

An Early History of Simpson County, Mississippi

by Bee King

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AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED TO:
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Due to her life-long (b. 1893) interest, and being a native Mississippian, Miss Beulah has gathered together many historical articles and books, and it is basically from this remarkable and vast collection that the enclosed material has been taken, her love of Mississippi history proved to be contagious. So it is with deep appreciation and a sincere "Thank You" for the special help and encouragement, that another chapter has been added to the extensive recording of the state's heritage.

Miss Beulah has also meticulously and lovingly chronicled the names and dates of her Boggan and related families and it is through this mutual family connection that the compiler became interested in the events concerning the early days.

All of the stories have been selected from a series of articles written by the late Bee King, who was a well-known lawyer, historian and writer. The Simpson County News began running the series in their weekly newspaper in 1937 and continued until 1948. Mr. King's writings are a graphic presentation of the life and times of early Simpson County. He interviewed the elderly citizens through out the area and uniquely recorded for posterity the experiences of the people in day to day living.

The picture shows Mr. King in his office when he was Mayor of Mendenhall, the county seat of Simpson County. 1928



Long before the coming of the white men to this county, there was an Indian encampment at or near what was afterwards known as Westville, and two or three well defined Indian trails crossing there; one running from a point on Pearl River near Rockport to the northeast through the Six Towns capital near the old gravel pit south of Weathersby, and another from the northwest and on in a southeast direction toward Mobile. Still another ran eastward through Smith and Jasper counties.

These trails were used by the early traders and trappers who came into the county prior to the coming of regular settlers. The first real settlements made in the county by white settlers were made about 1816, and after that time settlement was very rapid. By 1820 the Indian trails had been developed into roads over which wagons could pass without much difficulty.

About 1800, William Gibson, an Indian trader, decided to locate near the Indian camp at the crossing of these trails, as he found it would be more profitable to have a permanent location than to travel about. He was a man of considerable means and was the owner of several slaves, and with the help of his slaves and such other help as he could obtain; he built a large rambling house.

This house was located a few hundred feet north of where "the old courthouse used to stand, and was of course built of logs, which were hewn with broadaxes. The floors were made of plank, which were obtained by sawing the logs with a rip saw. (Rip saw: a saw with coarse teeth, for cutting wood along the grain) This was a saw very similar to a cross cut saw, but the log had to be put in a high frame and well fastened. One man stood on the top of the frame and another stood under it, so that the saw was drawn up and down, like the sash saws of later years.

It was slow work, but two strong men could saw several logs in a day.

The four main rooms of his house were about 20 feet square and there were side rooms also. The chimneys were large and the fire places about eight feet wide. The window shutters were made of plank and there was a wide hallway and wide galleries. The kitchen stood about forty feet away from the dwelling and had a dirt floor. The slave quarters were further away, as were the barns and outhouses. Gibson built a large house so that he could take care of the many traders and travelers coming that way and soon had a good business.

A short distance away he built another house which he used as a store house, where he traded with the Indians, swapping them beads, trinkets, knives, blankets, whiskey, etc., for furs. The furs were afterwards sold to fur traders or sent to Mobile to be sold or exchanged for things needed in a frontier settlement, most especially salt. Gibson's house soon became generally known as Gibson's tavern and adventurers of every kind

Buffalo Hunting

The first capital of the Six Town Indian Nation was probably near the old gravel pit south of Weathersby. The Six Town Indians had lived in this part of the country for hundreds of years before the coming of the white man. Until that time, their weapons were bows and arrows and blowguns. They were every one expert in making bows and arrows and in using them.

A strong, well-trained Indian would sometimes shoot an arrow entirely through a deer or panther. Their method of killing a panther was for one Indian to shoot an arrow into the panther's body with great force, and then while the panther was trying to pull the arrow out, the other Indians would begin shooting until they killed it.

One of their methods of killing deer and buffalo was to have an Indian to disguise himself as a deer or buffalo. This was done by covering himself with the hide of a deer or buffalo, and go into the woods where they were

supposed to be and then imitate their call. When the hunted animal got close enough, the disguised Indian would shoot it with an arrow. This method of hunting required a great deal of skill as well as patience.

The Indians were very expert in curing and dressing the skins of animals, and when the hide of a deer or buffalo was finally dressed, it was as soft and pliable as cloth, and every Indian chief was anxious to have a buffalo robe.

When the first white traders and hunters came into the country, the Indians purchased guns as fast as possible and the use of bows and arrows was rapidly abandoned, and it was a rare thing for an Indian to use the disguise of a deer or buffalo.

About 1820, a young Indian, called Red Bird by the Indians, decided to kill a buffalo by the old plan of disguising himself as a buffalo. He had heard that there were a number of buffaloes on the north side of Strong River; so one morning he slipped away from the village, carrying his new gun and a buffalo robe. After crossing the river, he put on his robe and waded up the east side of a creek for a mile or more. When he thought he had gone far enough, he began to imitate the call of a buffalo.

After calling at intervals for an hour or more, he heard the low bellow of a buffalo on the west side of the creek. Bending over to be sure that the buffalo would not notice his disguise he kept answering the buffalo and noticed that it was getting nearer. He had waited but a few minutes when he felt a dreadful pain in his head, and fell to the ground, as he heard the report of a gun. He knew no more for several hours. When he woke, he found a strange man sitting beside him, bathing his head with warm water. The man was a white hunter who had mistaken the Indian for a buffalo.

When he was able to walk the white man carried him to the village and explained to the Indians the mistake he had made. They took it good-naturedly and asked the man to remain in their village. When the man brought the young Indian back to the village he had called him Charlie and after that the Indians called him Buffalo Charlie.

There was no more hunting in disguise after that.

In referring to the Encyclopedia Americana 1946 A.H. McDannald Editor. The description of TANNING- reads

Converting skins or hides into leather by an astringent acid derived either from vegetable sources, such as the bark of the oak, hemlock, willow, chestnut, sumac, etc., or with a-astringent mineral substances, of which Alum may be taken as a characteristic type. In general, any acid, which has what would be called a "puckery" effect, will act upon a skin to convert it into leather. It toughens the skin, condenses it and coagulates all the albuminous matter so that it is no longer putrescible. That is to say, it preserves it from rotting.

The manufacture of leather is as old as history itself, The Persians and Babylonians passed the art over to the Greeks and Romans and so down to us. The American Indians were also well versed in the art although their method was entirely different to that of the ancient races.

HOW TO TAN SKIN - a brief method copied from an old book. (From the ingredients it sounds like an early-American recipe, rather than from the Indians)

Spread the skin out- flesh side up. Prepare a mixture of

½ salt peter

½ Alum

Mix with two parts Salt.

Pound this until very fine. Spread on the flesh side and roll up and leave a few days until the powder becomes dissolved. Stretch skin lightly on a board and SCRAPE until free of flesh or membrane. Place the entire skin in the sun to dry, then rub well with NEATSfoot oil and put in the sun again for a day or two. Then scrape all of the oil off with a piece of wood and dust thoroughly with Plaster of Paris or Whiting, which has been heated in the oven. Rub this in with a piece of flannel cloth. When dried and well brushed the skin is ready to remove the hair. Put in a vessel and add wet ashes; leave for 24 to 48 hours till the hair can be scraped off. Wash thoroughly in water. Hang up to dry. When it begins to dry around the edges, pull and work until the skin is dry and pliable - about two hours. As it dries, it will become beautiful white kid.

Indian Tribal Living

The Six Town Indians were a small division of the Choctaws. It is not probable that there ever were more than a few hundred in the county at any one time. They lived principally by hunting and fishing and there never was much game in the pine hills of South Mississippi. In the swamps there were beavers, deer and turkeys, and, of course, some game in the hills, but not enough to support many people. The Six Towns did a little farming, but grew nothing but Indian corn and very little of that. There were several villages in the county, the principal one being near the Cone place south of Weathersby. There was a small village near Westville where Ike Farmer now lives, and they had a burial ground where Frank Grantham now lives. There is a small mound there.

There was another small village on the high hill south of Mrs. Millis place and a burial ground nearby. There was another village near the present home of George Jennings, east of Mendenhall, and a village near Harrisville.

Their villages were simply collections of wigwams, usually built in a circular form around the wigwam of the chief. The wigwams were made of hides and were also circular in shape. The Six Towns were very poor and had few horses and scarcely any cattle. Before the white people came they killed game for meat and the skins they used for clothing. But after the white traders came they began killing game for the purpose of selling the hides to fur traders, and so they killed it out very fast. They also began to trade their furs for whiskey and were soon in worse condition than ever and because of that they more readily ceded "their lands to the United States government and began to move away.

By 1820 the only village in the county was near the Patterson place south of Weathersby. Their final removal to the Indian Territory is one of the most pitiful stories in American history. They were moved in the winter and most of them had to walk, though the government furnished some ox wagons, but they were so poorly clad and fed that thousands of them died of cold and exposure and disease before they reached their homes in the West. No wonder it was called the "TRAIL OF TEARS."

A few remained, but did so by hiding in the swamps and thickest forests. There were a few Indians in this county as late as 1880, but most of them had gone long before that time. There was a remnant of the Six Towns living along Okahay Creek in Smith county as late as 1877. I know of no Indians living in South Mississippi at this time.

RED CROW - Indian Chief

The first white man to permanently locate in what is now Simpson County was probably George Berkley. He first came to this part of the country about 1790. He was a fur trader from Natchez, and when in this part of the country, made his headquarters at the capital of the Six Towns Nation which was located near the old gravel pit south of Weathersby.

On one of his visits to the Six Towns, he had the misfortune to be kicked by his horse and his leg was broken. He was carried to the tent of Red Crow, one of the Six Town's chiefs. Red Crow had him treated as best he could, but it was many months before Berkley was able to walk again. He was never able to ride on horseback again.

Red Crow took a great interest in Berkley and when Berkley got well, he adopted Berkley as his son, which was done after appropriate ceremonies, as was the Indian custom.

At the time Berkley's leg was broken he had a small leather bag of gold, containing about eight hundred dollars worth of English coins. It had been untouched while his leg was being treated, and when he was adopted by Red Crow, he handed the bag to Red Crow and told him to keep it until he called for it. As he was never able to leave the Indian capital, he never called for the bag of gold and Red Crow faithfully kept it.

Some years later, Berkley died suddenly, and was buried in the Indian burial grounds near the capital and not far from where Walter Cone now lives. As Berkley had never given Red Crow any directions about what was to be done with his gold; he had the bag of gold buried with Berkley.

Twelve or fifteen years later, two other fur traders made the Indian capital their headquarters, and while there, heard the story of Berkley and the buried gold, and became very anxious to know where he was buried. Red Crow warned his people to never let them know the location of Berkley's grave, but by the liberal use of whiskey; they were finally able to learn the location of the grave from an old Indian woman. The two fur traders were pretty drunk when they came back from Berkley's grave and boastingly told Red Crow that they would keep the gold as Berkley was related to them anyway.

Red Crow told them that the gold would bring them bad luck as it was the dead man's gold. They laughed at him and proceeded to divide the gold. As they were not familiar with English coins, and not sure of their value they soon quarreled and the quarrel soon ended in a fight in which both of them were killed by the heavy knives they carried. Red Crow had the coins placed back in the bag and then he carried it to the grave of Berkley and buried them again with him. He then obliterated all signs of the grave so that it could never be found.

In later years many efforts were made to locate Berkley's grave but without success. Berkley's gold will probably never be found.

Scalping

The Six Towns Indians' form of government was tribal and very much like a large family. Their principal food was meat, which they obtained by bunting. When the men killed a deer or a buffalo they brought it into the village and turned it over to the squaws, who proceeded to dress it for curing. This was done by jerking the meat after it had been cut into thin slices. They had but little salt and the only way of preserving the meat was by drying it.

If meat was plentiful every member of the village had plenty and if game was scarce, then all did on little. The squaws dressed the hides and made such clothing as they had, mostly out of deerskins and beaver skins. Their shoes, or moccasins, were also made of deer hides. When the clothing was made every member of the village was cared for, share and share alike.

Their wigwams were also made of hides and a vent was always left in the top for the escape of smoke. Their cooking was usually done in the open, but when the weather was cold, it was inside the wigwams. They had no

cooking utensils except some flat rocks and what little corn they had was pulverized by beating it in a hollow rock. Most of their meat was cooked by broiling it.

The Six Town Indians, being a weak tribe had but few wars and those were with tribes of the southwest. When the white men came to this country, the Six Towns had a few scalps and they spoke of a battle that had been fought long before and was supposed to have been fought about where Maury McLendon now lives. At least there is a tradition that a battle was fought there, or near there. They took great pride in the number of scalps they could obtain and kept them as trophies.

Scalping was a very cruel thing as quite often the victim was scalped before he was dead. The scalp was taken by cutting the skin on the head just below the hair line and then the man was turned on his face and the Indian doing the scalping put his foot on the man's shoulder and caught the hair and pulled the scalp from the victim's head. It is said that sometime a man would live 'after being scalped, but such instances were very rare.

Romulus and Remus Lewis

The most commonly used Indian trail was the one running from the capital of the Six Towns Nation on Settlers Creek to the western side of Pearl River, where the Copenahs lived. The Six Towns and the Copenahs were very friendly and often met at this crossing to play their games, and to attend their cries when a chief died.

There was a small village of Six Towns there when the first white settlers came to this part of the state, but long before the settlers came, there were white trappers and fur traders who traded the Indians and used the trails for traveling.

About 1818, a man by the name of Pomeroy Lewis decided to establish a trading post there. His wife had died and he brought his two sons, Romulus and Remus, with him. They were twins and about 16 years old. Romulus was a cripple, but Remus was large and strong for his age. Lewis also brought with him two slaves, and soon after he built a small cabin for himself and then one for the slaves. Then he built a somewhat larger house for his trading outfit. This consisted of whiskey; rum, tobacco, candy and such trinkets as he knew the Indians would buy. He also brought a supply of traps, which he loaned to the Indians.

Lewis was very well educated and his son, Romulus, was what would now be called a "book worm". He could take no part in hunting and trapping, but he took great delight in talking to the Indians, and was on good terms with them, so that he soon became the real manager of the business. He also became an expert in grading furs. He dealt fairly with the Indians and he saw that the fur traders who came to buy furs from his father did not cheat him. Some of the traders were experts in swindling the men they purchased furs from, and on one occasion Romulus was compelled to agree to fight a duel with one of these scamps.

It was not generally known, but Romulus was one of the best marksmen in the country, and though he could scarcely walk, he could ride a horse as well as the Indians.

One day after he had closed a trade for a lot of furs with a trader, he noticed, after the trader had gone away, that he had taken a much more valuable bundle of furs than the bundle that he had bought. Romulus was very angry and ordered a horse brought at once to the post. He mounted the horse from the front porch, called his dogs and armed with two pistols, took the trail in pursuit of the trader. A short distance south of Strong River he overtook the trader, and charged him with stealing the pack of furs he carried. The trader asserted that he had the furs that he had bought. Romulus denied that, and ordered the trader to go back to the camp.

Very reluctantly, the trader went back to the trading post and there they found the furs that he had bought already tagged with his name. He insisted that the change had been made by Romulus. Romulus in a great rage challenged the trader to fight a duel. The trader said he did not want to fight a duel with a boy, but Romulus insisted. The trader then said that since he had been challenged, he had the right to select the weapons to be used, and that he would select pistols, and meet Romulus at the Indian ford on the little creek west of the camp at sun-up the next day.

While the trader was around Pomeroy Lewis' trading post, he learned that Romulus had trained his dogs to run horses, and that they had been known to take a man off his horse and bite him terribly. It was the only way Romulus had of recovering stolen horses and goods, and he had often used them to great advantage.

Pomeroy Lewis' two slaves, George and Pentecost, lived in the little cabin near the trading post, and Pentecost had heard the quarrel between the trader and Romulus. She didn't know anything about duels, but she had heard that pistols were to be used and the time would be sun-up next morning. She was greatly excited about the matter, for Romulus was her favorite of the two boys, on account of his being a cripple and because he was always kind to her and George. After the trader left for the Indian Camp, she tried to persuade Romulus to drop the matter, but he would not. She then decided to take matters into her own hands. She was a large, powerful woman and utterly fearless. When she decided to do anything she generally succeeded.

Pomeroy Lewis was not at home, and she paid no attention to George. She first went to see the Indian Chief and told him of the duel, and got his promise to help her, but she didn't tell him what her purpose was. Next morning long before sun-up she was up and had breakfast prepared. She then went to the post and took the pack of furs belonging to the trader and carried it to the Indian tent where she knew the trader was sleeping. She sat down on the pack of furs and waited. About daylight the trader stepped out of the tent door. When he did, Pentecost rose from her seat and said to him, "Here yo pack, You take it and git goin. You not guine to hurt dat boy, if you do I bust you open, I do it anyway ifen you fool, wid me a minit. Think you come sneakin' roun' here and do a thing like dat? I raise dat boy frum infancy, and I ain't goin' to let no triflin' low down white man come roun' here and hurt him."

The trader looked like he was going to strike her, but she stepped up closer and said "Jes tech me if you dare, jes tech me." The trader decided to let her alone, She called George to bring his horse. When it was brought she said, "Here yo hoss, and here yo pack. Take it an' git on dat hoss and git gone, or I set de dogs on you." He got on his horse and started, but after going a short distance he stopped and looked as if he was going to get down again. When Pentecost saw that she began calling the dogs and put them on his trail. He left at full speed, with the dogs, about twenty in all, in hot pursuit.

When Romulus heard that he was gone and the dogs in pursuit of him, he asked two Indians to follow him and call off the dogs, as he was afraid they would kill the trader. The Indians over took him as he was swimming Strong River, and called the dogs off. As they came back to camp they found most of the traders furs scattered along the trail. Some of them were in good condition, but most of them had been badly torn by the dogs. They had probably saved the life of the trader. He was never seen around that trading post again.

After the Indians learned that Romulus had agreed to fight a duel they wanted to adopt him into the tribe and make him chief. That just suited Romulus and when they presented him with a full suit of deerskin clothing he was indeed proud of himself. Soon after that he was invited to go on the annual buffalo hunt.

At that time there was still considerable number of buffaloes in this part of the state. They were not as large as the buffaloes of the plains, but they were larger than the cattle of the country. The Indians never killed more than

they needed, but after the coming of the white men into the country, the buffaloes were soon killed off, so that by 1830, it was a rare thing to see a buffalo.

The Indians were very fond of buffalo meat and they greatly prized the buffalo for robes, and were very skillful in dressing them.

At the time Romulus was invited to attend the hunt, there was a small herd of buffaloes in that large tract of open pine land lying north and west of Strong River, and it was decided to go hunting in that section of country.

The Indians hunted buffaloes entirely with bows and arrows, as they had but few guns and could not use them to any advantage on horseback. Romulus rode his large horse and the Indians rode ponies. Romulus had never hunted with a bow and arrows but he carried them, and soon found that he could shoot very well from horseback.

Leaving the Indian camp early in the morning, they rode west and crossed Strong River at the Indian ford, then took a northwesterly course thru the pine woods for several miles. Late in the morning they came in sight of a bunch of buffaloes on top of a high hill, but when the buffaloes saw them, they galloped away and hid in a reed-break. With loud shouts and beating of the bushes the Indians finally drove them out of the reed-break, and followed them over the next bill. The buffaloes were large and clumsy, but could travel almost as fast as a horse.

About noon, the Indians succeeded in killing a large buffalo and then stopped the hunt in order to get the buffalo dressed. After the hide was taken off, the meat was then cut in large pieces that could be easily carried to the camp.

When they reached the camp the meat was cut into long thin strips for the squaws to jerk. It took several days to jerk the strips until they were thoroughly dry. When well dried, they were excellent food and there was none that the Indians enjoyed better. On the hunt, Romulus got a chance to shoot the buffalo, so he was delighted with the hunt, and the Indians were so well pleased with him that they promised to take him to Singing Stone on the next full moon for an initiation into the tribe.

Through a fissure in a rock in the north bank of Strong River, probably about where the Jaynes Brothers built their water mill in 1835, near the present Town of D'Lo, there used to come low, humming sounds somewhat similar to that of a harp, or sounds in the shells of the sea. The early settlers called it the whistling rock, but the Indians called it the singing stone. They looked upon it, as not only supernatural, but as something holy. In their humble way it was a place of worship, and twice each year, at the full moon in the early spring, and at the full moon in the Indian summer, when the water in the river was low, they brought their young warriors to be initiated into the art of war. When the water in the river was low, the sounds from the stone were very musical, and if the young warriors listened to singing stone, when the sounds were soft and low, it was a good omen and meant success in all their undertakings. If the sounds at such times were slightly intermittent, they regarded them as being the words of some mysterious language admonishing them to be brave and become great warriors. If the sounds were shrill and hard, it was a bad omen and meant that great disasters would come upon them.

The sounds were doubtless affected largely by the depth of the water in the river, and by the seasons of the year, so the times selected by the Indians for their initiation rites, were supposed to be the best seasons of the year. to catch the sounds they desired. The Indians had no tradition of the time when the singing stone was first discovered, it must have been many hundreds of years before the coming of the white men to the country, for the large stone beneath the singing stone had been worn smooth, where they had knelt for ages to listen to its voice.

At last the day arrived for Romulus to take his initiation, and he was greatly delighted when it turned out to be fair and warm. He and the other young warriors were dressed in their new buckskin uniforms, had their faces painted, and hair well oiled, and were in high spirits. Only the chiefs and young warriors were to attend the ceremonies, but as a matter of pride, Pomeroy Lewis was invited to attend. When they reached the south bank of the river, opposite the singing stone, all dismounted, and after going thru certain ceremonies, waded into the water, and after the chiefs had thrown water over all the young warriors, and made a speech outlining the great things expected of them, they waded across the river and knelt on the flat stone beneath the singing stone. The chiefs, taking them, one at a time, had them place their ears near the fissure and allowed them to listen several minutes to the sounds that came from the stone. Romulus was highly pleased with what he heard, and so were the young men, as well as the chief. After that there were many other ceremonies, and then a grand feast of venison and buffalo meat, besides other things brought by Pomeroy Lewis, who was not to be outdone in the matter of hospitality. They had reached the river just as the full moon rose, and they remained until it was at the zenith. Then all went back to their camp. A few years later, a simple-minded trapper broke into the singing stone with an axe, to find what was in it. Of course, he found nothing, but the singing stone was ruined. It never sang again.



Hunting and Wolves

The early settlers of Simpson County depended very largely on hunting and trapping for a livelihood. Beavers and otters were numerous on the creeks and rivers and in the woods were deer and some buffaloes, bears, panthers, wildcats and wolves, and a vast number of wild pigeons. There were also foxes, raccoons, opossums and rabbits. But nobody paid any attention to him or her. Deer driving was the most popular sport because so many could take part in it, and for the further reason that great quantities of venison could be secured in that way. A few days in advance of a drive, notice would be given that all who wished to take part in it would appear at some fixed place with their dogs and plenty of ammunition. Nearly everybody would ride altho a few men who had no horses, but were good runners, would come on foot.

Some time in the fall of the year 1832 Arthur Mangum and Peter Stubbs gave notice that a deer drive would be made out on the west side of Okatoma Creek and that everybody was invited to come well prepared. That meant that everybody that came should bring something to eat as well as drink, as the drive was to last most of the day. On the appointed day, there was a large number of men present at an early hour, and after swapping a few jokes and taking a few drinks, a number of men were placed on various "deer stands" where the deer were supposed to pass, and others took the dogs and began the drive.

That part of the county was very thinly settled at that time, and there were a large number of deer where the drive was made. When the signal for the noon hour was given, almost a dozen deer had been killed, and were brought to what was called the Indian Lake near Goodwater Creek to be dressed. A few slaves had been brought along to make coffee and prepare dinner, and after dinner was over and a few more wild tales told, the drive started again. It lasted until late in the afternoon, and was a great success. More than twenty deer had been killed during the day and everybody had plenty of venison. The next thing to do was to get the deer properly skinned and dressed, ready to take home. This of course required considerable time and night was coming on before they were ready to to.

Among those who came on the drive was Johnny Sumrall, the son of Howell Sumrall. Johnny was about fifteen years old and was riding a small horse bought from an Indian. Another boy with him was little Joe Shotts, the son of the widow Shotts. Joe was about sixteen years of age, but very small for his age. Both lived on Rials Creek, and were about six miles from home. They had taken great interest in the drive, and had two deer to their credit.

Everybody was delighted with the boys and when they found that night was going to find them at the lake, it was thought best to let the boys take their venison and start home while it was yet light enough to see how to travel. Each one was given two or three quarters of venison, which was placed in long sacks open at the sides and well balanced on the horses. They were also given a quantity, of small pieces of venison which they carried in sacks hanging from their shoulders.

As they left the lake some thoughtless fellow told them if the wolves bothered them, to throw some of the small pieces of venison to them. When they were half way home, they were startled by the howl of a wolf somewhere near them. They couldn't tell the direction but their dogs began to growl like the wolf and they could tell the wolves were getting close to them. It was already getting dark and then they noticed the swift movement of wolves at the edge of the road. Then there followed the howls of other wolves getting closer all the time. The boys rode close together and as fast as they could travel, and tried to encourage their dogs, hoping to reach a house about a mile ahead in time to save themselves, as the wolves were snapping at the horses and the sacks of meat. They threw out the scraps they carried and the number of wolves grew larger and larger and they became more fierce than ever. Johnny became so frightened that he told Joe to ride on as fast as he could to Mr. Hornsby's house and he would follow. Joe was riding a large strong horse, that was a good traveler and Johnny followed as fast as possible.

The dogs had followed Joe, and Johnny was alone when his horse blundered and fell. As soon as it fell it seemed to him like it was covered by thirty or more wolves. The poor horse was killed and devoured before Mr. Hornsby could get there. He killed two of the wolves. Fortunately Johnny had been able to climb a small tree before the wolves noticed him. He would doubtless have lost his life if he had not.

Rattlesnakes

Jim and Will Powell were brothers. They came to Simpson County from South Carolina about 1824, and engaged in trapping and trading with the Indians. Both were single and in 1826 located for the winter near Rials Creek, a few miles northwest of the mill. They rented a log house that had been built by an early settler and kept "batch". The house they secured was a rather tall house and had a rough loft made of lathing or boards, riven out of a pine tree. The loft was reached by a kind of step-ladder in one corner of the house. In the back corners of the house were bedsteads, also made of poles and boards. Their beds were mostly of hay, or straw, covered with blankets and a few furs. The house had a dirt floor and a stick and dirt chimney.

Jim and Will were used to outdoor life and with plenty of wood to burn, kept very comfortable during the winter. They had been very successful in trapping and trading and had collected a fine lot of furs, which they kept in the loft of the house.

Spring had opened and they were getting ready to take the furs to market. Late in the afternoon of a warm spring day. Will went off to take up the traps, leaving Jim to prepare supper. Will was a great talker and also liked a drink now and then, and when he got to talking and drinking sometimes he was out late at night. Jim prepared supper early and after eating and smoking awhile, he decided to bank the fire and go to sleep. In those days nobody had any matches and the only way to keep fire was to cover a lot of coals with ashes. If well banked they would keep their heat all night. If they died out, a person would probably have to "borrow fire" from a neighbor. Jim knew that Will would come in some time in the night so he was not uneasy about him and soon was sound asleep.

After he had been sleeping something like an hour or more, he was awakened by some heavy object falling on the foot of his bed. He first thought it was a cat, but as it didn't get off, he decided to find out what it could be.

To his horror, when he moved he heard the buzzing of a rattlesnake. By the light of the moon, which shone through some cracks of the house, he saw that its head was lifted a few inches above his blanket and that it was slowly moving toward him. He was so frightened that he was unable to think for a moment; but before it reached him, by a supreme effort he threw it off of the bed.

After it struck the floor, it appeared to be more angry than ever, and the buzzing of its rattles seemed to fill the whole house; so it was impossible to locate it. Having no fire and no way of making a light, he was afraid to get up and almost afraid to move. Every time he tried to move the snake became more vicious. There was nothing to do but wait till Will came. After what seemed several hours he heard Will coming. He waited until Will reached the door and then called to him to get a light as there was a large rattlesnake in the house.

Will at first thought Jim was joking, but quickly decided he was not. Will remembered that he had passed an old tree that was burning about half a mile from the house, so he hurriedly went to the little shelf by the chimney and picked up a lot of long "fat" pine splinters and went back to the old tree and soon had a good torch burning.

When he reached the house again he opened the door very carefully and slowly walked in with his torch. He soon located the snake, coiled in the corner of the house near the fireplace. While Will held the torch Jim got the gun and shot the snake through the head. When it stopped moving, they dragged it out of the house and found it nearly eight feet long. They slept no more that night, but drank coffee and smoked until daylight.

Next morning Jim went down to the mill and got a pitchfork and very carefully they went into the loft and pitched down all the very furs. Just as they were finishing, they discovered two other rattlesnakes in one corner of the loft. Both were large, but not so large as the first one they killed. The next day they left with their furs for Natchez. About a month later it was noticed Jim and Will had moved.

A Story of a Great Rift

On Taylor Peacock's place on the west side of Strong River there is a rift in the land covering 80 acres. It is about six or eight feet below the surrounding land and is level. This rift is not the bottom of a lake and so far as is known it was never a lake, as the heaviest rainfall dries off rapidly. There is an old Indian tradition in regard to this rift that is very interesting.

The tradition is that many hundreds, perhaps thousands of years ago, this land and the adjoining land were covered with a heavy growth of large trees, there being no undergrowth, as the undergrowth was burned off every year so as to furnish grazing for wild turkeys, deer and buffalo; it is further stated that about that time a great battle was being fought on this 80 acre tract by two fierce Indian tribes, and that during the battle this tract of land fell a distance of about 14 feet.

The great trees were thrown down and fell on the fighters, and the trees along the edges of the brake were thrown upon the fallen ground. Nearly all the Indians were killed. The fight, of course, ended with the falling of the trees; there was also a great roar, such as the Indians had never heard. Those who were not killed managed to scramble out on the fallen timber, and immediately left at the highest speed possible, leaving their dead unburied, and leaving the wounded to die. For some little time afterwards the wounded Indians would reach the camp of his tribe, but would be looked upon more as a ghost than a human being. The Indians said that the evil one had his home beneath and that he had pulled the land down on his enemies in order to destroy them. The Indians were never known to return to this spot. They looked on it as a haunted land.

Perhaps for another reason that they avoided the place, was the fact that for hundreds of years nothing grew on this fallen land. The great trees rotted where they fell, and returned to the soil. The winds blew into the rift the

leaves of the forest for hundreds of years, and the rift gradually filled. After that, the new growth of timber grew there, and in the course of time the rift was gradually filled. What caused this rift is not known. It is one of the wonders of nature.

A Story of Pioneer Days

The father of John Bedford Gates moved from North Carolina to Mississippi about the year 1800, and located near Pearl River. At that time John Bedford was about five years old. His father built a log house and cleared a field. After the field was cleared there were many logs left upon the land and he gave a log rolling.

There were but few settlers in the county at that time, but they were always glad to assist one another in house raisings and log rollings. When John Bedford's father was ready for his log rolling he sent word to all the settlers for several miles around that he would have a log rolling on a certain day, and also a quilting. On the day appointed a large number of men, women and children came. The men soon went to the field to engage in rolling the logs. Some of the women engaged in quilting; others were assisting in the preparation of dinner. The children were playing some distance from the house in a large tract of woods.

While they were playing a large animal jumped from a tree upon John Bedford, knocking him to the ground and then began dragging him away; the other children ran screaming to the house and told of what had happened to John Bedford. They said a large yellow dog had jumped out of a tree upon him and was dragging him off.

The women knew at once that it was a panther and not a dog. They blew a horn and the men came running from the field. When told of what had happened they took their guns and calling the dogs went to the place where the children said John Bedford was caught.

In those days settlers carried their guns wherever they went as a protection against Indians and dangerous animals. The dogs took the trail and about half a mile from where the children had been playing they stopped where a pile of leaves was lying against a large log and began to bark. The men hurried to the place and looking at the pile of leaves discovered the hand of John Bedford thrust out from the leaves. A man caught his hand and lifted him up. They supposed he was dead. He was very bloody around his neck and was unconscious, but they soon discovered he was alive. They carried him to the house and washed the blood from his neck and found that there was a hole in his throat which extended thru his windpipe, and that his breath partly came thru the hole in his windpipe.

They then took some warm tallow and pressed it into the wound. He was badly bruised and there were claw marks on his arms and shoulders, but none of them were serious. After dressing his wounds with tallow, they wrapped him in warm blankets and put him to bed. In a few hours he awoke and was fully conscious.

After John Bedford had been put to bed, the men set the dogs on the trail of the panther and treed it about a mile from where John Bedford had been found. The panther was soon killed.

Johnny Bedford Gates got well without any further treatment and, in the year 1835 located in the northern part of the county. A beautiful spring hewn out of a solid rock on land he entered still bears the name of John Bedford Springs.

For an account of this incident I am indebted to my good friend, Collins Gates, a grandson of John Bedford Gates.

John Hodge

When John Hodge located in what is now Simpson County, about 1818, the county was almost an unbroken wilderness, inhabited entirely by Indians and a few trappers and traders. John built a small log cabin and lived there with his wife and their two boys, one about seven years old and the other about five. He was an Indian trader and kept a few good horses. His wife could ride a horse and shoot a gun as well as he could and she loved the wild life of the wilderness. She was a great favorite with the squaws and they kept her well supplied with meal and such fruit as they had. The Indians also kept them supplied with jerked venison, buffalo meat and wild turkeys.

John secured the most of the goods that he sold the Indians from other traders, though sometimes he would take a hurried trip to Natchez. On these trips he would usually take two or three Indians with him and they would be gone several days. During his absence some of the squaws would stay with John's wife, and camp near the house.

At that time there were many wild animals in the country, but they rarely molested anybody, and the early settlers had very little fear of them.

About a mile from John's cabin was a deep gulch, extending back into the side of a long hill. It was not very wide, but the banks were high and steep. It had become covered with vines of wild grapes and muscadines, and furnished a cool place for deer in the summer time. The Indians often went there to kill them. (muscadine: A musk-flavored grape of southern United States) The covering of the vines formed a sort of tunnel in which the deer liked to congregate. In later years when the black tongue attacked the deer, dozens of them were found in the gulch dying or dead.

Up and down the gulch were spots of white sand and often John would get an Indian to bring enough sand to his house to cover his dirt floor. Covering floors with white sand was a custom that was kept up by the early settlers for many years.

On one of John's trips to Natchez, his wife discovered one day that the boys were not about the house. It was growing late and when they failed to answer, she became very much frightened. One of the squaws told her that she had noticed the boys going off in the direction of the gulch, but, as they had never been there, John's wife didn't suppose they had gone that far, but she at once had one of the squaws go to her wigwam and ask some of the Indians to come and help find the boys.

There had been a light rain a few hours before and the air was much cooler. John's wife was getting very much alarmed and uneasy. She took her gun, and as it was almost dark, she had the Indians take long torches of pitch pine, and they started out. As they started, an old squaw, who was looked upon as a sort of oracle (a person of great knowledge) said, "Me think better go gulch heep quick." Taking the old squaw's advice they went directly to the gulch. One of the Indians told another one to hold the dogs back, then raising the torches high, so as to see, they started cautiously into the tunnel. John's wife, holding the gun, went in with them.

After they had gone fifty feet or more, one Indian pointed to a patch of sand and whispered, "Me see something." Going a little farther an Indian said, "Me see um." Then with a quick movement he snatched the gun from John's wife, and before she could utter a word, he shot an immense rattlesnake that was lying by the two boys, as they slept on the sand. He had seen the snake raise its head and wanted to kill it before it got away as he was sure the boys were dead, but the report of the gun awakened them. They had not seen the snake and it must have snuggled up against them for warmth when the air turned cold. The snakes measured more six feet-in length.

Two Men And A Girl

My attention was recently called by my good friend D. T. Taylor, to a most remarkable tragedy that occurred in this county more than 100 years ago. (printed in 1938) Tracing the matter down I found the facts to be about as follows: Prior to the coming of the white men into this country, the Six Town Indians, the southern division of the Choctaws, occupied practically all of the present counties of Simpson, Covington, Smith and Rankin. They had camps and villages at various places in these counties, all of which were of a temporary nature, as they were simply collections of wigwams, easily moved from place to place. Two or three of these camps or villages were located around the head waters of the present Sellers Creek in the county, one of them being on the high ridge north of Walter Cone's place, near the old gravel pit. (Editor's note: This is the location of Legion Lake)

Shortly after the Revolutionary War, white men from the eastern and northern states began to come into this territory for the purpose of trapping and trading with the Indians and they frequently made the Indians villages their headquarters and many of them married Indian women. About 1820 there came into this section of the county two men who dealt in slaves and also bought and sold horses.

These two men were bold adventurous fellows, hard drinkers and hard fighters. They were not partners, but they made the Indian village north of the Cone Place their rendezvous for trading and drinking bouts. As they dealt mostly in runaway slaves which they had captured and to which they had no rightful claim, they soon quarreled and sometimes fought.

This probably would have amounted to nothing more than ordinary quarrels and fights of frontiersmen, but shortly after coming to the village they both (Weathersby and Johnson) fell in love with an Indian girl, and Weathersby finding that the girl cared more for Johnson than she did for him, managed to pick a quarrel with Johnson over the possession of a slave and one rainy afternoon under some trees near the edge of the village, he provoked a fight with Johnson.

The fight was fast and furious and Johnson, doubtless feeling that his life was at stake, was fighting his best and was beginning to get the best of Weathersby, who realizing that he was out matched, whipped out a large hunting knife and lunged at Johnson, but just as he was in the act of striking Johnson lightning struck one of the trees they were under and killed them both.

The superstitious Indians, feeling that the Great Spirit had intervened in the matter, buried them where they fell and immediately moved their village across the creek somewhere about the present Patterson place and remained there until the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1833, when they moved to the Indian Territory.

Because of this most unusual occurrence, the Indians ever after regarded the girl as one favored of the Great Spirit and looked upon her with a reverence. She married a Choctaw chief and lived to a great age in her home in the west.

A Story of Early Times

About 1790 two fur traders, Bruce and Sterling, stopped at the Indian village south of the present town of Weathersby. (1948) Bruce was strictly a fur trader and had no education, but Sterling was highly educated. Soon after reaching the village, Sterling was astonished to find that the wife of Chief Black Eagle was much whiter than the other Indians and that she bore the name of Isabella. He also discovered that the Indians of that village used a great many Spanish words.

At that time Sterling was writing a series of articles for a Boston paper on the manners and customs of the Indians of the Southwest, so he proceeded at once to try to find out what he could about the use of the Spanish words, and the name of Isabella given to Black Eagle's wife.

One day Bruce offered a piece of gold to one of the Indians for a very fine pearl. It happened that Isabella was standing nearby and when she saw the piece of gold she said: "I got some like that." Sterling at once asked her to let him see a coin she had. She then brought a small buckskin pouch which contained about twenty Spanish doubloons, all being in gold.

Upon examination Sterling found that they bore dates ranging from the year 1500 to 1530. He then asked how she came into possession of the coins. He was then told that they had been brought there long ago by five white men, and that when the white men reached the village four of them were sick, and that in the course of a few months all of them died except one; that after his four companions had died the other man married an Indian woman who bore him one child, a daughter; that he named her Isabella; that before he died long after that he gave the coins and a gold locket which he carried to his daughter Isabella and told her to keep the coins and the locket in her family and to let the oldest daughter always have them. Isabella had no idea about how long ago that had been as she could not read or write and knew nothing of the value of the coins.

Sterling took notes of all this and asked her permission to open the locket. When he opened it he found a small picture of a woman who seemed to be very young. He also found a small scrap of paper on which was written the words Don Miguel Mendoza, Madrid. There was nothing else.

After spending several weeks at the village he and Bruce went away. Sterling returned to Boston and wrote to any of the descendants of Don Miguel Mendoza who might be living in Madrid and gave an account of his findings. Many months later he received a letter from Madrid signed by one of the Mendoza family thanking him and also extending an invitation to Isabella to visit them, and stated that they would pay all expenses. It was two or three years later when Sterling returned to the Southwest and made his headquarters at Natchez. Sometime thereafter he visited the Indian village again and found that Black Eagle and Isabella were both dead, and that a nephew of Black Eagle had given the coins and the locket for a gun and some whiskey.

It was Sterling's opinion that the five white men who first came to the village were members of DeSoto's expedition, and that they had escaped from the Chickasaws in the battle which DeSoto had fought with them about 1540 in Northeast Mississippi. He regretted very much that he was unable to secure any of the coins shown him by Isabella.

The most impressive example of tolerance is a golden wedding anniversary.
- From GRIT

THE BROWN FAMILY

An article from the Westville News, written by the Honorable L. Mendenhall: "Westville, Miss., Thursday, Dec. 1, 1898.

Note: Samuel Brown and his wife, Keziah Irby Brown came from England in 1832 and settled on Rials Creek, Simpson County, Miss. They were the Gr. Gr. Grandparents of Mrs. L. H. Holyfield (Miss Beulah Boggan). Elizabeth Brown, Samuel's daughter married John Clark.

EARLY SETTLERS

“The first settlement made on Rials Creek was made by a man by the name of Rials. The next was made by Samuel Brown, the great, great, grandfather of the present Brown family of that connection, who settled near the head of this creek on the Lewis Dixon place which was subsequently occupied by Stirin Dunford and Mrs. John Hays.

This place is noted for having been the scene of a heartless and bloody tragedy. Mr. Brown and his wife, both of whom were very old, were the only white persons living there. They owned several negroes and were generally thought to have had a considerable amount of money.

One night about sixty years ago three negroes all of whom bore the name of Henry, and a woman by the name of Rose, murdered the old man and his wife for their money, and killed two or three negroes who knew of the killing, to prevent them from testifying against them.

A man by the name of Miller was charged with having instigated the murder and was alleged to have received the greater part of the money. He was prosecuted for the crime. Three of the negroes, two of the Henrys and Rose were convicted of the murder and hanged by William J. Toler, who was then Sheriff (1836), near the place where T. J. Peacock now lives.

A change of venue was obtained in Miller's case, to Hinds County where he remained in jail several years. It seems that there had been a garden in back of the jailhouse. It is said that after Miller ate some peaches he threw the seed through the window of the cell. He remained in jail until the peaches were grown from these seed so near that he could reach through the grates and gather the fruit that had been produced from the seed of the peaches he had formerly eaten. He subsequently died in prison before there was any final disposition of the case.”

The early settlers of Simpson County acquired title to their lands from the government of the United States by original entry and most of them took lands lying along Strong River and the various creeks of the county. The reason for this was because the bottomlands were not so heavily timbered. Among those who settled along Strong River were:

David Bishop	Brewster H. Jayne	Eli Smith
Nathan Bush	T. J. Jenkins	James Taylor
Nathaniel Goff	Rhesa Kennedy	Mathew Thomas
William Hays	James May	Dempsey Touchstone
Lewis Harper	William May	George Truitt
Peter Hubbard	James McCaskill	Templeton Tullos
Bedford Gates	Assa Miller	David Womack
L. C. Gibson	David Quinn	

Dempsey Touchstone built the first cotton gin in the county

Note: The Cotton Gin was invented by Eli Whitney in 1794. Cotton farming has been the dominant industry in the State since it was established as a Territory, in 1798.

The earliest settlers on Skiffa Creek were:

John Graves	Duncan McLaurin	Joseph Carr	Jacob Grubbs
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Beasley Campbell was the first man to settle on Campbell's Creek and so the creek was named after him. The Sinclairs and Calhouns also settled on Campbell's Creek at an early date.

The first settler on Vaughn's Creek was a man named Vaughn for whom the creek was named. James Briggs was one of the first Sheriffs of the county and James McDuff built the first mill on Vaughn's Creek. James Powell and Jacob Kean also located near Vaughn's Creek about 1836.

The first settlers along Silver Creek were James Murray, Pipkin Smith, Tobias Smith, German Berry, Eli Myers, Jeremiah and Isaac Fortenberry, Willis and Wilson Huckaby, James M. Dampeer, Henry Beasley, Lewis Holyfield, Elbert and Gilbert Shivers, John P. Tolar, Isaac Newton, William Drummonds, Joseph Lane, Levi and M. A. Banks, John Berry, James Boggan, Francis Walker, William T. Brown, Owen Weathersby, Stephen Gardner and William Gates.

The first settlers-along Bouie River were John Price, Benjamin Thornton, D.A. and J. C. McLaurin and James Lee.

Note: Twelve of the above men can be found in the 1830 Census for Simpson County.

EARLY LIVING

At the same time that William Gibson settled where Westville was afterwards located, several other settlers located nearby. John Neely about a mile west and John and Elam Albritton about two miles north of Gibson's place and Alexander McCaskill and James McDuffie just south of the Indian camp. They probably all came together from North Carolina.

They were not the first settlers in the county, as there were several other settlements. Gideon Rials, Samuel Brown and some others had located near the head of Rials Creek and there were settlements along Pearl River and Vaughn's Creek and near the mouth of Strong River. A number of families from Scotland had also located in the southeastern part of the county. All of these settlements were connected by Indian trails which were being developed into roads that could be traveled very well.

Of course, there were no bridges, and people had to ford the streams, where it was possible to do so. (ford: a shallow place in a stream that can be crossed by walking.)

Two ferries had been established on Pearl River; a ferry at the Barron place in the northwestern part of the county and one near where Rockport is now located. Those early settlers built their homes and barns of logs, and built rail fences to protect their stock as well as to protect the fields. Almost every family had brought some horses and cattle with them, and none were to be had in the new country. The Indians had no domestic animals except dogs and ponies. Their ponies were very small and untrained except to ride. An Indian never worked, unless hunting could be called work.

The Indian women planted a little corn, dressed the deer hides and cured the furs and were very expert at that kind of work. They built the tents or wigwams, as they were called. Nearly all of those early settlers traded with the Indians, swapping with them such things as they had for furs and baskets and dogs. Indians would not sell their ponies, but would trade their dogs for anything they wanted, especially whiskey.

It was necessary for every family to have a number of dogs in order to protect their stock from the packs of wolves that infested the country. These dogs were also used in hunting deer and bears. The early settlers had a great fear of panthers, as terrible tales were told of them, and the scream of a panther in the night was enough to

frighten the most courageous of men.. Hunting them was dangerous, as the dogs were no match for them and to kill them with the old flint and steel rifles was very uncertain.

Hunting wolves was a great sport and was also necessary, as it was almost impossible to raise stock on account of them. They were very numerous, in those early days and their depredations were continual.

Deer were killed for food as well as for their hides. Turkeys were sometimes killed, but squirrels and rabbits were not noticed, in fact it was generally believed that, eating rabbits would make people cowardly and a new frontier was no place for cowards. Beavers and otters were trapped for their fur, but coons, minks and weasels were only killed to be rid of them. Bears were hunted for their hides and a well-dressed bearskin was highly valued as they made very fine rugs. There were a great many bears in the county when it was organized, (1824) and I have been told that more than 100 bears were killed in the county in the winter of 1824.

Note: from A SYSTEM OF SCHOOL GEOGRAPHY by S. Griswold Goodrich Pub. F. J. Huntington & Co. N.Y. 1836

The northern part of the state (Mississippi) is occupied by the Chickasaw Indians; the southern part, by the whites. Natchez, is the largest town in the state and is located on the Mississippi River. It is the centre of trade for the western tours of the state. Population 2,800.

From: The American Universal Geography or a View of the Present State of all the Empires, Kingdoms., States and Republicks In the Known World, and the United States of America in Particular.. by Jedidiah Morse D.D. F.A.A. S.H.S. Minister of the Congregational Church in Charleston, Boston. Pub. J. T. Buckingham Pearl River rises in the Choctaw country, and is navigable upwards of 150 miles. It has seven feet of water at its entrance, and deep water afterwards. In 1769, there were some settlements on this river, in which were raised tobacco, Indigo,, cotton., rice., Indian corn., and various sorts of vegetables. The land produces many kinds of timber fit for pipe., and hogshead staves, masts., yards, and all kinds of plank for shipbuilding. P. 77

This day, which thou fearest as thy last, is the birthday of eternity. Seneca -- Epistolae Ad Lucilium,

History is a pageant, not a philosophy. --Augustine Birrell - Obiter Dicta

No man was ever wise by chance. --Seneca - Epistolae Ad Lucilium

The Chochumas

After the cold plague had subsided, it was too late to take the trip to Natchez, but salt was obtained at Osceola and some cotton was shipped from that point on flat boats.

Early in the spring several fur traders came into the neighborhood, trading mostly with the Indians and living with them in their camps. They rode good horses, bought plenty of whiskey and were careful to never get cheated by the Indians. After they had been in the neighborhood about a month., two of them, John Regent and Tom McDonald, proposed giving an Indian ball game at the race track near Mrs. Lotto Williamson's place. The Six Towns were good ball players and they were soon persuaded to arrange a game with a small tribe of Chochumas, living out beyond Leaf River. McDonald and Regent made all the arrangements and were to represent the Six Towns, while some other traders were to represent the Chochumas.

The time was fixed for a day in April and a few days before the game was to be played, a large party of Chochumas came over and camped near the village of the Six Towns. Regent and McDonald purchased several

beeves, which were killed and barbecued for the occasion. As it was generally known that the Indians would soon move away and since that would probably be the last Indian ball game played in the county, a large number of white people attended the game.

A large number of Indians played on each side, and it was a very interesting game. No player was allowed to touch the ball with his hands, as it was caught and also thrown with a ball stick 'made for the purpose. The stick was about thirty-five inches long, and one end was drawn to a thin point and turned back and fastened against the stick so as to form a small cup in which the ball was caught and from which it was thrown. With the use of the stick a ball could be thrown several hundred feet. When the ball was thrown, there would be many runners trying to catch it, but many times it was missed by Indians running over or against one another. The game usually lasted several hours.

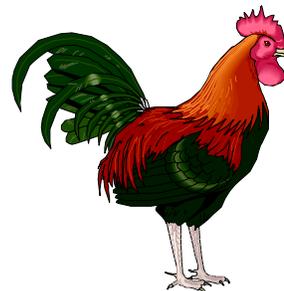
Indians never played the game for amusement, but played for what they could win, and when a game was played, the tribe staked all it had on the result. So before the game started, they brought all they had and placed it in a pile near the ball ground and appointed a guard to watch over it. If they lost, they lost all they had. The Chochumas had brought all their ponies, guns, tents, blankets and furs, Which were placed under guards on the other side of the ball ground.

When the Indians started into the game, they took off all their clothing except a loin cloth and greased themselves with panther grease and black snake oil. It was simply a business proposition with them. The white people present took a great interest in the game and there was much betting among them on the result, and much cheering among them as the result shifted from side to side. There was never any cheering among the Indians and the Indians who looked on never showed the slightest interest the result.

After the game had lasted several hours, it appeared that the Chochumas would win, but just before the time was up, the Six Towns was declared by the referee to be the winner. There was much cheering among the white people, but none among the Six Towns. They walked over and took possession of all the Chochumas had.

The traders had a feast of barbecued meat prepared and after it was eaten there was an Indian dance, and then all the Indians got drunk.

The next day the Chochumas started home on foot.



State of Mississippi



The Parent of American Commerce —Lettered Edge Bust Half Dollar—



Bust half dollar with the lettered edge (reading FIFTY CENTS OR HALF A DOLLAR), as struck during the period 1807-1836. This was an era of territorial expansion for America: hundreds of square miles west of the Mississippi River were purchased or taken in these years, and the Bust half dollar was the principal coin in commercial use at the time—so it was the parent of commerce in America during these decades.

ALVIN FINNEY and JAMES BOGGAN

Alvin Finney and his wife Jane settled near the Rials Creek Mill about the year 1826. Finney was a blacksmith and also repaired guns and clocks. He brought two very fine horses with him when he came to the county and always kept them in fine condition. He did very little farming, but kept a number of hogs and a few cattle. His house was made of logs and had only a dirt floor, dirt chimney in the one room. He built a small barn with sheds for the horses and built a smokehouse, which was really the best house on the place. It was built of split logs and the cracks were daubed with mud. He said that he built it strong to keep out the wolves, although he kept two large fierce dogs.

Most of the work that he did at his shop was paid for in furs and farm products, as there was very little money in the country, but it was soon noticed that he always had money and that often the coins appeared to be new. It was also noticed that he was often visited by men who lived a distance away. This soon led to the supposition among some of his neighbors that he was making counterfeit money, but there was no proof of that.

People of the neighborhood who visited him found that he lived well and always had an abundance of dried ham and sausage, and that smoke was always coming from his smokehouse.

At that time, JAMES BOGGAN, who lived a few miles south of the mill, was the largest slaveholder in the county and owned more than thirty slaves. One morning in the fall of the year 1828, BOGGAN found that one of his best slaves was missing. He was a young slave named Dave, whom he had bought that spring. He started a search at once. Bloodhounds were put on the supposed trail, and he employed several men to assist him in recovering the slave; but after riding more than a week, they were never able to get any trace of him. BOGGAN had offered a reward for Dave and a number of young men made an effort to find him. Some went as far as Vicksburg and others to Natchez; but all returned as they went. BOGGAN was sure that Dave had not run away,

and was confident that he was stolen. Several people, as it afterwards turned out, were unjustly suspicioned with helping to steal him, though BOGGAN kept all that to himself; and afterwards said that those he suspicioned never knew any thing about it.

For several days before Christmas of the year 1828, Finney had been very busy at his shop and a large number of strangers had been at Finney's place during the week. But it attracted the attention of one of Finney's neighbors so much that he decided the day before Christmas to go over to Finney's house that night after supper and ask Finney if he was in any trouble. He had almost reached Finney's house when he saw two men ride up to the front gate and call him, and when he came to the door they both shot him and rode rapidly away.

He heard nothing they said, but heard Finney's wife screaming. He ran at once to the mill for help and several went immediately to Finney's house but when they got there he was dead. His wife had become very calm, and when they arrived she said she was going to Westville for a doctor. They tried to persuade her not to go but she said she was going anyhow and preferred going by herself. Just as she left she called to Mr. Rials and said, "You had better open that smokehouse before it burns down. He went at once to the smokehouse and broke the door open with an axe. When he did he saw that the wall on one side was burning and that Dave, the slave, was chained to the burning logs.

They sent for an officer and JAMES BOGGAN. An inquest was held, and in the shop were found some new coins just made. In the house they found a letter from a man giving his name as Williams, which said that he would call for a slave by January the First. The postmark was Canton. The men who killed Finney were never apprehended, and his wife was never seen after she left that night. Nobody knew where they came from or where she went. Long ago it was written, "The wages of sin is death."

THE FIGHTERS

The early settlers of Simpson County were mostly young men, nearly all of them being hardy, bold, vigorous, adventurous young fellows who had come west to better their fortunes and build up a new country. It was not the time or place for idlers or cowards. They came from all the Atlantic states, from Maine to Georgia. A large number were from Massachusetts; some were from New York and Virginia; some from Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Others came from Maryland, New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania, but the greater portion of them were from North and South Carolina and Georgia.

That is the main reason the county developed so rapidly. Every settler brought in new ideas, and all profited from the experiences of the others. Everything was new, and the oldest house in the county was built by JAMES BOGGAN in 1816. It was about four miles south of where Gideon Rials built his mill at the head of the creek that bears his name.

From 1816 onward the population of the county had increased very rapidly. Lands were free, game was plentiful, stock of all kinds lived in the woods, provided the settlers could protect them from wolves, catamounts (a puma or lynx) and panthers. The only mills in the county were water mills and the mills soon became gathering places, especially on Saturdays, for the men of the community. Whiskey was to be had almost everywhere. It was sold in all the little stores that were opened throughout the county. There were always four or five places in Westville where whiskey could be bought; three or four places at Osceola; and from one to three at Rials Creek Mill.

On account of the fact that the Rials Creek Mill pond afforded the best place in the county for swimming and boating, it soon became a gathering place for all who liked to indulge in the rough sports of that time. On almost every Saturday from April until October, there would be a large number of big, strong, able-bodied men at the mill, bent on having what they called "a big time". That meant they would indulge in jumping, wrestling, boxing and fighting; not that they were angry with one another but for the pure fun of fighting and to see who could whip.

The first thing to be done was to prepare a pot of grease, being preferred more than any other. Then when the grease was prepared they would take off their shoes, though most of them went barefooted anyway, then take off their shirts and grease their bodies with the bear grease. When well greased it was very hard to hold a strong man, and when two of them were well matched, it sometimes took as much as an hour for them to get exhausted.

The jumping and wrestling was usually done in the forenoon and the afternoon devoted to boxing and fighting. The men not actually engaged in the fight would act as referees and see that no undue advantage was taken by one or the other, and nobody would interfere if the fight was carried on fairly. It was against the rules to bite off an ear or nose, but fingers were frequently bitten off, and mouthfuls of flesh bitten out of a man's body. It was astonishing the amount of punishment some of the fellows could take without flinching. It was only in rare instances that a man would ask the crowd to take a fellow off.

On one occasion a fellow named Elias Brown, and another fellow named Myers, who had fought repeatedly, met at the mill and both getting pretty well "tanked up" on liquor, got into a fight which lasted for almost an hour. They were both large, strong men, right in the prime of life, and everybody present took sides with one or the other. Quite a number of bets were made on each of them. They were stripped to the waist, barefooted and well greased. The fight was fast and furious. Everybody was in doubt about who would win. Finally, Myers fell on his face and Brown went down on top of him. Brown bit three mouthfuls of flesh out of Myers' back and spit them out on the ground. The crowd thought Myers would give up, but suddenly he whirled over, got Brown's right wrist in his mouth and held on until Brown said "quit". They then shook hands, promising to meet another day and fight again.

Those rough sports developed some wonderful fighters and produced a magnificent race of men.

"..... the price of wisdom is above rubies." - Job 28:18

DAN TEDDER

Old man Dan Tedder and his wife, Jane, came to Rials Creek mill sometime in the early fall of about the year 1827. They came from the east and brought all they possessed on a slide drawn by an old gray horse. Tedder wore a coonskin cap and homemade clothes, all badly worn. He wore a full beard, already about half gray. His wife, Jane, was a frail looking woman and was dressed in black cloth which appeared to be some kind of lindsey, also home woven. She wore a black bonnet held in shape by splints as was the custom in those days.

Tedder asked Rials if he knew of any vacant house he could get, as he wanted to settle down for a short time. Rials told of an old tumbled-down log shack about half a mile from the mill, that was vacant, that he might take as the man who settled there and, built the house had died and his family moved away. The old house had a mud chimney and a dirt floor, and was utterly unfit for habitation; but Tedder moved into it and remained for a year or more. He did add a puncheon floor and a door shutter, but that was about all.

He was a trapper and spent most of his time on the creeks in that vicinity. Occasionally he came to the mill and traded beaver and otter hides for meal and flour. He made ox yokes and bows and some times worked at Rials' blacksmith shop. If he had any thing heavy to carry he always came with his slide. He managed to keep the old horse in good condition, and although he had no kind of enclosure it never strayed far from his shanty. Neither Tedder nor his wife ever said anything about where they intended to go, and did not seem to want to make any acquaintances. Whether they knew this or not, this soon led to the suspicion that they might be implicated in some crime; or that they had been in trouble, of some kind. However, as new settlers were constantly moving into the country, this was soon forgotten as people had other things to think about.

As in all newly settled parts of the country, there were always a number of lawless characters among the settlers, and this resulted in a lot of stealing and other depredations. One day somebody came to the mill and reported that nearly all of his meat and lard had been stolen and that he would pay a reward for its recovery, and the arrest of the guilty party. Tedder happened to hear what had been said and he told the man that his wife, Jane, was a mind reader and that she might assist him.

Anxious to recover his meat and lard, he went with Tedder to see Jane. After he had told as much as he knew about the theft, Jane went into the house and sat down by the fire. Then with a stick she began making some marks in the sand on the hearth, stopping now and then, as if she was working out a problem of some kind. In about half an hour she came out and told the man to go east until he crossed the creek and then turn north and after he had gone about a mile to turn west down a new road till he came to a house. That he would find his meat and lard at the house, and would find some of the meat in the pot being cooked for dinner.

The man asked Tedder to go with him, but he refused, as he said it would break his wife's power as a mind reader and fortuneteller. The man then left and went by the mill and got another man to go with him and followed the directions given by the old woman. He had no faith in what she had told him, but thought no harm could come of it anyway. They followed the road north after crossing the creek and after reaching the new road turned west about half a mile to a small log house, recently built. When they walked up to the house a young woman and two small children came to the door and the woman at once said, "I know what you are after. I told Tom not to do that and now we are ruined." They pitied the poor woman and told her they would not bother Tom if she would give up the meat and lard.

She was glad to agree to that, but said she was cooking some of the meat and would pay for that. They told her that was all right and they would charge her nothing for what she was cooking, to take it and feed it to the children. They left her a considerable portion of the meat and promised her that Tom would not be bothered if he would reform and make a good citizen. She promised to see that Tom did that, but he didn't wait on promises, for he moved the next day.

The news at once went out that Tedder's wife was a fortuneteller and her advice was soon sought by a number of people, who secretly went to her to have fortunes told and to locate stolen articles. One matter that came up a few months later led to strange results.

CATCHINGS AND TEDDER

Sometime in the year 1827, William Catchings, who lived a few miles east of Pearl River bought a pair of young mules for driving as he considered them safer than horses. He had harness for the mules made and fitted by a saddler at Westville. The outfit attracted a good deal of attention as it was the first of its kind in the county. Catchings had a trusted slave who looked after the mules and did the driving, and as there was much horse stealing going on at the time, the slave was instructed to be very sure that the mules were locked in their stalls at night.

Early one morning in January of 1828, the slave came in great haste to Catchings and reported that the locks had been broken and the mules, together with the harness, were gone. Catchings asked if the carriage had been taken, but the slave had not been to the carriage house. Catchings went at once to see about the carriage, and found, to his surprise, that it had not been molested. The next thing he and his brother did was to try to track the mules. That was not a difficult matter for short distance on the road leading west, but before reaching the river, it appeared they had left the road entirely, going in a northerly direction through the woods.

The greater part of the day was spent in trying to get a further trace of them, and they had almost given up hope of getting any information about them, until about four o'clock in the afternoon, when they met a man who told them that a man living in Westville had lost a two-horse wagon, it having been stolen the night before. It was almost night when they reached Westville and it was getting cold. By the time they got in touch with the man who had lost the wagon, it was quite dark, but the night was fair and the moon was rising. It was so cold that the owner of the wagon advised waiting until morning, as they had no idea about what direction the wagon had been taken.

Catchings and his brother were determined to go on if possible, and seeing a light in a saloon, Walked over there and while talking about the theft learned from a man who had just come in, that a wagon drawn by two mules had been seen late the night before near Rials' mill, but that it had not passed the mill. He supposed it was some new settler moving into the neighborhood, but was not sure about it.

Catchings had never been to the Rials' mill and did not know the way, but the man said he had come for some whiskey for a sick man and was going back and if they wanted to go any further that night he would show them the way to the mill. Catchings and his brother at once left with the man and reached the mill in about an hour. At the mill they were introduced to Rials. They were nearly frozen, but soon warmed up. Rials had their horses carried to the stables and fed and then gave them supper. After Rials heard what they had to say about the stealing of the mules and wagon, and about the wagon being seen by the man who came with them, he recalled that someone else had spoken of seeing a mule wagon the night before, but had thought no more of it.

Rials then got his gun and told Leroy to get his gun and they would walk over to see if "Old Lady Tedder" could tell them anything. They found Tedder and his wife sitting by the fire, and after relating all the circumstances waited to hear what the old lady would have to say. She sat for a long time as if in a deep study, then reached out her hand and asked Rials if he had any "tobacco".

He handed her a twist and she filled her pipe, then raked it through some live coals and started smoking. After she had smoked a few pipes full, she said that the night before, only a short time before daylight, she heard a wagon pass the house, but knew it was driven off in the woods, as she saw that day that the tracks left the road. She had not tried to find it, but she heard a mule bray down in the woods that afternoon.

Tedder said he would not go down with them, but suggested that they go in the direction indicated and see if they would locate anything. They warmed themselves as best they could and went quietly down through the woods for about a quarter of a mile, where they found a wagon, but no mules or harness. They had almost decided to turn back when they heard an animal down in the thicket. After going very carefully around the thicket, they found the mules and by the light of the moon Catchings identified them as his mules.

Rials suggested that as he had recovered the mules, he had better take them to his house where they could be fed and cared for, as the night was terribly cold. Catchings thanked him but said he was going to catch the thief if possible. They went back to Tedder's house and the old lady said she knew the thief would come sometime before daylight to get them, so if they would watch that long, she was sure they would catch him. It was so cold they decided to watch in shifts, two at a time, Catchings and Leroy took the first watch.

Rials was quite sure that the thief would come early in the night for the mules and advised Catchings to take no chances; that if he was the man he suspected, he was a very dangerous fellow. Catchings and Leroy took their stand by a large pine tree and had not waited long before they heard a noise, as if someone was walking through the thicket; then they next heard the mules making what appeared to be an attempt to get away. They kept their guns ready to shoot and waited for the man they expected to appear. But to their surprise, a large bear came out of the thicket and went off through the pines. After that the woods were very quiet for an hour or more. Then they noticed several wolves prowling around the wagon, but the wolves left in a few minutes, going in the direction of a wolf pack that came chasing a deer over the hilltop. Nothing more was heard of them except their snarling and fighting after they had run down the deer.

A few hours later another bear, much larger than the first, came and walked around the wagon, and then starting towards the thicket, came so close to them that Leroy poked him in the side with his gun. The bear evidently had not seen them, for he at once gave a loud "woof" and went scampering away. Several deer came over the hill during the night, so that with the noise made by the various animals of the forest, they were kept on the lookout all the time, expecting every succeeding noise to be that of the man coming for the mules.

About midnight Rials and Catchings' brother came to relieve them and they went to the fire, drank coffee, took a smoke and after getting warm returned. As it was past midnight they were quite sure that the thief would certainly come in the next few hours. After waiting until it was nearing the break of day, Catchings and his brother decided to go and get a cup of coffee and warm a little, as they were almost frozen. They got to Tedder's house and were drinking coffee when they heard two gun shots in the direction of the mules. They ran back as fast as possible not knowing what had happened. When they got there they found Rials and Leroy, re-loading their guns. They stated that almost before they were aware of anybody's presence a man came around the thicket in thirty steps of them, that he was not facing them, but that they recognized him and ordered him to halt and throw up his hands; that instead of doing so, he dashed into the thicket and then they heard him running on the other side. They felt sure they had hit him but the only trace they could find was the broken bowl of his stone pipe, still warm. They said the man was a young millwright who had recently come into the neighborhood and that he boarded with a man named Brown. They further stated that his name was Pelham and that he claimed to be a native of Virginia.

Rials said he was greatly surprised, as Pelham had done some work for him and always acted as a gentleman. He said Pelham was a man of some education and of very affluent address. There was nothing that could be done, so they took the mules and wagon and went by Tedder's house to thank him. While talking to Tedder, the old lady Jane stated that they suspected the wrong man, as she ran out of the house when the shots were fired and saw a man running through the woods west of her house and going north. She said she did not know his name, but had seen him before and would know him if she saw him again. Rials was not entirely satisfied that Pelham was the guilty man, as he also said he caught a glimpse just after he had shot at Pelham. Catching blamed himself, for leaving when he did and felt sure that they would have got their man if he had remained with Rials and Leroy.

After taking breakfast with Rials, Catchings and his brother left for Westville, where they made an affidavit against Pelham and had a warrant for his arrest turned over to the Sheriff, Jacob Carr. They told Carr where Pelham boarded and he went at once to arrest Pelham. But when they reached Brown's place, he was told that Pelham left early that morning to go to Westville for a letter from his mother. Pelham had recently sold his horse, so he borrowed Brown's saddle horse to ride. He stated that he would be back in a few hours, but had not returned. The Browns were greatly disturbed about the charge against Pelham and felt that he was not guilty; but there was nothing they could do, so they said but little. Just before Pelham left he told her that some men tried to murder him that morning while he was hunting turkeys and that he felt uneasy, as he supposed they intended to

rob him. He told her he had a little money and would like to leave that with her until he returned. He then handed her two hundred dollars in gold and rode away. Nothing was said to Carr about that. She thought it best to wait.

Note: Jacob Carr was Sheriff - 1828-1829

After Sheriff Carr's interview with Brown and his wife, he was convinced that Pelham was guilty of stealing the mules from Catchings and at once returned to Westville, where he found that Pelham had been there early that morning, had been to the post office where he paid the postage on a letter and then left. Nobody had noticed him on the street and nobody knew when he left town, or what direction he took. The weather was cold, the ground frozen, and it was impossible to get any trace of him.

The news soon went out that Pelham was a horse thief, and doubtless a member of John A. Murrell's gang. Nobody had a good word for Pelham, except old lady Tedder, who insisted that the stealing was done by another man, and advised her neighbors to keep watch on their horses and mules.

She never called any names, but in the summer of 1827, it was reported that two men had moved into an old house further down the creek, that had been abandoned by an early settler and that they employed a half breed Indian boy to do their cooking and attend to their stock. They had an old wagon, badly worn, but covered with a very durable wagon cover. They had two small horses, which they used for pulling the wagon, and had one fine saddle horse. They claimed to be fur traders and trappers, but never did any trapping. They gave good prices for furs and it was soon noted that they gave higher prices than could be obtained at any other place in the county. So they built up a thriving business. They built another house near the first one, and it seemed that one of them occupied that house and as furs were kept in both houses, it was thought they occupied different houses for protection. Through the fall and winter one of them made long trips with the wagon, carrying furs to some place for sale. They were never seen together and the one who drove the wagon was always dressed in coarse, shabby looking clothes, was very profane in conversation and generally appeared to be under the influence of liquor. The other man was really the fur trader and did all the buying. He was always neatly dressed and very refined and courteous in his manners. He frequently rode over to Westville and would take a part in poker games that were generally going on when he was there. He attended dances and other social gatherings in the neighborhood, and was quite a favorite with the younger people. Near their cabins was an Indian encampment, and when they were away from home, the Indian boy spent his time at the encampment.

A few miles south of the Rials Creek mill, a number of slave owners had settled. They tried to protect their slaves from highwaymen and slave runners, but in spite of all their precaution, a considerable number of slaves had been stolen during the fall and winter of 1827 and 1828. Several who had lost slaves having heard that the old lady Tedder was a fortune teller, went to see her about the matter and she promised to help them. It so happened, however, that the fur trader had been consulting the old lady, also, and as he furnished her with tobacco and coffee, as well as some money, she felt under obligation to him.

A short time after the slave owners consulted her, another slave was stolen, and she discovered that the fur traders were suspicioned and that a raid was going to be made on them the next day. No time was to be lost, so she sent Tedder at once to advise the traders of what was going to be done. Sure enough about daylight the next day, the raid was made. But when they reached the traders' cabins they found no one, they had left early in the night. The wagon was there but the horses were also gone. They broke into the cabins and found the old clothes that the wagon driver always wore, and a wig which he had evidently been wearing. They went to the Indian encampment to inquire about the men. After the discussion, it was surmised that the stolen slaves were put in the wagon and covered by the furs and that the driver disguised himself when he drove the wagon.

A long hunt was made but they were never found, and it was thought that they were connected with the Murrell's gang.

Besides fortune telling, the old lady Tedder soon acquired the reputation of being able to cure a great many diseases, as she frequently advised sick people how to use certain kind of remedies. At that time there were no physicians in the county, except a few who had learned what little they knew from experience. Not one of them had ever attended a medical school of any kind. Many of them could scarcely read, but they had considerable skill in treating diseases and were far more successful than would, have been thought possible. The old lady Tedder doubtless, like most of the others, used Indian remedies. She gathered herbs and various kinds of bark and roots from which she made her medicines, and she knew the effects they would have on the human system. She must also have used her knowledge of human nature to a great extent; for she believed the state of mind had much to do with curing disease. She was most frequently called upon by the women of the neighborhood, some to have their fortunes told, and some to be cured when sick. Young women came to find out who they would marry and when. Married women often came to find out what their husbands were doing; for it was a new country and troubles were of many kinds.

The first case that the old lady Tedder had that attracted much attention was that of a white woman whose left arm became greatly enlarged and caused extremely severe pain. She had been to several doctors and obtained no relief, so she decided to see "Old Miss Tedder," as everybody called her. She stated to the old lady that she knew her arm was full of worms for she could feel them crawling. She said that the other doctors had laughed at her when she told them about the worms, but she knew better. After the old lady examined her arm, she told the woman that she was correct, that her arm was full of worms, but that she would soon get them out. She made a poultice and placed on her arm and told her to keep it there and return the next day. Sure enough, the next day the woman returned with the poultice still on her arm. After removing the poultice the old lady began rubbing the arm, first gently, and then very hard, and as she rubbed it was soon noticed that a large number of white worms began to fall to the floor. The old lady kept rubbing until the arm was reduced to its normal size, and the worms were crawling all over the floor. When the old lady stopped, the woman said the pain was gone and she felt all right again. Several persons were present but none of them knew where the worms came from and none of them had ever seen worms of that kind before. The old lady would have no pay for her services, but people frequently gave her food, tobacco and clothing, which she never refused.

Unfortunately for the Tedders there was much lawlessness in the county at that time, and many law-breakers, especially thieves were afraid the old lady knew more than she did know and would tell on them. One night a fellow, who had been suspicioned with stealing Catchings' mules, went to their house and threatened to kill them if they ever told anything on him. And a few nights later someone shot into Tedder's house from ambush. The next day they rented a little house down near the mill and moved there. But it was not long before Tedder was shot from ambush while fishing. Fortunately he received only a slight wound in the arm and soon recovered. A few days later Tedder and his wife left in a freight wagon going to Mobile.

The freight wagon in which the Tedders left for Mobile had only gone about a mile when the old lady suddenly told the driver to stop and turn back, as something terrible was going to happen. On account of her reputation he felt uneasy, but told her that nothing would happen and that they would join the other wagons going to Mobile. She then told him to let her and Tedder out and they would go back. They had started with a small bundle of clothing and said to Rials that they would probably be gone a month or more. He was surprised when he saw them coming back, but after the old lady gave her reasons he asked no more questions, and they went back to their little shanty.

In less than an hour a low muttering thunder was heard in the southwest and not long after that, they heard the roar of a great storm. Hundreds of trees were blown down and the roads were blocked for miles. A number of people were killed, including the driver of the freight wagon. Several other people were killed in the neighborhood and a number of houses were blown away. After everything was normal again, the neighbors began to talk about the prediction the old lady had made and wondered what was the source of her power. One old preacher hinted around in the community that she was a witch. But whether witch or not, the people kept coming to her for advice and treatment.

Among them was JAMES BOGGAN, who owned more than 20 slaves and was the largest slaveholder in the county. Some time in 1827, BOGGAN had bought several slaves in New Orleans. One of them was a young woman who had appeared to be in perfect health and continued so until the spring of 1828, when she began to complain of having frogs in her stomach. She also refused to eat and was rapidly losing weight and strength. BOGGAN had paid \$800 for her and wanted her well. He had taken her to all the doctors in reach and all had said that nothing could be done for her as medicine would do her no good. After the storm BOGGAN took her to see the old lady Tedder.

After the old lady examined the woman, she told BOGGAN that there was no hope of getting her well unless she could be made to believe the frogs had gotten out of her, that it was simply a trace of Africa, coming down through many generations that medicine would do her no good and if she was cured it would have to be by working on the imagination. BOGGAN told the old lady to go to work and see what could be done. She told BOGGAN to leave her with the Indians at the mill and come back two days later and they would give her a treatment.

After BOGGAN left, the old lady had the woman put on a cot and examined her again, and told her that she knew how to get the frogs out of her, and that she would soon be well again. She said that the frogs required a great deal of water and that she would have to drink a great deal of it before she could get rid of them. She also gave the woman some kind of herb tea to bring back her appetite, but gave her nothing to eat.

On the second day BOGGAN returned and the old lady told him they were ready to give her the treatment. She had the cot set out under a tree and then put a pail of clean water on the ground by the side of the cot, so that the woman could see it. After that she had a cover put over the pail and told the woman that they were ready to drown the frogs, and that she must drink a lot of water. The old lady had put something in the water to make her very sick "at the stomach and she did not want to drink much of it but BOGGAN stood by and made her drink a large quantity.

In a few minutes she was vomiting most violently, the contents of her stomach falling into the pail, from which the contents had been removed. A large number of people were standing around and watching to see what would happen, and all of a sudden a little boy said, "there goes a frog" and then another said, "I see three more in the pail," and then frogs began to hop out of the pail until fully a dozen had hopped out. By that time she quit vomiting and was watching the frogs, as they got up on the rim of the pail. Finally all were out except three fat toads that could not get out.

Everybody was amazed except Rials and BOGGAN. They seemed to know something they would not tell. In a few hours the slave woman said she felt all right and wanted something to eat. The old lady Tedder said she would keep the woman a day or two to see if the frogs came back. In a few days BOGGAN returned and found that the woman had gotten well.

Jack Taply first came to Simpson County about 1825. For a year or more he worked at a tan yard owned by John Freeman. This tan yard was on a little creek just west of Westville, now known as Tan Yard Creek. He claimed to be from North Carolina and was related to Gideon Rials by marriage, as he was a second cousin to Rials' wife. After working at Westville for a year or more, he was employed by a man named Walker to work at a tan yard near the Rials Creek water mill. He also made shoes when not working at the tan yard. At odd times he set out traps for beavers and otters on creek around the mill. He was not married, so he secured board with Rials.

About all he possessed was a gun., which he prized very highly., as he claimed to be a great hunter. He took great delight in telling of his hunting experiences back in North Carolina, and the number of bears, panthers and wolves that he claimed to have killed was remarkable. He was very anxious, as he stated, to kill a Mississippi bear, as he wanted its hide for a rug to sleep on in the summer time. He boasted so much of his hunting adventures that most people paid no attention to him. Many doubted that he had ever killed a bear and the Indians called him " Heep big blow."

However he did catch a few beavers and was skillful in dressing their hides. He also hunted a good deal, but never killed any thing except a few turkeys and a wolf or two, but he often told of shooting a panther, or a bear that got away from him; -it always being too dark to follow it or the dogs refused to take the trail. As he nearly always hunted by himself, there was nobody to verify anything he said: so his accounts of hunting dangerous animals went like the tales told by fishermen about the big fish that got away.

One day, sometime in the spring of the year, he surprised everybody at the mill by coming to the mill in great haste and asking for Walker's gun. He stated that he had found a bear in a huckleberry thicket not far south of the Rials Creek springs, and that his gun had failed to shoot when he tried to kill it. Walker first refused to let him have the gun., as he did not believe there was a bear nearby. He told Taply that it was probably some other animal, or perhaps a calf, or even a cow. But Taply at once asked Walker if he meant to insult him and stated that he knew a bear when he saw one, and that after killing hundreds of bears back in North Carolina, he certainly should know a bear from a cow, and that he could whip the man who said he didn't.

With that, Walker let him have the gun, but suggested that someone go along with him and take another gun, as one shot might not kill it. Taply would not hear of that; so Walker let him go alone. Walker then went down to the mill and told Rials about what Taply had said, and that he was afraid he would kill a cow or yearling .as he did not think there were any bears that near by. Rials said it must be something else, and they started to go over the hill and see about the matter for themselves. But about the time they started, they heard a gun shot over in the direction Taply had gone. Then the next thing they heard was Taply calling for some body to bring another gun, and to come as fast as possible.

Not knowing what could have happened, they took guns and went as fast as possible to where Taply was standing. As they came up he beckoned them to be as silent as possible, as he did not know whether the bear was dead or not. When they got to him he pointed to a large brownish colored animal lying in the bushes, and they saw that it appeared to be dead. From where they stood it was about thirty feet to where the animal lay, but as it did not move, they did not shoot any more, but walked on to where they could see what it was. When they got there, they saw that he had killed old lady Tedder's "jenny."

Taply never got over that So much fun was made of his bear killing that he left the county in a short time. Rials and Walker paid old lady Tedder for the "jenny," and she bought another later in the year.

One afternoon in the early spring of 1830, two men came to the Rials Creek mill to see Mr. Rials. They stated that they were from Georgia and were looking for a good location for a mill. They said they heard that his mill

was for sale and wanted to know his price. It happened that Mr. Rials was not at home that afternoon, but was expected to be home that night. The men remained at the mill nearly all afternoon, talking to a number of people; one of them being Dan Tedder. From him they learned that his wife was a fortuneteller and they appeared to be very much interested in that.

Mrs. Rials had told them that she had no room for them that night, but that a man named Smith who lived up on the hill east of the mill could probably take care of them and they could see Mr. Rials in the morning. About sundown they left the mill and went to Smith's place and secured lodging for the night. They rode fine horses, had good saddles and saddlebags and were men of good manners. Strangers at that time were so common that very little notice were given them.

A little after dark on that same night, four young men went to Dan Tedder's house to get his wife to tell their fortunes. She was very successful in her fortune telling, as she knew almost everybody in the neighborhood, either personally or by reputation; knew their likes and dislikes, of their fights and feuds, and more of their past than many of them would have admitted. She was no doubt a good judge of human nature, and was often consulted about anything that had been stolen or lost. Both women and men went to her to have their fortunes told, but as a rule they went alone.

That night when she started to tell the fortune of the first one of the young men, she had Dan build a fire outside where they could keep warm. She had hardly begun when she heard an owl booting a short distance down the road. She immediately ran out and said to the men that a man had been killed down the road where the owl was hooting, and to hurry down there at once. They first thought she was trying to joke them, but as she said she would go herself, all four hurried down the road, all feeling like it was a foolish trip. But after they had gone about three hundred yards, they found a man lying in the road, apparently dead. They at once picked him up and carried him to Tedder's house. When taken to the light it was found that he had been hit a terrible blow on the head and that he had been stabbed in a number of places. His clothing was very bloody and he was bleeding rapidly. The old lady applied some of her Indian remedies and then had him placed on a ground slide and carried to Mr. Rials' house.

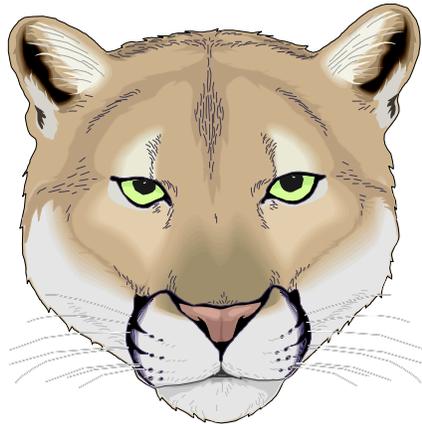
The man was an Irish peddler who had passed the mill about dark, and was well known in the neighborhood. The old lady went with them, and when they reached Rials' house, he had just returned home, and she insisted that he send a man to see Sheriff Farrington at Westville and urge him to come immediately. Rials sent a man at once and told him to lose no time.

The old lady went home and in a few minutes after she reached her house two men came and stated that they wanted her to tell their fortunes without delay as they were traveling through the country and wanted to reach Williamsburg that night, but had heard of her great success in fortune telling and wanted theirs told. She said they would have to wait a few minutes as she had to send her husband to the mill for some coffee he had forgot. She called Dan, told him to go get the coffee, and whispered to him to tell Mr. Rials that the men who killed the peddler were at her house, and to come with plenty of men to take them.

She was pretty slow with the fortune telling and just as she started with the second man, Mr. Rials and about a dozen men arrived. The men were taken on such a surprise they could offer no resistance, although well armed. They had the peddler's watch and had robbed him of more than a hundred dollars in gold. They had left his "pack" in the woods probably intending to get it as they left. The sheriff took them to Westville and placed them in jail that night, but before they could be tried they escaped and were never heard of again.

The peddler did not die but it was several weeks before he could travel.

Note: Daniel L. Farrington was Sheriff 1826 and again 1830



THREE BOYS AND A PANTHER

Panther hunting was a very dangerous sport and on account of the uncertainty of getting a good shot with the old flint and steel rifles then in use, few men cared to take the risk of hunting them. Nobody ever thought of them being hunted by children, and nobody would have allowed a child to hunt them under any circumstances. But about 1830 a panther was killed by some small boys somewhere between the Rials Creek mill and the big duck pond.

It came about in this way. A man named Walker had located just east of the mill and built a small shop. He was a blacksmith and also repaired guns and clocks. Usually there were several guns in the shop for repair. So his two boys, Tommy and Jack became very good gunsmiths themselves and also learned to shoot quite well. They were ten or twelve years old and spent a great deal of time with Tonie, the Indian boy. They often hunted and fished together, and when hunting the Walker boys would take guns from the shop and Tonie would take Joe's gun. Joe was Tonie's father and was very proud of Tonie's marksmanship.

One day in the fall when huckleberries begin to get ripe, Mrs. Walker told Tommie and Jack to go over towards the duck pond and pick some berries for dinner. They got some little baskets and took their guns and went over to Joe's house for Tonie. He did not care for berries but was glad to go, as he would have a chance to hunt and maybe kill a turkey. They all said they would like to have turkey for dinner, so agreed to keep as quiet as possible. About a mile from the mill, they found a large patch of berry bushes and soon became very busy picking berries, but still kept very quiet and made as little noise as possible. The leaves were damp and they were barefooted, so they made scarcely any noise in walking.

While they were picking berries they heard an animal coming at full speed over the hill. They got a glimpse of it as it ran into the berry bushes not far from where they stood, and then saw that it was followed by another animal, which they took to be a wolf. Tommie stepped up on a log and saw that the first animal was a calf that belonged to his father, and that the other animal was but a short distance behind it. Before he had time to do anything further, he heard the pitiful cry of the little calf as the other animal bore it down. There was another moan or two and all was still.

The Walker boys at once said they would kill the wolf, there and then. Tonie told them to be very quiet and careful if they wished to kill it and said he would help them. They took their guns and began to crawl slowly through the thicket to a place where they could see how to shoot. They finally reached a large log and moved along by the side of it to where a large limb lay a little above the main log and furnished an opening through which they could see the calf and the wolf. At first there was no chance to shoot as some small bushes

obstructed their view but a few moments later the animal began dragging the calf away, and so finally came into the open. Whispering together, they decided to all shoot at once. When they did, one gun failed to shoot, but the other shots were good.

When the animal was shot, it gave a great leap into the air and uttered a terrible noise, as it attempted to get away. It looked like it was trying to get to them and they moved further down the log, where the other gun was tried again, and so a third shot was given it. After a few snarls and a lot of thrashing among the bushes, it lay still. Before coming from behind the log, they reloaded their guns and then to be sure it was dead, shot it one more time in the head. They then saw that it was not a wolf, but a panther.

They then decided to go and get old lady Tedder's jenny and slide and carry it home. They agreed to say nothing until they got home with it. They told old lady Tedder that they wanted the donkey and slide to bring a little calf that was hurt. She made no objection, and about ten o'clock in the morning they came to Walker's house near the mill with the panther and the calf loaded on the slide.

Everybody in the neighborhood came to see the panther and hear their account of the killing. They were the heroes of the occasion, and Mr. Rials gave all three of the boys new caps.

HOW THE SUN CAME UP

For many years after "the old man" Dan Tedder and his wife located on Rials Creek, he was a familiar figure around the mill. Almost every Saturday he would come to the mill in the early morning, driving his little "jenny" hitched to a ground slide. Sometimes he brought a little corn to be ground but more often came to buy a little meal or rice. He rarely had any money, but would bring the pelts of such small animals as he could trap, or trade for. Occasionally he brought a beaver hide. He was a small man, wore a long beard and homemade clothes. He never wore shoes and paid no attention to burs or briars. He like a dram and if he had any money would spend it for whiskey. He was always more or less a joke for the youngsters and it was great fun to play pranks on him.

At that time there was a foot walk in front of the mill house that extended from one side to the other over the water of the pond. It was used by persons walking along the top of the dam. It had no banisters and was narrow but safe enough if a person was sober. Often they were not and many a "drunk" fell into the pond. Very often young men and even older men would get Dan about half drunk and get him to walk the planks, which formed the footwalk. Sometimes he fell off anyway, but if he failed to fall off, some husky fellows would dash across and accidentally, of course, knock Dan off into the pond. He would come out "cussing," just as they wanted him to do, and they would have great fun trying to get out of his way. He never caught anybody and was always ready to accept apologies for their carelessness, especially if another dram was offered.

Strange to say Dan was never bothered with a cold., and was never known to be sick. He was never known to do any steady work either. He liked fishing but never hunted and in fact was afraid of a gun and never used one. He cultivated a small patch of ground, probably about half an acre. He had plenty of wood convenient and always had good fires in the winter and when people came in, as they often did on winter nights, he enjoyed telling marvelous tales. One night in the winter of 1831 he quite unexpectedly turned the joke on the young fellows who always plagued him around the mill.

It so happened that on that night Free Lewis and Tonie and several other large boys of the neighborhood had been out hunting and as they came by Dan's house, saw the fire in his house and decided to stop and warm themselves. Dan gave them a hearty welcome, and among the weighty matters of discussion that came up, was how the sun got back east every morning. Dan told them it was a very simple thing. He said that after the sun

went down on the other side of Pearl River, a man took it and put it on a ground slide and hauled it back east clear "beyant" Leaf River and turned it loose about daylight.

He said the man nearly always came that way and that he had seen him passing with it many a time. He said the man drove a large black horse and kept the sun covered with a bearskin. He said he often lifted up the bearskin and looked at it. He told the boys that the man usually passed the mill about two o'clock in the morning and if they would go up on the hill east of the mill and wait until about that time they could see it for themselves. He talked so earnestly and was so positive in his statements that they decided to try it. So a few nights later they went to the top of the hill east of the mill and sat down on a log to wait for the man to come along with the sun. About midnight it grew cold and they built a fire.

As it had grown late and the boys were still out, Mrs. Rials grew uneasy and told Mr. Rials about their being out so late and the weather was getting so cold. He felt a little uneasy himself, and then seeing the light over the hill went to see if the boys were there. Sure enough, he found them, but could get no definite reason for their being there. The next day, however, Joe, the Indian, told him what their mission was.

It was too good a joke to keep, and it was a long time before the boys heard the last of it. The worst thing about it was that they swallowed Dan's "hook, bait and line."

Note: Dram: a small drink of alcoholic liquor or 1/8th ounce.

THE MYSTERIOUS RETURN

Along about 1830, while Daniel L. Farrington was sheriff, he had a very fine horse stolen. He did not think the horse had been stolen by regular horse thieves as it had been foundered, and could walk with difficulty. He had turned the horse into a small pasture down on the creek below Westville and it had been taken just before a big rain so there was no chance to track it. He was sure that if it had broken out of the pasture, it would have come to his barn. He made inquiry of a great many people but could secure no trace of the horse. It was a beautiful horse and he was anxious to recover it.

He waited until the next meeting of the Board of Police and then, after inquiring of all the members in regard to the horse, stated that he was going to Rials Creek Mill to secure the assistance of "Old Miss Tedder." Later in the day he returned and gave out the news at the courthouse that he had consulted her, and thought he had the horse located, and thought he had located some other things too.

He made no further inquiry about the stolen horse and nobody knew anything about what the Old Lady Tedder had told him nor anyone ever knew, but a few nights later the horse came home and was found at Farrington's barn the next morning. Farrington was highly pleased with the results of his visit to the Old Lady Tedder, but far more delighted when, a few days later, a boy came to his house one morning about sun-up and handed him his long lost gold watch and chain and said that he had found it in the road about a mile from Westville.

The watch had been stolen about a year before, but Farrington was a very cautious man and said nothing about that. He thanked the boy and gave him ten dollars for his kindness. It was a Swiss watch and had cost Farrington more than one hundred dollars. Later he found an overcoat that had been missing several months, hanging on the door knob at his front door one morning when he started to his office. It came at a good time as the morning was cold.

A few days later a man came to the courthouse leading a sheep. He called Mr. Farrington and told him that he had found one of his sheep in his field and had brought it back. Farrington thanked him and called to a boy to

come and take the sheep to his lot. As he started back into the office, the man said to him, "Did Old Miss Tedder tell you I stole your sheep?" Farrington said " No., she didn't mention your name." The man then said, "She better-not fur I shore didn't steal it."

The State Song is "Go Mississippi"

JAMES M. DAMPEER and DANIEL L. FARRINGTON

One of the most notable of the early settlers of Simpson County was James M. Dampeer. He was a native of one of the eastern states and came to Simpson County about 1830 and located on Silver Creek about where the town of Shivers is situated. During the next few years he entered a large tract of land from the Government of the United States and opened up a large farm. He was a successful farmer and businessman and was also very popular throughout the county. In 1833 Alexander McCaskill was elected sheriff of the county, but in the latter part of 1834, he resigned and a special election was held on the 2nd day of January, 1835 to elect a successor to McCaskill. Dampeer had never been in politics and had no desire to become a candidate, but a large number of people in the county were very anxious to defeat Daniel L. Farrington who had announced as a candidate for sheriff.

Farrington had held a number of offices in the county and had a large following. He also had a large number of political enemies. Those opposing Farrington's election knew that it would take a strong man to defeat him. After many conferences it was decided to persuade Dampeer to become a candidate. He considered the matter for some time and finally decided to run. It was a hard fought election, but as the time drew near it was seen that the chances were very much against Farrington, so a great many who would otherwise have voted for Farrington, voted for Dampeer. He was elected by a vote of 191 to 68 for Farrington. At the regular election held November 9th, 1835, Dampeer was re-elected without opposition. Dampeer soon found that his farming interests were being neglected and that he was losing money by holding the office of sheriff, so in the summer of the year 183 he resigned and John Powell was elected to succeed him. For the next ten years Dampeer gave his entire attention to his farm and became one of the wealthiest men of the county. In 1847 his friends urged him to become, a candidate for Representative. He had no desire to become a candidate but finally decided to enter the race. He was opposed by L. D. Thomas, but defeated Thomas by a vote of 420 to only 6 for Thomas. In 1849 he was re-elected without opposition. Having served two terms as Representative, he decided not to be a candidate again, but in order to defeat Alen Wilkinson, his friends insisted that he offer for the place once more. Wilkinson made a hard fight, but Dampeer was in his prime and after he got started, made the most complete canvass of the county that he had ever made. Wilkinson was a man of striking personality, but so was Dampeer. Wilkinson was probably a better public speaker, but Dampeer knew how to take care of himself in joint debate. Dampeer also had a wider acquaintance in the county. The election was held on the 6th day of November 1851 and resulted in a vote of 322 for Dampeer and 144 for Wilkinson. After the close of his third term as Representative he devoted his entire time to his farming interests and no amount of persuasion could ever induce him to become a candidate for office again.

In labors of love, every day is payday. Gaines Brewster

Brandon Hope – Hiding Behind a Skirt

Along about 1830 while Daniel L. Farrington was sheriff of Simpson County an old lady drove into Westville in a small covered wagon drawn by two horses. When she stopped she asked some one the name of the village and when told it was Westville, she stated that it was the place she was looking for. She then got out and engaged a room at one of the little hotels. The next day she said she wanted to rent a house and succeeded in getting a small house in the eastern part of town. She also secured at the same place a barn for the horses.

A few days later she brought two slaves, a man and a woman. The slaves did all the work about the place and planted a garden and also a few acres of land adjoining her place, which she rented. She had the appearance of being very feeble and carried a cane, a small sword cane. She wore a very tight fitting skullcap and a large black bonnet, which she wore at all times. The bonnet had strings, which she tied in a bowknot under her chin.' She wore a long black dress with skirts almost reaching the ground.

A few days after getting settled, she went to the Sheriff's office and asked him if he had seen a man by the name of Brandon Hope. She said that Brandon Hope was to meet her there. The sheriff told her that he had seen no such man. She then asked him if anyone else had inquired for Brandon Hope and he told her none had inquired for him. She then asked the sheriff to notify her at once if Hope came to town or if anyone inquired of him, the sheriff promised to do so. She very rarely went to any of the stores and never talked to anyone if she could avoid it.

After she lived in the town a few months, one of her neighbor's little boys fell out of a tree and broke his arm. There was no doctor in Westville or even in the county at that time, except a very illiterate old fellow who claimed to be a doctor and was usually drunk. He was sent for but seemed to be absent.

The little boy was suffering and his parents were much disturbed about him. The old lady went over to her neighbor's house and suggested that as there was no doctor and that with their consent, she would see what could be done about it.

In the meantime, a considerable number of persons including the sheriff had arrived and Sheriff Farrington advised the parents of the boy to let the old lady see what she could do. After that she proceeded at, once and set the bone, splintered the broken part and then bandaged the arm. Everyone noticed that it was very skillfully done. The little boy's arm soon healed and the report went out that the old woman was a doctor. Then somebody said that she was about such a doctor as the old lady Tedder, the fortuneteller, who lived out near Rials Creek Mill.

There was considerable talk about the so-called woman doctor and soon after a carpenter in town fell from a building and broke his leg. The old woman was immediately sent for and she made a wonderful job in setting the bone and splintering and bandaging the broken leg. The man recovered without any set back.

From then on out her reputation spread all over the countryside. The women of the community soon called her in for assistance at childbirth. They said she was simply a wonder.

Pretty soon she was kept busy nearly all the time, although there was a great deal of prejudice against a woman doctor. Some said she was simply a witch like the old lady Tedder. Then suddenly a strange thing happened for word came that old lady Tedder had fallen and broken one of her arms.

Sheriff Farrington, who had a great deal of confidence in the old lady Tedder, carried the woman doctor out to see her. The woman doctor treated the old lady's arm and left it in good condition.

Then sometime later the sheriff went out to Rials Creek Mill and stopped at the home of Old lady Tedder to see how she was getting along. He had carried a bottle of whiskey with him for he knew that the old lady always wanted her morning dram. Then he knew also that a good dram would start her talking.

After she started talking, he asked her what she thought of the woman doctor and she told him that the woman doctor was all right, but that she was not a woman and that he would find it out later. She said she was confident that the woman doctor was a man.

The services of the woman doctor continued to be in great demand, although a few people, including the doctor mentioned, seemed greatly opposed to her work and slandered her in every way possible, so much so that one day Sheriff Farrington told the old doctor that if he didn't shut his mouth and quit telling lies on the woman doctor he was going to beat him, until he would have to have the doctor himself. That had a very quieting effect on the old doctor and some other people and by a strange incident the old doctor was thrown from his horse and had one of his own arms broken.

Much as he hated the woman doctor his wife sent for her. The woman doctor who knew how he had talked about her refused to go, but finally at the request of Sheriff Farrington did go and treated the old doctor's arm, and saved it although it was badly broken. The woman doctor had so many calls that many people thought she was getting rich and some people did pay her very well, but many others didn't even thank her.

About a year after she arrived in Westville, Sheriff Farrington went to her house and told her that a man had come to town claiming to be Brandon Hope. He did not know whether it was true or false, but if she wanted to have him do so, he would walk by her house with the man and see if she could recognize him and that he would see her later. He did so and when later in the day he called at her house again she told him that the man might be named Brandon Hope, but that he was not the man named Brandon Hope that she had come to Westville to see.

The sheriff remembered what old lady Tedder had told him and that put him to thinking again. He had a great deal of confidence in the woman doctor and wanted to protect her. At her request he found that this man was simply looking for the real Brandon Hope and that he was sort of a detective.

The sheriff then told the man that he knew nothing about the man he was inquiring about, but would be glad to assist him if possible. The man then told the sheriff that Brandon Hope was a doctor and a graduate of a medical college. He further stated that in an election row in Virginia, Brandon Hope had killed three very wealthy slave owners and that he had escaped.

He further stated that Hope would certainly plead self-defense but that the family of the three slaveholders had the virtual control of the county. He went on that there was a large reward for the capture of Brandon Hope. After spending a few days in Westville the detective left.

After he left the sheriff told the woman doctor what the man had said, but he got no reply from her. He noticed, however, that she seemed to be getting nervous and usually requested someone to go with her when she was called from home. The sheriff dismissed the matter from his mind but one day when going out east on some business he stopped at the old lady Tedder's house and asked her why she thought the woman doctor was a man. She told him it was by her hands, that she had long slender hands and fingers and that they had an unusually strong grip.

A few months later, another man came to Westville and went to the sheriff's office and told him that he wanted to see him on a very important matter. The man was well dressed, was of fine appearance and had come to town in a carriage drawn by two magnificent white horses. He also had a slave driver. As soon as the sheriff got a chance he told the man he would see him. The man introduced himself as Augustus Hope and told him that he had a brother named Brandon Hope who was a doctor, and that Brandon Hope had promised to come to Westville about two years ago and remain until he came for him.

He further stated that no letter had ever been written to Brandon Hope and none had been received from him. The sheriff told him that he would try to find out if such a man was there and let him know the next day. He went again to see the woman doctor and arranged to pass her home with Augustus Hope. Later he called at her house again and was told that Augustus Hope was her brother and to bring him over. The sheriff did so. The next day Augustus Hope walked over to the courthouse in company with a well-dressed man and introduced him to Sheriff Farrington as Dr. Brandon Hope. Quite a crowd had assembled by that time, all of whom were introduced to the Hope brother.

Augustus Hope then made a little talk and stated that he was a lawyer and that the case against his brother had been dismissed as everybody had finally decided that he had acted in self defense when he killed the slave owners. They remained in town several days and in company with the sheriff went out to see the old lady Tedder. They carried her a very fine shawl and the sheriff took her another bottle of whiskey. She was greatly delighted.

The following day, the woman doctor who continued to be called gave the two slaves he had brought with him to Sheriff Farrington and they immediately set out on their return to Virginia.



The Story of an Old Eagle Tree

About 1823 George Westbrook and his wife, Nancy located at Westville. They had one child a boy named Joe, who was about 10 years old at that time. Westbrook was a shoemaker and opened a little shoe shop on the north side of the street east of the courthouse, and he lived on the south side of the same street.

Westbrook had no education and his wife had very little, but she was a very ambitious woman and very anxious to give Joe a good education. She knew this would require a good deal of money and at once set out to save what she could. She had Westbrook to make a buckskin bag, which could be closed by strong buckskin strings, and every time she obtained a gold coin she put it in this bag. The bag was kept in her trunk and the trunk was always kept locked.

In the course of two or three years she had saved several hundred dollars. One night in the fall of the year when the weather had become cold enough to have a fire in the house, she found when she came from the supper table that the trunk was open. She was frightened and astonished, and ran at once to the trunk to see if the little bag of money was still there, but found that it had been stolen. She called her husband and had him go at once to see the sheriff, Daniel L. Farrington. After they had stated the matter to the sheriff, it was decided that the sheriff would go with him to see the "Old Lady Tedder."

They reached her house about an hour after dark and after giving her a present of a few dollars, they stated the matter to her and asked her advise. She said nothing for a time, but finally said, "He went north and he will go north." They couldn't get her to say any more, so they returned home.

Westbrook, his wife and Joe talked about the matter until late in the night. Joe knew the money was being saved for his education, and he was very anxious about it. The next morning he called his dog and said he was going north to look for the money. His father and mother both told him that it was foolish for him to go looking for it, but he said he was going, so he started north on the Brandon Road.

Just west of the bridge on the creek north of town stood an old cypress tree. It was a large tree and the Indians called it the Eagle Tree. It was hollow for perhaps fifty or sixty feet above the ground and at the foot of the tree was a hole large enough for a small animal to enter, and hogs frequently slept in the old tree. A man could crawl into it easily. Joe thought nothing of the old tree until he reached the bridge, and found that a heavy rain had started. To keep from getting wet he crawled into the old tree with his dog.

It rained a good long time and Joe fell asleep. When he awoke the sun was shining and the rain was over. He got up and stretched himself. When he did his hand touched something that felt like leather or cloth. He decided to see what it was, and reaching up with both hands found that it was a bag of some kind. He pulled it down and laid it on the ground and then began to reach around on the inside of the old tree to see if he could find anything else. He had gone more than half around when he found another bag. He pulled it down also, but could find nothing else.

He then crawled out of the tree with the two bags. He went home as fast as possible. He knew that one of the bags was the one his mother had in her trunk. When he got home he was so tired and excited that he was almost speechless.

Soon after Joe reached home with the two bags his father sent for the Sheriff, and showed him what Joe had found, and asked his advice. Sheriff Farrington first counted the money in the bag that belonged to Mrs. Westbrook and found that it contained \$100.00 more than she had said it contained. Farrington then said that maybe that accounted for the \$100.00 that one of the saloonkeepers of the town had reported losing. He then examined the other bag and found that it appeared to be very old. He then counted the money in it and found that it contained about \$400.00. Much of it was English money together with several Spanish coins. It was his opinion that it had been hanging in the old tree for several years.

He then told Westbrook and his wife to say nothing about the matter and that he would make some investigation. He said among other things that he suspected a preacher who was holding a revival meeting under a bush arbor at the Rials Creek Mill, but that he might be wrong. The preacher he mentioned had been in the county a month or more holding revivals. He was a man about 35 years old, wore a full beard which he parted in the middle, and rode a dilapidated looking old mare. He seemed to take no interest whatever in horses. The preacher did not preach at night, but only at eleven o'clock in the morning. He had a room at the hotel, which he always kept locked even when he was in his room.

The next day Farrington rode out to Rials Creek Mill and served some papers. While there he called on the "Old Lady Tedder." He told her about finding money. He also asked her advice. Farrington perhaps had no real faith in what the old woman told him but he knew how the people regarded her generally and he often used what she said in securing testimony in criminal matters.

Many people thought she could tell a great many things, and that she could locate stolen articles and money and many people were afraid of her.

After Farrington talked with her awhile and drank some coffee with her and gave her a few dollars, he asked her what she thought of the preacher. She studied a long time and then said, "Watch your horses." Farrington had a

very fine horse and he told her that he kept it in a very strong stable and locked the door every night. Then again she said, "Watch your horses."

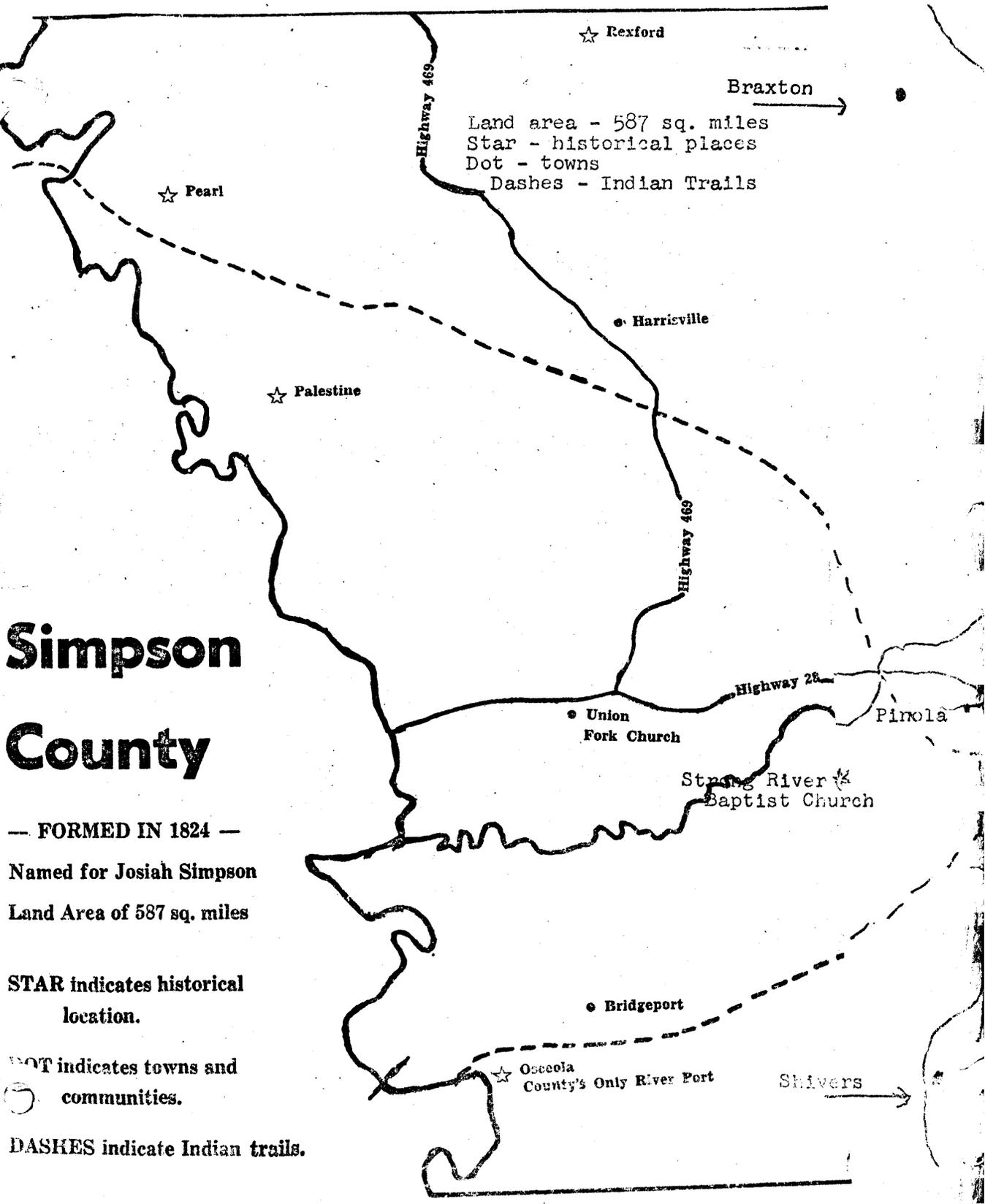
About two hours after dark on the night following the day Sheriff Farrington went to the Rials Creek Mill, it was reported to him that a man had been found dead near the old eagle tree on the creek north of town. The Sheriff at once ordered a slave to saddle his horse and bring it to the Sheriff's office, and at the same time gave the key to the stable door to the slave. A few minutes later the slave returned and said that the horse was not in the stable, but that he found the preacher's old mare had been put into the stable and that the door was locked when he found her.

Farrington went at once to the hotel and inquired if the preacher was there. The hotelkeeper said that he would see, and in a moment or two came back and told the Sheriff that the preacher was not in his room. The hotelkeeper also had a fine horse and the Sheriff told him to see if his horse was in the barn. He soon returned and said that his horse was gone. The Sheriff then appointed three or four deputies and they all went at once to the old eagle tree north of town and carried torches.

When they reached the tree they saw a man lying in front of it on the edge of the road. On examination they found the dead man was the preacher, and that he had been stabbed several times. About that time a trapper came up and told the Sheriff that while he was putting out some traps he heard two or three men quarreling, and that one of them was accused of stealing some money that was hidden in the tree. He said there was much cursing and then a fight started, and that he heard a man say, "You have killed me without a cause," and that right after that he saw two men get on their horses and ride north.

On looking around they found the Sheriff's horse hitched to a bush on the opposite side of the road from the tree. The hotel keeper and a saloon keeper who had also missed a fine horse, together with two of the deputies, said they would follow the men and try to recover their horses, and also arrest the men.

The Sheriff went back to Westville and carried his horse. He there waited for the deputies to report. He heard nothing from them until about ten o'clock in the next morning when they all came back bringing with them the stolen horses and two badly wounded men. The men were placed in jail charged with murder. A doctor was called to treat their wounds. They recovered in about three weeks but a few days after their recovery it was found that they had escaped. No trace of them was ever found, and it was supposed that some of their clan released them.



Land area - 587 sq. miles
 Star - historical places
 Dot - towns
 Dashes - Indian Trails

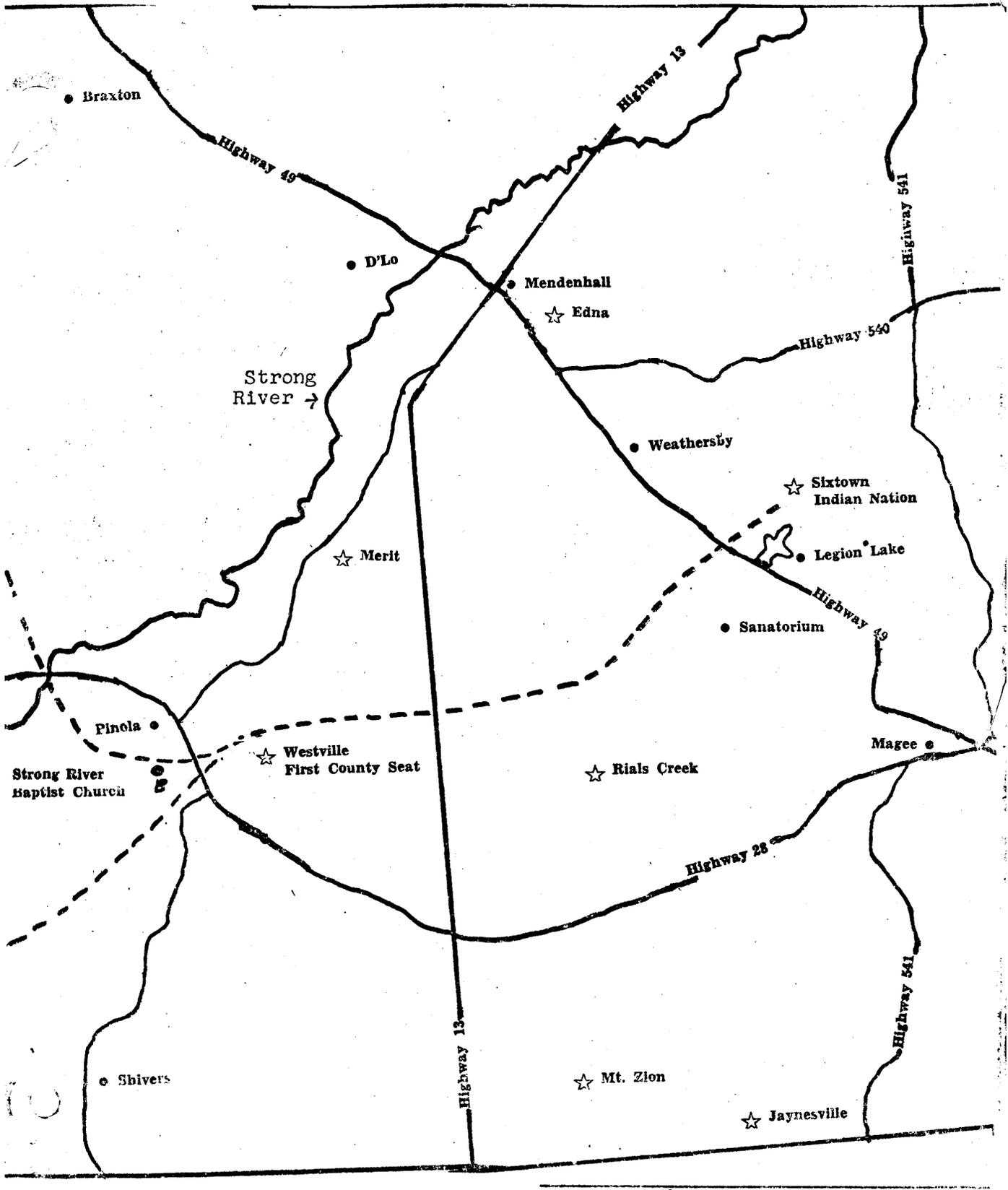
Simpson County

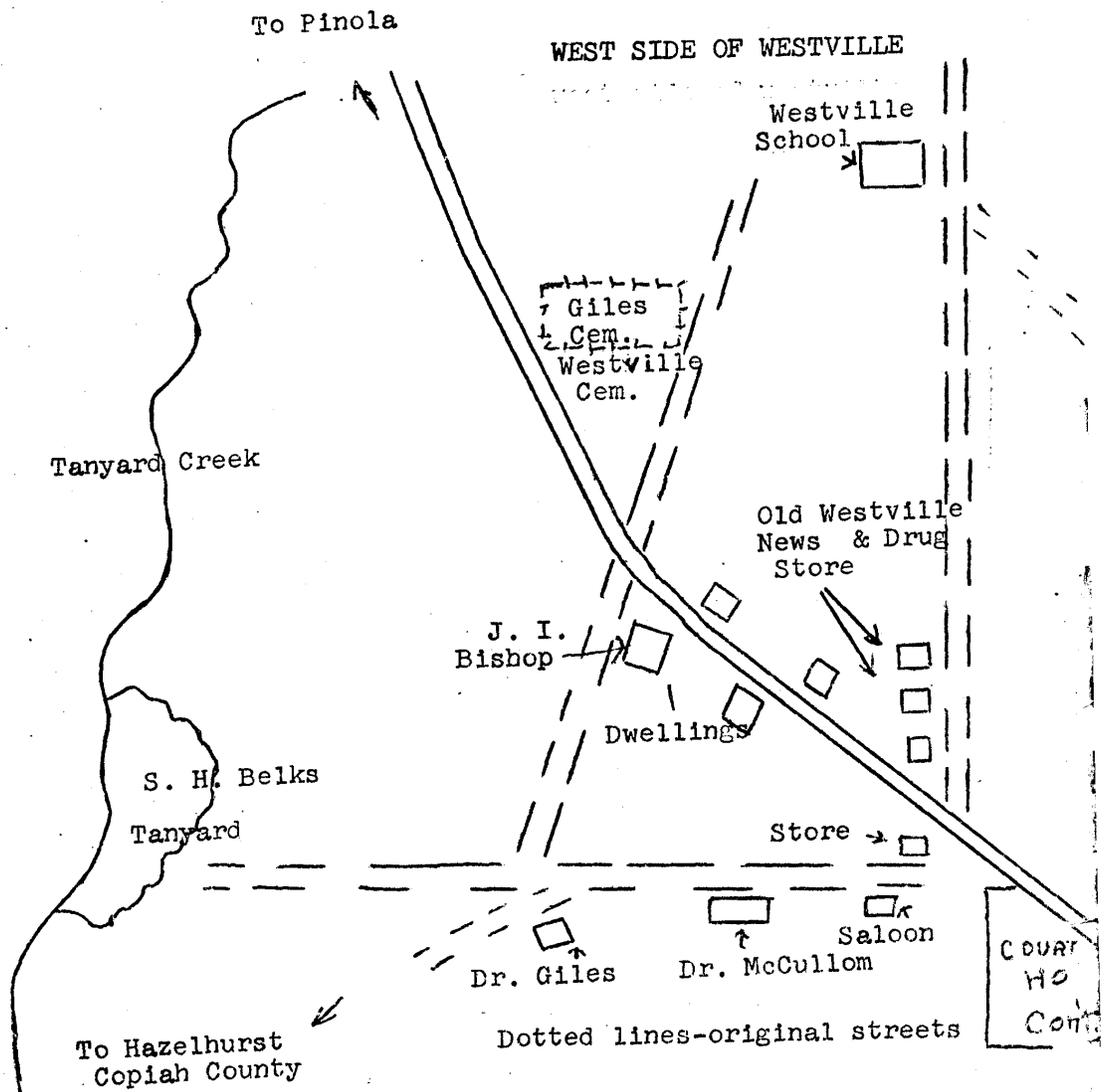
— FORMED IN 1824 —
 Named for Josiah Simpson
 Land Area of 587 sq. miles

STAR indicates historical location.

DOT indicates towns and communities.

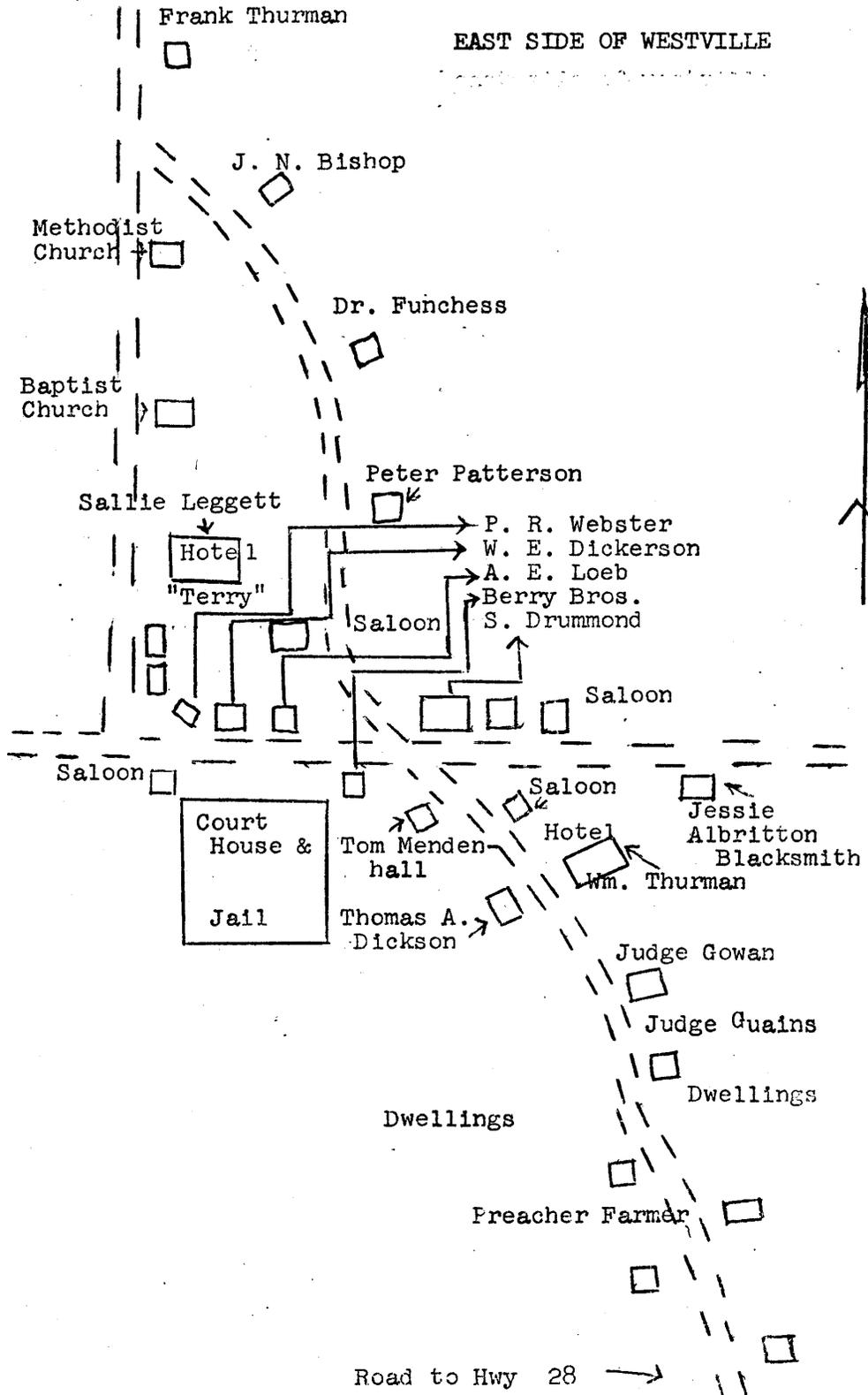
DASHES indicate Indian trails.

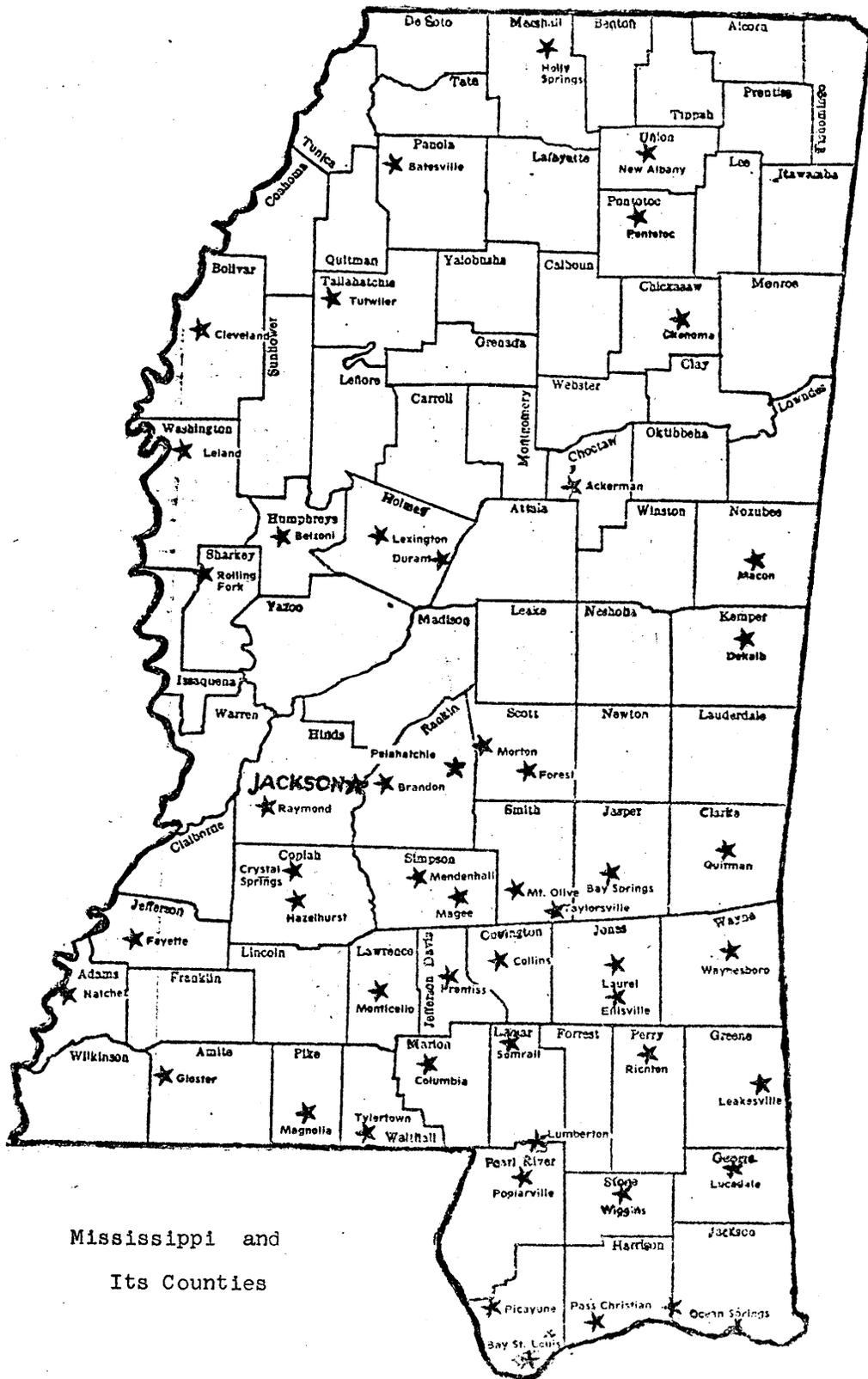




MAP OF Westville, Miss. Simpson Co. Miss.
"The Original County Site"
 Reproduced From The Map and
 Survey Made By D. L. Mc Laurin
 Simpson County Surveyor, and
 Showing The Present Gravel Road "1972"
 Drawn By H. T. Bishop County Surveyor,
 Simpson Co. Miss. July 14, 1972.

EAST SIDE OF WESTVILLE





Mississippi and Its Counties

THOMAS SIMPSON

Thomas Simpson settled on Strong River, near where Bridgeport bridge now stands, in the year 1827. Like most settlers of that time, he built a small log house and cleared a few acres of land, but he depended mostly on hunting and trapping, as a means of support.

In those early days there were but few fruit trees, and vegetables were also scarce, and the settlers coming from the older states missed the fruit of their old homes, more than almost anything else. So when the blue berries ripened in the spring everybody got busy gathering them. In the spring of 1828, there was a heavy crop of berries. Simpson's family consisted of himself, his wife, two small boys and a little baby just a few months old.

There were many Indians in the county at that time, but they were friendly and gave no trouble. The Indian women stopping at Simpson's place to trade often spoke of the eagles that built their nests in what they called the eagle tree, out in a lake known as the Big Cypress Lake near the river. They told Mrs. Simpson that the eagles had been known to carry off Indian babies, and that she had better be careful or they would carry her baby away. They told her of having found the skull of a small baby near the lake, and were sure that the wind had blown it out of their nest. Mrs. Simpson was very much frightened by their reports, but Simpson told her there was nothing in what they said and not to worry about it. Later when she looked at the eagles flying around, she decided that they were not dangerous and paid no further attention to what the Indian women said about them.

One day in the spring after Mr. Simpson had worked over his crop, he told his wife that he would go with her and the boys to pick blueberries. Plenty of them grew near the house or in sight of the house. She left her dinner cooking on the fireplace, and for fear the baby might crawl into the fire, took it out in the front of the house and left it asleep on a sheepskin, under a tree. Simpson and the boys went farther out into the woods, but Mrs. Simpson kept in sight of the house all the time. After Simpson and the boys got out of sight in the woods, she noticed an unusual number of eagles flying around, and she remembered what the Indian women had said and began to get uneasy. She was still in sight of the house, but it seemed that something urged her to go back to the house and see if everything was all right. She was about one hundred yards from the house when she heard the wild scream of an eagle, as it started for its prey. She saw that it was swooping like a rocket on her baby. She could do nothing but scream and run, but when she saw the eagle rise with its prey, she saw that it had an immense snake in its talons. She saw the snake turning and twisting as the eagle carried it towards the eagle tree, then the next thing she saw was the eagle and snake falling to the ground. By that time Simpson and the boys reached the house and she pointed out the place where she saw the snake and eagle fall. When Simpson reached the place they were both dead. The snake was one of the largest rattlesnakes he had ever seen, and measured over six feet in length. In some way it had managed to bite the eagle and both had died.

On looking at the trail of the snake, they found that it had almost reached the sheepskin when the eagle caught it. Simpson would never kill an eagle after that for he always said that the eagle gave its life for his baby.



On the first Sunday in March, in company with a friend, I went down to visit "Uncle Jimmie" Lee and to hear him relate his experiences in the Indian War of 1835. We found him cheerful and in good spirits and although he will be ninety-eight years old in September, he is still active and gets about without any assistance except that of his walking cane.

Some time ago the good people of Strong River Church prayed that he might live to reach a hundred years, and I hope and believe he will. The following account of the war with the Indians is given in his own words:

"It was not much of a war and there is not much to tell, and it does not seem like a thing of any importance now, but it caused great excitement then and spread great terror among the people of Alabama and Georgia. I was then a young man, living in Georgia, about twenty miles from Ft. Gaines. The country was very thinly settled and it was frequently several miles from one house to another.

"The Creek Indians had become hostile and were killing cattle and stealing horses and occasionally murdering a settler during the Summer and Fall of 1834, but in the Spring of 1835 the war broke out in earnest. Many families in Eastern Alabama and Western Georgia were murdered by roving bands of Indians. In my neighborhood one Sunday morning in May, a man and his wife were shot and killed while standing in the door of their house and their daughter, a young woman about twenty years of age, was shot through the body as she was getting over a fence. She fell behind the fence and was left unmolested by the Indians who probably supposed her to be dead.

"She was found by a searching party on Monday afternoon, still alive. By careful nursing she finally recovered. I saw her several years after that and she was a healthy, fine looking woman.

"In another locality several persons took refuge, from a party of Indians, in a large dwelling house made of logs. The Indians attempted to set fire to the house, but the men in the house opened fire on them and killed one of them. The rest then ran off, taking their dead comrade with them. Having no water in the house and fearing to go to the spring, the people in the house put out the fire with milk.

"The next attack in my neighborhood was made on the town of Roanoke and was led by Chief Jim Boy. A great number of people were killed and the town was plundered and burned. The Indians then retreated to an island in the Chattahoochee River, carrying with them a great quantity of goods taken at Roanoke. The attack and burning of Roanoke thoroughly aroused the people and in June of 1835, a company of soldiers was organized in my neighborhood under Capt. Wilson.

"I joined this company and we marched to Ft. Gaines and joined the regiment of Col. McGinty. It was then decided to attack the Indians on the island in the Chattahoochee and the march to that place was taken up. After several days of hard traveling through woods and swamps, we reached the vicinity of the island. This really was not an island except in time of high water and, in the summertime it could be reached by crossing several morasses and lagoons.

"On reaching the point nearest the island, we camped for the night and planned to attack the Indians the next day. On the morning of the following day, which I think was July 1st, we began the march for the island and after several hours of hard work cutting our way through vines and thickets and wading through marshes and lagoons, we reached firm ground. It was then about 10 o'clock in the morning, but not an Indian to be seen.

"As the island contained only five hundred acres of dry land, we knew it would not be long before we were discovered., so the order was given to post ourselves behind trees and logs and wait developments. Guards were then posted in front, with orders to shoot the first Indian who showed himself.

"We did not have long to wait. An Indian came down to the water to wash some kind of a garment and, as he stooped over the water, a guard shot at him but missed him. The Indian ran off giving the war-whoop, which was the most blood-curdling yell I have ever heard, and seemed to go curling and twisting through the tops of the trees.

"Almost immediately the whole island seemed to be filled with the same terrible yells, and in a few minutes the Indians were coming from every direction. As they came up the order was given to fire, and as we were all protected by logs and trees, we killed numbers of them before they became aware of our situation. They returned the fire, but they were so much surprised at our numbers and we killed them so fast that they did not continue the fight very long, perhaps not over half an hour.

"They then took to the marshes, while their dead and wounded were carried off by Negro slaves belonging to the Indians. We found the stolen goods, but as we had no boats and could only carry away a few articles, we burned almost all of the goods except some casks of gunpowder, which we buried in a marsh. After resting a few days we marched back to Ft. Gaines, where we remained about six months before we were disbanded.

I was not in any more fights, but there were a number of skirmishes with the Indians and a considerable number were killed on both sides. Attacks were made on nearly all boats coming into Ft. Gaines. The Indians would secrete themselves behind bluffs and around bends of the river and shoot any one they could see, and they frequently killed a man in that way. A few Indians had remained friendly to the white people and the hostile Indians seemed to have a greater hatred for them than for the whites.

I remember one time that a wooden dummy dressed like an Indian was placed in the stern of a boat coming up the river and when the boat reached Ft. Gaines, more than seventy bullets were in the dummy, having been fired by Indians from the river bank.

The guns we used were mostly what were known as flint and steel guns, though percussion caps were beginning to come in use.

By the close of the year 1835, the Indian outbreak was entirely quelled, and a short time afterwards they were removed to the Indian Territory west of the Mississippi River. Many of them hated to go, and after all, it seemed hard for them to have to leave their old homes and go to a strange land.

I cast my first vote for President Van Buren in 1836 and in the winter of that year I married. I removed to Mississippi in 1846 and settled on White Sand Creek in Lawrence County. On Sunday, the 15th day of April of that year, snow fell to the depth of three inches. All vegetation was killed and thousands of trees died from the effects of the cold. Almost all the chestnut trees were killed and you could smell the decaying vegetation for weeks afterward.

In 1847, I moved to Simpson County. Ed Vanzandt was sheriff and I think Alex Banks was clerk of the court. Dr. Funches was then a young man and was practicing medicine at Westville. I don't think there was a lawyer in the county and there were only two merchants. One was a Dutchman named Hurst. I have forgotten the name-of the other one.

I did not serve in the Mexican War, but joined the Confederate Army and was in the war between the States. I have seen many strange things during my life. I saw the great shower of shooting stars in November 1833. I saw the great comet of 1832 and Halley's comet in 1835. These things made a wonderful impression on me and I remember them as well as if I had seen them but yesterday. There are many other things I would like to tell you about, but my memory is getting bad and I cannot recall them just now. I was married but once. My wife died seventeen years ago and I have lived with my children ever since. Yes, I may live to be a hundred years old. I don't care. It don't bother me. I am ready to go any time.

We had a splendid dinner and "Uncle Jimmie" blessed the food and ate as heartily as the rest of us, and apparently enjoyed himself as much as we did.

As we rode away in the afternoon leaving him sitting in his rocking chair, he seemed almost like a figure of the past. Where are the children he played with when a boy? Where are the associates of his young manhood? They died long ago. Gone are Capt. Wilson and Col. McGinty. Gone are Jim Boy and his braves, all gone. The ramparts of Ft. Gaines have crumbled to dust and the boats on the Chattahoochee are troubled no more, but "Uncle Jimmie" still lives on. Among his children, honored and loved, nearing the end of his century of years sure of the future and with unquestionable faith, he stands at the gates of the eternal morning. When they open to him, may it be to a realm of everlasting peace.

Hitler And The Devil April 6, 1944

(This article was given the News by Rev. Luther Upton, whose son, Pfc. Bias Upton sent it to him)

Hitler called the Devil upon the telephone one day,
The girl at Central listened to all they had to say.
"Heil" she heard Hitler say, "Is old man Satan Home?
Just tell him it's the Dictator, who wants him on the phone."

The Devil said "Howdy" and Hitler., "How are you.
I'm running a Hell on earth, so tell me what to do."
"What can I do?" the Devil said, "Dear old pal of mine
It seems you don't need my help, you're doing mighty fine."

"Yes, I was doing well until a while ago
When a man named Roosevelt wired me I'd better go more slow
He said., "Dear Hitler we don't want to be unkind,
But you've raised Hell enough-, so you'd better change your mind."

"I thought his lease-lend was a bluff
And he could never get it through
But he soon put me on the spot
When he showed what he could do.

"Now that's why I called you Satan
I need advice from you,
For I know that you will tell me,
Just what I ought to do."

"My Dear Hitler, there is not much left to tell
For Uncle Sam will make it hotter, that I can here in Hell.
I've been a mean old Devil, but not half so mean as you,
So the minute you get here, the job is yours to do.

It'll be ready for your coming
And I'll keep the fires all bright,
And I'll have your rooms all ready
When Uncle Sam begins to fight.

"For I can see your days are numbered
And there's nothing left to tell,
So hang up your phone, go get your hat.
And meet me here in Hell."

MRS. McSHANN

There were many unusual occurrences in the pioneer days of Simpson county; one of the most notable being the case of the widow Mary McShann. Tom McShann and his brother, John, came from North Carolina and located in Copiah county in 1822. They both owned a few slaves and when Simpson county was organized, Tom McShann located in the southern part of the county, a few miles below Rials Creek Mill. John McShann moved over on the Mississippi River and located near Rodney. About 1827 Tom McShann bought a tract of land near Rials Creek Mill and moved there. But in the fall of the same year he contracted smallpox and died. Two of his three slaves also died of the same disease. He was survived by his wife, Mrs. Mary McShann and son, Thomas McShann, Jr. who was only about four years of age. The widow McShann was left with but one slave, a girl about fifteen years of age. Like hundreds of other pioneer women, she was left in hard circumstances. Several neighbors advised her to sell the girl and her horses and cattle and go back to North Carolina; but John McShann advised her to stay where she was, as with the help of the slave girl, she could make a crop, and probably get a better price for land and stock the following year. He also promised to help her if she should ever need help. So when the spring of 1828 opened she started her crop. She had never worked in a field, but she learned to plow and the slave girl could plow. She hired some help during the year and the crops were good.

She was advised by Mr. Rials and others to keep a close watch on Sallie, the slave girl, as there was a great deal of slave running and horse stealing going on in the country. Feeling that Sallie would be better satisfied if she had another slave, she bought a boy about the age of Sallie and built them good warm-houses to live in. Both appeared to be perfectly contented, and Mrs. McShann looked forward to being able to buy another slave the next year.

Then one morning to her astonishment the slave boy, John,, reported Sallie had disappeared. He said he had called her but could get no answer, and that he believed that she had been stolen. The alarm was at once given and the patrolmen notified. The neighbors all got busy and searching parties went out in every direction, and they hunted for days, but no trace of her could ever be found. Nobody believed that she had run away, but some thought she had been drowned.

The creek and pond were searched, but that amounted to nothing. Mrs. McShann had a little money and she offered a reward for Sallie, but that brought no result.

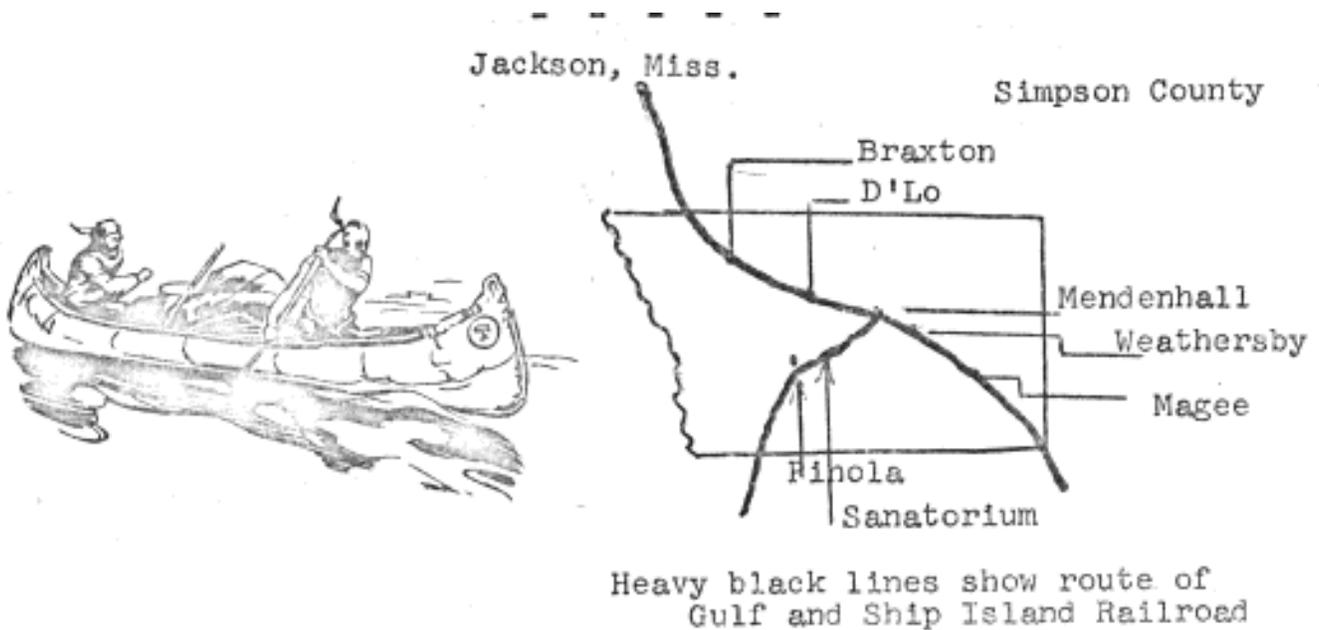
The next year she bought another slave and managed to "get along" very well. In the meantime, she had consulted the " Old Lady Tedder" and was told by her that Sallie had been stolen by a man that she would not suspect, but that she would find Sallie some day and get her back.

About 1832, Mrs. McShann received a letter from John McShann's wife, stating that John was very sick and that he wanted to see her and her little boy and to please come at once. She advised her to go by Raymond and Port Gibson, as that would be the safest road. Soon after receiving the letter, she arranged to go, and Mr. Rials sent two young men with her, as she was afraid to make the trip alone. The roads were not good, and they were two days in reaching Port Gibson, where they spent the night, the first night being spent at Raymond.

In going from Port Gibson to Rodney they lost their way, and after riding several hours reached Bruinsburg., where a large slave owner named Daniels, was building a brick residence. Many slaves and several white men

were working there,, and when they stopped to ask the way to Rodney, a young slave woman ran up to Mrs. McShann and said, "Law if dat aint Miss Mary." Mrs. McShann at once recognized the woman as being Sallie, and asked how she came there. She at once said, "Dat singing teacher stole me and brought me here, and sold me to Mr. Daniels." Mrs. McShann had Mr. Daniels called and explained to him that Sallie was her slave and told him about how she was stolen from her.

Daniels told her that he bought her from a man living near by, and at once sent for him. When he came Mrs. McShann recognized him as a singing teacher that had taught a singing school at Rials Creek the year Sallie was stolen. Daniels told the man that unless he paid back the money he had given for Sallie, he would hang him." The amount was five hundred dollars., but he paid it and Daniels let Sallie go with Mrs. McShann. Daniels paid Mrs. McShann for the work Sallie had done and gave her a horse for Sallie to ride.



LOTTIE WILLIAMSON

One of the most remarkable of the early settlers of Simpson County was Mrs. Lottie Williamson, the wife of Jesse Williamson. She was a native of South Carolina and was probably born about the year 1803, and came to Simpson County at an early age. I do not know in what year, but she and her husband were living in the county in 1824, and she remembered riding through Westville before the court house was built, and seeing the streets being opened and the grounds cleared off for the courthouse.

She and her husband located a few miles north of Rials Creek Mill and near the capital of the Six Towns Nation. Indians were very numerous at that time and she soon learned to speak the Indian language as well as she did her own.

When a very young woman she became much interested in the treatment of diseases, and always said that if she had been a man she would have been a doctor. She learned all of the Indian remedies for treating diseases, learned bow to dress and treat wounds, set broken bones and stop the flow of blood. There were no physicians in the country at that time, so it became common for neighbors to send for her when sick. Even when some so-called doctor was called in, people would send for her also. More often than not the local doctors were drunk or absent when called and women preferred Miss Lottie, as they called her, at all times. She became so skillful in obstetrics that she was often called to Westville and a few times to Osceola on Pearl River.

She some times assisted the Indian Medicine Men in treating knife and gunshot wounds and kept on good terms with them. By this means she learned their methods of preparing medicines, and the value of different herbs they used. The Indians had a very high regard for her and often went to her for help or advice. She often used Indian remedies in the treatment of her own family, but was always afraid to use their remedy for pneumonia. The Indians would wrap the patient in blankets when the disease had reached a certain stage and throw him, or her, into the creek then after being well soaked and thoroughly chilled lay the sick person by a fire, changing the position every now and then until dry. Strange to say, that treatment cured more than it killed.

After the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830, the Indians began moving West, and small groups passed her house from time to time for two or three years, often in bitter cold weather. Many would stop to barter such things as they had, for something to eat. She never could turn them away.

To show the misery the poor Indians endured, she used to tell of an incident that occurred in the winter of 1830, which was terribly cold. One morning just after daybreak she looked across the road in front of her house and saw an Indian woman sitting on a small log, under a clump of pines. The ground was frozen and there was ice everywhere, and she was sure the Indian woman was sick, or in great distress. She walked across the road to where the woman was and saw that she had an old, coarse blanket around her and appeared to be holding something. She asked the woman what she had under the blanket and she said, "Me got posscuss." That was the Indian name for baby. Sure enough it was an Indian baby only a few hours old and perfectly naked.

The woman had kept it from freezing by holding it against her body. She had the woman get up and come into the house where she could sit by the fire. Then she sent her children to the kitchen to prepare something for the woman to eat. While they were gone she heated some water and washed the baby, then put some of her own baby's clothes on it. She then fed the poor woman and fixed her a bed in the corner near the fire where she could sleep.

On the fourth day, while she and her children were looking after some cattle, the woman took her baby and left. Nobody saw her leave, and never knew whether she went on west or returned to her old home.

In her early years every body called her "Miss Lottie", but then in her later years nearly everybody called her "Aunt Lottie." She was loved and revered by all. She lived a life of helpfulness and unselfishness, and many a person is in the world today, because somewhere and at sometime, she was present in a time of need.

She lived to a great age, and in the serenity of peace she died as she whispered the words. "In my Father's house there are many mansions." Her life was a benediction and she was a blessing to those among whom she lived.

MRS LOTTIE WILLIAMSON - 2

Mrs. Lottie Williamson and several of her neighbors made ready to take a trip to Natchez. Wagons were carried to the blacksmith shop at Rials Creek Mill to be overhauled and repaired, and some new wagons were bought from the Albritton brothers, who had recently settled a few miles, northwest of Westville, on the west side of Strong River. They were expert in making wagons and bow frames for the wagon covers.

In those days nearly every family had a loom for weaving cloth and the wagon covers were made of heavy cotton cloth woven on looms.

It was arranged that they would start on Wednesday of the last week of October and that everybody should be ready by that date. The next thing to be done after putting the wagons and wagon covers in order and getting the

yokes in good condition, was to cook enough food to last for several days. So several beeves were killed and meats and bread and pies cooked. Sweet potatoes were gathered, hams boiled and long strings of dried sausage placed in Indian baskets to be eaten along the way.

On Sunday before the time for starting, it was reported that Charlie Whitehorse was very sick with some strange disease, and that many other Indians showed symptoms of it. Then on Monday following, a man on Mrs. Lottie Williamson's place was taken sick in the same way. There were no doctors to be had, but Mrs. Tedder was called in to see Charlie Whitehorse, and she pronounced the disease to be "cold plague", which must have been what is now known as "grippe". The man on Mrs. Williamson's place died almost at once. Several Indians died and the disease spread all over the country.

There were several deaths around Rials Creek Mill and several deaths at Westville. The whole country was in a panic for more than a month. But after the first of the following year the disease had subsided.

The trip to Natchez had been called off and Mrs. Tedder said it was fortunate that the disease broke out before they got started, or all of them would probably have died. Mrs. Williamson and Mrs. Tedder treated the sick as best they could and although they were going night and day visiting the sick people, neither of them took the disease.

Many people said that if Mrs. Tedder was a witch, she was the best witch in the world. With her knowledge of Indian remedies and her experience with sick people, she taught Mrs. Williamson many things that she was glad to know in later years.

MRS. LOTTIE WILLIAMSON 3

In the early fall of 1830, John Huckley, a blacksmith and carpenter, completed a new wagon for Mrs. Lottie Williamson. Soon afterwards she arranged with several of her neighbors to go to Natchez with a load of produce which they would exchange for salt and such other things that they might be able to obtain. At that time salt was one of their greatest necessities, as no kind of meat could be cured without it.

The Indians got along very well by drying venison and buffalo meat but white people found that method entirely too slow and pork could not be cured in that way at all.

There were very few wagons in the country and people who had no wagons would arrange with those who had wagons to take produce to the market. So a wagon was always sure to carry a heavy load. Mrs. Williamson kept a large number of cattle and she had several yokes of very fine oxen.

A week or more before starting on a long trip, the oxen would be driven home at night and fed in a large lot. This was done to give them sufficient strength for the long haul to market. Like all of the people of that period, Mrs. Williamson was an "early riser," and one morning when she went to the lot she found her best yoke of oxen was not there. She was very much surprised, as the fence had not been broken, and the bars were all in place. She knew that horse stealing was very common, but stealing oxen was a new thing.

She was confident that they could not be far away, and was afraid that they had been killed for beef.

She went at once to the Indian camp for Charlie Whitehorse, a noted Indian hunter and tracker. When Charlie came, she told him of the loss of the oxen and wanted to arrange with him to recover the oxen. Indians did not keep cattle, though they were very fond of beef. So when she asked Charlie what he would charge her to recover

the oxen, he said, "Me catchum for cow." She told him that would be all right, but he must start at once. He said that he would want help and that he would have to see two other Indians before starting.

When he turned to go back to camp, she told him to catch her fine saddle horse and ride. He said he would ride to the camp, but would not want to ride when he went in search of the oxen. But when he went to the stable to catch the horse, he hurried back and said, "No horse there, horse gone.

She then found that the horse and bridle had been stolen. Charlie took another horse and went to the camp and when he returned stated that two other Indians would go with him, but she would have to give them two cows. She finally agreed to give the Indians three cows, provided they brought back the oxen and the horse.

When they started she asked if they did not want horses to ride; but Charlie said, "Me walk, me catch um." They went back to the camp and she had no idea of the direction they would take, but she knew they would be sure to find the trail of the stolen horse and oxen before they went very far.

It had rained in the night and no tracks could be found around the lot or in the road, but she was quite sure that they had been driven north, and that whoever stole them would expect to be followed by white men. That was her only hope of recovering them as the thieves would hardly expect to be followed by Indians.

A few hours after Mrs. Williamson had arranged with Charlie Whitehorse and the other Indians to go in search of her horse and oxen, she was surprised to see them coming back to her house.

She first supposed that they had decided to abandon the trip. But knowing Indians as she did, she was not at all surprised when Charlie told her it would be a long trip and they wanted to kill one of the cows before they left and have a "big eat." She knew how Indians would gorge themselves with fresh meat and then get drunk, so she refused to let them kill the cow. She told Charlie that she would give them the cows, if they brought the horse and oxen, but would give them no cows until they did. They finally left and she was sure that they would not go as they had promised. But later in the day she learned that they had gone.

Charlie took his gun but the others took bows and arrows. Nobody knew what direction they had taken and she heard nothing of them for many days. One night about a week after they had left her house, she was awakened by Charlie calling at the front gate. She and several members of the family got up and found Charlie had returned with the horse. It was after midnight, and the first thing Charlie said was, "Me got horse, me mighty hungry, me starving." Fires were at once made and Charlie was told that they would soon have coffee made and some thing cooked for him to eat. He then said, "Horse mighty hungry too. Horse ain't had nothing two days." The horse was taken to the lot and fed, and then when asked about the oxen he said, "Me left oxen at big spring." (The spring now known as McNair spring.) "Oxen give out, heep hungry, men heep hungry, too; must send food for oxen and men, be heep quick."

As soon as something could be cooked, two of the men of the place were sent with feed for the Indians and the oxen. Sure enough when they reached the spring they found the Indians asleep, and the oxen lying down, and almost too weak to stand when made to get up. The Indians ate like they were starved and so did the oxen, but after resting until daylight they all came home. After Charlie had eaten an immense quantity of food, he lay down and slept until sunup the next morning. When he awoke he wanted more to eat and to have a big drink of whiskey before he would talk. Everybody wanted to know how he found the oxen and the horse, but he did not seem to want to tell too much about it. The other Indians wouldn't tell anything about the trip; so Charlie told what little he cared to tell.

He said it was more than two days before they struck the trail of the robbers, and two days more before they located the horse and oxen, and that when found they were beyond Leaf River and not far west of the Chickasawhay River. He said they secured the horse and oxen after heep big fight.” Said they followed Indian trails instead of the roads and that they had to swim Leaf River, as they were afraid to cross at the ford. He said they knew they had been followed and that once he thought they were seen by a party of men who seemed to be looking for somebody. He said they traveled entirely at night and in the day lay up in thick woods. He was afraid to shoot his gun, but they killed a few birds with arrows, and caught a few fish. There was blood on their clothing and many people believed they had killed the men who stole the horse and oxen, but they never admitted that they did.

The next day they came for the cows that were promised them and had a big feast. The feast was followed by a dance and big drunk. After the men all got drunk, the women ate what was left. The men always ate first, and after the women were through eating, the dogs were given the balance, which was mostly bones.

Note: In the family history we have listed a Joseph Boggan son (eighth child) of James Boggan., brother to Patrick; father Sir Walter Boggan. Also Jame's third child John had a son called Joseph. The first Joseph was born June 27, 1772 and the second was born February 23, 1794.

One of the early settlers Of Simpson County was Joseph Boggan. He came from South Carolina about the year 1820 and settled a few miles south of the Rials Creek mill. He owned a considerable number of slave owners. He was kind to his slaves and they were devoted to him. He even allowed them to read and write fairly well. They were taught at night by a young man that Boggan had hired as a private teacher to teach his own-children.

This young man was a cripple and as schools were scarce he remained with Boggan for several years. He could ride horseback and took great interest in good horses, and as soon as he was able he bought a fine saddle horse for himself.

Among the slaves owned by Boggan were two boys by the name or Jake and Peter. Jake looked after the stock, but Peter was more of a houseboy and he thought it was his special duty to look after the teacher. It was a great surprise to Boggan and the teacher to find one morning in the spring of 1827 that Jake and Peter did not appear when called. Boggan was very much alarmed, and a search was immediately made for them. It was soon discovered that not only were they gone but that the teacher's horse and one of Boggan's best horses were gone. Neither Boggan nor the teacher thought that the slaves had run away, and both were sure that they had been stolen. Notice was given to neighbors and it was but a short time before several men came to assist in the pursuit.

Boggan had recently had the misfortune to break his leg so he made no attempt to follow the thieves, but It was decided that he would send for Francis Grubbs, Temple Tullos and Vinson Meeks, and engage them to try to recover the slaves and horses. All three agreed to go, but as it had rained late in the night, it was impossible to get any trace of the thieves, but they kept going In various directions making such inquiry as they thought best. After riding almost a week, they came back and reported to Boggan that the recovery of the slaves seemed to be hopeless.

Boggan was very much disappointed. but told them to keep on the lookout and perhaps they would be located later. They were however more determined than ever to recover the slaves, and said they would get them if it took a year.

As it was springtime and the crops had to be cultivated, there was nothing to do but wait. Then in June of the same year, Boggan was at Westville and the postmaster asked him if the teacher, Francis Mayhor, was still with him, and told that he was, then asked if he would pay postage on a letter that he had for Mayhor. Boggan paid the postage and took the letter to Mayhor.

The letter was a great surprise. It was from Jake, and badly written but could be easily read. It stated that he and Peter had been stolen and taken to the plantation of a man named White, and that White lived northwest of Canton near Big Black River, that his plantation was in a big swamp and he had a large number of slaves. He stated that they would know the place by the wide gate in front of the house, that the gate was very tall and the gate posts were about twenty feet high and nearly two feet square. He said if anybody came after them, to be very careful as White was a terrible man and had a room in his house where he hung people. He told Mayhor that White had no family but was always around the house.

Boggan at once sent for Meeks, Grubbs and Tullos and showed them Jake's letter. They said they would start the next day. So early the next morning, they left. They were well armed, rode good horses and wore their best clothing. They knew that they were a dangerous mission. They spent the night at Canton. While there they quietly got directions to White's place. They reached the place about the middle of the morning. Hitching their horses, they walked into the yard and on to the house. A large evil looking man was seated on the galley, but gave them an invitation to come in, and when they started up the steps, he very preemptorily asked them what their business was and as did so he reached for his gun. Before he could get it out of his pocket, Temple and Tullos were on him like a tiger. He fought desperately but he was no match for Tullos. When he saw he was at their mercy, he again asked them what their business was. Meeks told him they were after two stolen slaves and horses.

When Meeks had spoken, White attempted to blow a small whistle but before he got it in his mouth, Meeks knocked him down. When he got up he said he had just as well give up, and they were welcome to the slaves if they could find them. He then suggested that they take a drink part friendly. They told him that was all right, and he led them into the main room and down to a small room. He told to walk in. But just before they got inside, Tullos whirled and caught him by the collar and jerked him into the room. It was a small room fastened by a heavy lock, There was no outlet but the door. Tullos wanted to hang him, but they decided to lock him in the room and take the key.

They then hunted up Jake and Peter and the two horses and reached Boggan's place that night.

LOST JOHN

Lost John was a slave. He belonged to Joseph Boggan who lived a few miles south of Rials Creek Mill. The other slaves on the plantation gave him the name of Lost John because he constantly was getting lost. He doubtless had defective eyesight but seemed to see very well .

When sent anywhere there was no telling when he would get back, nor what direction he would come from. When lost he would travel in circles, sometimes they were small and sometimes large. Very often he would be sent home by some neighbor as all the people in the neighborhood knew of his condition. He could not plow but he could chop wood and hoe corn and cotton as well as anyone. He was of a very kind disposition, loved animals. He liked to pet small animals.

At last Mr. Boggan decided to let John look after the sheep and cattle at that time and which all ran on open range. To keep John from getting lost, Mr. Boggan instructed him to always follow the sheep and to never try to drive them anywhere. The sheep were always driven home at night in order to protect them from the wolves.

There were more than a thousand of the sheep, and they had a wide range, but at night were always given some cottonseed and were usually given salt. They were protected at night by strong sheep pens, and also by wolfhounds.

John took great interest in the sheep, especially the little lambs. Often when coming home he would have two or three lambs in his arms.

One day in the spring he was following the sheep as usual. About noon they reached an old house that had been abandoned by an earlier settler. The sheep often went into the old house and rested, and did so on that day. While the sheep were in and around the old house John picked some blackberries from some bushes that were growing nearby.

He always carried a bucket so as to gather up anything he found in the way of berries or persimmons or any other kind of wild fruit.

He was very quietly picking the berries when he suddenly saw the sheep running away from the house. Fearing a wolf might be nearby he stood very still and then to his great surprise he saw two white men leading four slaves to the old house. He did not know the white men, but he knew that two of the slaves belonged to Mr. Boggan, and the other two belonged to a neighbor.

He remained, very quiet and waited to see what would happen. A few minutes later he saw the two white men go away toward the road. The old house was several hundred yards from the road and he was sure that the two men had horses somewhere between the house and the road.

He walked up toward the house and saw them mount horses and ride away. He then went very quietly to the house and looking through a crack between the logs saw that the slaves were chained to the log walls of the house.

Taking his bucket of berries he walked on and caught up with the sheep.

John wanted to get word to Mr. Boggan at once, but was afraid to try to drive the sheep for fear of getting lost. It was several hours until sunset, so all he could do was to follow the sheep until they went home about sundown. The sheep were in no hurry and John was very impatient, but he did as his master had told him.

When they finally reached home he turned the sheep into their pens and then hurried to Mr. Boggan to tell him what he had seen. Mr. Boggan sent a man to tell his neighbor about what had happened. The neighbor came at once, and they decided to get several other neighbors and surround the old house, provided the slaves were still there and wait till the two white men came for them. This was done and they went and secluded themselves near the old house. They waited for several hours, and just after the moon rose around 10 o'clock they saw two men riding toward the old house and leading some horses. They waited until the men dismounted and then told them to halt. The men halted all right, but drew their guns and began shooting. Then both sides began shooting but none was hit so far as they knew.

In the meantime the two men managed to mount their horses again and rode away at full speed. It was found that the horses that they had that were being led had been stolen from farmers in the neighborhood after nightfall. After that time Lost John was quite a hero among the slaves.

Angels well might wish thy lot
Richer far than any other
Thou hast that which they have not
Angel never had a mother.

Dabney Liscomb

A Series of Stories relating to MRS. MCKENNON and JAMES BOGGAN.

Many years ago Mrs. McKennon, a very old lady, told me of her first visit to Simpson County sometime about 1830. She was a native of Massachusetts, and at the time, an older sister was teaching in Simpson County, at or near the home of James Boggan, eight or nine miles southeast of Westville.

She said that she had been reared on a small farm where all the work had to be done by members of the family. Life was pretty hard in Mass. back in those days, and her sister had come South to engage in teaching, where the slave owners paid well. She had managed to save enough money to make the trip, and she was only a girl at the time, and it was the greatest event of her life. She reached the home of Boggan where her sister boarded late one October afternoon. Boggan lived in a large house and was the largest slave owner in the country at that time. She judged that he owned about thirty slaves. He lived in a large house with many rooms and several large chimneys. Slave boys looked after the fires and kept plenty of wood. The dining room was a separate building in the rear of the main dwelling, and the kitchen, which was also a separate building, was about thirty steps in the rear of the dining room. The buildings were kept separate, she understood, on account of the danger of fire. The dining room and kitchen, both had large chimneys, but that of the kitchen was immense, being about ten feet wide. The kitchen had a dirt floor and all the cooking was done on the "fire-place" or hearth. Vegetables and meats that had to be boiled were placed in pots and suspended from an iron rod that was built into the chimney a few feet above the fire. Bread, biscuits, potatoes, eggs, cakes, pies, and custards, fried ham, sausages, wild duck turkey, and venison were cooked on the hearth over "live coals". It was wonderful cooking and there was never a scarcity of food of any kind. The cooking was done by slave women, who took great delight in their work.

Some distance in the rear of the kitchen was the slave quarters, which were built separately of hewn logs and were furnished with doors, windows and chimney. Windows were closed with wooden shutters. The slave quarters were very comfortable. Slave families lived to themselves, and the slaves who had no wives lived in a larger house and ate their meals at the kitchen table.

Still further away was the lot for horses and mules and the cribs and stables for the animals.

On her first visit to the lots she counted five horses and thirty mules. The cribs were filled with corn. Her sister said that more than three thousand bushels had been gathered that year. In a separate lot nearby was corn fodder stacked around poles set in the ground. She remembered there were twenty stacks.

Adjoining the horse lot was the cow lot, where the milking was done. The cows were in good condition but very few would give over half a gallon of milk in a day. Twenty-five or more cows were milked every day. The milking was done by slave women and was always a very interesting occasion as many of the cows were almost half wild, and there was often a fight, or near fight between them and the slave women. When the cows were milked, they were turned out into the woods, and driven up again at night. The milking was always done in the morning. A cow that was gentle and easy to milk, would not be allowed to wean her calf until it was more than two years old. Some of those calves had horns half a foot long before they were weaned. In those days nobody ever thought of milking a cow without her calf. There was a milk house where milk and butter were kept, and there was always a good supply on hand.

The next day the meat was salted down, and the slaves got busy trying out lard, making sausage, cleaning hog feet and making souse .

Almost everyone ate too much. Some got sick from eating too much but soon got well again and were again eating as much as ever. Mrs. McKennon said that slaves had wonderful appetites, and she thought they were the greatest eaters in the world until one day, during this time, three or four Indians came selling baskets. As was the custom in those days, all who came were welcome to eat all they wanted. She said that she never before realized that anybody could eat as much as those Indians. She thought they would be sick, but the next day they were back again and eating as much as ever. On the third day before leaving, they asked Mr. Boggan if he had any 'fire water'. He told them that he had none and they left. When they were gone he explained that they meant whiskey, and that if he had given them whiskey they would have remained a week or more.

Not far from the well where the hogs were butchered, was the smokehouse. It was made of hewn pine logs and was about twenty four feet long and sixteen feet wide. It had a dirt floor, but the bottom logs were-sunk into the ground a foot or more to keep the wolves from digging under the wall and getting in. There were long joists across the top logs and small poles were laid across the joists from which were hung hams, sides of bacon, shoulders and long strings of sausage. Around the walls were barrels of lard and tubs of cracklings, and boxes of souse. Later when the meat was ready for drying and curing, fires of hickory wood were kindled in the shallow pit near the center of the smoke-house and kept burning until the meat was thoroughly cured. This smoke gave the hams and sausages a most delightful flavor.

About thirty hogs were killed at the first killing, but there were several more during the winter. It was said that as many as eighty hogs were killed during the winter. Mrs. McKennon noticed that at all of the killings there would be Indians coming to the farm on some mission and that all of them would eat as if they were starving, but Mr. Boggan always made them welcome. This as it turned out served him a good purpose later.

2. James Boggan always kept his slaves comfortably clothed. He had built a large house about fifty yards from his dwelling, which was used for the purpose of making cloth and clothing. This house was made of hewn logs and was furnished with windows and a wide chimney. It was very warm and comfortable in the winter. Several slave women were kept busy, carding and spinning cotton and woolen thread and others dyed the thread and dried it. There were three looms in the house and other women were constantly weaving cloth. Some of them were very skillful and could make beautiful cloth. After the cloth was woven, still other women made the cloth into garments for the slaves on the plantation to wear. There were no sewing machines in those days and all of the garments were made by hand. The slave women were able to make clothing for themselves and the children that fitted very well, but they seemed to have no "gift" for making the clothing for men, and sometimes they looked quite comical with their new suits, but they were warm and made of good cloth.

The slave women also wove coverlets for beds, and in the center of the house was a place for quilting, where almost every day, a number of women would be busy making quilts.

Mrs. McKennon said that she never grew tired of watching the women at the looms as the shuttles moved back and forth, and she loved to hear the women explain how the warp and woof were made into cloth. One thing she never could understand was how they made the colors blend into regular patterns, but the slave women knew and enjoyed their work. The carding, spinning and weaving was done mostly by middle aged women, but there were a few very old women who taught the others how to spin and weave. The real old women sat most of the time around the fire knitting socks, stockings, gloves and nubias (a woman's light knitted woolen scarf for the head or neck). All of the women smoked pipes and she said that she enjoyed listening to their conversation as they enjoyed sat around the fire knitting and smoking All during the day they kept potatoes

roasting in the ashes and every now and then stopped to eat one. Tobacco was grown on the plantation and was abundant. None of them had any education and their conversation was more like that of children than of grown people. Another very interesting place on the plantation was the shoe shop, where the shoes for the slaves were made.

There was a tan yard down near the little creek, where hides were tanned into leather. Some of the leather was very fine and soft but other leather was thick and heavy. The soft leather was used in making shoes for the women and children and the heavy leather for making shoes for the men and making harness. The shop was also a large log house, where three crippled slaves made shoes, boots, and harness. They were kept busy all the time as it required a great number of shoes to supply the plantation. The shoemakers supplied everybody on the plantation with shoes. Two of the shoemakers were very expert and could make real well-fitted boots and shoes. She said that nearly all of the white men she saw on her trip wore boots.

One incident she recalled was that one night while she was there she and her sister heard an Indian calling Mr. Boggan, and they woke him and told him that an Indian was at his front gate calling him. He called the Indian to come to him and they heard the Indian say, "Two white men catchum Pete and Tip, gottum on horses hind um, better hurry." Then she heard Mr. Boggan calling somebody and soon heard him and some other men riding away.

3. It was several days before Mr. Boggan returned, but he had recovered the slaves. One of the men with him had been shot in the arm and another had the heel of his boot shot off. After a running fight they had captured the slave runners and placed them in jail at Westville. She said that she learned afterwards that they were taken out of jail and hung. Mr. Boggan wouldn't say much about the matter. She learned that all slave owners were in dread of having slaves stolen, and no mercy was shown slave runners. They were in the same class with horse thieves, and were generally "strung up" when caught.

Among other things on the Boggan plantation was the shop where wagons were made and repaired, and where bedsteads and other household furniture was made. Among the slaves were several carpenters who did very good work. There was also a blacksmith shop, and one slave worked in the shop almost all of the time.

Another thing Mrs. McKennon remembered was the great flock of peafowls (peacocks) on the plantation. She had never seen peafowls before that time and never grew tired of looking at them. They were beautiful birds but had very harsh voices.

She remembered a trip she and her sister made to see an old fortune teller by the name of Tedder, who lived near a watermill a few miles north of the Boggan plantation. They rode horses and went on Saturday. They stopped awhile at the mill to see the wrestling and boxing that took place there on Saturdays. It all appeared to be very interesting to the men, but they soon grew tired of it. She did not like to see men beat up that way. Barefooted, hat off, stripped to the waist and greased before starting, the games were fast and furious. She saw a number of men almost covered with blood, but kept right on boxing or fighting, she did not fighting know which.

The old fortune teller lived in a small cabin not far from this mill, and when they reached her place she was cooking dinner on the hearth (stone or brick floor of the fireplace). She was sitting on a stool near the fire and wore a black dress and bonnet. They had dismounted and hitched their horses before they saw her, and when they did she was pouring some dough into an open skillet that had been placed over some hot coals. The old lady had a pet gander that was in the house near the fire, and it was amusing to see the gander scoop out mouthfuls of the hot dough, when the old lady was turning over the meat she had in a frying pan. They stood

and watched the old lady and the gander for several minutes before making themselves known. After removing the meat from the frying pan and turning over the bread, she asked them to be seated. They sat down on a small bench, and when they stated that they wanted their fortunes told, she became very much interested and asked them a lot of questions, especially about where they lived and what they were doing and expected to do. She then took them outside, one at a time, and told their fortunes. Of course, they were very good fortunes and everybody was well pleased. They gave her about a dollar as she remembered. Money was very scarce in those days and the old lady was delighted with what they gave her. She told them it was the first real money, she had received in some time.

When they told Mr. Boggan of their visit to the mill and to the old fortune teller, he told them that the old lady was a very remarkable woman and that she knew the gossip that was going on all over the country, and that was the reason she was so successful in telling fortunes.

Mrs. McKennon returned to her home in Massachusetts soon after Christmas. Her visit had been the most delightful event of her life. The great plantation was just a world within itself. Everybody including the slaves, were good to her and begged her to come again. She had come again, but what a change since then.

4. Another story from Mrs. McKennon from Massachusetts while she was visiting her sister at the home of JAMES BOGGAN. A man named Spencer, from her own neighborhood in Massachusetts, had located a few miles east of Boggan's place and was engaged in farming. His son, Jimmie Spencer, a boy about 17 years old, was attending her sister's school. He was a very industrious boy, and had made some money the winter before by trapping. He sold his furs at Westville and after he sold them he purchased a gold ring from an old crippled jeweler at Westville. He bought the ring for his mother's birthday present and had the jeweler to carve her name in the ring.

Sometime in the summer of that year his mother lost the ring and they had been unable to find it, but a few weeks before her arrival at Mr. Boggan's home, it was found by a peddler. The peddler did not know the value of the ring, and carried it to the jeweler at Westville to either sell it or learn its value. When the jeweler saw it, he told the peddler that it was Jimmie Spencer's ring and that Jimmie paid seven dollars for it. The peddler demanded that the jeweler pay him seven dollars, but the jeweler said it would not be right to pay him the value of the ring and he would not pay anything without seeing the boy.

He agreed to see the boy as soon as possible, and when he did, the boy said he did not have but one dollar, and would give him that, and left the dollar with the jeweler. Then the peddler returned, he refused the dollar and demanded the ring. The jeweler told him that he was guilty of stealing the ring if he kept it after finding the owner, and told him that he was going to have him arrested if he did not take the dollar and leave.

The peddler then took the dollar and went out muttering something. A few weeks later the boy and the peddler were both in Westville and when the peddler saw the boy he rushed on him with a knife and cut him severely. He would have doubtlessly killed him if others had not interfered. The peddler was arrested and carried before a Justice of the Peace, and after a trial was sentenced to serve one month in jail. Soon after he had served his sentence, he waylaid the boy on the road to school and rushed on him again with a knife and cut him terribly, but ran away when he saw that two trappers had seen him and were hurrying to the boy. The trappers carried the boy home and it was many weeks before he recovered.

When Spencer heard of the attack on his boy, he sent for the sheriff, who at once came with several patrolmen. The patrolmen put their dogs on the trail of the peddler and overtook him later in the day. When court convened the peddler was indicted, tried and sentenced to serve a term of ten years in the State Penitentiary.

She said that the following year one of Spencer's uncles in Massachusetts died and that when the will was opened it was found that he had left Spencer a considerable fortune, Spencer at once returned to his old home in Massachusetts. Later, Jimmie Spencer studied medicine and located in a nearby town. He was a successful physician and had a fine practice. One morning just after he had opened his office, a messenger came from the hotel and told him that there was a very sick man at the hotel, and to come at once. He went hurriedly, and when he entered the room of the sick man, he was confronted by a man standing in the middle of the room with a pistol in his hand. He at once recognized the peddler. As the man raised his pistol he said, "I've waited ten years for this and now my time has come." The doctor, seeing there was no chance of escape, rushed on him and grabbed the pistol, but it was too late. He was shot through the body and fell; but he managed to hold the pistol and the peddler ran out, but was soon caught.

The doctor lived long enough to tell all about what led up to the killing. When court convened the peddler was tried for murder and convicted. A few weeks later he was hung.

5. A small circus was traveling through the county and a show had been given at Westville, and another was to be given at some place southeast on the following day. The showman carried several wild animals, which were carried in cages. In one of the cages he carried a huge python. He also had two elephants and some camels, which traveled on foot with his horses. As the show was passing near Mr. Boggan's plantation, the wagon, in which the cage of the python was carried broke down and a stop had to be made for repairs. There was no shop that could do the work required, nearer than Westville, so the python's cage was set off on the ground, and the wagon carried back to Westville. It was too late in the day to get the work done in time to move on, so it was decided to camp for the night, and get an early start the next morning.

The animals were all fed and bedded down for the night, and as everyone was tired, the camp was soon asleep. To the showman's great surprise, it was found the next morning that the python by some means had escaped from its cage and was nowhere to be found. The showman was greatly disturbed. The python had cost him a large sum of money, and besides he did not know what damage it might do.

He came over to Mr. Boggan's place and related the matter to him and secured his help in capturing the snake. Dogs were carried to the camp and put on trail of the python, but they paid no attention to it. Mr. Boggan sent for some neighbors and explained the situation to them and secured their promise that it would not be killed if found. Several men rode thru the woods most of the day looking for it, but found no trace of it. Mr. Boggan tried to get some of his slaves to join in the hunt, but it, was useless. They were too afraid, in fact, it was hard to keep them from shutting themselves in their cabins, and as night came on they were almost in a panic.

The next day the hunt was renewed, but nothing was heard of the snake until late in the afternoon, when a trapper came to the home of Mr. Boggan. Under great excitement he stated that he had seen a snake in the swamp that was forty feet long and was swallowing an ox.

Word was at once sent to the camp and the showman was informed of the whereabouts of the snake. The excitement then was immense and everybody who could get a horse to ride, went with the trapper and the showman to the place where the snake had been seen. However, when they reached the place, the snake could not be found, night had come on. The showman was sure that if the snake had swallowed some animal it would not go very far that night and besides he found no one who would stay with him any longer. In fact, everybody went home and all doors and windows were carefully closed.

The stories that were going through the neighborhood were getting on everybody's nerves. One man reported that he found the trail of a snake that was two feet wide, and another that he had seen what he first took to be a log running through the woods. Fearing that he had been bewitched, he had gone at full speed until he reached home. One man said that he came on it unexpectedly in the woods and it rose straight up fully fifteen feet. He said he had his gun, but forgot to shoot it. In fact, he said he did not take time to shoot.

The next day the showman captured the snake and got it back in the cage. It was not known how it was captured, but Mr. Boggan said it had swallowed a fawn and was sluggish so it was easily caught. He said it was nearly twenty feet long and very large.

6. Mrs. McKennon told of another incident that caused much excitement during her stay at James Boggan's place. It was the report that there was a were-wolf or loup-garou, in the neighborhood. Many sheep had recently been killed or stolen, and the owners had not been able to account for the loss. Nearly all the settlers owned sheep and the sale of wool was an important source of income. Some men had several hundred sheep and on account of the wolves kept a man with dogs to look after them during the day and had them driven into a strong stockade and shut in during the night. Even then the wolves would sometimes dig in and kill a great number of sheep.

The report that there was a were-wolf in the neighborhood came largely from the Indians, who fully believed in their existence. This report was further confirmed by the statement of an old fortune teller, that it was perfectly possible for a man to turn himself into a were-wolf or loup-garou. It was believed by the Indians that were-wolves would eat children and that when they once ate a child they would eat nothing else.

The news spread through the neighborhood like wildfire. Everybody was on the lookout for the were-wolf, and the children were carefully locked in when night came on. About that time a new terror was added by the fact that a small child had been found in a thicket partly devoured .

Mr. Boggan and several other men saw that something had to be done to allay the excitement. They did not believe the story of the were-wolf, but that did not prevent others from believing it.

Then, too, an old trapper, who lived alone in a small hut a few miles east of the Boggan plantation, was reported to be absent. He was already looked on with suspicion, as he was surly and quarrelsome, and many people said he had the appearance of an animal, as he had unusually long arms and huge hands, though his feet were small. He wore no beard, but had a heavy shock of hair that grew very low on his forehead., almost meeting his heavy eyebrows. He kept some dogs that appeared to be half wolf and were very fierce. He was frequently absent for many days at a time. Nobody knew where he went nor what his business was, but he always had plenty of money. It was believed by many people that he could change himself into a were-wolf and drive sheep out of the country and sell them.

This belief was further confirmed by the report that a year or two before he had been seen in Mobile with a drove of sheep, but when the man who saw him spoke to him and called him by his name, he told the man he was mistaken and that he had never lived in Simpson County. However, when the man returned home, he rode over to the trapper's hut and found that he was absent. This same man was now sure that the trapper had changed himself into a were-wolf for the purpose of driving sheep out of the county.

It was decided to take a wolf hunt as whether there was a were-wolf or not, there were so many wolves in the county that it was almost impossible to protect the sheep, calves and hogs from them. It was agreed that the hunt

would start on Tuesday morning. When Tuesday morning came, fifteen or twenty men arrived at the Boggan plantation., bringing with them perhaps a hundred dogs.

It was decided to go east as there were a large number of wolves in the hills east of the Boggan plantation. She did not know anything about where they went, but they were gone until late in the afternoon. No trace of the were-wolf had been found, but a large number of wolves had been killed and strange to say, the most of the hunters believed that the werewolf was still out in the hills, because the body of an old trapper had been found on the bank of a creek, several miles from the Boggan's place. It had been partly devoured and was badly decomposed. Nobody knew the old man and the next day a few men took shovels and dug a grave and buried him. Some were quite sure he had been killed by the were-wolf.

The second day as a small group of men rode through the woods, they saw a man on foot beckon to them, and when they rode up to him, he stated that he had just a few minutes before seen a large gray wolf all alone coming up the other side of the hill. He said it was the largest wolf he had ever seen, and that it was almost white. Three men dismounted and while the others held their horses they went hurriedly to the top of the hill, which was very steep just as they reached the top, the wolf suddenly appeared, almost in front of them, but in a flash he was gone. They ran on over the hill, thinking they would get a shot at it through the open woods, but it had vanished utterly. They called the other men, who came at once with the dogs, but the dogs never struck trail of the wolf. All then rode on in pursuit of the wolf for more than a mile, but it was never found. A small pack of wolves was found later in the day, but they scattered in all directions and very few were killed.

The hunters were much disturbed over the phantom wolf, and never could explain its getting away from them so easily. Later it was found that there was a cave in the side of the hill, and that wolves often had dens in the cave.

Several days were spent in hunting the were-wolf but with no success. Fifteen or twenty wolves had been killed. They had also killed four panthers, and Mr. Boggan brought home the skin of a black panther and had it properly cured and dressed. It made a beautiful rug.

A few days after the wolf hunt, the old trapper, who had been under suspicion, came over to Mr. Boggan's place and told him he had come to him for protection, as he had been informed by an Indian that he was going to be robbed and murdered that night for some money that they thought he had. Mr. Boggan told him he was welcome to stay. After supper he complained about a pain about his heart and went to his room and to bed. The next morning when he was called to breakfast, it was found that he was dead. Nobody ever knew where he came from, or what his real name was. Later in the day it was found that his dogs had been killed and his home burned. If he had any money it was never found.

7. Mrs. McKennon told me that one of the most enjoyable Thanksgiving day she ever spent was at the home of James Boggan. Several days before Thanksgiving, hogs, beef, deer and wild turkeys were killed; the cooks were busy baking cakes, pies and puddings and bread. Hams, bread, and potatoes were baked in dirt ovens out in the yard; other things were cooked on fires in the kitchen hearth. Neighbors were invited and early in the morning there was a large number of people arriving on horseback and on foot. A few came in wagons, but she did not remember seeing a buggy or carriage.

Several tables were set end to end in the long dining room so that they appeared to be a single table; then the food was brought in until it was fairly loaded with meats, pies, puddings, custards, cakes, pumpkins, potatoes, rice, jellies, preserves and other things too numerous to mention. When everybody was seated, an old preacher

at the head of the table, gave a prayer which was followed by large goblets of eggnog to give everybody a "good appetite."

It was a wonderful feast and was enjoyed by all present. After the dinner was served, Mr. Boggan told the cooks to prepare the same kind of dinner for the slaves. He asked the old preacher to remain in the dining room and pronounce a prayer for them. "He stated that what he had was made by their efforts and that it was right that they should have the same kind of dinner that he had. He was careful to see that they were furnished with all things that had been served with the first table. They were not to be given scraps and leavings, but to have the best of everything and to have all that they could eat. After the old preacher's prayer for them they were served eggnog and then such a feast as they had never saw before, and had never seen since. It was a scene she could never forget.

After dinner was cleared away, Mr. Boggan told the slaves that he wanted them to give the visitors some of their own songs, and in order to give zest to their songs, he gave them an extra glass of eggnog. She had never heard them sing their native songs, but they had wonderful voices. One thing she noted was that their songs had the under-current of sadness, like the songs of the oppressed.

Four of the slaves had been brought from Africa, and they took no part in the songs that were sung by the others, but when the singing was over, Mr. Boggan gave them another glass of eggnog and asked them to give some of their chants. Standing up with their faces turned skyward, they began in a low mournful tone, which gradually grew stronger and higher in pitch, until they seemed in some strange trance; they turned and whirled as if in some ecstasy. They seemed perfectly oblivious to their surroundings. As they gave voice to their weird and mysterious melodies they seemed almost like beings from some other world. She said that as she stood and heard them and watched them, she could imagine them on the far away banks of the Congo River, and she wondered what thoughts could be passing through their souls.

8. Mrs. McKennon, the lady from Massachusetts, told me of another incident that occurred during the visit to the home of James Boggan where her sister was boarding.

Mr. Boggan had a bad spell of pneumonia just after Christmas, and on the advice of neighbors, he employed an overseer. He had never employed an overseer before and was afraid the man employed would abuse his slaves. But he decided it was necessary to get the spring plowing started as well as to sow wheat and oats, it would be better to have some one to manage the farm.

The man employed was about 50 years old and had the reputation of being a first class farmer, although inclined to be hard on slaves. He started off very well and for a few weeks the slaves were treated very much as Mr. Boggan treated them.

The overseer always carried a heavy whip, and it was soon found that he was ready to use it on very little provocation, and often for very frivolous things. One thing the overseer required of the slaves who were plowing, was to curry the mules well every morning before putting the harness on. That was often a cold job at that time of year, as all the slaves were required to eat breakfast and be at the horse lot by daybreak or before. One cold morning, in January, snow began falling about the time they reached the horse lot, but the overseer said it would soon stop and to go ahead with their work. He went to his room for a few minutes and when he returned he asked three slaves why they hadn't curried their mules. They said they had, but he was not at all satisfied with the way the mules had been curried, and in quite a rage, he ordered the youngest of the three slaves to go into the harness house, and then followed him and shut the door. He gave the slave a terrible whipping, and when he let him out the slave was bleeding in several places on his back and arms. The next

youngest slave was ordered into the harness house and he was beaten terribly and there was blood on his clothing when he was let out. The other slave was one of the slaves who came from Africa, and his name was George. When ordered into the harness house, he hesitated for a minute or more, but the overseer began to curse him, and he went in. There was a grind stone near the harness house where axes and other tools were sharpened, and before the overseer went into the harness house to whip George he stopped at the grind stone and sharpened his knife. A slave woman who was present, thinking the overseer was going to kill George, ran out of the lot screaming "He gwine to kill George," and of course George could hear her and he no doubt saw the overseer sharpening his knife, as the harness house was made of logs and was unceiled. George had only one method of fighting and that was by butting, and he could hit his opponent with great force. He was doubtless in great fear of his life, and when the overseer opened the door and started in, George came out. Nobody knew how it was done, but the next thing the slaves knew, the overseer was down and George was running away. They were afraid to touch the overseer, but ran for Mr. Boggan. He was in bed but sent a neighbor, who had called to see what had happened. When he reached the harness house he found the overseer lying on the ground quite still. He had the slaves pick him up and carry him to the house, but before they reached the house he was dead.

The average American eats about four pounds of peas per year, according to Dr. Lawrence Van Miers of the National Cannery Association.

The green pea wasn't canned until 1881. But peas, were concealed in the tombs of Egyptian kings and were sacred to the Norse god Thor. They were favored by the royal ladies of 17th century France as the fashionable thing to eat before retiring. The pea was also the favorite vegetable of Thomas Jefferson. - Press-Enterprise

The Port of New Orleans is the second largest in the nation, banding annual cargo totals exceeded only by New York. - N.E.A.

"DR" GEORGE BARNES

Simpson County was created-January 23, 1824 by an Act of the Legislature, but the county seat was not located until the following year. On February 4, 1825, an Act of the Legislature was approved appointed Peter Stubbs, Jacob Carr, JAMES BOGGAN, Robert Laird, James B. Satterfield, William Herring and Daniel McCaskill as a committee to locate a permanent seat of justice within three miles of the center of the county, and ordering that a county tax be assessed to provide for the construction of county buildings. This act specified the size of the town, the width of the streets, etc.

Soon afterwards, the committee located the county seat at Westville. At that time Westville was only a cross road place where a grocery was kept, and where a store and tan yard were owned by Nathaniel Freeman, an early pioneer, but after the county seat was located, Westville became the rendezvous for all sorts of adventurers seeking locations in the new frontier. Some came to stay, but most of them were transient and soon moved on. There were Indian traders fur traders, gamblers, thieves and "never do wells" from all parts of the eastern states. However, some bought land and erected buildings but even then they soon moved away. A few remained and prospered, and many of their descendants are citizens of the county today.

As in all new towns, there was a lot of work to be done. Nearly all buildings were made of hewn logs. The work was hard and many men were hurt while at work. Besides that many were hurt in fights and cutting affrays on the streets and in the saloons. Doctors were scarce and the few who claimed to be doctors, were nothing but quacks. Some were not able to read and write, but were often called on when people were sick or hurt. Fortunately, they didn't kill everybody who sent for them, and some of them acquired a considerable reputation for curing common ailments. One of the "most powerful" remedies was bleeding, and if unfortunately they sometimes bled a patient to death, they never placed the blame on themselves. It often happened that a workman

would have an arm or leg broken. Then those quacks it were up against it. They knew that something had to be done, and done at once. If an arm or leg had to be amputated, it meant the death of the sufferer. There scarcely was an exception.

One day in the spring of 1826, a man giving his name as George Barnes, rode into Westville and engaged a room for the summer. He said that he was from Baltimore and was taking the first vacation in ten years and wanted to spend a few months in a new country. He dressed well, and was a fine marksman. He made friends rapidly, and always invited others to go with him on his hunting trips. He cared nothing for the game he killed and always gave it away, but did keep a few panther skins for himself.

Thomas I. Brooks, the County Coroner, at that time, often hunted with Barnes and they became good friends

In the early part of the summer, Brooks had the misfortune to get his leg broken by a fall from a horse. He was carried home in great pain, and one of the local doctors was sent for, then some of the family sent for the other doctor. Neither knew what should be done but finally decided that the leg would have to be amputated. They were disputing about the best way to proceed, when Barnes came in. He had heard of the accident and that the two quacks were treating Brooks, and fearing the worst, hurried over to see Brooks.

When he learned that they were going to amputate the leg, he knew that something bad to be done and at once. He walked over to the bedside and said "Let me examine the leg, perhaps it can be saved." The quacks resented his remarks and told him that it was their case and to get away or they would put him out of the house. Barnes told them to try it if they dared. Brooks then asked the Sheriff, who was present, to let Barnes treat him, and Barnes proceeded to examine the broken leg. He found that it was badly broken, but thought it could be saved. He immediately went to work and everybody was astonished at his skill in setting and bandaging the broken leg, even the quacks had to acknowledge that it was well done, but it was very apparent that they felt great resentment towards Barnes.

A few days after the Brooks accident, two fur traders engaged in a fight in one of the saloons in Westville, and both were terribly cut with knives. When separated, it was thought that both would die, and Barnes was sent for by friends of both men. Neither one wanted anyone else. Barnes was near by and went at once to see the men. Both had been carried to the same boarding house. Barnes saw that they were dangerously wounded. He said to the people standing around that he didn't come to Westville to practice medicine, but that in a case of that kind, he would do the best he could.

He asked some one to send for the two quacks, Watson and Thompson, as he did not want them to think he was trying to take their practice away from them. Thompson came and Barnes asked him to help dress the wounds of the two men. Thompson did the best he knew and appeared to be delighted to have a chance to work with Barnes. In a few hours they had the wounds of the men dressed, and Barnes asked Thompson to call on him at any time he needed assistance.

In the course of a month there were a considerable number of wounded men brought to Westville for treatment and every one wanted Barnes called at once. Barnes never refused, but always sent for Watson and Thompson, but Watson never came, and Barnes soon noticed that Watson never spoke to him, when they met in the street. Watson also became very unfriendly with Thompson.

One day Brooks' little boy came home very much excited and told his father that he had heard Watson's little boy say that his "pappy" was going to kill "that fellow Barnes." Brooks was getting able to get about on

crutches, and he hobbled over to the Courthouse and told Barnes to be on his guard, as Watson might attempt to kill him. He also told Sheriff Briggs to watch Watson.

A few weeks later, Barnes and Thompson went hunting a few miles north of town. A farmer living near Strong River had reported seeing a panther near his home and asked Barnes to come and kill it, as he was afraid to try to kill it himself. By good luck Barnes and Thompson found the panther in a large oak tree and killed it. As a number of people in Westville had asked them to bring the panther back with them, if they killed it, they fastened it on Barnes' horse behind the saddle and started to Westville.

When they reached Brown's Creek, a mile north of Westville, they stopped to let their horses drink. While the horses were drinking a shot was fired from a thicket and Barnes was struck in his left arm. His horse became frantic and threw him off into the water, and as it was already excited by having the panther lashed on its back, it made a dash for Westville. Thompson jumped off of his horse and went to the assistance of Barnes. About that time another shot was fired and Thompson said he got a glimpse of Watson in the thicket, but saw no one else. Handing his bridle reins to Barne's and seizing his gun, he rushed into the thicket before Watson could reload his gun.

Thompson was a very strong man and soon outran Watson and caught him. Then taking Watson's gun, they went back to where Barnes was standing. Barnes was trying to cut his sleeve off so he could bandage the arm. He said the bone was not broken but it was a bad wound. Thompson made Watson help Barnes get on his horse and they all started to Westville.

Barnes' horse had gone into Westville at great speed, and had run into a fence and fallen. Before it could get up again, some men caught it and took off the dead panther and saddle, and carried the horse to a stable. Not knowing what happened a number of men mounted their horses and started north in a gallop. About half way to the creek they met Barnes, Thompson and Watson, and soon found out what had been done. When they reached Westville, Thompson dressed Barnes' arm, and Sheriff Briggs carried Watson to Monticello and placed him in jail. A few weeks later he escaped and was heard of no more. Later in the year Watson's family moved away, but told no one what their destination was to be.

About the time Barnes was shot, some busy-body, who had written to Baltimore to get the "low-down" on Barnes, received a letter from the Postmaster of Baltimore stating that Barnes was a noted surgeon and was the Superintendent of a great hospital in Baltimore, but was away on vacation. In the early fall, Barnes returned to Baltimore. He made many friends while in the county and all regretted his going. He had never charged anything for his services and would not accept anything that was offered him.

B K

Note: There is no mention of Sheriff Briggs in the Simpson County Line-up , but there were three men of the Briggs name in the 1930 Census.



THE BUCKSKIN SUIT

Walter Champion, a nephew of Francis Grubbs, came to Simpson County about 1829. He came with a party of immigrants from North Carolina in the fall of that year and remained in the county until the following spring. He was a man of very commanding appearance, dressed well, and was well educated. He would have attracted attention anywhere, but in a new country where almost everybody dressed in home-made clothes, his neat tailor-made clothes and fine manners gave him a distinction that few others, possessed.

Besides visiting relatives in the county, he was anxious to see the Great Southwest, as the country was called at that time, and also to see the Indians of the country. He rode a very fine mare, and as soon as he reached the county and had arranged to stay with his uncle for a short time, he began to ride about his new surroundings. He visited all the Indian villages in the county, and at the village of Red Cloud, the Six Town Chief, near the head of Sellers Creek, he made a great "hit" for Red Cloud took such a fancy to him that he wanted to adopt him as a son and make him a chief. Champion told him that he would have to study about that for several " moons". That seemed to satisfy Red Cloud, as he felt sure that Champion could not resist such a grand offer. Almost every week Champion would visit Red Cloud and talk with him about things that would be of interest to the Indians.

At that time there was a great deal of talk about moving the Indians to what was then known as the Indian Territory. The Six Towns were much opposed to the move, but in case that they did have to move, they wanted to be protected by some white man in whom they had full faith and confidence and Champion seemed to be the very man they wanted. At that time, nearly all the Indians wore buckskin suits and a great many white men wore buckskin clothes.

When new they were warm and comfortable, but as they got old, they were very uncomfortable, and white men would not wear them if they could get other clothing. At that time clothing was made at home from wool and cotton and in almost every home was a spinning wheel and loom. The wool and cotton was first carded into rolls and then spun into thread on the spinning wheels and afterwards woven into cloth on the looms. Home-made dyes were made from logwood, which made black; sumac berries for purple, while boiled coperas and onion skins furnished different shades of yellow. Much of the cloth was well made, but a great deal was not, and very few clothes were well made.

Champion brought two or three suits of clothing with him, and he soon discovered that Red Cloud was very anxious to secure one of them, but as he was not a trader and had nothing to sell to the Indians, Red Cloud felt that it would be an insult to offer to buy the suit he wanted. He finally fell on another plan that he thought would succeed and it did.

He and Champion were both about the same size, being six feet high, perfectly straight and well built. So he had a buckskin suit made pretendedly for himself, but really made for Champion. He was very careful and saw that it was made in the "very latest style". The softest and lightest of buck-skin was used, and the trousers were in the usual Indian style, but the coat was more modern. It had a wide collar that reached to the shoulders and was trimmed with buck-skin fringe nearly two inches wide. The sleeves were gathered in tight fitting cuffs, 'like our modern shirts. The body of the coat extended to the waist to which it was attached. Around the bottom of the coat the fringe was about three inches wide. Down the front of the coat were large gilt buttons. This suit represented the highest type of Indian art, and was indeed a beautiful piece of work.

When the buck-skin suit was finished, Red Cloud sent it to Champion., with the request that he accept it as a present from the' Chief Red Cloud.

Champion liked the suit and wore it several times before he saw Red Cloud again. However, his uncle, Francis Grubbs, told him that Red Cloud would expect a good suit in return, or he would expect something else of equal value. Champion had two good pistols, but didn't like to part with them, and the suits he had with him had been worn, so he was at a loss for something to give him.

He then decided to go to Natchez and buy a suit for Red Cloud. His uncle had told him that Indians liked bright colors and to remember that he was buying a suit for an Indian instead of a white man. So, after trying several clothing stores in Natchez, he found a suit of blue broadcloth with gilt buttons and gold braid on the collar and sleeves. It was made very much like the army uniforms of that time and was really a handsome suit.

When he returned from Natchez he sent the suit to Red Cloud by his uncle, with many apologies for being so late in returning the gift made him. Red Cloud was delighted with the new suit and wore it on all important occasions.

By that time, the first signs of spring were appearing and Champion's visit was about over. He had enjoyed it immensely. He had seen the real west as it really was. He had seen the Indian as they lived in their villages, had seen the wild game, had hunted some, though he cared very little for hunting; had attended dances, house raisings and log rollings; had seen what a fine sturdy race of pioneer settlers had come to this county, and wished that he might remain. But business matters in North Carolina required him there. About a week before the time he had fixed for returning home, he received a message from Red Cloud stating that he wished to see him at once. The message told him that Red Cloud had contracted pneumonia and was very sick and that he must hurry if he wished to see him again.

As quickly as possible he caught his horse and started for Red Cloud's village. He reached there just in time for Red Cloud to grasp his hand and mutter with his dying breath, "Take care of my people, make great chief." The Six Towns gave Red Cloud a grand funeral and Champion had his opportunity of attending one of the Indian cries, which came after the burial and lasted for several days. The Indians came from all the surrounding villages for many miles around and spent several days at the cry, winding up with a great feast; after which all the men got drunk. When a man got drunk enough to stagger, four squaws would rush on him with a blanket, push him over and throw the blanket over him. They would stand on the corners of the blanket until he got still. They kept this up until all the drunks were laid out. The squaws then finished the feast. When the men sobered up, all went home, the men riding their ponies and the squaws walking alone behind them and carrying their loads.

Champion attended the cry and was very much interested in the strange performances, as he had never seen anything like that before. Sometime after the cry a delegation of Indians visited him and insisted that he go with them in case they had to go west.

They also wanted to make him chief, but he told them he had to return to his people in the east. He promised to visit them again if possible. A short time before he left, he was invited to attend a dance over on the other side of the creek and about dark he and a few other young men started to the dance.

As the creek was up and the ford bad, they walked and crossed the creek on a foot log that is, all got across without any trouble except Champion. He was not used to walking foot logs, and in some way slipped off into the creek. By the time he got out he was quite wet, and as the night was cold, they all hurried on to the dance. Champion stopped at a big log fire on the outside of the house to warm and dry his clothes. He had worn his buck-skin suit and the first thing he knew it had drawn up until he could scarcely move, much less dance. There

was nothing to do but go back to his uncle's house and get the suit off. He managed to get out of the coat, but the trousers had to be cut off of him.

Mississippi State Motto:
Latin: Virtute et Armis
English: By Valor and Arms



ELI MITCHELL

Eli Mitchell came from South Carolina and settled two miles south of the Rials Creek Mill in 1823. He was a millwright (a mechanic who installs or maintains mills and other machinery) and carpenter, and when not otherwise engaged did a lot of hunting and trapping. He had taken up a small tract of wild land and built a small cabin during the winter and had also cleared a few acres of land. He was a single man at that time but expected to be married the following fall.

The little cabin he first built was made of round logs chinked with mud. The roof was made of boards which were laid on the lathing and fastened down by long poles laid across them. The poles were fastened at the ends by strips of leather or rawhide and held the boards very well. Nails were almost unknown at that time, as all that could be secured, had to be made at a blacksmith shop. At odd times Eli was busy hewing logs for a better house, which he planned to build in the fall.

The little cabin had a dirt floor and dirt chimney, and only one door. There was a small window at the side of the chimney, which was used for taking in wood for the fires. Both door and window were fastened by wooden latches lifted by a buck-skin string. Eli had a small bed in one corner of the cabin, a few cooking utensils and two small benches instead of chairs. He kept two large dogs and a gun. The gun was kept on a "rack" just over the door. The rack was made of two forked sticks fastened to the wall.

Eli! soon made a lot of acquaintances in the neighborhood and kept on the best of terms with everybody that he knew. One day in the early fall he had the misfortune to cut his foot while hewing logs and was "laid up" for several days. It happened that Ed Brilland, who lived only a mile or two away, heard of Eli's misfortune and came over to see him. Ed noticed that Eli was rather "short" on meat and suggested sending, or bringing him a quarter of venison, as he was going deer driving the next day. He also requested the loan of Eli's two dogs, as they were very fine deer dogs. Eli told him to take them. So Ed took the dogs and that afternoon brought Eli a very nice quarter of venison, but stated that the drive had not been very successful and asked for the loan of the dogs for the next day, to which Eli consented.

Before leaving, Ed advised Eli to keep fires burning all night if possible, as wolves would probably smell the fresh venison and dig under the sills of the house and get it if Eli went to sleep and left no fire burning. Ed placed a few turns of pine knots on the little shelf at the side of the chimney, and again advised Eli to be on the lookout for wolves as he would have no dogs to guard the house.

Eli made some strong coffee and sat by the fire a long time smoking his pipe. About nine o'clock, judging by the stars, he heard the howl of a wolf, which was soon followed by that of many others howling. Eli had never had much experience with wolves but he was determined that they should not get the venison. He decided to spread a blanket down by the fire and prop himself against the wall and await results, He had his gun lying beside him and had not lain there long before the wolves seemed to have all gathered around the house. Pretty soon he heard scratching at one of the sills. He got up and sat on a bench, waiting to see the first wolf that made his appearance.

But very soon the wolves left very suddenly, and it was more than an hour before he heard them again and then they seemed to be very far away in the woods. Knowing that they traveled very fast, he decided to throw some knots on the fire, and remain on the blanket. Unexpectedly he dropped off to sleep. He did not know that he had been asleep until he was awakened by a scratching on the roof of his cabin. Very quietly he raised himself and took up his gun and waited to see what would happen. He did not think a wolf could be on the roof of the house, but knew it was some large animal. As the boards were loosely held down by the poles it was very easy to get them displaced.

The fire had burned very low but still there was enough light to see anything that might enter the house. Presently he saw the nose of some animal shoved down between the boards. He lifted his gun and waited for it to shine its eyes, and as soon as he saw its eyes he shot. There was no outcry, but he heard a large animal apparently fall off the roof. He was afraid to go out as his dogs were away, but as soon as daylight came he took his gun and went out to see what, if anything, he had killed. To his great surprise a large black panther lay dead at his door.

GEORGE AND JANE JENKINS

George Jenkins and his wife, Jane, were among the early settlers of the county. They came all the way from Georgia in a cart, bringing all their belongings. The cart was furnished with shafts (the bars between which a horse or ox is harnessed to a vehicle) and was drawn by an ox. They also brought a cow and her calf. The cow was hitched to the back of the cart, and George usually walked behind to keep the calf going. Jane drove the ox. They reached the county probably in 1825 and settled a short distance east of Okatoma Creek. It was their intention to go further, but there was an overflow of the creek, and winter was nearly over, so they decided to stop. They found a deserted settlement, and were told that the owner had moved further west. The land was public anyway, but that made no difference with George. Plenty of land could be had for the asking, and besides he had no money to pay for a patent.

This settlement consisted of a small log house of one room with dirt chimney and dirt floor, a small crib for corn, and a very small stable. The stable door was so low that the ox could not go under the top doorsill, but the cow could easily get in. George would drive the cow into the stable at night and leave the calf outside. There was a small clearing, which had been cultivated the year before. George broke the land with the ox, letting it out at night to graze. This worked very well for a short time, but George soon found that the ox would not come home in the morning. He was losing too much time hunting the ox. He decided to put the ox in the stable at night and let the cow run outside. To do this he had to cut in to the upper doorsill half way and split off the lower half of the sill. This left a flat surface with sharp edges for the upper sill. The ox could barely enter the stable without scraping its shoulders on the doorsill. By keeping the ox in the stable at night, he got along very well with his plowing, but had to buy feed for the ox. The ox had the bad habit of breaking fences, so George was much worried as he feared to let the ox out at all.

One morning about "daylight, George was awakened by the distressful bawling of his cow. He knew she was near the stable and wondered how she came to be there. He ran down to the lot gate and started to go in, but just

at that time, saw a large animal which he took to be a dog, crouching at the door of the stable. The cow still bawling for life, appeared to be in the stable and the stable door was open. He started to go into the lot, when he saw the ox coming at full speed. As the ox came up he started to lunge at the animal at the stable door. As the ox made its lunge, it gave a bellow of rage, but the animal, at the same time sprang toward the ox, went over the head of the ox and landed squarely on the back of the ox, fastening its teeth in his back and ripping the sides of the ox with its terrible claws.

The ox gave a loud cry of distress and ran. It made the circuit of the little stable, then at full speed dashed into the stable door. As it went in the sharp upper sill of the door scraped the animal that was on him from his back. It had been caught so suddenly that its hips rolled up and broke its back. It fell off to the ground unable to get away. George called to Jane to bring his gun and when he shot it, found that it was a large panther.

The ox was terribly lacerated, and very bloody, but soon got well. George said he would never part with his ox, and that fall hitched up and went on west.



JOHN C. HALFORD

From the organization of the county in 1824 until adoption of the Constitution of 1832, the justices of the peace of Simpson County were appointed by the governor. The first justice of the peace to hold court at Westville was John C. Halford, who was appointed by Governor Walter Leake. Halford was a native of the Eastern states and one of the first settlers of Simpson County.

He was a large man of rather commanding appearance, wore a heavy red beard, had a strong, booming voice and attracted attention almost anywhere. He was a man of some education and the owner of a few slaves. He did some farming, but his principal business was trading with the Indians for furs and selling whiskey. Just before he was appointed justice of the peace, he opened a saloon on the north side of the road at Westville.

The building was of logs and was about twenty feet square. There was a large door at the south end next to the road and a chimney and door at the rear. The bar was on the east side of the building and two large oak trees in front near the road furnished shade. When the weather was good Halford held court under the trees in front of his saloon, but in the winter, or when the weather was bad, he held court in the saloon. He always had an “eye for business” and never let the trial of a case interfere with the liquor business. So, no matter when a customer came in for a drink, the court proceedings stopped until the sale was made. Sometimes if there was but one customer he would tell the litigants to proceed as the court was listening. If a number of customers came in together, court would recess until they were gone.

Halford always carried two pistols, which he said he carried in order to uphold the majesty of the law. Very few objections were made to his ruling and strange to say, very few appeals were taken from his court. Almost all matters brought before him were criminal cases and all of them were promptly tried.

At that time there was no jail in the county and whipping was the punishment for misdemeanors by the slaves, who were always punished by being given thirty-nine lashes on their bare backs. Halford had a whipping post set half way between the two oak trees and when a whipping was to take place, a large crowd always gathered

to witness it. This, of course, brought business to Halford's saloon and made it one of the most popular gathering places in the county.

Court was always held on Saturday and people came early from the surrounding neighborhood to see what was going on in court. The whippings were of great interest to the Indians, so that on Saturdays there would be Indians from nearly all the villages to witness any whippings that took place.

The Indians were tried by their own laws, unless they had trouble with white men. In that event they were tried in the county courts. However, I do not believe the Indians were subjected to whippings.

In 1832 Halford was a candidate for delegate to the Constitutional Convention, but was defeated by John B. Lowe.

I understand that he moved to the Republic of Texas about 1837

VICTOR BONDURANT

Victor Bondurant, a young Frenchman, came to Westville in 1825. He was a surveyor and assisted in laying out the town. He was well educated and of pleasing manner, was always well dressed, and was quite a favorite with all who knew him. He and Franklin E. Plummer selected the site for the courthouse and he helped construct the first courthouse of the county.

He did a considerable amount of surveying in the county during the next few years and then built a store house on the east side of the courthouse and opened a mercantile business. His storehouse was built of long hewed logs. He slept in a small room at the back of the storehouse, which was shut off from the main store by a partition. Soon after he began business, he went to New Orleans and purchased a bill of goods, and included in the bill was a number of pocket knives, some of them being long, pearl handled knives, which were very expensive for that day, but were soon bought by the slave owners in the county.

On one of the pearl handled knives, which he kept for himself, he had his name engraved on the blade. He rarely used his knife. and no one knew of his name being engraved on the blade, with one exception; when he returned from New Orleans, he showed his new knife to Miss Rebecca Vanzandt, a young school teacher, who was teaching a small class of boys for certain slave owners. About a year later, he and Miss Vanzandt became engaged to be married and the day was set for the marriage. On the day they were to be married Bondurant failed to open his store and did not appear at his boarding house for breakfast. There was considerable comment about the store being closed, and about 11 o'clock, Miss Vanzandt asked Sheriff Farrington to investigate the matter.

Farrington and his deputy went to the store and called several times, but received no answer. He then broke the back door and went in. There he found Bondurant lying on the floor, with a long knife blade sticking through his heart. His body was cold and he had been dead for many hours. He was fully dressed, and his bed had not been disturbed, but the sheriff was not able to decide whether he had died before the hour of retiring, or after he had gotten up in the morning.

Before the body was moved, Farrington had an inquest held. The jury decided that Bondurant had committed suicide. Miss Vanzandt was present when the jury returned its verdict. She uttered a wild scream, and then said, "Mr. Farrington, let me see that knife."

The sheriff hesitated about handing the knife to Miss Vanzandt. He feared she might try to kill herself, but told her to wait until they reached his office. She quietly agreed and when they reached the sheriff's office, the knife

was handed to her. She examined it very carefully, then handed it back to the sheriff. She said "Mr. Bondurant was murdered."

She told the sheriff that after the funeral, she would talk to him. Before the funeral was held, Franklin E. Plummer reached home from Washington. He was greatly shocked at the death of his friend, Bondurant. He went at once to see Miss Vanzandt and told her that a few months before leaving Westville, Mr. Bondurant had a premonition that he would be killed and wanted his will drawn, and that he drew the will and had it in his office.

The will conveyed all his property to her and named Daniel L. Farrington, the sheriff as the executor. The will was then probated and Farrington took charge of the property. With the assistance of Plummer and Miss Vanzandt, he began a careful investigation of the killing of Bondurant. He found that the knife used was not the knife that Bondurant carried, as that knife had Bondurant's name engraved on the large blade, and the knife used to kill Bondurant had no such inscription.

He also found that Bondurant's gold watch and chain were missing. The little iron box in which Bondurant kept his money could not be found. Bondurant's business was in good shape and he had a considerable stock of goods. It was evident that he had been murdered and then robbed, but there was nothing to show how the murderer had entered the building.

It was finally decided that he must have had a key. A search was begun to find a lock similar to that of Bondurant's store, Farrington kept the store keys in his pocket and at intervals as he had a chance, but found none that could be opened with Bondurant's key.

A few weeks later he found that George Smith had placed a new lock on the front door of his store building and as he got a chance, he tried his key on Smith's lock and found that it would unlock and lock his store door. Smith was a young man about the age of Bondurant and had also been one of Miss Vanzandt's suitors. He was very popular and had the confidence of everybody.

A few people knew that his business was not in good shape. One of them was Plummer and when he found that Bondurant's key would fit Smith's store lock, he advised immediate action. An affidavit (a written statement made on oath) was made charging Smith with the murder of Bondurant, a warrant was issued and the sheriff arrested him. It produced a great sensation and many people came forward to assist in making bond for Smith, but he was lodged in jail until a trial could be had. After his arrest, a search was made and on his person, it was found he was carrying Bondurant's watch, as the watch he carried had the name of Victor Bondurant engraved on the lid, also in the store was found the knife on which was engraved Bondurant's name and in a sack of corn was found Bondurant's little iron box in which he kept his money.

Miss Vanzandt said that Bondurant told her that he had about \$1,000.00 in the box, but only a few hundred dollars were found in it.

The next morning Sheriff Farrington saw, from the courthouse, that the jail door was standing open. He went to the jail at once and stopping inside, found the jailer lying dead, with a knife sticking through his heart. The knife was exactly like the one used to kill Bondurant. Smith was gone and no trace of him was ever found.

LITTLE GEORGE MARSHALL

Little George Marshall had really a more remarkable escape from a wolf than he had from the bear. When the county was first settled, wolves were very numerous and very destructive to stock, especially, sheep, calves and colts. Frequently, they would run down and kill grown cattle, and even horses, if they found them in poor condition. It was almost impossible to trap them, or to get close enough to shoot them, as they were very sly. One plan that the early settlers fell upon was to dig what they called a wolf pit, which was covered with a trap door.

The Indians claimed that wolves followed certain trails pretty much like a deer, and it was said there was a wolf trail leading from the wolf pits east of Rials Creek Mill to the northwest part of the county, crossing Strong River a short distance south of the mouth of Rials Creek, and crossing Brown's Creek south of the home of Alfonso Smith, not far from James Marshall's place.

In the fall of 1831, Smith and Marshall, having lost so much stock on account of the wolves, decided to dig a wolf pit on what the Indians called the wolf trail. Wolf pits were usually about eight feet deep, about eight or nine feet long and six feet wide. They were dug deep enough to prevent the wolf from jumping out. The dirt from the pit would be carried some distance away, and the pit would be covered with a door made of slabs; the edges of the door just fitting in the edges of the pit. The door was swung from a pole laid across the pit near the center, in such a manner that it was very evenly balanced across the top of the pit.

After that was done the door would be lightly covered with dirt and pine straw, so that it was very hard to distinguish it from the ground around it. After the pit was built, it was usually or three weeks before it would be "baited". This was done by sprinkling blood along the trail for some distance, and by fastening small pieces of fresh meat under the edges of the trap door, at the sides. Wolves were always prowling through the woods, whether they were following a trail or not, and were frequently caught in the pits, as after "picking up" the blood trail until they reached the pit, they would begin scratching into the edge of the pit for meat, and when they stepped on the edge of the swinging door, it, would of course, drop down, and before the wolf could recover, it would fall into the pit.

The door would then swing back into place and the wolf was caught, and if the pit was very deep, it was almost impossible for it to escape. After the trap was baited somebody would go nearly every day to see if anything had been caught. This was necessary, because very often hogs, or cattle would fall in the pit. Every man who visited the pit would take with him a gig. This was a sharp pointed piece of iron with strong barbs, fastened to a long pole, and when a wolf was found in the pit, the door would be propped up and the wolf would be killed by first piercing its body with the gig, and then pulling it out of the pit by the barbs. Usually two men went together and when the wolf was pulled out of the pit by one man, the other would kill it with a club or axe. It was a cruel way to kill an animal, but nobody had pity for a wolf.

A few weeks before Christmas of 1831, little George Marshall was out in the woods hunting rabbits. He had one large dog with him, and carried a heavy stick, as his leg had not entirely healed. Down near the creek the dog got on the trail of some animal and was soon out of sight, and the next thing that he noticed was that the dog was barking at the wolf pit. He hurried to the pit, and found the dog was barking at something inside. He first tried to peep in but could see nothing. So he decided to raise the door just a little so he could look into the pit. But when he did, the dog plunged in, and George accidentally stepped on the door and went in himself. Fortunately the door did not close, as something obstructed it. In the pit was a large grey wolf, which the dog at once attacked. George screamed at the top of his voice, and the noise made by the boy and the wolf was terrific. Luckily Mrs. Smith was at Mrs. Marshall's house, and they heard the noise and feared that the boy was being killed. They started at once for the pit, and Mrs. Smith was thoughtful enough to grab the gig as she started. They also called the other dogs. They reached the pit just as the wolf had killed the dog and was apparently

fixing to attack the boy. They might have been too late to save him if the other two dogs had not gone into the pit. It was a furious fight and hard for George to keep out of the way and he was bitten several times before Mrs. Smith could spear the wolf with the gig. She held the wolf against the side of the pit until the dogs had finished it. About that time Mr. Marshall got there and took the boy and the dogs out of the pit. The wolf was dead when he pulled it out.

THE BEARS

Some time in the year 1830, Alphonzo A. Smith and his wife's brother, James Marshall, settled a few miles northeast of Westville, on the north side of what is known as Brown's Creek. They built a small house of logs, cleared a few acres of land, which they planted in corn and wheat, but they depended mostly on hunting and trapping "for a living" Smith's family consisted of himself, his wife and two small girls, one about nine and the other about seven years old. The members of Marshall's family were himself and wife and a small boy about eight years old.

During the winter of 1830 and 1831, Smith and Marshall hunted and trapped on the creeks nearby and on Strong River and by the time the trapping season was over, had a considerable number of beaver and other pelts, all in good condition. As the fur traders who came to Westville had not offered them as much as they thought their furs were worth, they decided to take them to Osceola, on Pearl River, as they heard that some traders were making up a load of furs and other products to be carried to New Orleans. Early one morning about the first of April they left home with their furs, carrying them on what was known as a "ground slide", pulled by a horse. They had two horses and one would ride a few miles, while the other led the horse that was pulling the slide, then they would change so as to rest the other man. The slide was to be left at Osceola when the furs were delivered.

While they were away from home Mrs. Marshall spent the time with Mrs. Smith and the children were allowed to go almost anywhere they pleased. The little Marshall boy, George, had fallen from a tree a month or more before that time and broken his leg, so that he had to walk on crutches. After dinner that day the two women and a neighbor, who had come in decided to do some quilting and were quite busy for several hours. In fact, so busy they had not thought how the time was passing, and having no "timepiece," it was nearly night before they noticed that the children had not returned since the dinner hour. Also it had begun to rain and the rain was cold. After calling the children and getting no answer, they became very much frightened and started hunting them. It so happened that the neighbor woman had just started home and she said she would have her husband come and help find the children, but by the time he reached their place it was quite dark. He had two boys, nearly grown, and they came with him, and he also brought his dogs. It had quit raining, and after they had prepared some long pine torches, they started hunting for the children. The women were almost frantic and insisted on going along and for an hour or more they hunted on the north side of the creek. Not being able to find any trace of them, Mrs. Smith suggested that they cross the creek, as they might have gone over to the bluffs on the south side.

The man said that was hardly possible, as the children knew that bears had their dens in the caves along the bottom of the bluff and would be afraid to go there. But the women insisted that they cross the creek, as it was shallow at that time and the children might have waded across. So they all crossed the creek and walked along the deer trail at the bottom of the bluffs. As they passed the caves, they would hold the torches high and look in. There were three caves and when they reached the third cave and looked in they heard the whimpering of the little bear cubs and the man said he was going to see if he could catch one. But just as he started to go into the cave he heard the old bear growling, so he stopped. But on looking closer he caught a glimpse of a child. So he called his boys to hold the torches while he crawled further in, and when he did, found all three of the children. He first thought they were dead, but when he took hold of them, found that they were asleep and

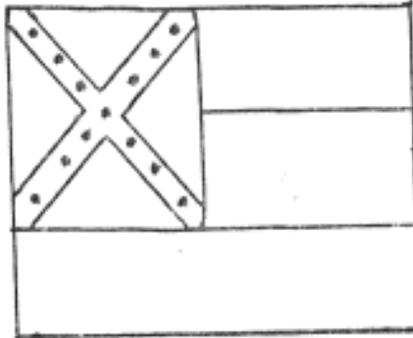
unhurt. When they were taken out they said that it started raining and they crawled into the cave and must have gone to sleep. They did not know the bears were in the cave.

Nobody could explain why they had not been killed by the old bear, as she must have passed them when she went into the cave to her cubs. The man said he would come back the next day and kill the bear. But Mrs. Smith said she did not want that done, for she wanted to be as good to the old bear as she had been to her. The children never forgot their night with the bears.

MISSISSIPPI STATE FLAG, adopted after the Civil War, is of three stripes, blue (on top), white (center) and red with a red union upon which appears a blue cross of Saint Andrew with 13 white stars.



The Brown Bear



Mississippi was the first state to ratify the 18th Amendment to the Constitution on Jan. 18, 1918 and, hence, the first to approve prohibition. On July 1, 1966, Mississippi became the last state to outlaw statewide prohibition.

Ed Dunlap

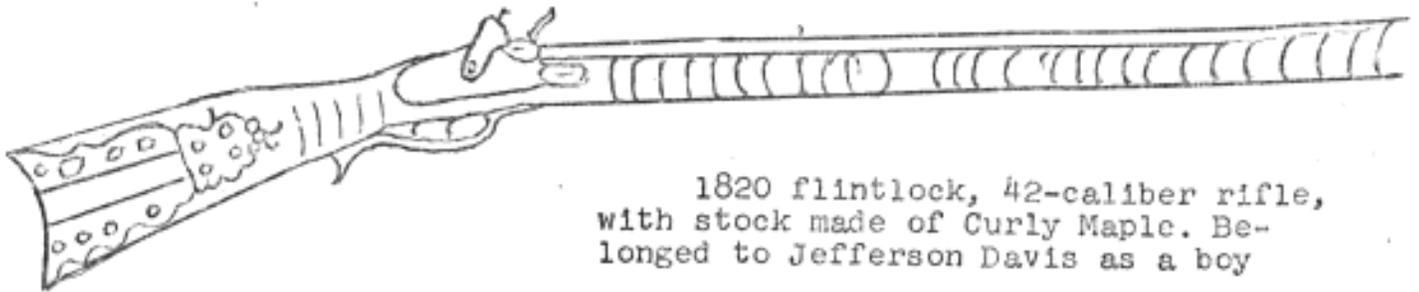
It has been said that the Lord takes care of children and fools, “for which God be Praised”, as old parson Dunlap remarked when he heard of his nephew, Ed Dunlap's encounter with the bear. The Dunlaps had settled along on the west side of Rials Creek about 1827. Parson Dunlap was a preacher and had organized a few churches in the county, but being of a restless disposition had moved to Rankin County, where he remained a few years and then moved to Hinds County.

Ed Dunlap was a ginwright and a carpenter. He first farmed in a small way, and about 1829 having inherited a few hundred dollars, decided to build a gin for himself. It was what was known in those days as a horse gin, as horses were used to furnish the power for operating the gin and press.

The gin house was built on large posts about ten feet high. Under the floor of the gin house was a system of cogged wheels which when turned kept the gin in operation. These wheels were turned by horse power, the horses moving in a circle around a large post which served as an axle for the lower wheel, the lower end of the post being set on an iron pivot fitted into a socket underneath. Long levers were fitted into the upright post and the horses were hitched to the ends of the levers and kept moving. When the gin was in operation, the presses used for pressing the bales of cotton were operated on nearly the same way. At the front of the gin house was an elevated platform used for loading the cotton into the house, also a wide door through which the cotton was carried. The gin house was also divided into stalls for placing the cotton of different owners.

Dunlap spent the entire spring and summer in getting his gin ready for the fall ginning. About the first of October he bought four small horses and announced that he was ready to begin ginning. There was not much ginning to be done, but as he never ginned over two bales a day and often times not more than one, he was kept

quite busy for a month or more. In those days nobody cared for the cotton seed, as they were of no value. Nearly everybody left the seed at the gin, and they were piled in the stalls where the owner could get them at planting time if he wanted.



1820 flintlock, 42-caliber rifle,
with stock made of Curly Maple. Be-
longed to Jefferson Davis as a boy



cogwheel

Dunlap had a few cows and he found that they would eat cotton seed and that it was easier to milk them while eating. So he built a fence around the gin lot and made a few troughs out of hollow trees for feeding the cows. His little daughter, Sue, who was about 12 years old, had learned to milk and it was her job to milk the cows every morning while her mother was cooking breakfast at least by daylight, or earlier. A person who waited until sunup to eat breakfast would have been considered slothful. (lazy)

One spring after Dunlap had built his gin, Sue got her pail and a basket and went to the gin lot to milk the cows. Setting down the pail, she took the basket and ran up the stairs and into the gin house to get some cotton seed for the cows. Dunlap had a large black dog named "Nig" and when Sue went to the pile of cotton seed, she saw Nig lying on the seed. He was in her way and she told him to move. But as he didn't move, she gave him a kick. He did not move for that, and as he was a rather quarrelsome dog, she decided to let him alone and went to another pile of seed where she filled her basket. She took another look at Nig as she came out, but as it was pretty dark in the house she did not bother him.

While she was milking she heard a rattling noise made by the feet of some animal coming down the gin house stairs and when she looked at it she saw it was not Nig, but a much larger animal. She did not wait to see what would happen but ran to the house as fast as possible and told her father. He at once said it certainly was a bear. As soon as he could load his flint and steel rifle, he called Nig and set out on the trail of the bear. Nig soon took the trail and it was not long before Dunlap heard the dog baying down at the bluffs on the creek. He hurried on as fast as possible and got there just in time to see the bear knock Nig clear over the bluffs.

Fearing his dog had been killed, Dunlap shot the bear and saw it fall over. But it was only stunned, for when Dunlap ran up with his knife to finish it, the bear suddenly rose up and confronted him; and as he attempted to strike it, the bear gave him a blow with his paw that laid open his right cheek and nearly put out his eye. The bear rushed on him, but fortunately he tripped and fell over the bluff into the creek.

When he finally got on the bluff again the bear was gone. He tried to get Nig to take the trail but Nig had had enough of bear hunting-and refused. So with that he picked up his gun and went home. He said he was not cut out for a bear hunter anyway. That summer Dunlap's gin got burned and he went back to Georgia.

WILLIAM GIBSON

William Gibson settled where Westville was afterwards located, about 1820 and by the time the county was organized in 1824, a considerable number of other settlers had located nearby. Edward F. Wingate, Charles B. Bowen, James Sanders, William McNulty, John C. Halford, Stephenson Smith, Harmon Powell, William Howard, John Berry, John George, Anthony Sutton, James Dear, Mathew Taylor, Jacob Neely, Southey Fisher, Jesse and Crawford Dear, Michael Hill, James D. Waldrop, and several others had settled within a few miles of Gibson's place. At that time it was the most thickly populated part of the county and largely for that reason the county seat was located at Gibson's house. It was the most central place in that neighborhood.

Gibson had a small store and a tan yard had been located on Tan Yard Creek, a water mill was also built on that creek. There was no courthouse there at that time and Gibson gave the county the use of his house for holding court and for use of the county officers until a courthouse could be built.

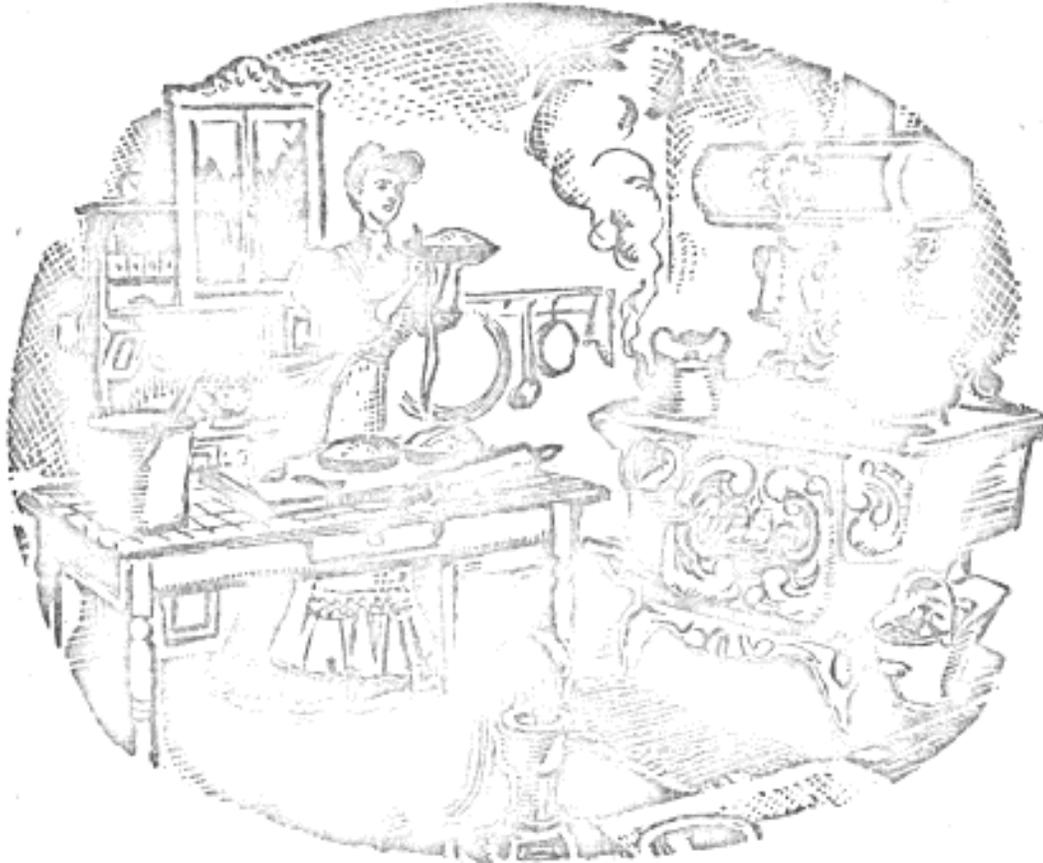
One of the front rooms was used for a court room when court was in session, but otherwise used for sleeping quarters for travelers. The two side rooms were used for the sheriff's office and the clerk's office, Justice of the Peace courts were held on the front porch or in the hallway, except in very cold weather. The Board of Police met four times a year and met in the clerk's office, as did the probate court. All of the first officers of the county were APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR. The first Sheriff was Richard Sparks; the first Clerk was H. I. Bennett; the first Assessor was Neal McNair; the first Coroner was Daniel McCaskill; the first Surveyor was Eli Nichols; the first Treasurer was JAMES BOGGAN, the first Notary Public was Daniel D. Farrington; the first Ranger was Gideon Rials; the first Judge of the Probate Court was Duncan McLaurin; the first associate justices were Willaim Morris, Peter Stubbs, Richard Nail and James B. Satterfield; the first Justices of the Peace were Lauchlin McLaurin, Jacob Carr, James Briggs, William McNulty, John C. Halford, Ralph R. Plummer and Ethelred Owens.

After the county seat was located, several lawyers from the eastern states located there. Franklin E. Plummer being the first to "hang out his shingle" in Westville. Plummer boarded at Gibson's house, as did most of the early adventurers and fortune seekers, who came that way.

At that time Westville was a frontier town. It had its bad men as well as its good men. There were men who had moved into the new country to make it their home, and there were others who were simple transients, gamblers, fur traders, slave runners, men who had committed crimes in other states; in fact, all sorts of men. There- were men from nearly all of the eastern states.

Some settlers brought slaves who did most of the work. The Indian encampment was still there. A few white men lived with the Indians; some had married Indian women. There could hardly be found a more mixed population.

Every day brought strangers and new comers, and people heard from back home by them. Everybody was welcomed, and the latch string hung on the outside of the door. Land was to be had for the asking. Whiskey was sold everywhere. The saloons, or grogeries as they were often called, were the center of festivities. Fist fights furnished free entertainment and scarcely a Saturday night passed with out several on the streets of Westville. One fight often led to another and sometimes there was as many as four or five going on at the same time. Those frontier people had more thrills in a day than most people now have in a lifetime. It was a wonderful age.



The nations' oldest tree farm is located at Gulf Coast Junior College at Perkinston. The first pine seedling nursery was started at the site in 1.885.

FIRST SHERIFF

There were less than 200 voters in Simpson County when it was organized in 1824. The first sheriff of the county was Richard Sparks. He was a native of Virginia, and like many others of that day, had come to what was then known as the "Great Southwest", seeking fame and fortune. He was an educated man and the owner of several slaves. He located at Westville and operated a store and saloon, and also a small farm.

At the first election held after the organization of the county, he was a candidate for sheriff. The election was held on the fourth day of April, 1824. Sparks was opposed by Neal McNair, Malcolm McIntyre and William Magrew. Sparks was elected, as he received 61 votes to 43 for McNair, 24 for McIntyre and 24 for Magrew. For some reason there was another election held in the county on August 4th, 1824, and Sparks was again a candidate for sheriff, and having no opposition, was elected, receiving 104 votes.

In the fall of 1824 Sparks decided to return to Virginia on account of business matters there, he resigned the office of sheriff, sold his business at Westville and moved away. He never returned.

A special election was called on the 24th day of December, 1824, to elect a successor. The candidates at the election were James Briggs, James Murray, Thistam Stubbs, and Daniel L. Farrington. Briggs received 40 votes, Murray 31, Stubbs 15, and Farrington 11. At the next regular election held on the 3rd of August, 1825, Briggs was again a candidate for sheriff and was opposed by James Murray. Briggs was again elected as he received 93

votes to 73 for Murray. He was not a candidate for sheriff again, but it seems that over his protest he was elected assessor at the regular election in 1827. He refused to accept the office of assessor and Jacob Carr was elected in his place at a special election in 1827.

James Briggs and his brother John Briggs, had first settled on Vaughn's Creek and owned and operated farms in that section of the country. About the close of James Briggs term of office the town of Osceola was established on the east bank of Pearl River, a short distance below the present Rockport bridge, and James and John decided that more money could be made by operating a store and saloon at Osceola than could be made by farming or holding office. Their first store building was made of pine logs and stood on the bluffs overlooking the river. Flat boats were then in use on the river and then such produce as they bought such as hides, furs, and cotton, was shipped to New Orleans on flat boats and keel boats. Most of their goods were brought overland from Natchez, as those boats rarely ever brought goods from New Orleans.

A few years later the Briggs brothers built a hewn log storehouse and brought their goods direct from New Orleans as Steamboats had by that time supplanted the old flat and keel boats. At that time Osceola was the largest town in the county and did a thriving business. In fact, it was very much like our Western town of early days. It was the headquarters for wealthy slave owners of that section; was for several years the head of steamboat navigation of Pearl River; boasted the best race track in the county; had a half dozen saloons, where gamblers from the steamboats and the surrounding country foregathered; and, as the old saying goes "where fortunes rose and fell."

About 1845 James Briggs died and his brother, finding that business was leaving Osceola, moved to California.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF VOTING

What kind of people were these 200 voters in Simpson County in 1824. We know that they were all white men, but just how difficult was it for them to cast their vote.

Voting has always been looked upon as a great privilege and for decades limited to those who were wealthy and powerful as the ones most likely to be knowledgeable in managing the government for all the people.

When King Charles II of England came to the throne in the 1600's, he demanded the oath of allegiance to him before any man was allowed to vote. There were thousands of people who could not meet the voting requirements in the 18th century. In 1775, in Philadelphia, approximately one person in 50 was eligible to vote. With the opening of new lands and the influx of new people from various countries, it became necessary to add the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution. But it was not until 1865 did the nation receive a long delayed definition of what constitutes American Citizenship. A Citizen of the United States was one who was natural borne or naturalized and allowed to vote.

Shortly, thereafter, in 1867 the 15th Amendment was added, "the right of citizens of the United States to vote and hold office shall not be denied or abridged by the United States, or any state., on account of race, color or previous conditions of servitude."

All this time women did not vote. It took the 18th Amendment as late as 1920 to clarify the female position. "which prohibited discrimination against them on account of their sex".

The 24th Amendment provided for the right to vote for President, Vice President, Senators and Representatives in the Primary election.

The 26th Amendment has lowered the voter's age to 18 years and was ratified by the Congress in 1971.

Let us return to that early day when Simpson County had the Polls open for the first time and consider some of the questions that might have been inflicted on the voters.

Were they Citizens of the United States?

Had they paid their POLL tax (varied from .50 to a dollar)?

Did they own land and was it productive?

Were they within the age limit of 21 to 60 years?

What religious creed did they follow? Were they atheists?

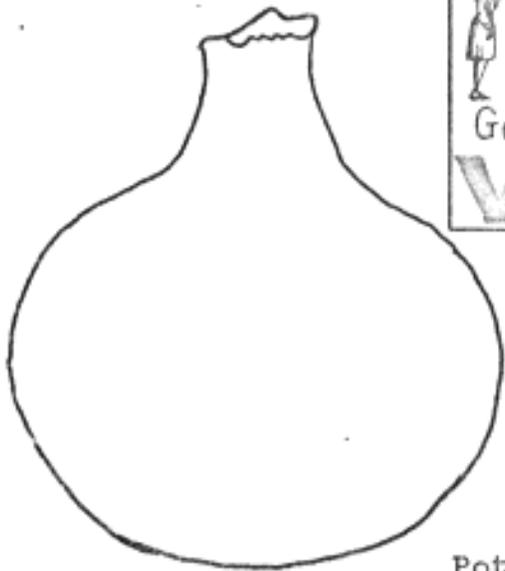
Had they ever been convicted of a crime; forgery; embezzlement or involved in dueling?

Fraudulent Bankruptcy? Guilty of Malpractice?

Had they ever borne arms against the United States or worked toward overthrowing the United States Government?

Were they given a literacy test?

This taken from the Encyclopedia Americana - A.H.McDannald, Editor 1946



Yazoo Indian
Pottery, circa
(about) 1200 - 1600



Cotton

HOMESTEADING

Nearly all the early settlers of Simpson County secured their homes by entry from the United States Government. Applications were filed in the General Land Office and a small fee was required.

In the early days money was extremely scarce and many of the settlers "took up" lands by simply squatting on it, that is to say settling on land without making application for homestead entry. Sometimes a settler would live on a tract of land for several years without entering it. If a tract of land did not suit them, they would move on to another tract and trust to luck to secure a title. This loose system led to many disputes about homesteads, and often resulted in killings.

A peculiar case that occurred many years ago was that of Jordan and Bass. A man named Jordan had moved into the county from the north and settled near Brown's Creek. He had no money and other settlers told him to settle on any land he might select and make application when he was able to pay the fee.

Jordan selected about 100 acres of land, built a small dwelling and barn and proceeded to clear acres for cultivation. It was his intention to file his homestead entry the next fall, but through carelessness, or probably want of money, he neglected making his application for several years.

It was much to his surprise one day when he was stacking fodder near his little barn, that a man named Bass rode up and, stated that he had entered the land Jordan was living on, and that he demanded possession at an early date. Jordan first thought he was joking as he knew him well, and had no idea that Bass would take advantage of him in such a way.

Finding that Bass was not joking, and that no agreement could be reached with him, either to rent or purchase, he told Bass that he was a man of peace, and knew that fighting would do no good., but that if he was determined to take his land away from him in such a way as that, he hoped to God that when he stacked fodder the next year, that he would fall off and break his neck.

In those days nearly all corn fodder was stacked around poles set in the ground, and in such 'a way it would be well preserved for several months when properly shocked. Some times a fodder stack would be twelve or fifteen feet high.

That winter Jordan gave up his little home and moved away. Bass frequently joked with neighbors about Jordan's wish, and it furnished him with many a good laugh.

Some years passed and Bass had stacked many a stack of fodder. But one day after the fodder had been brought from the field, Bass was hurriedly stacking the fodder, so as to get it stacked before a rain came up. He had nearly reached the top of the pole, and one of his boys was throwing up the bundles as fast as possible. Bass was placing the last bundles and capping the pole, when by some sudden slip of his feet, he fell from the top of the stack. His back struck the ground and his neck came in contact with a green pole and was broken.

Many people thought it was a judgement sent on Bass.

SLAVE CHILDREN

George and Mary Wasier settled in the northern part of Simpson County about 1829. John Wasier, their only child was then about 19 years of age. He was badly "spoilt" and had never been trained to do much work and was of a quarrelsome and cruel disposition and the older people who knew him pronounced him to be a "bad egg". However he was a very handsome young fellow, a good talker, graceful dancer, and very popular with the

young people who knew him. When about 21 years of age, he secured a new suit of clothes and a little money and decided to go and spend Christmas Holidays with some relatives living near Augusta. He was gone for more than a month and his parents were getting uneasy about him, but one day about the first of February they received news that he had married into a wealthy family, and would soon be home with his wife and some slaves, that her parents had given her.

George and Mary were very much elated over the news they received, and made quite an affair of his home coming. Sure enough, a few weeks later, he and his wife arrived bringing with them two slaves, a boy about sixteen years of age and a girl about fourteen. The girl was a sister of the boy, and they had been given to John's wife by her parents. In addition to the slaves, she had been given a wagon and two horses and a considerable amount of household goods. John's wife was soon a great favorite with all who knew her, but John did nothing much, except to put on "airs" and strut around, making the two slaves do all the work, and beating them most unmercifully on the slightest pretext. His wife tried to protect the slaves from his cruel beatings, but that only made him more cruel than ever. This treatment of the slaves continued throughout the year and continually grew worse. Along in October when the moon was full, the two slaves decided to run away and go back to their old home, where they had always been well treated. They managed to get away early in the night, and they remembered the road they had traveled when coming to the county, the same road was later known as the "Old State Road." They walked as fast as possible and had reached a place on the road where it crossed the high ridge north of the O'Neal place and about a mile east of the Carr and Durr plantations. They were so tired that they sat down to rest awhile. The ridge was almost clear of all undergrowth but was covered with large pines.

It was long past midnight and when they stopped to rest, they must have fallen asleep. They were awakened a little while before daylight by the howling of dogs, that John Wasier had put on their trail.

For several months, Wasier had been training a pack of large fierce dogs, claiming that he was going to use them as a patrolman for the Board of Police. In some way he found late in the night, that the slaves had run away, and the dogs were put in pursuit of them. Waiser had followed the dogs, but failed to keep up with them. When the two children heard the dogs coming, they ran, but it was impossible for them to escape. Their screams were heard by some men who were camping nearly a mile further down the road, and they took their guns and hurried to the scene, but when they reached there the children had been killed and almost torn to pieces.

The little girl had evidently run down the hill, as bits of her mangled body were found scattered among the pines on the hillside. The boy had been caught and killed at the top of the hill, where they had first stopped, as his torn and mutilated body was found near some food the children had carried with them. The men from the camp killed most of the dogs, before they got away, but some of them escaped.

The matter was reported to the owner of a nearby farm, and the campers moved on. The screaming of the children and the howling of the dogs had been heard by the slaves on the Carr and Durr plantations, and for many years, they claimed that when the moon was full and the nights were clear, they could hear the screams of children and the howling of dogs far off on the hills. Many strange tales were told after the death of the children, one being by a trapper, who stated that as he was crossing the ridge one moon-light night, he saw a girl or the ghost of a girl running among the trees, pursued by a gray wolf-like dog, and that as they passed near him, he shot the dog and killed it, but when he walked up to where it lay, there was no dog there, and the girl had disappeared.

IMMORTALITY

There is no death! an angel form
Walks o'er the earth with silent tread
He bears our best loved things away,
And then we call them "dead"

Harvey

The quality of mercy is not strain'd
It droppeth as the gently rain from heaven.

Shakespeare



The Story of Bertrand Guysell

Bertrand Guysell came to Westville while Daniel L. Farrington was Sheriff of Simpson Co. Guysell was not a mere adventurer or fortune hunter. He was highly educated, being a graduate of a Northeastern University. He was a man of portly manners and dressed well. He wore good clothes, fine boots, and an expensive beaver hat. He carried a sword cane, and was an expert swordsman. His father was the editor of a paper published in Virginia, and Guysell was writing a series of articles for his father's paper under the title of "Traces and Adventure in the Great Southwest."

These articles were very interesting and were widely read throughout Virginia and other states. Guysell took lodging at the Hotel and soon became acquainted with Sheriff Farrington. He and Farrington soon became great friends, and what was unusual, at that time was the fact that neither wore beards, and they both shaved every day.

Guysell enjoyed his trips over the country and almost every Saturday he would attend the wrestling and boxing matches at the Rials Creek Mill. He enjoyed seeing the neighborhood men strip off their shirts and grease themselves with bear grease before starting their wrestling matches. These matches would last almost all day, and generally wound up with everyone getting drunk. There was rarely a real fight, though often times many of the contestants would be bloody from their boxing matches, but they took it good naturedly.

Guysell was often asked to join in these sports but never did. He also loved to visit the Indian villages, especially the one known as the Capital of the Six Town Nation. He enjoyed listening to their strange language and observing their customs and manners. It was all new to him, and he had never met with any Indians back in Virginia.

He also enjoyed the horse races, which were held in various parts of the county. One race was near the Capital of the Six Town Nation, and great numbers of people would attend the races, which were held once in each month. It was true that the race horses were mostly just plow horses, but they could run fast enough to make the races interesting.

There was also a race track about a mile southeast of Westville and another one near Ocoola on Pearl River. Guysell attended them all and wrote about his experiences while attending them.

On one occasion he rode out to Rials Creek Mill with Sheriff Farrington and while there he met the old fortune teller known as the old "Lady Tedder", and her husband, Dan Tedder. Guysell found her very interesting and enjoyed talking with her, and on his trips to the mill on Saturdays would often stop and have a cup of coffee with her. He always carried her some little nick-nack of candy to please her. He sometimes gave her money. On one of his trips she advised him that he was in danger of being hurt or killed by four bad men, and advised him to change his room every now and then. She also advised Sheriff Farrington that Guysell was in danger.

Guysell had done nothing to cause anyone to be angry with him, but when he told the Sheriff what the old lady had said the Sheriff told him that the old lady probably knew what she was talking about, and that he had better arrange with the hotel keeper to change rooms quite often.

At the time that Bertrand Guysell came to Westville there was much crime throughout the country. Murder, robbery, horse stealing and slave running were common occurrences. While most of the early settlers of the county were good people seeking new homes and cheap land, there was scattered among them many bad men who had left the Eastern States to escape punishment for crimes they had committed before coming here. Naturally these men were suspicious of all new comers, as they never knew when they might be arrested and carried back to their old homes for trial.

As Guysell had no visible occupation, many soon suspected him of being a detective. Late one afternoon while Sheriff Daniel L. Farrington was standing in a door across the street from the courthouse, a bullet shot from a gun at the corner of the courthouse struck the side of the door where he was standing. It was not known who fired at him, and Farrington thought perhaps it was an accident, but as he was always clean shaven, he believed that the shot was intended for Guysell. He soon discovered that Guysell was a lawyer and warned him to be on his guard.

Guysell continued to travel around the country and seemed to have no fear of anyone. He always carried two pistols in his pockets. They were small, double-barreled pistols and the most up-to-date weapons of that time. He never had any occasion to use them, but one day in Westville a half-drunken fellow walked up to him and started to strike him with a stick, but before he could raise his stick he found one of those pistols pointed at his head. He dropped the stick and ran. Guysell had never had any trouble with the fellow, and was never bothered with him any more.

Acting on the "Old Lady Tedder's" advice Guysell arranged with the lady who kept the hotel to change rooms, every now and then, but he was never molested at the hotel, but while the Circuit Court was being held at Monticello, he went to that place with the Sheriff to assist in carrying some prisoners. He was at Monticello almost a week and while there an Irish ditcher (one who digs or repairs ditches) was given the room he usually occupied. The ditcher was a very strong man but suffered considerably with rheumatism, and for that reason carried a very heavy walking stick. The Irishman knew nothing of Guysell and had no idea he would be molested, and so was careless about fastening his door.

One night while he was lying across his bed resting, he dropped off to sleep. He did not know just how long he had been asleep when suddenly he was awakened and found four men in his room.

As the Irishman rose up, he was struck in the arm with a knife. He received a very severe wound. The man that struck him immediately said, "Oh, I struck the wrong man." As soon as the Irishman got on his feet, he drew

back his heavy stick and just as he struck, he said, "Yes, but I am striking the right man." The fellow was knocked sprawling, and he lay unconscious for several hours. The Irishman then struck another man and knocked him sprawling. The third man had his right arm broken. The fourth man escaped from the room, but ran over a chair that was sitting on the porch. The Irishman overtook him and gave him a most terrible beating. The Irishman then went to a saloon across the street and kept drinking and relating the fight until he had to be carried back to his room. By that time all four of the men who attacked him had gotten away. The Irishman did not know any of them.

When the Sheriff and Guysell got back from Monticello they were considerably amused at the way the attack on the Irishman had turned out; but at the same time Guysell began to feel uneasy, and remembered what the old "Lady Tedder" had told him. He had enjoyed his trip to Westville very much, but decided that it would probably be better for him to get away. He spent one more Saturday attending the boxing matches at the Rials Creek Mill, stopped and drank coffee with the "Old Lady Tedder", and gave her a few dollars as a parting gift.

On the following Monday, he bought a very fine saddle horse and in company with the mail rider left for Brandon; from Brandon he went to Clinton; then called Mt. Salles. At that point he took the road from Natchez, now called the Natchez Trace; (trail) from Nashville, he had an open road to his home in Virginia. Daniel L. Farrington received letters from Guysell from time to time for several years, and frequently asked him to pay another visit to Westville, but he never came back again.

An honest man's the noblest work of God. – Pope

No man is the whole of himself; his friends are the rest of him. - Harry Emerson Fosdick

Instinct is the nose of the mind. - Madame de Gerardin

John Guy

John Guy was known as a free person of color. He was brought from one of the eastern states by George Nelson, an Indian trader, about 1815. Nelson claimed that John Guy was born free, and that he had never been a slave. Nelson kept him as a servant and paid him wages. When Nelson went to New Orleans or Mobile to sell his furs, he usually left John with the Six Town Indians, and he learned the Indian language. He was probably about twenty years old when Mississippi was admitted into the Union as a State. (Dec. 10, 1817) Soon after the State Government was organized, the legislature passed some very strict laws regarding slaves and free persons of color. A free person of color was not allowed to remain in the county of his residence unless by special permit from the Board of Police, which was the same as the present Board of Supervisors, and if he left the county, he was required to carry his permit with him or he would be subject to arrest by any person who apprehended him, and placed in jail. If he did not produce his permit the Board of Police would order him to be sold into slavery, and the money received for him turned into the county treasury.

After the county was organized in 1824, Nelson went before the Board of Police of Simpson County and made proof that John Guy was born free, and secured a permit for him to remain in the county. John was then a grown man and able bodied and strong. Nelson was going back to his old home, and he wanted John left in good hands so that he would never be sold into slavery. He was afraid to leave him with the Indians, for they often sold slaves that they claimed to have bought, and Nelson was sure that any person of color left with them would soon be traded for horses or liquor.

Before leaving the county Nelson arranged with Mr. Rials to take John and let him work at the mill. He had already worked at the mill, and Mr. Rials was well pleased with the bargain. Nelson promised to return but never did.

In 1826, John decided that he would like to get married, and Mr. Rials said he would try to find a wife for John. He did not want John to marry an Indian woman, and he knew that he would not be allowed to marry a slave woman, as slaves were personal property like horses and cattle, and marriage among slaves was not allowed by law. John's only hope of getting married was to find a free woman of color, but there was no such woman in the county.

One day a man came to the mill and told John there was a free woman of color living in Covington County, and advised him to go and see her. The man spoke so highly of the woman that John asked permission of Mr. Rials to let him go to see her. Mr. Rials consented and one Sunday morning a few weeks later John told Mr. Rials that he was going to see the woman and that he would be back in the afternoon or the next day.

Mr. Rials got John's permit and warned him to be very careful and not lose it. John left in high glee and reached Covington County about ten o'clock that morning. Mr. Rials had offered to let him have a horse to ride, but he preferred walking. He had not gone more than a mile in Covington County when he heard a man say, "Halt." He looked around and saw a man coming toward him, and instead of halting, he ran, and soon left the road and took to the woods. The next thing he knew there were two men after him and before he had gone a mile further they caught him. He tried to get loose from them and in the scuffle lost his permit, and when they called for it, he could not produce it. They probably had it, but never told him. He was then carried to jail and the next day was ordered to be sold into slavery unless he could produce his permit within the time required by law.

John knew nobody and could not read or write. He had no one to befriend him, and gave himself up for lost.

As he did not return, Mr. Rials became uneasy about him and sent Temple Tullos to find him. Tullos soon got trace of him, and found him in jail. The Sheriff refused to discharge him, and said he had proof that he was a run-away slave and that his master would soon be after him.

Note: The compiler has not found the end of the above story in the records. Date-wise, the following stories on what we believe to be the same man run consecutively.

More on John Guy

John Guy, listed in the early records of Simpson County as a free person of color, was more than 20 years of age when the county was organized in 1824.

His mother was a member of a wealthy family of Virginia, but soon after John's birth, she was given a considerable amount of money by her father and requested to leave his home forever.

From that day, like Hagar and Ishmael of old, she and John were social outcasts. She first came to Adams County where she lived until her death about 1816.

After her death John came to what was then known as Copiah County to settle in that part which was afterwards organized as Simpson County. He soon found that he was not wanted by anyone. White people avoided him, and slave owners did not want him to associate with their slaves, for fear that he would cause trouble with them. The only people who welcomed him were the Indians, and he soon learned their language and spent the most of his time with them.

He was adopted by the Six Town Indians at their capital near the head of Sellers Creek. He became a great hunter and horseman. He always had money and bought a fine horse from one of the Indian traders. He never liked to ride the Indian ponies, as he was a large man and considered his weight too much for them. He was a shrewd trader and good judge of furs and was nearly always consulted by the Indians in their sale of furs.

Unlike the Indians, he never drank whiskey. He took great interest in hunting; his greatest delight being to kill a panther. He learned to imitate the scream of a panther and could often get close enough to shoot one before being discovered. It was a very dangerous sport, as he had to hunt by himself, when he hunted that way.

It is said that in the winter of 1822, he killed 20 panthers and about 30 large bears. Their skins, after being well cured, brought him a good deal of money. Indians relished bear meat, but their principal diet was venison. John, was an expert in killing deer and killed them in great numbers.

On one of his hunting trips he was bitten by a rattlesnake and had to be carried by his Indian companions to the village, where he was treated many days before he recovered. After that he lived in terror of snakes of nearly every kind and when hunting always carried a bow and arrow for shooting snakes. He was very expert with the bow and arrow, and often used them in shooting small game.

Free Lewis, when a boy, knew John quite well and once told me of an encounter that John had with rattlesnakes.

In the hill east of Rials Creek mill, John was hunting deer on a still hunt. Near the foot of a little ridge, he saw a number of deer feeding, then suddenly heard the pitiful bleat of a fawn. His first thought was that a wolf had caught it, but a moment later he saw a large buck bound from a thicket and jump high into the air. As it came down it bunched its feet and struck something on the ground. It jumped away and then came back again, striking at the same object. Leaving that point, it jumped again and came down on something at another place. It seemed to be in a perfect frenzy. Running here and there and always bunching its feet as it came down on something. All the time, the doe was bleating piteously.

Finally the buck dashed into the thicket and he heard the buck and the doe running over the hill. With gun in hand, he cautiously approached the place where the buck had fought his battle. He found that the buck and killed 14 large rattlesnakes, the largest still coiled around the fawn, which it had killed.

John Guy

John Guy found-that being free did not keep him out of trouble. He was often arrested, for traveling without a passport from his master. When he explained that he was free, he was simply laughed at and told that he could not put such things as that over the officers. He would have to send for the Sheriff to set him free.

At another time he was arrested for carrying a rifle, as slaves were not allowed to carry weapons. Again he was held until the Sheriff explained to the officer, who arrested him, that John was a free man. At last he secured a certificate from the Sheriff stating that he was a free man and not to be molested for carrying a gun, or traveling without a passport. Even that did not protect him, for soon after he obtained it, he was arrested by the bridge keeper at the bridge a few miles west of Westville. When he showed the bridge keeper the certificate he pronounced it a forgery and carried him to Westville on the charge of forgery as well as traveling without a passport.

The Sheriff, of course, had him discharged. On account of these repeated arrests John became more and more secluded in his way of living and spent the most of his time in the woods hunting or in the Indian villages. In

one of the Indian villages, he was once arrested for being a run away slave, but as he had to be carried to Westville for a trial; he was discharged when he reached that place.

All these arrests were very annoying to John, but one moonlight night he got a real scare for he was captured by a gang of slave runners. It happened that he and an Indian had been hunting, and were lost in getting to their village. At a sharp turn in the road, they were suddenly halted by some men and told to hold up their hands. Two of the men dismounted from their horses and questioned them. They paid no attention to the Indian, but when they asked John the name of his master; he told them that he was a free man.

One of them said, "Free man hell, we have heard that yarn before." They told John that he could come with them. As John left the Indian, he said to him, in the Indian language, to let the Sheriff know at once that he had been stolen.

These men had captured four slaves and had them on two horses but as John was a large man, they had two of the slaves to dismount, then they put John in the saddle with one of them behind him. Then the smallest of the slaves was taken behind one of the men.

They put handcuffs on John, and then rode on rapidly. Passing through Westville, which was only a few miles away, they turned north. They kept riding until late in the night when they stopped to let the horses rest.

In the saddlebags they had some bread and cheese. They gave some to the slaves and ate the rest while riding along, John found that he could slip the handcuffs as he had very slender hands, however he kept them on. The slaves all fell asleep at once and one or two of the men slept a little while. John did not sleep, though he pretended to sleep.

He knew that two or three of the men did not sleep, and he wanted to hear what they said.

He learned that they were going to Tennessee, but he did not know how far away that could be. The conversation ceased and one of the men yawned and stretched himself, then took a drink of whiskey and handed the bottle to another man. Suddenly and apparently quite near them, they heard the deep voice of a bloodhound.

When the robbers heard the blood hounds, they became greatly excited. Some of them ran to their horses and others tried to rouse the slaves, but only one, a slave named Jake, got up, John Guy was awake, but he said nothing and pretended to be asleep, while he slipped off his handcuffs again. The slaves would probably have been awakened but about that time the blood hounds barked again, almost opposite their camp. Every man then mounted his horse and galloped away through the tall pines.

John was astonished when the hounds ran by them without noticing the slaves. In a few minutes he heard horses coming and as they started to pass by, one of the slaves cried out, "Here us is, here us is. A man stopped and said, "Who is us? "Then John said "Stop, we been stole, come git us." Two or three men came out to the camp and John told them about their being stolen. The man in charge of the company then said that he was a patrolman in another county, but that he would see that they got back home. All the horses had been taken except one, and only two could ride, but the patrolman said he would try to get some horses for them.

The robbers had taken everything except a pair of saddlebags, which were found to contain some papers belonging to a man in Simpson County. They then started back to Westville, and kept traveling until they met the Sheriff and several other men. The patrolman then turned them over to the Sheriff, with the horse and saddlebags.

It was afterwards found that the horse had been stolen from a man in Simpson County. The saddlebags were delivered to the owner, who stated that they had been stolen, but as they contained a change of clothing, most people believed that he was one of the robbers. He had never been suspicioned before, but a few months later he moved to Texas.

The slaves reached home about noon, very glad to get back. The Indian had notified the Sheriff as John had requested, and had gone with the Sheriff to hunt for him.

John always kept his horse in good condition and taught it many tricks. One was to turn suddenly; another was to kneel when asked. Both of these tricks served John a good purpose. One day a man unexpectedly asked John to let him look at the horse's teeth.

When he got to the horse, he mounted it and started off, saying: "Thank you for the horse." John at once said "Kneel George." The horse knelt immediately, and the man went over its head. Before he could get up, John was on him and the beating he got was enough to stop him from horse stealing.

Another time John found that he was being pursued by two men on horseback. John was riding his horse, but saw that the men were gaining on him. He at once turned towards a deep ditch, not far ahead, and succeeding in reaching it ahead of his pursuers. Just before he reached the ditch he had his horse to take a sudden turn. The robbers could not stop in time to save themselves. Both were thrown into the ditch. One had his neck broken and the other had a leg broken. The horses were hurt, but not dangerously. John reported the matter to a neighbor, and he had the Sheriff to investigate the matter. Nobody knew them. The crippled man denied attempting to steal John, so when he was able to travel he left the country.

Another Story about John Guy

Soon after the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, the federal government began moving the Choctaw Indians to the Indian Territory, now known as Oklahoma. Large numbers of men contracted to move them, and large covered wagons reached Simpson County. One of the drivers died, and John Guy was employed to take his place.

John wanted to take his horse, as he was afraid to leave it, and also thought he might need it on his return. He wouldn't sell it, so he arranged with Chief Cornflower, as young Six Towns Indian, to allow him to ride the horse and let Cornflower's squaw ride his pony. This she refused to do, preferring to walk with the other squaws. Cornflower then let his boy ride the pony.

John bought a good horse blanket for his horse and showed Cornflower how to fasten it on the horse. Cornflower was a good rider and took great pride in riding the horse. He always rubbed it down at night and if the nights were cold, fastened the blanket on it. The shaggy pony got no attention whatever.

It was a sad day for the Indians when the drivers arrived and ordered them to get their few belongings and start. Many refused to go, especially the squaws, who said they had rather die than leave their homes, but the government agents were hard and often brutal in dealing with the Indians and forced them to go.

The fact that the Indians had lived here for hundreds of years and loved their homes, had no appeal for the government agents. Their business was to move the Indians, and they were going to carry out their orders.

The big wagons were soon filled and ready to move. The long procession started, two or three agents in front, then the wagons, followed by Indian men on their ponies and the squaws walking behind them.. A few agents

brought up the rear, to prevent any Indians from escaping. So in this manner the poor Indians left their homes forever.

They were heart broken and felt like they had been herded like cattle and driven away. The treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek was nothing to them. That had been done by their chiefs and without their consent.

When John was ordered to start his wagon, he wished he was somewhere else. There were tears in his eyes as he started the wagon and heard the mournful wailing of the Indians. It was winter and it began snowing a few hours after the wagons left the village.

The poor squaws were ordered to get into the wagons, as they were mostly barefooted, as well as bareheaded. Most of them refused, and kept walking through the snow. Night came on at last and fires were made, where everybody could get warm. Food was furnished by the Indian agents, and the Indians were forced to sleep in the wagons, but they were poorly clad and bedding was not sufficient to keep them warm.

Many grew sick in the next few days, and some died, and were buried along the roadside. So great was the grief of the Indians that many attempted to escape, but the agents hunted most of them down with bloodhounds and brought them back.

The wagons traveled nearly north, and reached Pearl River near the northern point of Rankin County. There they met a large number of other wagons moving the Indians from the eastern counties of the state. There they camped a few days to rest.

Before Pearl River could be crossed there came a great snow and for fifty miles or more, the roads were blocked with trees bending under the snow. At that time the Indians had plenty of food and kept fairly comfortable by building large fires around the camps.

After waiting nearly a week for the roads to be cleared they crossed the river and proceeded west, but during the delay at the river many deserted and returned to their homes. The snow prevented the dogs from trailing them, and the agents reported them lost. With the great number of wagons in the roads, the mud grew deeper and the roads almost impassable.

The poor squaws trudging through the mud, often knee deep, had a terrible time. Many took pneumonia and died before reaching the Mississippi River. After that river was crossed, the roads became worse than ever, the wagon wheels churned the black mud until many of them stalled and had to be pulled out in relays.

After several days traveling through the muddy roads, the weather became very warm, in fact, as pleasant as spring, but the mud was worse than ever. The mules sweated and pulled and stalled time after time. They were often beaten until their hides were in a lather of perspiration. The drivers were merciless and the poor mules suffered terribly.

The Indians were pleased with the warm weather and hoped that spring was opening, but just when the weather became almost sultry, and all the teams were wet with perspiration, a blizzard came out of the north with the speed of a hurricane. Rain froze on the trees as it fell. Orders were given by the agents to unhitch the mules and rub them down with blankets. They ordered trees to be cut down and fires built at once. Everybody got busy. The ground was freezing; water in the pools along the roadside had frozen solid.

Many mules froze to death before the harness could be taken from them. More than one hundred mules froze that night. Dozens of Indians froze. The fires could not keep them warm. Sleep in the wagons was impossible. The oldest Indians had never known such cold.

At that time there were no weather reports; no telegraph or telephone lines. Nobody ever knew how cold the weather was on that occasion. It was many days before the weather grew warmer, and when it did, the bodies of the dead were buried in shallow graves out of the frozen ground. The wagon wheels had to be dug out of the frozen mud before the wagons could start moving.

The inhabitants of that country said there had never been such terrible weather before. At last they moved on, still further west. Week after week until one day in the spring, they reached the wide prairies. Green grass was growing for endless miles. It looked like a wonderful carpet spread over the earth. It was supremely beautiful. On the wide planes uncounted thousands of buffaloes grazed at leisure. There was nothing to do but erect their tents and kill and eat. The Indians knew how to do that.

John Guy spent a few years with the Indians and then returned to Simpson County. A few Indians came with him. What finally became of John Guy is unknown.

The best way to appreciate your Job is to imagine yourself without it.
-The Miles Gazzette

Little Joe

George Halsell was one of the early settlers of Simpson County. He located in the southern part of the county, about eight miles southeast of Westville and engaged in farming. He owned about a dozen slaves and a considerable tract of land. He was married and had two sons, Joe and George Halsell, who were about 20 years of age. Halsell was a pompous fellow, and like to boast of his relationship to a certain Lord Halsell, living in Ireland. He lived well, and was always well dressed.

He claimed to be a graduate of Harvard University, and could speak several languages. He was a fairly successful farmer, but was very hard on his slaves, and usually kept an overseer who was also very hard on them. He tried to keep his sons from associating with what he called the "white trash" of the county. That was the general name he gave to the people who owned no slaves.

Great was his rage, when one day the news came to him that his son, Joe, had married a poor, girl of the neighborhood. The girl was an orphan, had lived a hard life, had no education whatever, but was a good girl and made a good wife for Joe. When Halsell heard of Joe's marriage, he sent word to Joe that he would be disinherited, and that he never wanted to see him again.

Joe settled on a small farm about 10 miles from where his father lived, worked hard and made a success. A few years later, George Halsell, the second son of the older George Halsell, married the daughter of a slave owner, and her father gave her two slaves. George Halsell also gave his son two slaves, and a tract of land. A few years later, Joe Halsell was killed by a falling tree. Not one of his relatives was present at his funeral, but might not have known of his death, at any rate they took no interest in the matter.

Joe Halsell left his wife and one small boy, known as Little Joe. The widow and the little boy continued to cultivate their farm until Little Joe was about 12 years old, when one day, to his mother's surprise Little Joe asked her why his father had no slaves. She told Little Joe of the treatment his father had received because he had married her.

When she had finished, Little Joe told her that he was going to buy some slaves or take some of the slaves his grandfather had. She told him not to do that, but he said nothing more at that time. A few months later he came home one night bringing two slave boys, about his age. He told his mother that he had found them in the woods and that they said they had been terribly beaten by an overseer for roasting some eggs. They said they belonged to young George Halsell, and had run away. They said they were trying to get to Joe's house.

Joe knew they would be hunted, but did not think it would be suspicioned that he had them. He made them wear dresses, and pretend to be girls. Joe took them and gave it out that he had bought them. He and the two boys cleared some more land and that winter he bought another mule. He made a fine crop the next year and bought more land and more slaves.

During that time, his grandfather died and when his will was opened it was found that all his property went to George. For several years, George had neglected his business, and had become involved in debt. Then word came to Joe that his Uncle 'George's slaves were to be sold under a mortgage. Joe attended the sale, and to the surprise of every one, was the highest bidder.

When the sale was over, Joe went to his uncle and told him that he would let him renew the mortgage and give him credit for three slaves. His uncle was too proud to accept the offer, and soon after, sold his farm and left the state.

A few years later Little Joe lost his good mother. Life seemed to hold nothing for him, and he moved to Ohio with W. J. Goode, and set free all of his slaves. Then went into business with W. J. Goode & Company in Cincinnati.

William Hooks and Walter Van Husen

William Hooks and Walter Van Husen were Dutch peddlers. They came from Delaware and located in Simpson County about 1828. Being men of good appearance and pleasant manners, they soon did a good business until the spring of 1830 when Hooks was indicted for trading with slaves. Hooks did not know anything about the law against trading with slaves, and when he traded a knife for a beaver skin that the slave owned, Hooks thought that it was all right. The judge let him off with a fine of fifty dollars, which was the minimum. He could have fined him as much as five hundred dollars.

After that Hooks and Van Husen decided to quit peddling and opened a small store in Westville. They had a small stock of goods, and had so much idle time on their hands that they added a wood shop to the back of their store. Hooks was a mechanic and carpenter, and he made tables, bedsteads, looms and some chairs. A little later he began to make coffins, though there was very little demand for them, as they were usually made by some local carpenter when a person died. As there seemed to be some prejudice against the making and handling of coffins, they were kept in the back of the shop out of sight.

In 1831 business was very dull and Hooks and Van Husen talked of going further west, but about that time a man named Smith came to Westville pretending to be looking for a location. He claimed to be a lawyer, but when Franklin F. Plummer examined his license, he found that the license had been issued to another man whose name had been erased and that of Smith's name had been substituted. Smith then acknowledged that he

got the license in a poker game, but that it made no difference as he was a lawyer anyhow, and had been licensed in Massachusetts, where Plummer came from.

Smith claimed that he had lived in Delaware and knew Van Husen's brother and talked with them nearly every day for a month or more, then he disappeared and was gone for several months. He then returned with two slaves, a man named Sam and a woman named Betsy. He sold the slaves to Hooks and Van Husen for five hundred dollars each, and executed a deed to the slaves, which was recorded the same day. Smith then left Westville and was never seen again. Everybody was surprised when Hooks, and Van Husen bought the slaves as nobody thought they had that much money.

Sam and Betsy were both intelligent, and Sam soon learned the carpenter's trade so well that the work in the shop was almost turned over to him. Sam took great delight in talking to other slaves and would always ask them about how they were treated by their masters. Many slave owners were very cruel, and some had overseers that were more brutal than the owners.

Due to this cruel treatment, many slaves ran away and Sam would make it a point to get in touch with a slave that had been terribly beaten and tell him how to get away. Slaves had a way of transmitting news that was known only to themselves. It was the method used in Africa, and now known as the grapevine telegraph. It was so subtle that the white people could never understand it, though they learned that the slaves had already heard what happened in major events long before their owners heard of it.

Sam's promise to dissatisfied slaves was to set them free. He had a most unusual plan for their escape. Hooks and Van Husen built a small barn north of their store and bought two horses and a covered wagon from the Allbritton brothers, and used the wagon and team in hauling freight from Natchez and Vicksburg. They would also deliver coffins when they were wanted, so they had a good many orders for them, as they sold the coffins for a very small price.

Soon after the barn was completed, a slave named Joe was terribly beaten by his master, a brutal fellow who operated a saloon, and boarding house at Westville. Sam managed to see Joe soon after he had received the beating and told him that he could arrange to set him free. Joe said he wanted to be free and left the matter to Sam.

A few days later Sam saw Joe again and told him to be at the back gate of his master's place about bedtime. Sam was waiting for Joe and when he appeared, he took Joe on his back and carried him to the barn and told him to climb up in the loft and stay there. He carried Joe on his back in order to keep patrolmen from tracking him with their dogs. The next morning Joe could not be found and the patrolmen came with their dogs and spent the day trying to get a track of Joe, but never found any trace of him. Nobody had seen Joe, so it was decided Joe had been stolen.

Suspicion rested on two strangers, who had eaten supper at the boarding house the night before. It was found that they had gone in the direction of Monticello. So Joe's master and several other men followed them, but got no trace of them for several days. When they were over taken, they had two slaves with them, which they claimed to have bought. But Joe's master stated to them that he knew one of the slaves and that he belonged to Willie Gibson at Westville. Gibson had lost a slave a few weeks before and thought he had run away. The men with the slaves then drew their guns and offered to "shoot it out". The other men came back to Westville and reported to Gibson that they had found his slave. Gibson organized a posse, and with the Sheriff, went in search of the slave, but never found him.

A few days after Joe disappeared, a man came into Hooks and Van Husen's store and stated that a man had been killed up in Rankin County and he wanted a coffin sent at once. He paid the price and left. Hooks and Van Husen promised to deliver the coffin by midnight. Soon after the man left the store Sam took a bottle of whiskey and went into the barn and called Joe. When Joe came down, Sam told him to drink all he wanted and to say nothing, about it, and to drink all of it if he wanted that much. Joe was very fond of whiskey and kept drinking until the bottle was about empty.

When he started back up in the loft he could not climb at all, and soon fell on the floor as drunk as could be. That was what Sam wanted, and as soon as Joe was "dead drunk" Sam and Van Husen hitched the horses to the wagon and put Joe into one of the largest coffins, and then lifted it into the wagon. They drove the wagon around to the front of the store and talked to several that were standing around, and asked if any of them knew the dead man. None had ever heard of him, and it was the opinion of most of them that the man had been murdered as murders were frequent at that time.

As Van Husen and Sam drove off Hooks asked them when they would be back and Van Husen said he wanted to be back by daybreak. The lid of the coffin was raised several inches so that Joe would not smother and there was no noise except Joe's snoring and the rattling of the wagon. When they reached the Rankin County line they found three men waiting there. Two of the men were standing by the road holding their horses. The other man was sitting in a small wagon. The two men standing by the road walked up to Van Husen's wagon and said "Halt".

When told to halt, Van Husen stopped his horses and raised his gun. One of the men then said, "This is lawyer Smith, if that is Hooks, give the pass word. Van Husen then gave the password and said this is not Hooks, but Van Husen. Smith then asked if he had the coffin and Van Husen said he did. There was an old stump burning a short distance from the road, that furnished a little light, so Van Husen got out of the wagon and he and Smith walked out to the light and began talking.

Sam lay still in the wagon, but managed to peep under the wagon cover and see what was going on. He knew Smith, but had never seen the other men, but noticed they were tough looking and well armed. He was afraid of them. He couldn't hear what was said by Van Husen and Smith, but heard enough to learn they were disputing about the price of Joe. He heard Van Husen say that Joe was worth at least eight hundred dollars and that he should have more than two hundred dollars for his share. Smith said that two hundred was Murrell's limit, unless he was an extra slave. Van Husen said he was, and that he would be satisfied with three hundred dollars. Smith finally agreed and counted out three hundred dollars in gold to Van Husen.

He then produced a bill of sale for Joe and told Van Husen to sign the name of Joe's master to the bill of sale. Van Husen said he did not like to do that, as it would be of no value anyway. Smith said for him to sign it, as he might need it to prove that he bought Joe from his master. Van Husen then signed the name of Joe's master to the paper and Smith put it in his pocket. Smith had a watch and saw that it was almost midnight. He said they must hurry, as he had a sale for Joe if he could get across Pearl River before daylight. That a man living near Raymond wanted a real first-class slave at once. The coffin with Joe in it was then taken from Van Husen's wagon and placed in the small wagon.

As Van Husen was turning his wagon, Sam heard one of the men with Smith say, "We paid too damn much for that boy, but we'll get it back unless he beats us to Westville." As Van Husen drove off, Smith and the two other men on horseback took the road north. As soon as Van Husen got started toward home, Sam told him what he had heard. Van Husen was very much alarmed. He was afraid of the men with Smith, and felt sure that they would not hesitate to rob him and perhaps kill him. He had asked no questions about the man the coffin was for,

and doubted its being for anybody. He drove rapidly, but knew well enough that he could not travel as fast as men on horses could travel.

After he had gone about two miles he came to the house of a man he knew, and decided to stop. He got out of the wagon and went to the front door of the house and knocked. The man came to the door and was very much surprised to see Van Husen, but after Van Husen explained his reason for stopping, he told Van Husen to drive the wagon around to his barn so that it could not be seen from the road. After the wagon was driven around to the barn, they sat down on a log near the road to watch. In less than an hour they heard some men coming down the road on horseback.

When they passed, Van Husen was quite sure they were the same men that were with Smith, He did not think Smith was with them. They were riding rapidly and going toward Westville. Van Husen and the man kept talking and smoking for hours, waiting for the men to return. It was already getting light in the east; and Van Husen had started to get his wagon, when the man said "Wait, I hear somebody coming." Sure enough, in a few minutes the same men went by going north. Van Husen had a narrow escape. He fed his horses and took breakfast with the man and reached Westville early in the morning.

When he reached home, he found that two men had been there and reported that Van Husen had been robbed and killed up near the Rankin County line. Hooks was preparing to go after him when he arrived. From what the two men told Hooks, it was evident that it was their intention to rob Van Husen if they found him on the road, and kill him, if necessary. They -failed to find him on their return trip. Van Husen was very much worried by what he had heard and thanked the Lord for protecting him. He and Hooks agreed that no more coffins would be delivered by them at night.

A few weeks later, Sam found a run-away slave and persuaded him to come and stay in the barn loft till he could get a chance to set him free. As the slave was very much frightened and restless they wanted to get him away as soon as possible, so Hooks took a hurried trip to some place and returned the same day. Sam spent the night with the slave in the barn loft and gave him enough whiskey to make him dead drunk. About daylight the next morning two men drove to Westville in a wagon and inquired if anybody had coffins to sell. Someone at once pointed them to Hooks and Van Husen's place. About an hour later they drove away with a coffin in their wagon. Nobody knew, or suspected that the coffin contained the runaway slave or that Hooks and Van Husen had been paid two hundred dollars for the coffin.

In the summer of the same year a young man of good appearance came to Westville and announced that he was a preacher, and that he would like to hold a meeting in the county. Some suggested that he hold the meeting at Westville but as there was no church building there, he said he preferred to go to the Rials Creek mill as it was a rather thickly settled neighborhood, and he felt sure the people out there would help him build a bush-arbor and secure seats. In a few hours the preacher was on his way to the mill, with Hooks and Van Husen's blessing. He rode a good horse, carried a pair of saddlebags and was very well dressed.

Reaching the Rials Creek mill, he introduced himself as James Oliver, an itinerant Methodist preacher. He further stated that he had been sent out as a missionary, and wanted to hold a meeting at that place. He soon met a number of people, who agreed to assist him in building a bush-arbor and securing seats, which were made of logs but were fairly comfortable. The preacher had a loud, booming voice. He could be heard for half a mile or more. He might not have been much of a preacher but he was a good actor, and he soon had great congregations for that early time.

There were many converts. Almost every night the altar was filled with shouting penitents, many of them crying "Hallelujah" and "God grant it." The meeting was a great success. The preacher was urged to locate in that neighborhood but he said he had other work to do in the Lord's vineyard. There was very little money in the country at that time, but a collection was taken and he was presented with fifty dollars. He refused to accept it and asked that it be used in building a church at Rials Creek mill.

When he left the Rials Creek Mill, he stopped at Westville and called on Hooks and Van Husen. The slave, Sam, afterwards said that he knew that Hooks and Van Husen gave him several hundred dollars in gold. After the meeting was over it was discovered that ten slaves and a number of horses had been stolen and carried away during the last two or three days of the meeting. It was later discovered that Hooks and Van Husen had sold five coffins during the week of the meeting.

In the meantime the saloonkeeper had offered a reward of four hundred dollars for Joe. To Hooks' and Van Husen's surprise, the same two men who were with Smith the night Joe was delivered to him brought Joe to Westville and claimed the reward. Hooks and Van Husen had sense enough to know that the "cat was out of the bag." They at once loaded the goods they had on hand in their wagon and left for parts unknown. They were followed and it was found that when they reached Brandon, they sold Sam and Betsy, as well as their wagon and goods. They were never heard from again.

Soon after Hooks and Van Husen left the county, John Freeman, who operated a store and tanyard at Westville, was called to Brandon as a witness in a shooting affray. While there he saw Sam, the slave, that Hooks and Van Husen sold. He belonged to a man named Coffee and was engaged in building a house. Freeman bought Sam from Coffee, and at Sam's request he bought Betsy who had been sold to another man. Betsy was Sam's slave wife; for while slaves could not legally marry, they were often allowed by their masters to have a mock marriage and live together as man and wife, and it appeared that Sam and Betsy had been living together for several years.

They were very glad to get back to Westville. Not long after their return to Westville, Joe was stolen again. His master had been very kind to Joe and did not believe he had run away. He was very confident that Joe had been stolen; but as he had already paid a big reward for him, he hesitated about offering another reward for him, and decided to try and find some trace of him. He and several other men spent more than a week trying to locate Joe, but had no success. Joe's master learned how Joe was first slipped away, and he decided to take Sam into his confidence, as he felt sure Sam knew something of the tactics of the slave runners. When Sam was first approached, he had but little to say, and probably knew nothing to say. However he suggested that it was possible that Joe was stolen by the very same men who brought him back and claimed the reward. Sam was also pretty sure that they were the men who attempted to rob Van Husen when Joe was first stolen.

A few weeks later an attempt was made by some strangers to steal Sam, which very nearly succeeded. Freeman then got busy himself and he and the saloonkeeper fell on a plan to trap the slave runners. It was decided to offer another reward of three hundred dollars for Joe, and notice was posted at various places giving a description of Joe and stating the amount of the reward offered.

It was not many days before two men appeared at Westville with a slave that answered the description of Joe. They carried letters of recommendation signed by most of the public officials of Claiborne County, and stated that they had found Joe hiding in the woods near the Mississippi River, and that he was nearly dead when found. Joe confirmed what they said, and Joe's master being satisfied that the slave was Joe, paid the reward. Before the reward was paid, Sam was sent for, and on the pretext of fully identifying Joe, he took a careful look at the two men who brought him. While they were dressed very differently from the way the men were dressed

who brought him before, Sam was quite sure that one of them was one of the same men who attempted to rob Van Husen. He was not sure of the other man.

Freeman did not want to lose any of his slaves, but wanted to assist the saloonkeeper in catching the men who stole Joe. So it was agreed that Sam should secretly hide himself where he could watch Joe's cabin. After watching for probably a month with no results, Sam had about given up all hopes of catching the slave runners and got rather careless about staying awake.

One night about 'midnight, he was awakened by some slight noise, but hearing no more of it, he fell asleep again. Just about daybreak he heard someone calling Joe and noticed that Joe did not answer. He hurried to Joe's cabin and found that Joe's bedding was cold, and that he had apparently been gone for several hours. He at once notified the saloonkeeper and his master, and a search was begun at once. As luck would have it, a very light rain had fallen early in the night, and unknown to the robbers their horses could be tracked for several miles going northwest. Then all trace of them was lost. It was believed they would cross Pearl River at one of the two ferries south of Jackson, so the party divided, one party going as rapidly as possible to one of the ferries, and the other party to the other. Just as the first party reached the river they saw the ferryman tied to a tree and that two white men and a slave were pushing out into the stream, Only two shots were fired, The two white men tumbled into the stream. Joe was told to bring the ferry back to the bank. Two pairs of saddlebags left in the boat contained a lot of papers and some money. Sam never learned how much. The two horses were soon after claimed by some men in Rankin County. Joe was never stolen again.

The saddlebags contained forged recommendations from all of the officers of several counties, including Simpson, together with licenses to preach and practice law. The papers showed that the two men were members of John A. Murrell's gang.

Charles and Joseph Renan

Among the unusual characters who came to Simpson County during its early settlement were Charles and Joseph Renan. They claimed to be political refugees from France. Both were men of culture, well educated and refined in their manners. After spending a few days in Westville, Joseph, who was a cripple, stated that he wanted to spend a few months with the Indians as it was his purpose to write a book on the manners and customs of the American Indians. They secured conveyance to Rials Creek Mill and from there went to the capital of the Six-Town Nation, near the head of Sellers Creek. Before they left the mill, Mr. Rials told them that they would be very much disappointed in living with the Indians, but that if they became tired of living with them, to come back to the mill and he would be glad to take care of them.

They had never seen Indians and at first were quite sure that they would like their wild life. They found the Indians very interesting and Joseph began collecting data for his book, but after about a week, Charles stated that he had had enough of Indian life. He stated that they were entirely too unsanitary for him and that he was going back to the mill. Joseph agreed to go with him as he said he could get all the information he wanted from the Indians around the mill.

When they returned to the mill, Mr. Rials had a good meal prepared for them and a swim in the lake and a good nights sleep, in a real bed, they were all right again. Mr. Rials let them have a good comfortable house up on the hill east of the mill, and had one of his slaves do the cooking for them until they could buy a slave.

Charles took great interest in horses and bought two of the best he could find. He liked to ride, but Joseph never tried to ride a horse, if he could find any other kind of conveyance. After Charles bought the horses, he rode

down to the southern part of the county with Mr. Rials and they selected two slaves, and at Mr. Rials' suggestion Charles bought both of them, Tom and his slave wife, Jane.

Their owner warranted them to be of sound health, and experts in dressing and cooking game. Joseph was well pleased with the purchase and he and Charles could scarcely realize that they were the actual owners of human beings. They secured a good house for Tom and Jane, and soon found that they were all their owner had claimed them to be. Tom was given charge of the horses and he never grew tired of attending to them.

At that time there were many racetracks in the county and Charles took great delight in the races. He decided to get in to the game himself and he put Tom to training his horses for the races. Nothing could have pleased Tom any better. Charles had a barn built and bought several more horses for Tom to train. They attended all the races that they could hear of, and sometimes they won a race, but more they lost. That did not please either of them so Charles sold some of his horses and bought others that Tom could run.

It was not many months before Charles had several of the fastest horses in the county and attended races at Westville and Osceola, where he matched horses with Alex Banks and Turner Wilson, both of whom were fine judges of "horse flesh".

On one of these occasions it was his ill luck to come in contact with Dr. Bottom.

It was after Renan won several horse races and made some money, that he decided to stay over until the next day and try some more races. Several poker games were going on at the saloon and after supper Renan played a game with Dr. Bottom, who was considered the best poker player in Osceola. Bottom was also considered a "dead shot" with a pistol.

After playing several games, Bottom found that Charles had won nearly all his money. Bottom called for a drink, borrowed some money and started another game with Charles. But after playing a few minutes, Bottom jumped to his feet and accused Charles of cheating. At the same time he grabbed all the money on the table. Before he could move Charles, who carried a sword cane, as well as pistols, had the point of his sword at Bottom's throat. There was nothing for Bottom to do but drop the money, which he did. He immediately challenged Charles for a duel. Under the rules of dueling the person challenged had the right to select the weapons they would use.

To Bottom's delight, Charles chose pistols, and after that seconds were selected for both men. It was the duty of the seconds to fix the time and place for the duel, and to see that both sides had a fair deal. Bottom selected one of the saloonkeepers. Charles was very careful in making his selection of a second. He finally selected James Briggs, who had been Sheriff of the county and was a man of unquestioned courage. The time selected by the seconds was sun-up the next morning, and the place was on the riverbank north of the village.

The next morning a large crowd had assembled long before sun-up. When the time was up, both men appeared with their seconds, their pistols were examined and lines drawn thirty yards apart. The signal to shoot was to be made by blowing a whistle. Whether by accident or design, Bottom shot Just as the signal was given. His shot struck Charles in the side and he came near falling. Bottom turned to leave, but Briggs said to him, "Step back to that line and give this man a chance or I'll shoot you." Briggs then steadied Renan long enough for him to shoot. When he fired, Bottom reeled around and the crowd thought he was killed, but on examination it was found that he was protected by a breastplate of steel, that everyone recognized as belonging to the saloon keeper. Renan was a stranger, but in those days everybody admired courage and demanded fair play.

Bottom might have hung, but in the excitement, he mounted his horse and galloped away. Charles was the hero of the occasion and after his wound was dressed and it was found that he was not dangerously wounded, he was cordially invited to come and make his home in Osceola, which many believed was destined to be one of the principal towns in Mississippi.

In a few days Charles had sufficiently recovered to return to his home at Rials Creek. When he reached home his brother Joseph advised him that they had received a letter from a relative in France who told them that their political faction had come back into power and that he could safely come home. Charles then sold his horses, and Joseph gathered up his notes on the manners and customs of the American Indians, and they left, going by the State of Ohio where they gave Tom and Jane their freedom and bought them a little home and gave them a horse and some money.

To commune with the great and mighty dead ----- To turn our thoughts backward along the path of time; and call from their silent graves the buried heroes of the past, and people with their living forms those old battle fields where free men, under protection of the God of Heaven fought, not for a crown, but for liberty--is an employment both pleasing and instructive.
Egbert Guernsey, A.M. 1847

John Burchard

John Burchard and his wife were born and reared in Massachusetts, but on account of the hard winters in that state, moved south and located in Simpson County soon after the county was organized. Their home was a few miles northwest of Westville. John traded with an Indian for a small field. Then built a log house.

Early in the spring he bought a horse and cow, and began to get ready for farming. He had never hunted and knew very little of the wild game in the neighborhood. He had brought a gun with him, and from the Indians secured a few good dogs and always kept them near him when working in the fields. His only child was a little girl about four years old. Like all country children of that time, she had very little to interest her, but took great delight in playing with kittens and a little puppy that an Indian women had given her.

Panthers were unknown in that part of Massachusetts where John and his wife had lived, and nothing was so terrifying to them as the scream of a panther at night. John had seen a few of them at a distance but had never been able to kill one. In fact, he had never hunted them.

During the springtime when he was very busy with his work, he frequently noticed his little girl playing at an old willow stump, forty or fifty yards from the house, near the edge of the woods. He asked her what she had found there, as she seemed to be interested in something down in the old stump. She told him she had some little kittens and had to feed them. He thought perhaps she had and paid no further attention. But several days later after coming out of his field and going toward the house, got the fright of his life when he saw that the little girl was near the stump and that a panther was rushing towards her at full speed. He called to the little girl to run and he ran towards her. But she was so frightened she could only stand and scream. He had no gun with him and the dogs were in the field. He saw no hope of saving the child as the panther was apparently within ten steps of her. He screamed and kept running and then, as he afterwards said, "a miracle happened." Just as he gave the child up as lost, he saw a small animal run in front of the panther and stop. He next noticed it shaking its tail, then to the surprise of his life, the panther stopped and reared up on its hind legs, then turned and fled into the woods. He ran on to, the little girl and found that the little animal was a polecat (a small bad-smelling, weasel-like animal of Europe; a skunk) and that the kittens the little girl had found were the polecat's kittens.

Ever after that John said, that polecats had a tender place in his heart.

The next day John and some Indians hunted down the panther and killed it in Strong River swamp and the Indians dressed its hide and John's little girl used it for a pallet (straw bed or mattress) for many years.

NOTE: From the Simpson County News March 11, 1976 (Excerpts)

TRAPPING: IMPORTANT TO MANY MISSISSIPPIANS

Trappers are usually thought of as buckskin clad frontiersmen who, like the buffalo, vanished with the approach of civilization. However, the 1,500 member Mississippi Trappers' Association is proof that trapping is still an important activity for many Americans.

This Association was organized in Holmes County during 1970 with 11 charter members and the primary objectives are to promote trapping in Mississippi, improve trapping techniques, and provide a sales outlet for the state's trappers.

The Trapping season in Mississippi begins the Saturday nearest the first day of December and continues through February 15th. The association holds three sales during this season. The latest of these is held in the third week of February and over 280 trappers come from all over the state to bring their furs. Buyers come from Missouri, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana and Alabama.

The sales are conducted on a sealed bid basis. Each seller is assigned a lot number and places his pelts in a bin that is labeled with his number. Buyers may then examine each lot and submit a written bid on each lot they wish to buy.

Pelts from all animals that are legal to trap in the state are presented at the auction. These include beaver, bobcat, skunk, fox, mink, muskrat, otter, raccoon and opossum. The sale also included pelts from nine coyotes that were trapped in the state. These animals have recently been moving into the state to fill the role in nature formerly occupied by the red wolf and PANTHER.

The economic importance of trapping to the group's members is reflected in the fact that the January sale brought in about \$97,000. It was estimated that over \$125,000 was bid for the pelts at the February sale. Bobcat's pelts were the highest priced furs at the sale, bringing an average of \$75 each. Opossum pelts brought the lowest price, about \$1.50 each.

There is another side to the trapping story. Some of the animals that are trapped would cause serious economic losses for farmers if left totally uncontrolled.

Old Tom Whitney

Old Tom Whitney settled on the north side of Rials Creek, a mile or more below the mill, in the fall of 1830. He probably bought the place from an earlier settler, as a house had already been built. That winter he and his family cleared a small field on the creek. He was a coarse, cruel man and treated his family like slaves.

He had three children, all girls; Mollie, the oldest being about sixteen, and the youngest, Bess, being about twelve years old. Old Tom, as he was usually spoken of, made his wife and girls clear the land, split rails and built fences while he hunted and trapped on the creek. He would leave tasks for them to do while he was away and if not satisfied with what they had done when he returned, they were severely beaten. He drank heavily and frequently had fights with other settlers, as he was very quarrelsome. In one of the fights he had an ear bitten off, and after that he was more vicious than ever, and took his spite out on his family.

The only redeeming thing about Old Tom was the fact that he had two very fine horses that he would not sell or trade, and he kept them in good condition all the time. Many people suspicioned that he had not "come by them" honestly, and that perhaps he belonged to a clan of horse thieves, but there was no proof of that.

In the spring of the year 1831 his sister, the widow Sawyer, died and Old Tom had to take her only child, a little girl named Janie, about 12 years old, as she had no other relatives. Although he brought with Janie all the property his sister had, he seemed very resentful about having to take her, and at once apparently set out to make life as hard for her as possible. She had not been in his home but a few days before she was severely beaten because she dropped a cup. Of course, she had to work in the field with the other children; as nearly all the fieldwork, both plowing and hoeing, was done by them.

Janie was a delicate child, and had never been required to do such hard work before, and it was the first year she had worked in the field. One day, about the first of May, Old Tom came home about half drunk, and finding his wife at the house, gave her a beating and then went down where the girls were hoeing corn. Just as he came up, Janie happened to cut down a good stalk of corn. Old Tom flew into a rage and jerking the hoe out of her hand, struck her on the head with it. She fell and lay on the ground screaming and quivering. Bess, the only child that ever "talked back" to Old Tom ran up and said, "You have killed her." His only answer was that he didn't care if he had.

Finally, seeing that she couldn't get up, he told Mollie and Callie, the next oldest girl, to take her to the house. For several days she was barely conscious and had high fever nearly all the time; but in about a week she began to improve, and it seemed like she was going to get well. However, her mind still appeared to be in a dazed condition, and she would moan and call her mother, not seeming to realize that her mother was dead. Sometime in the second week after she was hit with the hoe, Old Tom came in just off a spree, and finding her lying on the bed, struck her with a whip he carried, and told her to get down to the field and go to work.

Wearing only a thin garment and no covering for her head, she managed to get to the field, but fell as she attempted to take up the hoe. Bess ran to her and they both lay down in the shade of a bush, but had not been lying there long before, Old Tom came up. He first struck Bess a heavy blow with his whip, and then began beating Janie. Somehow she managed to get up again, and then ran screaming, "Oh Mama, oh mama," until she reached the fence, and going over it like a frightened animal, she plunged into the creek. When they got her out she was dead.

Janie was buried in a lonely little grave yard, on a hillside nearly half a mile from Old Tom's cabin. There were only three or four graves there and the place had grown over with weeds and briars. There were no markers, whatever, and but few people knew the names of the people buried there. Old Tom probably wanted her buried there where but little would be said about her death.

Some time in early summer of that year Ed Brilland set out some hooks on the creek late in the afternoon, and early next morning started to the creek to see what he had caught. He took his dogs with him, and when they reached the creek, immediately turned and came back to him, their bristles raised and uttering loud "woofs".

Day was just breaking, and Brilland was not afraid, as his gun was in good condition. So, calling his dogs back to him, he went on to the creek, expecting to find some large animal there, or near by.

To his great surprise, he found, what appeared in the dim light, to be the body of a girl or a small woman floating on the water. He said she was thinly clad and her arms extended outward and were quite still, and that her small, bare feet pointed upstream. Brilland at once returned to his home, and as soon as he could see a

neighbor or two they returned to the creek, found no trace of the woman, although they searched for more than an hour for her. Some people thought Brilland played a joke on his neighbors, and others thought he might have been drinking, so there was a great deal of banter at Brilland's expense.

A few weeks later, however, two men, going on a deer hunt, about daylight on a foggy morning, started across the creek on a foot log. When they were about half way across, the man ahead, suddenly said, "Look there," and jumped. The other man jumped also, as they both had seen the body of a woman or girl, floating on the water. After they got out and recovered from their excitement, they tried to find some trace of the woman, but found none. One of men said that he was sure she was the little girl Old Tom killed, as he remembered her very well. After that there was a lot of talk and people began to say Old Tom's, place was "haunted" and there was more talk about the death of Janie than ever; and everybody began to avoid Old Tom as if he was a pestilence. Of Course, Old Tom and his family soon heard what was being said and were greatly disturbed. Old Tom took spite out on his family and drank heavier than ever.

His wife and the girls became so nervous that they were afraid to look out after the sun went down, and Bess reported one night that she saw a girl that looked like Janie standing at the window of the little room where the girls slept. After that the window was kept shut, no matter how hot the night. Others reported seeing a woman walking across Old Tom's field one moonlight night.

There were many reports of seeing ghosts, and women floating in creek and walking through the woods at night; and one man reported that he almost shot a woman in a tall tree one night, as he first thought he saw a panther and heard it scream. Many others mentioned hearing the scream of a panther, which was always said to be like the scream of a woman.

One night in October of the same year, two young men were out hunting north of Old Tom's place and got lost. In wandering about they came to the little graveyard where Janie was buried, and there they got "the fright of their lives". For on looking through the tangle of briars and weeds they caught sight of a girl, thinly clad, sitting on Janie's grave. They went at full speed to Old Tom's house. Eve body had gone to bed, but when they made themselves known, Old Tom got up and made a fire.

When the young fellows reported what they had seen, the whole family got up. Old Tom's wife and the girls were terribly excited, and Old Tom took his gun off the gun rack and said he was going to "Go up thar and kill her for good. It Bess tried to hold him, but he started out the door calling his dogs. Just as he stepped out, somebody snatched his gun and broke in on the wall. Old Tom gave a loud yell and fell backwards. Bess ran out and saw what she took to be Janie going around the corner of the house. Everybody then ran out, but could see nothing When Old Tom failed to get up, they found that he was dead. Sometime in November on a cold day somebody found the body of a woman floating against a sand bar on the Creek. It was the body of an old demented woman who lived alone in the neighborhood and was supposed to be a witch. That winter Old Tom's family moved.

THE BEGINNING OF SLAVERY IN AMERICA

Excerpts from: Dolores Barclay - Associated Press Writer

It is believed that the start of slave trade on a large scale was in the early 17th Century in the Virginia colony when a Dutch slave ship traded and left 20 black slaves in Jamestown.

At first the blacks in the colony were made indentured servants which meant each man served a specific period of indentureship and then was free to become a landowner. This was true for a short time only. It was not long

before the colonists began to see that Africans could always be supplied and they could not easily run away because the color of their skin identified them.

In 1661 Virginia passed a measure sanctioning the holding of blacks in perpetual service to whites, all Negroes or other slaves within the province, and all Negroes to be hereafter imported, shall serve during life.

Incredible cruelty, torture and bizarre punishments were not uncommon from the grueling, trek through jungle and desert, crowded conditions and heavy chains on board ship to being separated from families at the auction block were the lot of the blacks during the boom of the 18th Century.

During a period of time it was against the law to teach slaves to read and write.

Many black men served with honor in, the Revolutionary War despite their servitude.

The delegates to the Continental Congress wrote in the Constitution- Article 1. Section 2:
"Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years and excluding Indians not taxed, 3/5 of all other persons"

And a black became 3/5 of a person up to the year 1865.

In one second the sun radiates more energy than man has used since the beginning of civilization. From N.E.A.
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THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1927

Notes from the Encyclopedia Americana - 1946:

The frequent recurrence of devastating floods led Congress in 1923 to authorize the expenditure of Ten million dollars annually for six years. Abnormal rains during the early part of 1927 produced the greatest floods in the known history of the lower Mississippi. The flood began in October of 1926, due to the heavy rains in August and September. The lower rivers became flooded and caused the back up to flood the areas on higher ground - chain reaction type. About 700,000 were made homeless and the economic loss was estimated by Secretary Herbert Hoover at 400 million dollars. Mississippi's share of the flooded area amounted to 861,000 acres.

THE GREAT FLOOD

The creeks and rivers of Simpson County have always been subject to great over-flow, often causing much loss of property and sometimes loss of life. A few overflows have been so extraordinary as to be remembered for generations. The greatest overflow ever known in the county was that of 1825. Notches out on trees to mark the height of the water, showed that no other overflow ever reached within three feet of those marks. At that time there was no bridges.

Many houses were destroyed, as the early settlers located near the creeks and rivers. Several people lost their lives by waiting too long to leave their homes.

A small tribe of Indians living near Vaughn's Creek were forced to move their camp for the first time in their lives. Old Indians said they had never seen but one flood that equaled it, and that was when they were young

men. All families living near Pearl River had to move to the hills and remain there until the waters subsided. Many horses and cattle drowned and even deer that were caught on knolls were drowned before they could reach dry land.

A man named Berry had a most unusual experience during that flood. He had a few cattle that failed to come home and fearing that they would drown, he took a boat and went in search of them. Many hours later he found some of them on a little ridge of land and managed to get them off. Then by following them he succeeded in getting them to dry land. He had failed to find a very fine calf that he was very anxious to save, and after he had reached home, he took a slave and went back into the swamp to hunt for the calf. Late in the day he found the calf standing on a drift of floating logs. Leaving the boat in charge of the slave, he went very cautiously across the drift until he reached the calf. Just as he stooped to pick the calf up, it jumped into the water. But he plunged into the water himself and caught it. As he was getting back onto the drift, he heard a noise like the cry of a baby. He held the calf and kept listening, and in a few minutes he heard the cry again. Then looking closely, as it was nearly dark, he saw a baby's cradle floating on the water on the upper side of the drift.

He called to the slave to bring the boat around to where he was. When the boat reached him he got into the boat and letting the slave hold the calf, rowed along side the cradle. Sure enough, there was a little baby lying on a sheepskin in the cradle. It was covered with a small quilt and appeared to be very hungry and cold, but was dry, as the cradle did not leak. He lifted the cradle into the boat, and hurried home. His wife took charge of the baby, gave it some dry clothes and then some warm milk. It was soon asleep. They kept waiting for someone to come for the baby, and they made inquiry of the few neighbors, but nobody knew any thing about the baby's parents. The waters finally went down and Berry made every effort he could to locate the baby's home and parentage, but never did. He and his wife were glad to keep the baby, as they had no children of their own. So in their good home it was reared, never knowing until it was grown that they were not its parents.

In the summer following the overflow, there was found in a creek, a few miles north of Berry's home, a wagon and the body of a man, and a yoke of oxen, almost entirely devoured by turtles and alligators. The wagon contained some cooking utensils and some bedding, which indicated that the man was moving and had been caught in the overflow. There was nothing to show who he was, or where he came from and it was supposed that he might have been the father of the baby. If he had a wife, no trace of her was ever found.

THE OLD HOUSE

When the first white settlers came to Simpson County, there was an Indian trail that crossed Strong River about a mile east of where John Quinn once lived. There was a ford at the crossing that could be used a greater part of the year. In later years a road was opened along the trail and a bridge was built near the ford and maintained for several years, but it was abandoned soon after the Civil War.

About 1819, a man by the name of Johnston settled on the Indian trail a short distance from the ford on the river and built a large house of hewn logs. The house was about forty feet long and twenty-five or thirty feet wide. There was an upper story of the same dimensions and the house was furnished with a very wide brick chimney. Johnston owned four or five slaves and the house was built by the slaves, some of the slaves were good carpenters. The lower story was used as a sort of trading post and had a dirt floor. The upper story was used for living quarters and was reached by a wide stairway.

Johnston kept a large assortment of goods that suited the Indian trade and for several years had a flourishing business. He kept a few horses and cattle, and sometimes went to New Orleans on business. On one of those trips he unknowingly contracted yellow fever. In a few weeks Johnston and all of his slaves and many Indians of

the neighborhood were dead. Johnston being the first to die, was buried by his slaves, but the last of the slaves were left in the house without burial and were finally devoured by the wolves, or dogs.

Indians would not go about the place, and the house soon acquired the reputation of being haunted. Hunters and trappers sometimes stopped there when the weather was cold or raining, and-it was said that some robbers made the old house their headquarters at times. Later two men were murdered in the house and left to the wolves. The place had grown up with briars and cane reeds and was a very lonely, desolate place. Being in the swamp, it had escaped the forest fires put out by the Indians in the spring but its reputation for being haunted grew as the years passed. After the country was more thickly settled, men would sometimes be heard to say that they would spend a night in the old house, and one or two were said to have tried it, but never stayed the night through, as they always reported terrible noises that kept them from sleeping. One man reported seeing a large man sitting by him, when he woke in the night, but that when he spoke to him he vanished. In the fall of 1825 two young men, on a wager agreed to spend the night in the old house and be there in the morning for everyone to see. The bets were "covered" and about dark they set out for the old house.

The house they went from was about two miles away, where a dance was going on. After the young men left, there was a great deal of banter about how long they would stay. Some thought they would stay all night, but many thought they would soon return, so the dancers decided to remain until midnight or longer and see what happened. They didn't have to wait long, for about nine o'clock the young men came back under great excitement and stated that there was a young woman in the upper story of the old house and they believed she was dead. The dance broke up and several men were sent for immediately.

As the party proceeded to the old house, the boys were asked about their finding the dead woman, and they stated that they carried torches with them and made a fire in the lower fireplace which lighted up the room. Then they noticed a large rattlesnake in one corner of the room. They killed the snake and looked for more of them and found two other large rattlesnakes in the room. They killed them, but, decided it would be dangerous to try to spend the night in the lower room. They then took a torch and went up the stairway into the largest of the upper rooms. When they walked into the room, they looked for snakes, but saw none. They then went into another large room and in that room they found the dead woman. They couldn't say just why they thought she was dead, but they were already nervous from their encounter with the snakes, so they left at once.

Several torches were carried by the party, and when they reached the old house they made a search of the larger lower room, for more snakes, and sure enough found two large rattlesnakes, which were immediately killed. They then went upstairs into the other rooms and found the woman. They all thought she was dead, but on walking nearer to her, found that she was alive and that she was an Indian woman lying on a blanket which she had spread on the floor, and found that she had by her side a new born baby. They spoke to her and at first she would not make any reply, but they told her they wanted to help her if they could, and wanted to know where her people were. She then said they were down the river by the trail, where they had camped for the night.

Two or three men then went down to the camp, which was only about one hundred yards away, and roused up some of the Indians and told them about finding the Indian woman and the little baby. They simply said that she would be all right in the morning and ready to travel. One of the men had a bottle of whiskey, which he divided with the Indians. That started them to talking, and they then said that they lived beyond the Indian ford on Pearl River, where the trail crossed the river. That they had been to a Cry for a Six--Town Indian Chief, who had recently died, and were on their way home. There were about a dozen of the Indians, six or seven women and children.

Two or three of the party said they were going back to the old house in the morning to see for themselves if the Indian woman was there. They struck the old Indian trail about half a mile west of the old house, and had gone but a short distance when they met the Indians going west along the trail. The men were all riding ponies but the women and children were walking along behind them. The last one was the Indian woman they had found at the old house, and she was carrying her baby in a basket, which she carried on her back. The men told the boys that under the circumstances, the bets should be called off, and they were. A stranger story of the old house will not be heard again for some time. The Indian ford on Pearl River was about four miles north of the present Georgetown Bridge.

In the winter of 1826, James Briggs, the sheriff of Simpson County, received notice from an Indian Chief, down at the ford or Strong River, where the northwest trail crossed the river, that some white men had a terrible fight at the old house near the trail and that one or two had been killed. Briggs and several other men went at once to investigate the matter. On reaching the old house, they found that two men were dead, and had evidently been robbed of what money they had and also of their horses. An inquest was held and it was found that four white men had been camped at the old house for a week or more. They kept their horses in the lower part of the old building and all slept in the upper rooms. They claimed to be fur traders and kept a considerable assortment of goods that suited the Indian trade.

The Indians said they all carried pistols and that all of them had gold watches and that all had money, but had no idea of the amount. They had good horses and saddles and plenty of blankets on which they slept. They had bought all the furs the Indians had at the time, but stated that they would return in a few days and buy any furs the Indians might have at the time. The Indians thought they left the day before, as they had not see any of them that day, but it happened that an Indian had loaned one of them a new blanket which had not been returned, and had gone to the old house to try to find it.

When he went in the house, he found that all the horses and saddles were gone, but as he knew they slept in the upper rooms, he went up the stairs and first thing he discovered was a dead man, and on looking into another room found that there was a dead man in that room. He went through all the rooms, but saw nothing of the other two men. Then he went back to camp and reported the matter to the Chief. The Chief sent for the Sheriff.

On further investigation, it was found that the men had been killed with knives, and that they had been robbed. No money was found on them and their watches were missing. All the horses had been taken with the saddles and bridles. The men had evidently been killed early in the night, as it appeared that no one had slept in the house after the killing. The Indians thought the two dead men had killed each other, but were not sure about it.

The Indians didn't know the names of any of the men, and had never seen them before they came to their camp. The Indians were of the opinion that there had been a desperate fight, as there was blood on the floor of the lower room. Briggs decided to follow the men, although he had but little hope of overtaking them. When he reached the Indian ford on Pearl River, he found that two of the horses had been abandoned, but that the men had crossed the river. Catching the loose horses, he returned. The horses were sold for enough to pay the cost of burying the two men.

Nobody ever knew who they were nor where they came from. The Indians promised to report to the sheriff if the two men who escaped were ever seen again, but they never did.

Briggs didn't know it at the time, but he afterwards learned that when the men left the old house, they took two Indian girls with them, and that the girls rode the horses that belonged to the dead men, until they reached the river, sometime in the night. The girls jumped off the horses as they entered the river, and dived under the water

for such a distance that the men thought they were drowned. Late in the afternoon the girls reached their home camp on Strong River. Briggs always thought that if he had known that at the time, he could have captured the men. It was too late. Soon after that the old house was burned and soon forgotten.

THE STORY OF AN EAGLE

In the month of October, 1825 James Neely settled on Strong River, about one mile south of the present Union schoolhouse. Like all early settlers he depended more on hunting than on farming, although he cleared and cultivated a small field. There was an Indian settlement on the river near Neely's place and he traded with the Indians and employed them in curing his furs, as they were very skillful in that kind of work. Neely's son, Tom who was about thirteen years of age, enjoyed the trips to the Indian settlement with his father, and learned a great many things about hunting from the Indian boys, and often hunted with them.

They taught him the habits of the wild animals, and the best way to trap them, for as they had very little in the way of guns, they depended mostly on trapping to catch the wild animals of the neighborhood. The Indian boys never attempted to trap bears or panthers, as they were too dangerous, but they enjoyed catching otters and beavers. They paid no attention to coons and opossums, as they considered them worthless.

They never killed wild fowls with anything except blowguns and bows and arrows. They were expert in making and handling bows and arrows, and blow-guns, and often killed ducks, wild geese and turkeys with them. They never tried to kill eagles and always advised Tom to never disturb eagles, as they were dangerous, but Tom would often stand by the river and watch the eagles flying up and down the river in search of food for the eaglets, and he often told the Indian boys that he believed he could "tame" an eaglet if he could catch one. The Indian boys told him that he could never catch one, as it would be impossible to reach the eagle nest in the big cypress trees. They told him that even if he could get to the nest, he could never get down with the eaglet, as the eagles would tear him to pieces. Tom didn't believe that, but as he saw no way to reach the eagle nest, he said nothing.

One day in the spring there came a storm in that part of the country and many trees were blown down, and several were blown down near Neely's field fence. The next day after the storm, Neely and Tom started out to see what damage had been done. After they had gone around the field and made some repairs on the fence, they went down to the Indian settlement to see if the Indians were "all right." At the settlement they found the Indians dressing a deer they had killed, and Neely decided to buy a part of the venison and waited for it to be dressed. Below the Indian Camp was a long sand bar on the north side of the river.

The river was low and Tom and the Indian boys ran down to the sand bar to see what they could find. Tom was wearing a new coonskin cap his father had traded for and one of the Indian squaws took a large feather that she had dyed a brilliant red and stuck it in Tom's cap Just over his left ear. Tom was very proud of his cap and the red feather. About the time Tom and the Indian boys reached the west end of the sand bar, they saw an eaglet struggling through some vines near the sand bar. It had been blown down by the storm. Tom ran at once to catch the eaglet, and paid no attention to the warning cries of the eagles and of the Indian boys. When he caught the eaglet, he ran with it towards the Indian boys, but they ran away from him and told him to throw it down.

By this time three large eagles were screaming over-head, and swooping down almost to the ground as they flew close to Tom. By that time, his father and the Indians at the camp saw the danger and called to Tom to drop the eaglet, but he was determined to hold to it, and probably would have succeeded if his father had been a little faster, but before his father could reach him, one of the eagles, with a wild scream caught Tom's cap and flew away with it, and part of Tom's left ear. Tom dropped the eaglet then and another eagle caught it up and took it

away. When they got to the camp one of the Indian boys said, "Me tole um eagle catch um." Tom believed them after that.

John Magee

One of the most adventurous of the early pioneers of Simpson County was John Magee. He was born and reared in North Carolina and when about grown decided to go west. He was seeking adventure more than fortune, for he never seemed to care for money. He crossed the mountains of East Tennessee on horseback and when he reached the Tennessee River, he sold his horse and embarked on a flat boat for the Ohio River. When he reached that river he secured passage on another flat boat leaving for New Orleans. Passing out of the Ohio River, the boat reached New Madrid some time in the year 1811, where it was stranded by the tidal waves on the Mississippi following the great earthquakes of that year above Memphis. There was such a succession of shocks that it was several months before he could secure passage on another boat going south. Just north of Natchez, this boat sprung a leak and sank. All on board were saved by swimming ashore, as the boat sank near the east shore of the river.

After reaching Natchez he remained a few months and decided to return to North Carolina overland. He bought a horse and started East. After crossing Pearl River he was taken sick, but kept going until he reached the capital of the Six Towns Nation, just south of the present town of Weathersby. By that time he was too sick to travel. The Indians then took charge of him and after several weeks, in which he was delirious a large part of the time, he recovered. This was probably in the year 1812.

Winter had come on and he decided to wait until spring to resume his journey. The Indians were very kind to him, and he became a favorite with them. Chief Bluebonnet wanted to adopt him as a son and make him Chief, but he declined the offer. Bluebonnet was by no means disheartened, as he was sure Magee would accept the offer later. Perhaps he would, but Bluebonnet died the following year. Magee was greatly grieved by the death of Bluebonnet and agreed to remain with the Indians another year.

He became a fur trader and very expert in the grading of furs. He also assisted the Indians in their dealings with other traders and often prevented their being cheated when selling furs.

Magee never sold whiskey to the Indians, but he kept whiskey for himself and would give them whiskey when they asked for it. The Indians often called on him to settle their disputes so that in the course of a few years he acted as a kind of judge for them in all kinds of matters. They trusted him and loved him as they would a brother. He loved the wild, free life of the Indians, and the happiest years of his life were spent among them. No one, more than he, regretted their removal to the Indian Nation west of the Mississippi River.

After their removal he married and reared a family. He died about 1840. He was the great grandfather of my good friends, Frank Hardin and Solomon Grubbs.

ROBERT MAGEE

Robert Magee was a brother of John Magee, and he and his wife, Peggy, came to the county about the year 1818. They came on horseback from North Carolina and settled near where the town of Janesville was afterwards located. The few early settlers helped them build a small log house and a little furniture of the most primitive kind was collected. They obtained some flour and meal at a small water mill on Nusapho Creek, which was owned and operated by a man named McNair. The mill had been built by a man named Woodward in the year 1816. Meat could be obtained by hunting, and was quite plentiful.

Magee's wife was a very thrifty woman and she kept Magee hustling. They soon began to accumulate some property, mostly cattle. About 1820 she was advised that one of her relatives in North Carolina had died, leaving her several slaves. At once they arranged to go and secure the slaves.

It was a long trip, more than 900 miles, mostly through thinly settled country. Now and then along the road were taverns, where lodging for the night could be obtained. More often they had to depend upon the few settlers along the road. Often it was dangerous to stop with them, but after being on the road for several weeks they reached their destination. After resting a few days, they set out on their return to Simpson County, bringing the slaves with them on horseback.

They found the return trip very difficult, as they had to protect the slaves against robbers. Often they had to camp at night in the great forests. Sometimes the large streams were so swollen that they were often delayed for nearly a week at one place. They finally reached home after an absence of many months.

Life then began in earnest. A large farm was opened and put in to cultivation. Peggy bought a large number of sheep, which she had protected as best she could by a few slaves, who were given charge of them. These slaves were furnished with a pack of wolfhounds and they kept near the sheep at all times.

At night the sheep were kept in stockades, guarded by the wolfhounds. There were no cotton gins in the county at that time and very little cotton was grown. Wool was the only thing that could be sold at all times. The principal market for wool was Mobile, (Alabama) and every winter wagons loaded with wool, hides and tallow would be carried where these products would be sold, or traded for goods of various kinds, especially cloth, sugar, lumber and whiskey.

A few years after their return from North Carolina, they opened a store, which Peggy managed, while Robert looked after the farms, cattle and sheep. Robert was a successful farmer and continued to buy land in Simpson and Covington Counties until he owned several thousand acres. He also continued to buy slaves and at his death owned about one hundred. He seems to have had "heart trouble" and perhaps for that reason he always carried a slave boy wherever he went. This boy looked after his horse, kept it well curried, and well fed. Saddled the horse when his master wanted to ride, and was with him at all times.

I do not know when Peggy's death occurred, but Robert Magee died suddenly about the year 1859.

ED BRILLAND

Ed Brilland came to Simpson County about 1823 with his wife and two little girls. He settled about two miles west of Rials Creek and bought a small farm and with the help of a few neighbors built a log house. The house was low and had a rather flat roof. It was covered with boards about four feet long, and as he had no nails, the boards were held down by heavy poles which were fastened at each end to the walls of the house.

He built a stick and dirt chimney and at the left side of the fireplace was a small window with a sliding shutter. Just outside the window was a shelf or platform on which wood was placed, to be used when needed. When the fire burned low the window would be opened and a few sticks of wood taken from the shelf to replenish the fire.

On Christmas Eve of 1826, Brilland and some neighbors went deer driving early in the morning. They killed two or three deer, which they dressed and divided among themselves. Brilland's share was a ham of venison, which he carried home and hung on a peg in the corner of the house.

He reached home about noon. His wife then told him that the little girls would be disappointed if they didn't get something from Santa Claus, and suggested that he go to the new village of Westville and try to get something for them as well as some groceries.

Brilland did a good deal of hunting and trapping, and had a very nice selection of furs. It was his intention to go to Natchez or Mobile in the early spring and sell them. He had a homemade cart and a small yoke of oxen, so he decided to go to Westville with his cart and take a few furs and see if he could get something for the children, as well as the groceries his wife wanted.

He got rather a late start after noon, and it was late when he reached Westville. It was almost night when he had made his purchases and started home. He had bought two small dolls, some candy and apples for the little girls. After supper Brilland's wife made a good fire and told the little girls to hang up their stockings on each side of the fireplace and go to bed as Santa Claus would not come while they were sitting up.

After they had gone to bed, their mother sat by the fire waiting for Brilland to come back. While she was sitting there she heard some animal scratching, on the wood she had gathered for the night. She thought it was a wolf, and was not afraid, as wolves were very common. She remembered that the dog had followed Brilland to Westville, and paid very little attention to the scratching, but presently she heard the animal leap up on the roof, and immediately after it had leaped upon the roof she heard the scream of a panther. She knew that she was in danger. She got Brilland's rifle from the rack and saw that it was loaded. Then she noticed that the panther was scratching on the boards of the roof, and she could see the boards beginning to move as there was no overhead ceiling in the house. She waited until she saw an opening in the roof, then she raised the rifle and fired through the opening. The panther gave a terrible scream and bounced off. She heard no more of it.

About an hour later Brilland reached home and his dogs began baying at something near the house. Brilland's wife called him and told him what had happened. He unyoked his oxen and came in carrying a long torch and taking his rifle he went to the dogs. When he reached them he found that they were baying a dead panther.

When Ed Brilland settled near Rials Mill about 1823, he first built a log house for a dwelling. It was a house of just one room, but was well built, as Ed was a fairly good carpenter. It was provided with a "stick and dirt" chimney and a puncheon floor. (puncheon: a broad, roughly dressed timber) With an adz (an axlike tool for dressing wood) he made the floor as smooth as possible. The worst trouble was the large number of cracks in the floor and the walls of the house. Soon after he finished his house, he built a small log crib, with side shed for his horse, and then built another small house for curing meat. Ed was a strong, hustling young fellow and good at such odd jobs as he could find in the neighborhood.

Like all the new settlers at that time, he did a good deal of hunting and trapping. Late in the fall he was out on the creek one day with Joe, the Indian, looking after some traps. He did not have his gun with him, but carried a heavy hunting knife generally known at that time as a Bowie knife. While walking along the creek bank they noticed on the other side, a large bear, which appeared to be eating something at a fallen tree. Joe at once said, "Bee tree fall, bear eat honey, we get him." Very quietly they crossed the creek with the two dogs they had with them, and waiting until the bear had its head almost hidden in the tree made a rush for it. When the dogs were let go and rushed on the bear, it rose up on its hind feet, and as it did, Ed sprang over the log and struck it through the heart with his knife. The bear was soon dead, and after skinning it they agreed that Ed should have the bear skin, as he wanted it for a rug, and that Joe should have all, the meat. Indians were very fond of bear meat, and some white people would eat bear meat.

Joe helped Ed with the 'bear skin and in a few days it was well dressed. After it was well dried and "cured". Ed placed it on the floor of his dwelling and it was used as a rug for many years. It was once used as a pallet for the baby, a tiny little girl, named Betty. Ed enjoyed lying on the rug himself, 'when he came in at night after a day of hard work.

In those days very few people had wells and dwellings were usually built near springs, from which the water would be brought, and at the springs the family washing could be done. At the springs was what was generally called the "wash place", where wash pots and "battling sticks were kept.

One day in the spring when little Betty was about old enough to crawl, Ed's wife rocked her to sleep and left her on the bear skin while she went to the spring to wash some clothes. Ed kept some good hunting dogs, which were usually with him, but he also kept a small dog named Fanny, which was always left, at home to guard the house. Fanny was very devoted to Mrs. Brilland and the baby, and when Mrs. Brilland went to the spring she left Fanny to guard the baby. She never knew just how long she had been at the spring when she heard Fanny barking furiously. Feeling that something was wrong, she hurried to the house as fast as possible, and as she entered the door saw that the baby was crawling towards a huge rattlesnake. She could hear its rattles singing, and it seemed ready to strike. Fanny was baying it, and as Mrs. Brilland came in she seized the snake and never turned it loose until it was dead. Unfortunately Fanny was bitten several times, and in a few hours she died in spite of all that could be done. Ed was in the field and heard his wife's screams and came as quickly as possible. Mrs. Brilland had taken Betty and ran out in the yard and had fainted, Ed didn't know what had happened until he went into the house. When Mrs. Brilland recovered, she told him what had happened. He had found the snake, and when measured, was found to be over five feet long. Ed tried to save the life of the little dog, but it was too badly bitten to save it.

Ed was a "tender hearted" man, and he buried the faithful little dog under a dogwood tree on the hillside, and for long years after, when Betty was old enough to hear the story of how she was saved, she would go in the springtime and place flowers on the grave of the little dog.

The principal outdoor sport of the early settlers of Simpson County was hunting Panthers. Catamounts and wolves were hunted, on account of their killing so much of the stock, first brought to the county. Bears were hunted mostly for their hides, which were used for rugs and also for bed covering in extremely cold weather. Deer were hunted for their hides as well as for food, and "deer driving" as it was called, was the greatest sport of all. Other small animals and wild fowl were also hunted in a small way, but scarcely considered as sport as they were usually caught in snares, traps.

Firearms were scarce and ammunition hard to obtain, so but little would be used on small game. When deer were feeding, they would travel somewhat in wide circles, and would cross a ridge or hollow at pretty much the same place almost every time, and an old deer when hunted would take the same route over hills, hollows and swamps. Hunters who were familiar with the territory, usually knew where these crossings were and when they went driving for deer, some men would be placed at the best known crossings, or stands as they were called. Then other men, usually on horseback, would take the dogs and go in search of a deer until they found, or until the dogs found a fresh trail, then the dogs began the chase and continued until the deer was overtaken or lost. When the men at the stands heard the dogs they knew at once that the deer might appear at any time, and were ready to shoot when it came in sight. On almost every drive a deer was killed and sometimes more, but as a rule, only one. When the first shot was fired, all the hunters would come up, the dogs would be called off and the deer dressed and taken home where it would be divided among them.

Besides game there was back in those days, a great number of diamond-backed rattlesnakes in the woods, and people were always on the lookout for them as they were very deadly and people were often bitten by them. About the year 1823, Ed Brilland who lived in the hills east of Westville, had a most unusual experience while on a drive for deer. He was a young fellow and had never killed a deer in his life. He was very anxious to kill one and asked to be placed on a good stand. There was a high ridge a little east of Rials Creek mill, where deer nearly always followed a certain trail when hunted, and he was placed there. The deer stand was at an old pine somewhat decayed at the ground and apparently hollow, as there were small holes going down along the tree and roots.

It was late in December and very cold, Brilland was not very well clad and after he had stood there for about two hours, he felt like he would freeze. He had some matches and knew he could start a fire with his old flintrock gun, but he knew there was a little cabin about a quarter of a mile away, where he might get a little fire. So he leaned his gun against a tree and ran to the cabin and "borrowed a chunk of fire". He then went back and set fire to the old tree. It started burning almost at once and he was soon getting warm, and not hearing the dogs, decided to take a smoke. While getting his tobacco pulverized in order to put it into his pipe, he felt something touch his ankle. He looked down and to his horror, saw an immense rattlesnake crawling out of a hole and over his foot.

He never knew how far, or how quickly he jumped, but his quickness probably saved his life, and the snake began rattling very viciously. He finally secured a stout stick and went back to the tree, but by that time four other large snakes had come out of their holes and all seemed very angry. He killed them as rapidly as possible and then watching the holes for more snakes, and more kept coming until he had killed thirteen of them. Others had probably been burned to death before they could escape. The fire had burned down into the roots of the old tree and gotten into a nest of rattlesnakes.

After he had recovered from the shock of his experience with the snakes, he found his pipe, took a smoke and got his gun ready for the deer, as he heard the dogs coming at full cry. In a few minutes, he saw the deer coming, not far ahead of the dogs. As it passed he shot. He first thought he had missed, but as he kept looking, he saw the deer fall about sixty yards away. The other hunters soon came up and congratulated him on his kill, But when they were told to come with him to the old tree, where the thirteen rattlesnakes were laid out in a row, they had no words to express their surprise. Two of the snakes were more than seven feet long and none less than five. Brilland was the hero of the occasion.

JOHN BRIGGS

John Briggs was an early settler of Simpson County. He located in the southwestern part of the county near Vaughn's Creek. His first dwelling was a small log house with stick and dirt chimney. It had but one door, but at the sides of the chimney were small windows, about two feet square. The windows were closed by wooden shutters fastened on the inside by buckskin strings, which were looped over pegs in the wall. The door was fastened on the inside by a cross bar.

Briggs had a wife and several children, the oldest being a little girl about 12 years old, named Sallie. Like nearly all frontier children, they became accustomed to the wild life of the forest, and had very little fear of the wild animals. The nearest neighbor lived about two miles away, and visits were few and far apart but they lived on a road, or trail, that was followed by the Indians in their annual trips from the headwaters of Pearl River to the swamps of Louisiana.

Every winter a great number of Indians would pass their house going to Louisiana where they would make baskets and hunt until the next spring. Then taking their baskets they would proceed northeast to their homes on

Pearl River, selling baskets and trading as they proceeded. The men rode ponies and carried their guns. The squaws walked and carried the luggage. Every few miles they would stop and camp, perhaps for several days. On one of their trips north, a small band of Indians camped on Vaughn's Creek not very far from where Briggs lived. They were there for about a week, and some of the men were on a "big drunk." During the time they were camped there, one of Brigg's neighbors came to his house one night and asked him and his wife to come to his house as his wife was dreadfully sick and he needed help at once. After giving instructions to the children, telling them to keep the door and windows shut, Briggs and his wife left for the neighbor's house.

The children parched corn and played some games until they were sleepy. Then they lay down on a quilt near the fire and were soon asleep. The fire got low and the house was dark. Inside, when Sallie awoke very much alarmed, for she was sure that she heard something at the window. She quietly put a pine knot on the fire and waited to see what would happen.

In a few minutes she heard the noise again, and it appeared that some person or animal was pushing against the window shutter. She then said, "Get away from there, or I'll shoot you". There was no reply, but soon after she heard the same kind of noise at the other window.

She then knew that it was not an animal, so waking the other children and telling them to be quiet, she went to the gun rack and took down her father's rifle. She had never shot a gun and she didn't know whether the rifle was loaded or not. She told the other children to crawl under the bed, and then trembling with excitement, she went to the side of the bed furthest from the fire, and, laying the rifle across the bed, she listened.

She had not waited very long when the window was pressed open, and she saw the face of an Indian and saw that he was trying to get into the house. She was so excited she hardly knew what she was doing, but she pressed-the trigger of the gun and it fired. The Indian disappeared, and she thought he was gone. She built up the fire and finally closed the window, but never went to sleep until her father came and told them that their mother would not be back until morning.

The dogs had gone with Briggs to the neighbor's house but they came back with him. And soon after he came they began barking at something near the chimney. As soon as they could the children told Briggs of what had happened. He then said it might be the Indian the dogs were baying. Taking a torch he went out to the side of the chimney and found the Indian lying on the ground dead. He went and reported the matter to the Indians at the camp. The only remark they made was, "Him heep bad Injun. Give heep trouble.

No one is rich enough to do without a neighbor.
Danish proverb

Civilization is a movement and not a condition, a voyage and not a harbor.
Arnold Toynbee

COUNTY ESTABLISHED

Simpson County was established in 1824, and In 1825 an act of the legislature was approved designating Daniel McCaskill, James B. Scatterfield, William Herring, JAMES BOGGAN (James B. Jr. would have been age 62 and Jessie James Sr. would have been 48 years old.) Jacob Carr, and Peter Stubbs as a committee to locate a permanent county seat within three miles of the center of the county. And ordered that a county tax of one half

the amounts of the state tax should be assessed to provide for, the construction of the county courthouse and jail. This act also specified the width of the streets as well as the size of the town.

The site selected was called Westville , in honor of Col. Cato West. The first courthouse was built of logs and was a, small building about 20 feet wide and 24 feet long. It was used for only a short time and seems to have been used entirely for offices, as the courts were held at the residence of William Gibson until a frame building was erected about 1827.

There was no jail until about 1830, when a log jail was built. There were no cages in the jail and the prisoners were chained at night to the logs on the floor.

In 1844 the courthouse and jail were burned at night and two prisoners who were in the jail were burned to death as they were chained and could not get out. After that time another and much larger courthouse was built as well as a new jail. This courthouse was also a frame building and on May 9th, 1872 it was burned together with all public records of the county. I understand that the jail was also burned, but no lives were lost. The third courthouse was built of brick and cost \$11,000, which was considered a very large sum for that time. This courthouse was standing in 1907 when the county seat was finally moved to Mendenhall. After the removal of the county scat, the old courthouse was torn down and the brick sold. The jail was also torn down and sold.

THE MISSISSIPPI STATE SEAL

Established after the Civil War

The Indians had used the "spread Eagle" as a symbol of speed, wisdom, and strength. The arrows held on one side denote War if necessary. The Olive Branch on the other side signifies Peace.

Twelve other states use the Eagle in their Seal.



JOSIAH SIMPSON -Mississippi County namesake

Mississippi was admitted to the Union 10 Dec. 1817 and takes its name from the river, which forms its western boundary for a distance of over 500 miles.

Mississippi River was named by the Indians and literally means “the Father of Waters”. It is the main stem of the greatest drainage system in North America.

In 1798 the Mississippi Territory was created by Congress. According to the Encyclopedia Americana - 1946 “with the great additions of territory -- came the necessity for a good colonial or territorial system. --- At the head of each territorial government stood the governor. He, with any, administrative officers needed, was appointed by the President for a term of four years”.

James Madison, fourth President of the United States, became so in 1809 and continued thru the War of 1812, retiring from office in 1817.

From the Mississippi as a Province, Territory and State with Biographical Notices of Eminent Citizens by J. F. H. Claiborne, Vol. I Jackson, Miss. Power & Barksdale Pub. and Print. 1880 we find that President Madison appointed JOSIAH SIMPSON as Territorial Judge.

Josiah Simpson, a native of Penn. educated at Princeton, studied law, and married Miss Stewart near Fredricksburg, VA, and in 1812 was appointed by the President one of the Judges of the Mississippi Territory, to succeed Judge Fitz. He resided at a place then called Green Hill, in the vicinity of Natchez, now known as Devereux Hall. 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.

The bar before which he dispensed justice was extremely able-the people were intelligent, cultivated and wealthy-they had lived under three governments, and the due administration of the laws required a very extensive range of study and of inquiry. Judge Simpson soon impressed himself on the bar and the community as a man of great ability, learning and rectitude, and no man was more beloved. In the Convention - a position he would have avoided, but was literally forced into it by a universal call -- he took a very prominent part, and his conservative character is impressed on the most important features of our first constitution. He died soon after the Convention dissolved.

This would probably have been late in the year of 1817. He left an only daughter, who became the wife of the Hon. Thos. L. Dobyns, a native of Mason County, Ky., who resided at Rodney, Miss., a leading lawyer and prominent politician, and died there in 1854.

Shooting Star or Meteor

If a shooting star, or meteor, should fall in your yard it would truly be money from heaven for they sell sometimes as high as ten dollars per pound, and sometimes they do strike the earth. It is estimated that more than a million meteors strike the earth's atmosphere every day, and that they travel at such frightful speed that every living thing on the earth would be destroyed if it was not for the fact that friction with the atmosphere causes them to be burned up by the heat thereby produced. It is the heating of the meteor and the surrounding air that produces the incandescent glow when falling. Most of the meteors are small, but sometimes they weigh several tons. When they reach the earth they are called meteorites and the largest ever found is at Grootfontein, South Africa. It weighs about twenty-five tons, but a much larger meteorite must have fallen in Arizona centuries ago, for there is a great crater in a treeless plain, nearly a mile across which was caused either by a

meteor or a shower of meteors, as tons of meteorites have been found all around the rim of the crater. Thousands of meteorites weighing from a few pounds to hundreds of pounds have been found on the great western plains. People in all ages have looked upon meteors with a kind of awe and a meteor that fell in Mexico in the time of the Montezumas was wrapped in mummy cloth and buried in one of the Aztec temples. It weighs 3,407 pounds.

A meteor that fell in Bohemia in the year 1400 A.D. was believed by the peasants of that country to be a recently dead ruler who had been very cruel to them. They believed that an avenging heaven had turned him into stone and dropped him back to earth as a warning to evildoers. They took the meteorite and placed it in the Town Hall of Elbogen so that all might see.

The sacred Black Stone of Mecca is also a meteorite. It is worshipped by the Mohammedans who always kiss the stone when they visit it. They say it was snow white when it fell from heaven, but that the sins of men have turned it black because of the kisses of sinful men.

There is no record of anyone having ever been killed by a meteor, but science now holds that Joshua's account of the rain of stones which fell upon the enemies of Israel was an early account of a shower of meteors. They are supposed to be fragments of comets or planets that have broken up, and disintegrated. They are composed both of iron and stone, but the stone meteorites are the more valuable. No inscription has ever been found on any of them, but if there ever should be, it might be the key to some wonderful discoveries and it would certainly show that those fragments came from planets that were once inhabited by intelligent beings.

- Bee King Nov. 18, 1937

To age with dignity and with courage cuts close to what it is to be a man.

- Roger Kahn

Shooting Stars

Encyclopedia Americana Corp. 1946 P. 742-4

In addition to the sporadic shooting stars, which may be sometimes seen on a dark night, these, bodies occasionally appear in showers. These showers are caused by the earth's atmosphere, encountering streams of particles traveling in elliptical orbits about the sun.

The most brilliant meteoric shower on record was that of November 13, 1833. This spectacle caused the greatest interest among all beholders and made many think that the world had come to an end. It was witnessed generally throughout North America, which happened to be the part of the earth then facing the meteoric storm.

Hundreds of thousand's of shooting stars fell in the course of two or three hours. Some observers compared their number to the flakes of a snowstorm.

Immediately after this, great display of 1833 Prof. Denison Olmsted of Yale College announced that what had occurred was an encounter by the earth with a vast swarm of particles moving around the sun. It was also observed that there were other, less brilliant showers at different times of the year, notably the annual display on August 10th.

It was Prof. Hubert A. Newton of Yale College who devoted his time and study to arrive at a solution. The ancient records showed that ever since the 10th century there had been recurrent showers in the autumn at an

average interval of 33 ¼ years. The slight variations were due to planetary attractions shifting the position of the orbit.

The study also showed that usually there was a considerable display a year before or a year after, the principal shower. The explanation of this was that instead of being concentrated at one point on their orbit, the particles were strung along in a column of sufficient length to occupy at least two years in crossing the point of intersection with the path of the earth.

After the mathematical computations were arrived at, a notable shower in Nov. 1866 as predicted occurred by a second display the next year. However on neither occasion was the spectacle equal to that of 1833.

The return of the shooting stars on their predetermined date of 1899 or 1900 was eagerly awaited. Before the time arrived, however, astronomers had begun to foresee the probability of a disappointment. The planets Jupiter and Saturn began as early as 1867 to effect the swerving inward of the orbit of the swarm so that it could no longer intersect the earth's orbit at the old meeting place.

A considerable number of shooting stars were seen in 1899 and 1900 but there was no such display as would have occurred had the earth plunged through the main stream.

In one second the sun radiates more energy than man has used since the beginning of civilization.
- N.E.A.

Free Lewis stated that he was about twelve years old when the stars fell" but he could not give the date. As a matter of fact it was on the night of the 20th of November, 1833 and was undoubtedly the most remarkable spectacle ever witnessed by man.

He stated that the night was cold and perfectly fair, and that he and a number of other boys had gone out hunting on the hills east of the water mill. Out near the big pigeon roost they built a little fire while waiting for the dogs to "tree". While they were sitting by the fire, one of them noticed a shooting star in the northeast and mentioned seeing it, but almost before he could speak, they saw another and then others falling faster and faster. It was then perhaps ten o'clock in the night and they decided to go home.

At that time there were ten or twelve families living near the mill and around the mill was quite a little village. Several of the boys who were out hunting lived near the mill and they all decided to go there first, for by that time they were terribly frightened, as the stars were falling by the hundreds and every moment they expected to be struck by them. They threw down their game and ran as fast as possible to the mill. Before they reached the mill they heard horns blowing and guns being shot and people calling each other in every direction. The stars were falling by the thousands and the whole country was almost as light as day.

When they reached the mill, a great number of men, women and children were there; white people, Indians and slaves. Some were praying some were crying and some were screaming. Others were gathering their children together and telling them goodbye, for they thought the world was coming to an end. By midnight the very heavens seemed to be full of stars, and they were apparently falling by millions. They were all sizes, from that of a silver dollar to the size of a dinner plate. Many appeared to be much larger. They filled the entire atmosphere like a snowstorm. While none appeared to fall immediately around the mill, they appeared to be falling to the ground further away and everybody thought the woods were full of them. Occasionally some excited fellow would declare that he saw some of them fall in to the mill, and to add to the terror, a crackling sound could constantly be heard in the sky. When that was first heard, nearly all the women and children went under the

houses, and even the bravest of the men felt that the end of the world was near. It was so light that an old school teacher, who happened to be there, got a Bible and read a few passages from it.

The terror was doubly increased by the action of the animals. The cattle all got up and ran, lowed continuously; and the dogs barked all howled as if in the greatest distress. Even out in the woods could be heard the mournful howling of wolves and many deer were seen around the edges of the lake, as if they were seeking protection from some mysterious enemy. Thousands of pigeons from the big roost circled over the mill and hundreds of ducks plunged into the lake.

Over at Samuel Brown's who lived a short distance from the mill, an old slave died from fright. No one thought to wake him, and when he did awake about midnight and stepped out of his cabin door, he fell to the ground and was not noticed until about three o'clock in the morning when it was found he was dead. Several old women fainted, and an old preacher, who was subject to fits, and who had been predicting that the world would soon come to an end, was found drowned in the lake.

After midnight it was noticed that there were not so many stars falling and the people began to get over their excitement. By three or four o'clock, only one would be seen occasionally, but the sky seemed to be filled with some kind of strange vapor that was entirely unnatural. In connection with this strange phenomenon were many tragic as well as many humorous incidents that illustrated the beliefs and superstitions of the people of that

Fagan the Crippled Irishman

When Free Lewis was a small boy, an Irishman by the name of Fagan lived near the mill. Fagan was a crippled man and depended on what he could make operating a small blacksmith and wood shop. He had a turning lathe and made pails, wooden churns, piggin, half bushel and peck measures and many other things that were in common use at that time.

Note: Piggin – a small pail or tub, especially a wooden one with a handle formed by continuing one of the staves above the rim. His shop was a very interesting place for the boys of the neighborhood and they took great delight in visiting the place and watching Fagan at work. Fagan was married and had two boys nearly the same size as Free Lewis, and the three boys spent a great deal of their time together around the shop and the wigwam of Joe, the Indian.

Among Joe's children was a boy named Tonie, who was about the age of the Fagan boys and was quite a favorite with them. The four boys often hunted together and were very successful in securing game. At the time there was a considerable number of bears in the country and bear hunting was considered a great sport. Of course, Joe did nothing but hunt and fish and put out his traps for otter and beavers. He never hunted for the mere sport of hunting but simply for what he needed for food.

One day while visiting his traps on a little creek running through the hills between the Rials Creek and Westville; he noticed the tracks of a bear and two small cubs. He followed the tracks for some distance and found that they led to a small cave in the bluff on the east side of the creek. He made a note of the place and that night told the boys of his find. They were very anxious to go the next day and secure the cubs for pets. Joe told them that hunting bears was a dangerous business and that they would have to be very careful and take plenty of time.

For several days Joe went to the little cave and carefully noted the location of the bear's den and how it could be reached. He did not want to kill the old bear, but for the sake of the boys' he wanted to capture the cubs. He discovered that the cave did not extend very far back into the ground and that several trees grew on top of the

bluff, and that it would be an easy matter for a man to go down the rope and fasten it around a cub, so that it could be drawn up to the top. He then decided that by using two ropes both cubs could be captured at the same time. The next question of course, would be to find the old bear away from the cave. Joe told the boys of his plans and together they talked the matter over for several nights, their interest growing greater all the time. Joe went to his traps every day, and when he was on the little creek he watched for the old bear. By waiting patiently he found that she always left the cave at some time of the day to feed and that she rarely ever carried the cubs with her. He also found that she sometimes went a considerable distance from the cave and was often gone for an hour or more. He also noted that she was constantly stopping and listening, as if she expected something to happen to her cubs. Joe finally decided that it was about time to capture the cubs, and one morning about daylight he called the boys and told them he was ready to go and catch the cubs. They took something to eat as they might be gone all day. They also took their four dogs and two ropes. The wind was blowing from the east and Joe said it was a good time to catch the cubs as they could cross the creek and come to the bluffs from the west side, so the old bear would not scent them. Joe said he would go to the bluffs and tie the ropes and watch to see when the old bear left the cave. He left the boys and the dogs a considerable distance away but in an open place so they could easily see him. The boys were directed to keep the dogs quiet. They found it very tiresome; just sitting there and watching Joe as he stood on the bluff. But after about two hours, Joe beckoned them to come. When Joe beckoned for the boys to come, they hurried to the bluff and watched Joe as he slid down the ropes to the cave. He carried some old sacks, which he first wrapped around the cubs and then tied them with ropes; and signaled for the boys to draw them up. When the cubs reached the top of the bluff the dogs made great outcry and Joe knew the old bear would come at top speed. He scrambled to the top of the bluff and sent the boys off at full speed for home.

He remained with the dogs, for he knew the old bear would have to be kept from following the boys and cubs. In a few moments he saw her coming rapidly to the cave. He managed to hold the dogs at the top of the bluff while the bear examined the cave, then he saw her coming up the bluff and he knew the fight was on. The dogs had never been in a bear fight but they fought well and held their own for several minutes. The old bear fought well also, for she realized that the life of her cubs was at stake. Joe stood by for he did not want to kill the bear as he thought it would bring bad luck.

Finally the bear knocked two of the dogs over the bluff and was getting much the better of the other two. Joe knew that the boys could not be far away so he gave the bear a lick with a stick and knocked her over the bluff. He then called the dogs and followed the boys. They had been taking the cubs "turn about" and had gone over a mile and were going down hill when Joe looked back and saw the old bear coming at full speed. The dogs did not seem to want to renew the fight and Joe had forgotten to bring his stick, and there was no time to cut one. Just about the time the old bear reached them one of the boys who was carrying a cub fell down and the bear covered him.

Joe was terribly frightened, as he feared she would kill the boy. But fortunately she caught the cub instead of the boy. Perhaps luckily for all, she turned at once with the cub and went in the direction of the cave. They all then sat down to take a rest, as they were exhausted. They knew it would be useless, as well as dangerous to follow the bear. She was ready to give her life for her cub and would have died rather than to give it up. They carried the other cub home and Joe said it should belong to all four boys and they would have to take good care of it or return it to its mother.

They built a kennel for it in Fagan's back yard and every day they would feed it and take it out and play with it, until it became perfectly tame. They taught it to do a number of tricks and taught it to dance, so that it became one of the main attractions of the neighborhood.

One night when the boys were out hunting and all the dogs were away, Mrs. Fagan thought she heard a noise around the back yard, and went to see about it. The moon was shining, and when she walked out she saw a large bear standing at the fence with its forepaws on the top rail. She also saw a small bear near by. She called her husband, but before he could get out the bears were gone. Mrs. Fagan said she was sure the large bear was the mother of the little bear in the yard, and felt "sorry" for her. When the boys came she told them of seeing the bears and they kept watching for them to return for a long time, but they were never seen any more.

Late in the fall, while out hunting with Joe they found a number of bear tracks and followed them some distance, but never came up with the bears. They then decided to go to the bluff and see if the bears were there. They found some tracks around the bluff but they seemed to be old. At that time the bluff was quite high above the creek. Joe crawled into the cave to see if the bears were hibernating for the winter, but found nothing except some "possums" and screech owls.

A short time after taking the hunt for the bears, a man rode up to the mill one day and asked to be allowed to post a notice of a show that was coming to Westville the next week. It was the first show to be brought to the county; and everybody was anxious to go. Free Lewis and the Fagan boys could hardly wait for the day to come.

For the next few days scarcely anything was discussed around the mill except the show. The boys of the neighborhood were all very anxious to go and at once began to make plans for the occasion. None of them had any money and very few of the grown people had any. At that time almost all their business was carried on by a kind of barter system. Another trouble was the distance to Westville. It was over six miles - and many of them would have to walk as many people had no horses or wagons. Joe, the Indian, told the Fagan boys and Free Lewis that he would give them some furs to trade and thought they could get in the show that way. They were greatly delighted over what he told them and said they would go if they had to walk.

On the day before the show was to be given, while nearly everybody around the mill was eating dinner, Joe came from over the hill, east of the mill, to the Fagan place and simply said, "Me see um coming." In a short time every body around the mill, and in fact the whole neighborhood had gathered to see the show. In a short time the first wagon was seen coming over the hill. It was drawn by two large dappled gray horses with glittering harness and tassels, and bells ringing. The next wagon was drawn by large black horses and a third wagon by beautiful bay horses. The fourth wagon was drawn by white horses and the driver of that wagon was a clown. He captured the crowd at once with his painted face and funny clothes. Everybody wanted to see him.

Then there was an elephant and two camels, a cage with a lion and another cage with a bear. When the last wagon got down to the mill, they all stopped and the showman asked if there was a blacksmith there. He stated that he had to have one wheel of his front wagon repaired and wanted it done as soon as possible. The wheel was taken off and while it was being repaired the show man walked among the crowd and told them all about his show and asked them to be sure and be at Westville the next day. He was a very jolly sort of fellow and the boys were greatly delighted with him. While they were looking at the bear in the cage, the Fagan boys told him that Tonie and Free Lewis had a bear that could dance and hold a gun. The showman asked them to show him the bear and let him see it dance and hold the gun. Nothing could have pleased them better and they at once brought the pet bear out and had it dance, stand up and hold the gun. This so pleased the showman that he offered to buy the pet bear. They told him that the bear was not for sale. But the more he looked at it the more he was determined to buy it. His first offer was ten dollars, but they would not take that. Then he offered twenty dollars, but the boys said they could not give it up for that. After a little while, Joe told them that they could catch another cub in the spring. Mrs. Fagan also said that they could not keep the bear much longer as it would be grown and then people would be afraid of it.

They finally agreed to take forty dollars for the bear. The showman said he could not give that much, but finally he did and paid the boys ten dollars each; all in gold. It was the first real money they had ever had and the first money Free Lewis and Joe had ever seen. They felt like they were rich indeed. But when the wagon wheel was repaired and the showman started to lead the little bear away, they regretted selling it. They all caught it again and hugged it and cried as if their hearts would break.

When the first show was given at Westville, the population of the county was small and the roads were poor, but the attendance was good and it was a great event among the young people of the county; and they talked about it for a long time afterward.

Nearly all the people living near the Rials Creek Mill got a chance to go, as the mill man had a large freight wagon and two good yoke of oxen and a careful driver. He turned these over to his neighbors for the day. Everybody was up before daylight and long before sun-up the wagon was loaded with boys and girls and a few of the older people. It was soon on its way to the show. The Fagan boys, Free Lewis and the Indian boy, Tonie, went in the wagon.

There were no buggies in the county at that time, and very few wagons. Many people had carts, but their use was not general and they were not much used for traveling. Nearly everybody that could afford a good horse went horseback and saddle horses were highly prized at that time. Many of them had been brought from the eastern states, and were very valuable. The owner of the mill and Samuel Brown and many others attended the show and all went on horseback. There were also in the neighborhood a number of settlers mostly engaged in trapping and such odd jobs as they could get, who had no horses, but regardless of that were anxious to go to the show. Some of them managed to hire conveyances, but most of them walked. There were a few Indians still in the neighborhood and they decided to go as it was something entirely new to them. The men all rode their little ponies but the squaws walked. It seems that an Indian squaw never thought of riding. They always walked and often carried heavy baskets strapped on their backs and held by a wide band extending around their foreheads. Joe, of course, rode his little pony, and Mary, his squaw, walked behind him and carried a basket of beaver and otter skins to trade. It so happened that about three miles west of the mill Samuel Brown and his wife overtook Joe. Mrs. Brown, feeling sorry for the poor Indian woman, asked Joe why didn't he let Mary ride. Joe said "She gottum no horse." By nine o'clock the show tents were up and the village was full of people, it being the largest crowd that had ever gathered there. At that time there were but two small stores in Westville, but there were three saloons, and there was as usual much drinking, a great deal of profanity and a number of fist fights; some of them being serious. A terrible fight took place in the early morning between a man named Blackwell and two men by the name of Davis. One of them was badly cut by Blackwell and later in the day Blackwell was attacked by three other members of the Davis family and badly beaten before he could be rescued. With the exception of fights every thing went off very quietly. The showman evidently knew that there was very little money in the county, and so he had provided for that. He had an experienced judge of furs connected with the show and this man put out a notice that he would buy all furs that were in good condition on that day, and that in addition to paying cash, would give tickets to the show. He kept very busy nearly all morning, buying and sorting the furs. A great number of beaver and otter skins were bought, as well as some bearskins and a few wolf hides. He also bought well-dressed deer hides. At that time coon skins and mink skins scarcely had any value, but coonskins were often used for caps. The showman recognized the boys who sold him the little bear and told them that when the show was over to come and see him before they left. When they went to see him he gave them some candy and gave each of them a pair of red topped boots which he fitted so they would not hurt their feet. They were the first they had ever had, in fact, none of them had ever worn shoes before that time. They were delighted beyond words, but in their poor way tried to thank him. He then took them to see the little bear again. They all hugged it again and could not keep back their tears as they went away. They knew they would never see it again.

"As it is the commendation of a good huntsman to find game in a wild wood, so it is no imputation if he hath not caught all." Plato

JOHN CADE

John Cade came into the county about 1829 and first secured work at Freeman's tanyard near Westville. (A Nathaniel Freeman is listed in the 1830 Census) He had no family and nobody ever knew where he came from. He claimed to be able to tell fortunes; and like all fortunetellers he got a few people to listen to him. He was very fond of whiskey, and soon became a nuisance around the saloons at Westville, telling fortunes for drinks.

A man named Smith, who was "running" a saloon at that time, became so tired of Cade, that one day he knocked Cade down and then threw him out in the street. Cade was a very cowardly fellow, and offered no resistance, but when he got up he said to Smith, "I'll get even with you, I'll put a curse you," The bystanders laughed and nobody thought anything about it until a few days later, when Smith's horse threw him and broke his leg. Cade didn't fail, to remind Smith of the curse, but was careful not to go near him again. (Alan & Eli Smith in the 1830 Census)

It was soon the talk of the community that Cade could put a curse on a person. Soon after that Freeman became so very much vexed on account of some of Cade's words that he beat him severely. After Cade received his beating, he told Freeman that he would not work for him any longer and that his curse was on him. Freeman remembered then the experience Smith had with Cade and tried to apologize. But Cade left him and went to work for a man who was digging a well. The well was very deep, and while they were digging the well, an overflow came and washed Freeman's water mill and tanyard away. Cade left off work to remind Freeman of what he had told him. Freeman would have whipped him again, but failed to catch him.

The well digger decided to get rid of Cade, but was afraid to discharge him until the well was finished. However, to keep on good terms with Cade, he had his fortune told and, among other things that Cade told him was told that he would fall in that well and get badly hurt. The well digger only laughed at that. But a few days later a fight occurred near the well, and two or three shots were fired so quickly that the well digger started to run, and in his excitement fell in the well. He broke an arm but, by having plenty of help, got out without further mishap.

After that Cade could get no work to do at Westville and he drifted over to Rials Creek Mill and started to work at Walker's tanyard. (Eleven Walkers in Census) He continued telling fortunes and Indians thought he was a very wonderful fellow, on account of his having a small pocket compass; something they had never seen before. Cade pretended to be able to do great many things with the compass, and many people believed him.

He secured a little house and lived alone, and it was thought that he got most of his food from the Indians and slaves by the "magic" of his compass. He met the "Old Lady Tedder," but she had great contempt for him, as he did for her. He remained around the mill for several years, and most people regarded him as a simple, harmless fellow. Occasionally he got drunk and one day while drinking he told someone he had traded his compass for a watch; but he refused to show the watch. It happened that a short time before he told about his trading for a watch, Samuel Brown had lost a watch, which he believed had been stolen.

After he heard that Cade had a watch, he had a search warrant placed in the hands of the Sheriff and had Cade's house searched. Sure enough Brown's watch was found and he charged Cade with stealing it. Cade denied stealing the watch, and claimed that he had traded his compass for it, but couldn't, or wouldn't give the name of the person with whom he traded. He was tried and convicted, and sent to jail. At the close of the trial, he told

Brown that he had been wrongfully treated, and that his curse was on him. While Cade was in jail, Brown was murdered and the compass was found in the possession of one of his slaves.

When Cade's sentence was served out he went to Osceola on Pearl River, where he was murdered a few months later.

Mr. Stanbury and his Wife

About 1826, a man named Stanbury settled on the east side of Pearl River, a short distance below the mouth of Limestone Creek. He and his wife lived in a small log house, and for a livelihood he depended mostly on trapping and hunting instead of farming. He had no children and life was very dull and lonesome with both of them, but as game was plentiful and furs a very good price, Stanbury preferred to remain there instead of moving away as his wife tried to persuade him to do.

After a year or more, Stanbury began to be afraid his wife would "loose her mind," if he did not move and he promised her to move the next winter. After that she became contented; but often sat for days without saying a word. Stanbury became uneasy and resolved to move at an early date.

One night during the summer, his wife woke in a most troubled condition. She told Stanbury that she heard a baby crying somewhere and she believed it was in the creek. Stanbury could hear nothing and tried to persuade her to go to sleep; but she said she could not sleep while that poor little baby was crying; and that she was going to it. She would not wait, but putting on her clothes, hurried out into the darkness, calling the dog. Stanbury thought she had lost her mind entirely. He at once followed her, but had not gone far before he heard her calling him to come for she had found the baby. By that time he thought he heard a baby crying. He hurried on and when he reached his wife, found that she had found a very small child, had it in her arms and was talking to it. She had found it at the creek bank; and they knew by the stars that it was after midnight.

They carried it to their house and gave it something to eat. It was nearly starved and ate greedily. When it could eat no more it went to sleep. Early the next morning they left it sleeping and went to investigate the strange occurrence. They knew that no one lived in that locality and really there was almost no road through that part of the country. Going to the place where they found the child, they tried to follow its tracks, but could not but they heard the cry of a little dog further away, and went in the direction of the sound. Going about a quarter of a mile, they first saw a horse standing hitched to a tree, and getting closer saw a cart near by.

The dog was tied to the cart and begged most piteously. The horse looked like it was nearly starved. Going closer to the cart and looking around they saw a man lying on the ground about fifty yards away. Stanbury called him, got no answer. He then went to the man and found that he was dead and that he had evidently been dead more than a day. They made further search but found nothing else.

They then took the horse and dog and went home. When the poor animals were fed Stanbury reported the matter to the coroner. The coroner held an inquest and it was decided that the man died of smallpox. The baby appeared to have had it but had recovered. An Indian who was present; stated that the man crossed Pearl River at the Indian ford, a week or more before, and that his wife had died on the west side of the river-not many days-before he crossed the river. The Indian said she had smallpox from what he had learned. The coroner left the cart; horse and dog with Stanbury, and told him to keep them and the baby until he could locate the relatives of the dead man, but he never did locate them. With the baby to care for Stanbury's wife became better reconciled. They moved away a few years later, taking the little child with them.



JAMES BROWN AND THE PANTHER

James Brown settled in Simpson County about the year 1825 on the south side of Rials Creek and a few miles northwest of the mill. He was the owner of a few slaves and had enough money to buy a farm that had already been settled by an earlier pioneer of the county; who was also a slave owner. The dwelling was probably half a mile from the creek on the west side of the fields. It was a rather pretentious home for that period and consisted of one main room of hewn logs about 20 feet long with a side room on the north, and a smaller room and gallery on the south or front side. (Gallery: a covered walk or porch open at one side.)

The door opening from the main room to the gallery was near the side room. The floors were about ten feet above the ground. The chimney was built of rocks and of course the cooking was all done on the fireplace, but no better cooking has ever been done than was done on old-fashioned fireplaces. The yard was enclosed by a rail fence and the outhouse and slave quarters were a hundred yards or more south of the house.

Brown's family consisted of himself and wife and two children' a little boy named Billy, about four years old, and a little girl just a few months old. Brown was a bustling young fellow and was very busy getting his fields ready for spring plowing and was also clearing a few more acres of land. In the meantime he had been getting acquainted with the neighbors, attending house raising and log rollings and taking part in deer drives.

He had found the country very interesting, but his wife had never been used to pioneer life, and she had, on account of the absence of near neighbors, become very much afraid of the wild animals that continually prowled about the place; most especially the wolves and panthers. The scream of a panther in the night almost drove her frantic. Brown kept several dogs; but as they always followed him to the field; they were no protection to the family except at night.

About the first of March the child of one of the slave women became very sick, and Mrs. Brown was kept quite busy looking after it and giving it such medicine as they could secure. The weather had been unusually cold for the season; but was followed by a fine warm day. So late in the afternoon, after rocking her baby to sleep, she and Billy went down to the slave quarters to give the sick child some medicine. It was about sundown when she started back to the house.

As fires would be to make, the slave woman gave Billy an arm full of "fat" splinters for kindling, and he started towards the house a short distance ahead of his mother. She stopped along the way to pull some dry bark off the fence rails; as it was quite fine for cooking purposes. Billy reached the front steps about the time his mother reached the yard gate. Just as Billy stepped on the gallery, a large animal bounded out of the main room. Billy stopped, but did not run, and stood still holding his splinters.

It so happened that his mother saw the animal as it came out of the main room and called to Billy. But before he could make any move the animal gave a loud squall and with ears laid back crouched for a spring at Billy. In her terror, his mother gave a scream that was heard by Brown and the slaves down in the field. But when she screamed the animal turned and sprang out on the ground and from there leaped over the fence and was soon out

of sight. Mrs. Brown had never seen a panther, but she was sure it could be nothing else, and that the baby was killed.

Screaming and sobbing she rushed into the house expecting to find the mangled body of her baby. But when she reached the cradle the baby was smiling as if nothing had ever happened. Billy had thought the animal was a large dog. As soon as Brown reached the house and discovered what had happened, he and the slaves called the dogs and put them on the trail of the panther and taking his gun followed in pursuit. He could not believe it was a panther until he found the dogs baying it in a large oak. Taking good aim he was fortunate enough to kill it with one shot.

On examination its tracks were found in the beds and near the baby's cradle. The life of the baby was probably saved because a large piece of raw venison left on the dining table had been found by the panther and eaten.

Note: To describe what a Panther's scream and habits are we refer to the Encyclopedia Americana - 1946 The Panther is also known as a Cougar but was called Panther by the settlers of the Eastern States. It ranges from the Hudson Bay to Cape Horn, a remarkable distance for any wild animal. The cubs may be spotted and marked, but after the first year, the coat is a "uniform reddish, tawny color, deepening in tone toward the spine. Paler around the eyes and whitish on the throat, legs and under portion. The color is so much like the coloring of some deer, that at a distance hunters often confuse the two.

The head is rounded and the face is extremely intelligent, but crafty in general expression. It is said to be more cowardly and less dangerous than the other large carnivores.

The Panther will prowl lone camps and logging huts from curiosity or hunger, but rarely ventures on offensive warfare with humanity. However, J. Hampden Porter says, "there is no need to argue the question whether or not Panthers will kill, men; that has been affirmatively settled by facts"; and Theodore Roosevelt says, in his "Hunting Trips of a Ranchman": "When hungry, a Panther will attack anything it can master".

Panthers were plentiful a century (1846) ago, but is rarely met with today. The Panther prefers to hunt at night and creeps leeward of its Intended victim; and; with noiseless tread and crouching form,' springs upon the back of the victim, plants its long claws in the quivering flesh and with its sharp teeth dispatches its prey.

The cry of the panther is said to be one that will carry terror to the stoutest heart. Its cry can be likened only to a scream of demoniac laughter (possessed of a demon) in the male, and in the female; to the wail of a child in agony.

The Panther was held in religious veneration by the Indians of California, and it multiplied accordingly.

JOHN AND JULIA HANOVER

John Hanover and his wife, Julia, located at Westville about the year 1828. Their only child was Hiram Hanover a young man about 24 years of age. Hiram was well educated, being a graduate of some college in Virginia. John Hanover was in poor health and could do no work, but he owned a few slaves who cultivated some land south of town.

When Daniel L. Farrington was elected Sheriff (1830), he employed Hiram Hanover as a deputy. Hiram was a man of very fine appearance and of good manners, and soon became very popular with the people of the county. Besides working in the Sheriff's office, he did a considerable amount of surveying; and was very efficient in that work.

Hiram's mother decided to open a boarding house. Hiram, of course, lived with his mother, but a short time after decided to get married and became engaged to a very cultured young lady in the neighborhood. He bought a plot of ground just across the road from his mother's house and built a house that was quite a credit to the town. The house was finished a few months before the date set for the wedding, but he slept at his new house and had it well furnished. He took his meals with his mother.

He had been sleeping in his new house about a month, when one morning, to his great surprise, he found a little baby girl lying on the floor at his front door. It was a beautiful baby, well dressed and wrapped in a cloak of very fine material. He first thought somebody was playing a prank on him, but he called his mother and when she came and looked at the baby, she said that she didn't think it was intended as a joke, but that it had been placed there by somebody for him to keep. His mother carried it over to her house; and said she would take care of it until its parents could be located. Nearly everybody in town came and looked at the baby, but no one could recall ever having seen it. The baby was about three months old, was in good health, and its clothing indicated that its parents were well to do. Hiram soon began to be worried about the matter. There was a lot of banter by the young men of the neighborhood for a while; but that died out after Hiram had whipped two or three of them. But gossip went on, and about a month later he received a letter from the young lady that he was to marry, stating that their engagement was broken and that she did not want to see him anymore.

The following year Hiram's mother adopted the baby and gave it the name of Lucy Hanover. Hiram spent a good deal of his time in the fields with his slaves and did some surveying. He was a good businessman and in a few years was a large slave owner. He still slept in the little house across the road from his mother's place but took his meals with her.

In 1839 Hiram died of small pox. By will, he had conveyed all his property to his mother. About a year after Hiram's death, his mother sold all her property and she and Lucy moved to Virginia. The mystery of Lucy Hanover's parentage was never solved.

Note: Among the earliest settlers in Simpson County were James Boggan who might be the one shown in the 1830 Census as age 40 to 60. It is possible that he could have come as a young married man of 26 in 1816. It is believed that he had no children.

Also Gideon Rials who built his water mill at the head of Rials Creek (Mr. King spells the name RIALS but the Census Enumerator spelled it RAYALS) By 1830 Mr. Rials had a male under 10 and 1 male 10 to 20 years of age. We might assume they were his sons.

“BIG TIME” in the Early Days.

From 1816 onward the population of the county had increased very rapidly. Lands were free, game was plentiful, stock of all kinds lived in the woods, provided the settlers could protect them from wolves, catamounts and panthers. The only mills in the county were water mills and the mills soon became gathering places, especially on Saturdays, for the men of the community. Whiskey was to be had almost everywhere. It was sold in all the little stores that were opened throughout the county. There were always four or five places in Westville where whiskey could be bought, three or four places at Osceola, and from one to three at Rials Creek mill. On account of the fact that the Rials Creek millpond afforded the best place in the county for swimming and boating, it soon became a gathering place for all that liked to indulge in the rough sports of that time. On-almost every Saturday from April until October, there would be a large number of big, strong, able-bodied men at the mill, bent on having what they called a "big time".

That meant they would indulge in jumping, wrestling, boxing and fighting; not that they were angry with one another but for the pure fun of fighting and to see "who could whip." The first thing to be done was to prepare a pot of grease, bear's grease being preferred more than any other. Then when the grease was prepared they would take off their shoes, though most of them went barefooted anyway, then take off their shirts and grease their bodies with the bear grease. When well greased it was very hard to hold a strong man, and when two of them were well matched, it sometimes took as much as an hour for them to get exhausted. The jumping and wrestling was usually done in the forenoon and the afternoon devoted to boxing and fighting. The men not actually engaged in the fight would act as referees and see that no undue advantage was taken by one or the other, and nobody would interfere if the fight was carried on fairly. It was against the rules to bite off an ear or nose, but fingers were frequently bitten off, and mouthfuls of flesh bitten out of a man's body. It was astonishing the amount of punishment some of the fellows could take without flinching. It was only in rare instances that a man would ask the crowd to take a fellow off.

On one occasion a fellow named Elizas Brown and another fellow named Myers, who had fought repeatedly, met at the mill and both getting pretty well tanked up on liquor, got into a fight which lasted for almost an hour. They were both large strong men, right in the prime of life, and everybody present took sides with one or the other. Quite a number of bets were made on each of them. They were stripped to the waists barefooted and well greased. The fight was fast and furious. Everybody was in doubt about who would win. Finally Myers fell on hip face and Brown bit three mouthfuls of flesh out of Myers' back and spit them out on the ground. The crowd thought Myers would give up, but suddenly he whirled over got Brown's right wrist in his mouth and held on until Brown said "quit". They then shook hands, promising to meet another day and fight again, Those rough sports developed some wonderful fighters and produced a magnificent race of men.

JAPHET BANNISTER

Japhet Bannister settled a few miles north of Rials Creek in the year 1826. He had come from Virginia and had been more than a year in making the long trip. He had no acquaintance or relatives with anyone in the county. In those days it was very impolite to ask a man why he had come to the county. The fact was that in most Eastern States, a man could be imprisoned for debt, and that was the reason so many men moved west. Like every other new settler Bannister was given a hearty welcome, and the neighbors for several miles around came and helped him built his house, and do such other work as was customary in those days. Bannister was a very intelligent fellow and tried in every way that he could to repay the kindness shown him. Like nearly all the early settlers he depended largely on hunting and trapping, though he cleared a small field and appeared to be a very successful farmer. He was married and had three small children. His wife enjoyed company and was quite a favorite with the women of her neighborhood.

Bannister and his wife attended nearly all the house-raisings, log-rollings and quiltings given during the winter months and Japhet was always glad to help other settlers moving into the country. After he had planted his crop in 1829, he had the misfortune to get his leg broken. There was no real physician in the county, but an old fellow in Westville, claimed to be a "Doctor", and he was sent for. He set Japhet's leg as best he could and bandaged it but it was a rough job and Japhet was not able to work at all that year. What little they had was soon used up and his family were almost on "sufferance" before any body realized their condition.

It so happened that there was a large gathering of people to hear a preacher talk and at the close of his sermon he called on everybody to give their "experiences". On these occasions nearly everybody present would think of the people "back home" and it was often with sadness that they spoke of what the Lord had done for them. On this occasion Jesse Williamson's wife was present and just before the meeting closed, the preacher asked her if she wanted to say anything. She got up and said that she was not used to saying anything in public, and what had been said was all very good, but what was past could not be called back. She said her idea was that some things

should be done now. After she got started to talking she said, "Now, there's Japhet Bannister down and not able to work and his wife and poor little children got nothing to live on, and that little woman can't plow that mule and they ain't got nothing to feed it on either. I'm going to ask everybody to meet me at their house next Tuesday and bring dinner and bring something for his folks and some feed for the mule, and bring some clean bed clothes and some clothes for the little children to wear, and I want everybody who will meet me to stand up." Almost every person present stood up.

Sure enough, on the following Tuesday about thirty people arrived at Japhet's house early in the morning. All had brought something; two or three women brought clothing for the children as well as for Mrs. Bannister. Some brought flour and coffee. Several of the men brought hams and sides of bacon. Jessie's wife was there and everybody said she should take charge. So the next thing to be done, she said was for the men to go and work out that crop. She had already told several men to bring plows and hoes and plenty of mules to plow. She told the women to start a quilt and some she put to sewing, and a few of the older women prepared dinner.

Before night the crops were cleaned out and in good shape. Mr. Rials sent some molasses and that night they had a candy pulling. It had been a great day. Japhet and his wife were simply overcome but, in spite of their tears, they managed to thank their good neighbors for what they had done.

Later Jesse's wife called another meeting to finish the crops. It was a great success and the crops were good. That winter Japhet was called back to Virginia and after being away more than a-month, he returned. He had been left a considerable fortune and was going back to Virginia to live. Before he left, he and his wife went around among his neighbors to thank them for what they had done and say "goodbye". To all of them they made some little gift, and to Mrs. Jesse Williamson they gave his mule and fifty dollars in gold. He said that what she had done had saved them.

BILL JAMESON AND TOM McTAG

Bill Jameson settled a few miles northwest of Rials Creek mill about the year 1828, and the following year Tom McTag settled about three miles further west. Neither had made application for homesteads, but they built small log houses, and cleared and fenced a few acres of land for cultivation. Jameson had a wife and one child, a boy about nine years old named Johnnie. McTag was married but had no children.

Like nearly all early settlers, they depended largely on hunting and trapping for a livelihood, and both had traps along the streams of the neighborhood. Jamieson was an easy-going, good-natured fellow, but McTag soon acquired the reputation of being quarrelsome and a man to be avoided. Nobody had ever heard of any differences between Jameson and McTag, but during the trapping season of the year 1830, while Jameson and his little boy, Johnnie, were hunting and examining his traps, a man standing behind a large tree unexpectedly spoke to Jameson and said to him, "I understand you have been accusing me of robbing your traps". Jameson told the man that he had done no such thing, but before he could say anything more the man shot him. Jameson fell and was unable to get up and his gun had been thrown out of his reach. The man at once began to reload his gun and at the same time advancing towards Jameson, who begged him not to kill him, but when he had loaded his gun he raised it to his face. Just before he fired, Jameson said, "Goodbye, Johnnie." He was shot through the head and died instantly.

As soon as the second shot was fired, the man turned and ran. Johnnie had been standing behind a large bush when the first shot was fired and the man probably never saw him. Johnnie had never seen the man before and didn't know who he was but he knew that he could never forget that face.

Though Johnnie was a small boy, he knew that his father was dead, and he took the gun and went home as fast as possible. A neighbor was notified and soon other good neighbors came and after the inquest carried the body of Jameson's home and prepared it for burial.

Johnnie was the only witness and he could give no clues that would warrant an arrest. Several transient trappers were suspicioned with killing Jameson, but were never arrested. It seems that McTag was never suspicioned at all.

In the winter of the same year McTag's wife died, but he continued to live at the same place and continued his hunting and trapping as before, and when spring opened he planted a small crop on his land and made an addition to his building. As McTag was living alone, it was soon suggested by some busybodies that he get married again, and among the eligibles the name of Mrs. Jameson was mentioned, and one or two persons agreed to arrange a meeting for them. Finding that Mrs. Jameson had no objection to meeting McTag it was agreed that he would call on Mrs. Jameson the following Sunday afternoon. Several persons even took it on themselves to be present when McTag arrived at Mrs. Jameson's home, but left soon after. Johnnie Jameson was not at home when McTag arrived, but he came late in the afternoon, just as McTag was leaving and heard his mother ask McTag to call again.

As soon as McTag was out of sight, Johnnie said to his mother, "That is the man who killed daddy." Mrs. Jameson was so shocked she almost fell in a faint. She sat down and it was along time before she could reply. When she did she told Johnnie to go over to a neighbor's house and tell him to come there at once. When this neighbor came she told him what Johnnie had said and asked him to go at once and tell Jameson's two brothers in Copiah county. The man left at once and the next day the two brothers, arrived. Three other men came with them. They had all recently come from North Carolina and nobody knew them. Johnnie took them to the tree where his father was killed and showed them how it was done. When they went back to the house they told Johnnie that he had better not go with them. It was nearly night when they rode away.

A few days later it was reported that a man had been found hanging to a tree. Another inquest was held and the dead man was found to be McTag, and he was hanging from the tree from which, he shot Jameson. No charges were ever made against anybody.

TOM PACE

In the fall of 1828, Tom Pace located on the west side of Rials Creek about a mile northwest of the mill. He claimed to be a native of South Carolina and said he had been nearly three years reaching Simpson County. He had traveled all the way in a small wagon drawn by one yoke of oxen.

After leaving South Carolina in 1826, he stopped off for almost a year in the central part of Georgia, where he made a small crop. When that was gathered, he again started west and reached the western part of Alabama in 1828, where he stopped again and made a small crop. After that crop was gathered and disposed of, he started west again reaching Simpson County just before Christmas of that year. He had used the same wagon all the way, but had lost several yoke of oxen on the way; one yoke having been stolen and another yoke killed by the Indians, and still another yoke killed by falling timber in the time of a storm.

His family consisted of himself and his wife and two small girls, one about eight and the other about six years of age. Mrs. Pace was it a very delicate little woman, and Tom said she had contracted "consumption", on account of the long, hard winters. Tom was a very robust fellow but "good natured", and he readily fell in with the people of the neighborhood. His wife was a very religious woman and she soon made a number of acquaintances as well as good friends, many of whom came and assisted her during her long illness. When Tom

first reached the county, he traded his oxen and wagon for a little house where he located; it having been built by an earlier settler who wanted to move further west. It was a very good deal for Tom for there were two small rooms to the house and a few acres of cleared land adjoining. Tom was a millwright (one who installs or repairs machinery in a mill) and soon found some work to do building and repairing mills.

He also trapped otters and beavers and hunted deer and buffalo. Otters were never used for food, but in those days many people ate beaver meat and said it was good. Bear meat was also eaten.

Early in the fall of 1829 Tom's wife died, and Tom and the little girls were left to take care of themselves as best they could. Mrs. Pace could never do much with Tom, but she had taught the little girls to pray, and every night she would pray with them and tell them what to say. Tom never made any objection, though he was not a "praying man". After her death, Tom would never go far away from home, and was very attentive to his little children. If he had to be away all day, he took them with him, but would return at night.

Late in the fall of 1829, Mr. Rials had a big "blow out" at his mill and employed Tom to assist him in repairing the dam and in making some changes at the mill. On these days Tom brought the little girls with him; so they became well acquainted with Mr. Rials and his good wife, and they enjoyed being there. Although Mr. Rials had no girls of his own, there were frequently other little girls at the mill.

A few days before Christmas, the weather turned very cold. During the cold spell, Tom had the misfortune to fall into the creek. He got out and without any trouble; but instead of going home and changing his clothes, he continued working, just stopping long enough to warm himself at the fire near the mill. At the end of the day; Tom and the little girls went home. The next morning Tom failed to appear, but soon after sun-up the little girls came to tell Mr. Rials that Tom was sick. Mr. Rials was not surprised, and blamed Tom for not taking his advice and going home to change his clothing. Then he thought better of that for he had an idea that perhaps Tom was a very poor man. Mr. Rials saw at once that he probably had pneumonia. There was no doctor to be had, but he sent two men to look after Tom, and to keep him advised of his condition. That day they reported his condition very bad and the next day shortly after noon Tom died.

Several other men came in and they made a coffin for Tom, and after placing him in it, sat it on two short logs near the back of the room. The coffin was left open so that any one who called might see the body. Several came in to remain for the night, two of them being women. About dark, as they were all sitting near the fire, one of the women called attention to the two little girls, They were both kneeling beside Tom's coffin and praying. Everybody kept perfectly still but they could not "make out" what they said. But when they got up they kissed Tom's face then taking his hands they said, "Goodbye Daddy". Then with tears streaming down their faces they walked out of the house. About an hour later they knocked at the door of Mr. Rials' house, and when Mr. Rials came out they said, "we have come to live with you". He was a good man and told them that he was glad they came. They lived to be fine, noble women.

Jerkey, or jerked beef, is a corruption of the Chilean word "charqui", meat cut into strips and dried in the sun. From N.E.A.

FRANKLIN E. PLUMMER – A NOTABLE SETTLER

A brilliant and certainly one of the most notable of the early settlers of Simpson County was Franklin E. Plummer. He was a native of Massachusetts and was born about 1789. He was not as well educated as some of the Easterners who came South when this county was being opened up, but he had a good New England common school education and he used it well. His parents were poor and could do little for him; so at an early age he decided to come to the southeast.

He worked his way from Massachusetts to the Ohio River and then secured employment on a flat boat going to New Orleans, When he reached New Orleans he found friends who advised him to go to some of the new counties in Mississippi, so he went to Copiah County and secured his residence with John Coor, the first sheriff of the county, and there he opened a log-cabin school. He could read; write and cipher up to the Rule of Three. He had push, shrewdness and the "gift of gab" and was considered at that time, and in those new settlements, a walking encyclopedia.

"The country all declared how much he knew,
'Twas certain he could write and cipher too;
Lands he could measure; terms of tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge!
In arguing too the parson owned his skill;
For ev'n tho' vanquished he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound,
Amazed the gazing rustics rang'd around!"

It was not long before Plummer became virtually sheriff, clerk and county judge, though the commissions of course, were held by three respectable citizens. Copiah County was established in 1823 by being cut from Hinds. The country was settling so rapidly that Simpson County was formed from the Choctaw Session and Westville selected as the County Seat the following year in 1825.

Plummer moved to Westville and hung out his shingle as attorney and counsellor-at-law. His library consisted of Poindexter's Revised Code, a pamphlet copy of the acts of the last legislature and one volume of Blackstone on crimes and misdemeanors. However nobody ever saw him reading. He spent his time among the boys, in the crowd, and on the steps of the courthouse, but when the courts came on he was found employed on one side of every case; and to the astonishment of older lawyers, and of the Judge, he was generally on the winning side!

He talked very fluently; his manner was insinuating; his smile irresistible; his good humor contagious; he knew his jury; could fathom the depth of the judge and had the most consummate audacity. His career at the bar was short, but no man was ever more successful. It was not long before he was employed in several neighboring counties and employed in nine-tenths of the cases.

The story is told that two men quarreled about a will in a neighboring county. One said, "I will sue." The other replied, "Sue and be d__d." They separated. Each started for Plummer by a different road, and faced each other at his office at the same time. Each claimed him as counsel, but he made them decide it by pitching up a dollar -- heads or tails! And he who won; paid him the fee.

It was not long before he was elected to legislature and became a leader there. He made himself master of parliamentary law, and could embarrass the House or disentangle it, at his pleasure. This with his free and easy way of speaking, and his imperturbable good humor, made him both a popular and influential member, wielding more power than men of higher grade and culture or than all of them combined.

In 1829, he announced himself for Congress, much to the consternation of some of the other members. But he took the stump and routed them without difficulty. It was on this canvass that he played off a good joke on Monsieur Parisott, who had opened a hotel at Benton, Yazoo County.

Mr. Plummer engaged a room there; made free use of the bar; invited many friends to drink and dine with him; made his speech and ordered his horse. Parisott had the bill in his pocket, attended him (Plummer) to the door, intending there to present it, when Plummer called out to the crowd, "Attention, Gentlemen! Before leaving Benton I desire publicly to acknowledge the unbounded hospitality of my worthy friend Parisott, who stands here modestly behind me. He is a true Samaritan. He found me weary, hungry and thirsty, and he comforted me. He has placed his table and bar at my disposal, as you gentlemen can testify. He is the prince of tavern keepers, delight in feasting his guests, and never says a word about the bill. God bless you my dear friend. Plummer will never forget you. Gentlemen, farewell!" And vaulting onto his horse, he rode off, amidst the hurrahs of the crowd.

He was re-elected as often as he presented himself; beating, without difficulty, the most popular men in the State.

In one of his contests; he and one of his competitors, Judge Harry Cage, agreed to canvass together. They met at Holmesville and they stopped at 12 M. at a farm house for dinner. Cage pleased the mother very much by kissing her little girl and praising her beauty; but she was completely carried away when she saw Plummer pick up her wee toddling boy, lay it gently across his lap, turn over its little petticoat' and go to HUNTING RED BUGS! "They are powerful bad," said Plummer, "and mighty hard on babies." She was enchanted, and never forgot that tender hearted Congressman.

That night they stopped with an aged couple whose children had all married, and settled around and formed quite a colony. Gage recommended himself by cutting a turn of wood and bringing it in for the old lady to get supper. In the morning he missed Plummer, but soon found him at the cow pen, the old lady milking and he HOLDING THE CALF BACK BY ITS TAIL! Cage was furious; he found himself headed at every turn, by the cunning Yankee. So when they rode a mile or so, and came to where the roads forked. Cage halted and said: "Plummer, here we part. You are too aggravating. Choose your road. If we travel together another day I shall shoot you." And so they parted.

Mr. Plummer was good tempered, full of humor, a hearty laughter lived at a period when street fights and duels were the order of the day but was rarely involved in difficulties. On very exciting occasions in the presence of an angry crowd, he exhibited singular coolness and self-command.

In 1835, Mr. Plummer was invited to Natchez to place his bid for the United States Senate. He purchased a stylish barouche; mounted his servant in livery and set out on canvass -- all because money had come his way so easily. This proved to be his ultimate downfall, however. Previous to this he had had no connections with intriguers, cliques banks or combinations. He stood squarely on his own platform of "Plummer for the People, and the People for Plummer." But now he had accepted their money and his mission was to eulogize, and not to denounce.

He lost his popularity and apparently his courage as well and never applied himself for a public position again.

He never seemed to have had any thirst for money and was lavish with it when flush but generally had none or very little. He died in Jackson, in 1847, in an obscure cabin and in poverty. Those who knew him, in this decade, as a defunct politician, and a sot, lurking in mean places, with low associates, can have no conception of the power he once exerted. Those who knew him in his better days what he had been, and what he might have been sincerely lamented his indiscretions and unhappy fate.

Note: the above excerpts from: Mississippi as a Province, Territory and State by J.F.H. Claiborne

FRANKLIN E. PLUMMER'S BROTHER JOSEPH R. PLUMMER

In 1824, Joseph R. Plummer a native of Massachusetts, and a brother of Franklin E. Plummer, located in Westville. He was a surveyor and a carpenter and as the town was growing he secured work immediately, and among other things helped his brother lay off the western part of the town. In 1825 he entered land on Strong River about three miles northwest of Westville, being a part of what is now known as the Young place.

In 1827 a public road known as the Jackson Road was open from Westville leading north and northwest from Westville through the county. This road crossed Strong River at Plummer's place and under the law he had the first right to operate a ferry. Being a carpenter he built a ferryboat and continued to operate the ferry until about 1835, when he built a toll bridge across the river and discontinued the operation of the ferry.

Owners of toll bridges were required to secure license to operate a bridge from the Board of Police; and also to give bond to keep the bridge in good repair and to protect their patrons from damages. Also to prevent slaves from crossing without permit from their owners. The bridge keeper being subject to a fine of \$25 for violation of that order.

The country was being rapidly settled up and Plummer made money for several years operating his bridge, but in the winter of 1841, a heavy freight wagon left Westville for Vicksburg, then the principal market for this part of the state. The wagon was drawn by three yoke of oxen and carried five bales of cotton, an assortment of hides, and other things, together with wagon cover, bedding for the driver, etc.

Just as the wagon was reaching the north span of the bridge the middle span broke and fell in. As the river was high, the wagon was immediately submerged and the cotton, wagon cover, hides, and driver's bedding went floating off. The driver was badly hurt and Plummer had great difficulty in keeping him from drowning. The tongue yoke of oxen drowned and the middle yoke had their necks broken by the fall.

Fortunately the pull chain of the front yoke broke when the wagon fell and they were saved. The bridge was ruined and by the time Plummer paid the damages of the fall he was ruined, he operated a ferry for a short time, but as a road crossing the river a few miles further north had been opened; the old road was abandoned and Plummer moved away.

SMITH AND HIS PIGS

A great many years ago a man named Smith bought a tract of land down on Pearl River and opened up a considerable farm. He built a comfortable dwelling, barns and out houses, and in a few years had become quite prosperous. He had no children, but he and his wife were hard working and industrious people. His land produced large crops of cotton, corn, hay and oats and he had a large number of cattle and hogs that for most of the year ran on the open range. His hogs were what is known as the razorbacks; and were usually two or three years old before they were fattened for meat. They were always more or less wild and at times were quite dangerous.

It was the custom in those days to take up the hogs that were intended for meat late in the fall and feed them a few weeks on corn.

One fall somewhat early on account of the short crop of mass, (barley cake?). Smith drove about a dozen of his hogs from the range and shut them in a large pen just across the road from his dwelling and began feeding them with corn. He had troughs on the inside of the pen for holding water and slops, which were poured over the fence, which was made of heavy rails. The corn was always thrown over to them and scattered around so all could get an equal chance.

He never went inside the pen as it was not safe, One night probably in October, or early November, there came warm spell of weather, and after supper, Smith and his wife sitting on their front porch talking. Smith was smoking as usual and his wife was knitting. The moon was shining and it was a beautiful night. All at once Smith's wife said, "I hear a baby crying somewhere." Smith said "You just imagine so I reckon." But he had hardly said that when they both heard the cry of a baby.

His wife jumped up in great fright and said "That baby's at the hog pen, I do believe it's in the pen, run, run!! Smith ran as fast as possible and grabbed a stick as he went. As he reached the pen he saw something that looked like a child about the middle of the pen and saw that the hogs were gathering around it and that a big sow was taking hold of it. Jumping over into the pen he rushed at the sow and struck her hard enough to knock her over and then struck several of the other hogs, as rapidly as possible; for they seemed determined to seize the baby. He then snatched it up and ran to the fence and handed it to his wife.

They carried it to the house and examined it by candle light as best they could to see if it was hurt. Smith then built a fire and heated some water before taking off its outer dress, which they found to be made of fine linen. The dress was very muddy. In the back and the baby's hair was wet with mud. Except for the hole in the dress made by the tooth of the sow, there were no marks on the baby's clothing and none on the body. It was a little girl apparently about a month old. All of its clothing was of the very finest material and beautifully made. After washing the mud out of its hair and drying its clothing, they gave it some sweet milk and soon it went to sleep. Smith asked his wife what they would do with it; and she said she would take care of it of course until its mother came for it. She took it in the bed with her and it slept the balance of the night. Next morning they gave it sweet milk again, as they had nothing else in the way of food for a baby.

The next day Smith made inquiry of the neighbors in regard to the child, but no one had the remotest idea where it came from, or whose it was. It was supposed that the baby was placed in the pen while Smith and his wife were at supper, and while the hogs were eating corn.

Smith and his wife kept the child and reared it as if it were their own. They gave her a fairly good education and she was a great comfort to them in their old age.

When about grown she married, and has, as I understand a number of fine children, but she has never known and can never know who her parents were.

Benjamin Franklin's last words: "A dying man can do nothing easy".
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ADVENTURER, FORTUNE HUNTER

One of the most brilliant of the early adventurers and fortune hunters who came to Simpson County about the time of its organization (1824) was James B. Satterfield. He was a native of Massachusetts, was well educated, and was of distinguished personal appearance. He first located in Copiah County about 1822 and when Simpson County was organized he came to Westville and secured work as a surveyor.

A short time after he opened a small mercantile business in connection with a saloon. He appears to have been related to Franklin E. Plummer, and when Plummer got into politics he read law in Plummer's office just west of where the old courthouse at Westville was built.

When Satterfield first came to Westville, it had not been designated as the county seat, and was not so designated until sometime in 1825. By an act of the legislature, it was approved on the fourth day of February.

1825. Peter Stubbs, Jacob Carr, James Boggan, Robert Laird, Daniel McCaskill, William Herring and James B. Satterfield were appointed as commissioners to locate a permanent seat of justice within three miles of the center of the county.

A short time thereafter they began seeking locations which they thought would be to the best interest of the county. Many sites were offered, one at the present Town of Merit, where a watermill was already in operation; another where J. E. Boggan now lives; still another was at the head of Rials Creek, where Gideon Rials had built a watermill.

Of course, Westville was proposed as there was a considerable little village there. Strange to say, there was much opposition to Westville, probably on account of the large number of Indians living in an Indian village nearby. Stubbs lived in the eastern part of the county and was anxious to have the county seat located at Rials' Mill. Laird and Herring were in favor of placing it at the mill near the mouth of Rials Creek, as that was almost at the center of the county. Satterfield was very much in favor of Westville and finally persuaded McCaskill, Carr, and Boggan to vote with him and establish the county seat at Westville.

In the meantime, Satterfield had been appointed Associate Probate Judge and served through part of 1824 and all of 1825. He was a candidate for Representative in 1825, but was defeated.

By Act of the Legislature of 1829; he and Nathaniel Goff and Derrell Young were appointed commissioners to lay out a road from Westville to Raymond, crossing Pearl River at Welch's ferry. The road ran from Westville by way of Harrisville to Welch's ferry and seems to have been finally opened.

Satterfield remained in the county a few years longer but was not very successful in business and like most men who operated saloons, soon became his best customer. I am not sure that he was ever licensed to practice law, but he seems to have been associated with the Plummers in business and when they moved to Carroll County, he went with them.

Note: Mr. Satterfield and the Plummer brothers are not found in the 1830 Census. We do find Messrs: Carr, Stubbs, Laird, Herring, McCaskill and Boggan.



EARLY-DAY POSTAL RATES

It will doubtless be interesting to give the postage rates on letters about 1830. The postage on a single letter at that time was six cents if the distance to be carried was not over 30 miles. From thirty to eighty miles the postage was ten cents from 80 to 150 miles, the postage was 12 cents, from 150 miles to 400 miles the postage was 18 cents, and over 400 miles it was 25 cents. The postage could be paid by the person sending the letter or it could be paid at the place of delivery by the person to whom it was addressed. Money was very scarce at that time and often a letter remain in the post office for many days, even for months, before the postage would be paid and the letter delivered to the person addressed. Because of the high postage rates many people never wrote letters at all and many never received any letters over a long period of years. About 1833 a very eloquent Methodist preacher by the name of Johnson, who was preaching at Westville, told his congregation at the opening of the Sunday morning services that he would preach there no more as he had a letter in the mail from his mother and the postage required to get it out of the post office was "two bits," and that he did not have "two bits" so he decided that if his poverty had brought him so low that he could not get a letter from his mother, he

would quit preaching and try to find something else to do. The next day he got a job digging a well and paid the letter out of the post office.

Several good men had offered to pay the postage for him but he would not allow them to do so. The letter contained 100 dollars and his mother requested that he come back to their home in Virginia. A few years later he returned to Mississippi, but he never preached any more.

Note: Some more interesting facts from the Encyclopedia:

Sunday delivery at the Post Office began in 1810; Postage Stamps of 5 and 10 cents went on sale in 1847; Stamped Envelopes were available by 1853; Registration was instituted in 1854; and Postal Cards were introduced in 1873.

The method of carrying letters was established by Louis the 11th of France about 1470; the general post office, established in England, as is now known, in 1660.

JAMES TAYLOR AND HIS SLAVE JOE

James Taylor settled near the mouth of Strong River about the time the county was organized. (1824) He owned a considerable number of slaves, and operated a large farm.

One of his slaves, named Joe, was a great hunter. His master allowed him to carry a gun when he was hunting and Joe killed a number of deer, besides other wild animals. Joe also enjoyed killing panthers, though his master had warned him that they were too dangerous for a man to hunt alone. Joe promised to quit hunting panthers but the temptation was too great so at last it resulted in Joe getting his face terribly torn by a panther as Joe rushed on it with his knife, after shooting it. Joe thought it was dead, but to his surprise, just as he stooped over to start skinning it, the panther struck him in the face with one of its front feet. His face healed after a few weeks, but left a huge scar. Joe hated panthers after that and always killed them every time he had a chance, but he was always sure that they were dead before he went near them.

Joe was healthy and strong and really a valuable slave. He was quite a favorite with his master, and he thought his master was the greatest man in the world. One-day in the spring of the year 1833, Joe disappeared. His master first thought that he might have been killed by some wild animal, and had the woods searched, but with no result. He finally decided that Joe had been stolen and offered a reward for him, and sent several men in search for him, but no trace of him could be found. Taylor gave him up as lost and never expected to see him again. That fall after the crops were gathered, Taylor and Turner Wilson and a few neighbors went to New Orleans on a business trip. They were in New Orleans for several days and on several occasions attended the slave market. There the slaves would be placed on what was called the auction block, which was a kind of platform and offered for sale, one at a time, to the highest bidder.

Wilson had already bought a few slaves, but Taylor had bought none so he decided that before leaving the city he would attend the sale again and perhaps buy a few slaves for himself. He and Wilson went together and were looking at the slaves before the auction began when suddenly they heard a slave say, "Lordy, dere's Marse Jim." Taylor knew it was the voice of Joe and looked for the slave at once and immediately recognized Joe by the scar on his face. He and Wilson at once went to the auctioneer and told him that Joe was a stolen slave and belonged to Taylor. The owner of the slaves was called, but he refused to deliver Joe to them. They at once told him that they would try the matter in the courts. The man said they would have to prove ownership before he would give them the slave, but agreed to deliver Joe to them upon their giving bond. He no doubt thought they could not do that, but they at once gave a cash bond and took Joe. He gave them the name of the man he had bought Joe from and to their surprise it was the name of one of Taylor's neighbors.

After some further talk the man agreed to give up Joe if they would pay him a small sum, and rather than wait for a trial, they paid him one hundred dollars and took Joe home. Taylor said nothing about how Joe had been stolen, although Joe told him all about how he was taken and gave the name of the same man given him by the man in New Orleans. A few weeks later an attempt was made on the life of Joe by the same man, but it so happened that some other men came up in time to see the attack made on Joe. When the sheriff went to arrest the fellow he was gone and his wife said he had been gone nearly a month. A few weeks later his family left the county and Taylor had no more trouble with him.



THE CAGED EAGLE

The old eagle tree that used to stand in the eastern part of the Rials Creek Mill pond, was very old when the first white men settled in Simpson county. The Indians said that for many generations the eagles had built their nests in the old tree, and they looked on the tree with a kind of reverence. They never molested the eagles and regarded them as the king of birds.

A few years after the mill was built there came a great storm in that locality and many trees and some houses were blown down. While the storm was blowing, Joe the Indian and his boy, Tonie watched the great tree from their wigwam on the hillside just east of the pond, expecting every moment to see it fall. Many limbs were torn away, and a part of the immense eagle nest was blown away and fell in the pond. With the nest, one of the young eagles fell into the water. Joe at once ran down to the pond and waded as far as he could trying to catch the eaglet before it drowned. At last he had to swim but managed to rescue it before it went over the dam. It was almost drowned, but after wrapping it in some dry cloths it soon got over its fall into the water. Tonie was very proud of the eaglet, and the next day Joe made a cage for it. It had a remarkable appetite and could eat great quantities of fish and such birds as Tonie could kill. It was still covered with down, but weighed several pounds.

It grew rapidly but never became friendly. While it tolerated Tonie, it had a most venomous hostility to other boys and to dogs. For many weeks after it was captured, the old eagles would fly over the pond and hill, and give loud screams and occasionally would swoop down to the cage, when it was sitting in the yard near the wigwam Tonie finally moved the cage into the house and kept it there, until the eagles left the old tree for the summer. He was glad when they were gone, as he had become afraid of them.

An old Indian had told him that they would catch him and take him away if they failed to get the eaglet. Joe said it would bring bad luck to kill them and he would not think if having even one of them killed. An old Indian medicine man came along about that time and wanted to cut off some of the eaglet's toes, as he said eagle's toes worn around the neck was good for rheumatism. Tonie would not allow that, even if he was a medicine man. Soon after that the medicine man returned and wanted to buy the eaglet, but Tonie refused to sell, as he was afraid the medicine man would kill it.

The eaglet grew rapidly, and Joe had to make a much larger cage for it so that it could be kept out of doors. Its appetite increased as it grew, and Tonie found that it required much of his time to catch enough for it to eat. It was very fond of fish, but rabbits, squirrels and birds of all kinds were just as acceptable.

It was about 1825, and spring had come again, and with the coming of spring the old eagles had returned to the eagle tree to hatch and rear their young. They had added a large number of sticks to their nest and life was going

on with them as usual. They had doubtless forgotten the eaglet and it did not remember them, but it was now a grown bird, and day after day it walked the length of its cage back and forth, with all the fierceness of pent-up hate.

About that time an Irishman, who had been teaching a school for the Scotch settlers south of the mill, came to Rials Creek looking for a location. Walking around the mill, he came in contact with the Indians and saw the eagle in the cage. He seemed moved by a great pity when he looked at the lonely bird. The next day he went back and asked Tonie what he would take for it. To Joe's surprise Tonie said he would sell it for a little gun the Irishman had. The trade was soon made, and while Joe and Tonie were wondering what he would do with the eagle, the Irishman walked up to the cage and opened the door. The eagle appeared to be dazed for a moment, and then with a wild scream it swung out of the door and into the air. It rose higher and higher until it seemed but a mere speck in the sky. When it was out of sight, the Irishman said, "I was a prisoner in a war for five years and I never see anything in a cage, but what I want to set it free."

FRANCIS GRUBBS

Francis Grubbs settled on Rials Creek about 1824. He built a log house and barn and opened up a small field, which he planted in corn and potatoes, but his principal occupation was trapping and hunting. He kept a number of large dogs and took a great delight in hunting panthers. At that time there were a great many panthers in the country, and no wild animal was more dreaded by the early settlers. They were very bold and dangerous and would not hesitate to kill a cow or even a colt when they were hungry.

Living in their lonely cabins, frequently more than a mile from the nearest neighbor nothing was more terrifying to them than the scream of a panther in the nighttime. It was enough to bring terror to the very bravest and for many days after one was heard in the neighborhood, children would scarcely leave the house.

A year or two after Grubbs located there a young fellow named Smith located about a mile away and built a small log cabin. His family consisted of himself, his wife and baby and a little boy about three years old. He had only a small dog, it was brave enough, but no match for a large animal.

One morning in the early spring Grubbs was surprised to find Smith knocking at his door just about daylight. He carried his gun and told Grubbs that he wanted help at once, as a panther had come to his house that night and that his wife was frightened nearly to death. "That he was afraid to leave her, but that something had to be done. He stated that the panther had jumped upon the roof of his house and screamed, and his wife felt sure that it was after their baby. He said that the dog was so frightened that they had let it in the house and that it was only after he had built a big fire that the panther left the roof. He felt, sure it was nearby.

Grubbs loaded his gun, took a good supply of ammunition and calling his dogs set out with Smith to his home. It was not hard to find the trail of the panther, as its heavy tracks were plain enough around the house. Grubbs and Smith followed the dogs for more than a mile before they came up with the panther. It was a very large one and at first threatened to fight the dogs but as the men came in sight it moved away at great speed. It followed the swamp and was several hours before Grubbs and Smith saw it again. It had climbed a tree, and on account of the undergrowth; it was some time before they discovered it lying on a large limb. When they first saw it they were too far away to shoot and before they got in shooting distance it jumped to another tree and then to the ground.

They followed it through tangles of swamp until late in the afternoon, when it crossed Strong River. The dogs kept following, but as they had no way of crossing and night was coming on, they returned home. Grubbs told Smith not to be afraid as they would get it later. Grubbs had great faith in his dogs and that night about three

o'clock he heard his dogs baying something far down in the swamp. The moon was beginning to shine, so he decided he would go at once and see what they were after. He took his gun and went in the direction of the dogs. After going nearly a mile, he found that they were at the foot of a big tree. The animal seemed to be restless, so he was afraid to wait until daylight, and took a shot by moonlight. When he shot, the animal fell from the tree like a heavy log. His dogs entered the fight but as he could not reload his gun by moonlight, he decided to go and get Smith, who lived only a short distance away. So before day he was knocking at Smith's door for help. He reloaded his gun and Smith took his gun and they started back.

By the time they got there, everything was quiet. The dogs had evidently been killed or had gone home. They approached the place very carefully, and moved around so as to get the wind blowing towards them. Then as it began to get light enough for them to see they saw a large animal lying on the ground apparently dead, but two small cubs of some kind were nuzzling around the body. Hearing a brush move, they saw a panther of immense size walk up to the cubs and begin sniffing the air and lashing its tail. It was what was known as a black panther and extremely dangerous.

Grubbs told Smith to move back a little and he would take a shot. When Grubbs shot, the animal whirled and turned towards him coming at great speed. As it came near, Grubbs moved around a tree, and as it evidently did not see Smith, it turned to follow Grubbs. Just at that time Smith fired and the panther fell. Smith shot it through the heart and on examination it was found that Grubbs had shot it through the lungs. The cubs were found in the hollow of a nearby tree.



Grubbs, Meeks and Tullos And Slave Stealing

These three men had come back to White's place, and here they learned from Peter and Jake that almost all of the slaves in White's possession had been stolen. They also learned that slaves were usually brought to the place at night, and that many were carried away at night. Jake who had worked around the house and barns most of the time, said that he learned that two young slave women had recently been stolen from a man named Stewart, who lived near Raymond, and that a young negro man, named George, had been stolen from a woman named Bland, who lived at Port Gibson. He said that all of them were anxious to get back to their owners, but were afraid to run away.

After getting home, they met again at the mill on Saturday and Tullos suggested that they go see Stewart and Mrs. Bland and find out whether any reward would be given for the return of the slaves. Meeks and Grubbs told Tullos that they were too busy to go, but that he could get off if he desired. So a day or two later Tullos and Kayrion Meeks (Note: a Keenan Meeks in the Census) rode off claiming to be going to Vicksburg on business. They were gone several days, and when they returned stated that Stewart offered a reward of two hundred dollars each for the women and that Mrs. Bland offered two hundred dollars for George.

As that was more money than they expected to make that year, they decided to go at once to recover the slaves. Vinson Meeks said that he had very little faith in the project and didn't care to go, but his brother, Kayrion, went in his place. Before leaving they armed themselves well, with both pistols and rifles of the best make. They also decided that it was best to take Jake along, as he would probably be needed in securing the slaves. He finally decided to let Jake go, provided they would agree to pay six hundred dollars for him in case of his loss; and as they left told them that Jake was theirs until they returned. The teacher was very anxious to go, but being crippled, they thought it best that he did not. However, he let Jake ride his horse.

As they left early in the morning and being in no hurry they stopped at Dan Tedder's house and asked the old lady what she thought of the venture. It happened that she had already heard about it, and she at once said, "You all better count your money afore you go." They asked her what she meant, but she said, "That's all I got to say."

They reached Canton that night and took an early start the next morning for White's place; but to avoid suspicion, went nearly west to Big Black river and then turned northeast along the river, following a road that was rarely traveled. They met no one, and when Jake said they were near White's place they stopped and led their horses out into the thick woods, and sent Jake to see if he could locate White. It was their purpose to first locate him, and when located to capture him and lock him up and then take the slaves they were after and to leave as quietly as possible.

Jake soon returned very much excited and stated that the house and barns had been burned, and he thought everybody was gone. They at once mounted their horses and rode to White's place. As they reached the gate they saw that it had been torn down and that a long pole had been placed on top of the gate post. Also that a man who looked like White was hanging from the pole. From his appearance he had been dead for several days. All the buildings on the place had been burned and everybody was gone.

Grubbs at once advised getting away from the place immediately as their remaining any longer might get them in trouble. They thought it best to follow the road up the river instead of taking the road to Canton, and it was fortunate they did. For as they made the last turn around the field they saw a large number of men ride up to White's place. They hurried on to the road leading south and at Canton they stopped for something to eat. While eating they heard a man say that the sheriff and his posse came very near catching the men who killed and robbed White; that they had been gone only a short time when they reached the place. Fearing that they may have been followed, they turned east to Brandon that night, and got home the next day.

When they got back, Kayrion Meeks said the trip had been worth the money. But Temple Tullos wanted to know, "what money?"

DANIEL AND PATRICK O'BRYANT

Two Irishmen, Daniel and Patrick O'Bryants came to Westville about 1.828. They were carpenters and contractors. At that time, all carpenter work was done by hand, so that building a house was a long hard job. Most of the lumber used for flooring' ceiling, doors and windows had to be dressed by hand, as planing mills were unknown at that time. The two brothers would take a contract to build a house and complete it in a certain fixed time.

Many slave owners, who were able to build good houses, employed Daniel and Patrick to build their dwellings. The only trouble with them was their habit of taking long drinking sprees. They knew this prevented their getting some good contracts, so they persuaded two of their nephews, George and Jack Haney, to come from North Carolina and help them.

George and Jack were a little over 20 years of age, were healthy and strong, and did good work. Their only trouble being that they would get drunk sometimes. However they never took long sprees, so they got along very well.

About the time the O'Bryants were finishing a job they had down below Westville, a planter from the western part of Hinds County sent word that he wanted a dwelling built and would like to have them come over and see him. It was late in the year, and Daniel was not well, so he sent Patrick to see the man. Patrick went by way of

Raymond, where he spent the night. The next day he went to see the man who wanted the dwelling built, and they closed the contract.

The man wanted a very expensive house built, and wanted it finished the following year. Patrick promised to begin work the first Monday in January. Patrick then returned to Raymond where he again spent the night. It so happened that two other contractors, who had competed with Patrick on the job he had taken, were also spending the night there at the same hotel. The next morning, the two other contractors congratulated Patrick on his securing the job, and they all proceeded to a saloon, and began drinking. After taking several drinks, they began quarreling, and later would wind up with a fight. After Patrick had knocked down one of them, the other struck Patrick with a large knife. Patrick struck the man with a stick that he found handy and then the other man struck Patrick again with a knife. Patrick fell on the floor, and died a few hours later.

A messenger was sent to Westville to advise Daniel of the death of his brother. Daniel was not well enough to go to Raymond, so he sent the Haley boys, giving them money to pay all expenses. He procured a pair of good horses and a wagon. The boys set out for Raymond and reached there late in the afternoon. After securing a coffin, and placing the body of their uncle in it, they decided to drive back to Westville that night. Before leaving Raymond, they bought a jug of whiskey and placed it in the front of the wagon body. They placed a plank just behind the jug.

As it was much nearer to Westville to cross Pearl River at the old Indian ford, they took that route and crossed the river about 9 o'clock in the night. The river was rising, and the horses had to swim part of the way. George was driving and Jack held to the jug. When they got across they took another drink, and George remarked that the river came near getting them. They reached Strong River west of the Strong River Church, and came near getting a horse drowned but got out all right. About midnight they reached Westville.

Taking another drink before hiding the jug they woke their uncle. Daniel and told him that they had arrived. He went to the wagon at once, had the horses unhitched and carried to their stalls, and looked for the coffin. He saw none, then in a loud voice he yelled out "Where is the corpse?" The boys said it was in the wagon. Daniel then said "The hell it is." By that time the boys were so drunk that it was necessary to wait until they sobered. That was the following morning. They could give no account of the loss of the coffin. A search was made along Strong River and Pearl River as well as along the road, but no trace of it was ever found.

THE STORY OF JOHN HADDOCK

Many years ago John Haddock lived in the Eastern part of the county. He was a very cruel man and on the slightest provocation he would whip his slaves terribly. Almost every one of them carried scars on their body from wounds inflicted by him. He would even whip his wife terribly and she was afraid of him. He even beat his mules and horses and oxen. One day in the fall of the year a very strange occurrence came to pass on his farm. The slaves were coming out of the field about dusk. They had been picking cotton and Haddock, who always carried a heavy whip in his hand, was standing at the top of a little hill in his pasture. Just at that moment they noticed a blinding light in the sky. It looked to them to be a ball of fire as large as a half bushel measure. The whole sky was lightened up as if by sunshine. Then the light disappeared. The slaves said that they thought, the ball of fire, as they called it, went into the ground on the hillside. They hurried on as fast as possible, and talked of what they had seen, and some of them told Haddock's wife, but she had also seen the light and told them that it was a large meteor. The next morning the slaves went back to the cotton field as usual, but Mrs. Haddock noticed that Haddock had not come home. Finally she sent a slave woman who had been picking cotton, to examine the hillside where Haddock had last been seen. She soon returned with Haddock's whip. She further reported that there was a hole in the ground at about the same place where Haddock had been standing, and that the hold was two or three feet in diameter, and was circular. She said she found the whip about ten feet from the

hole, but could not find a trace of Haddock. Mrs. Haddock then had the other slaves come out of the field and see if they could trace Haddock, but no trace could be found. It was generally supposed that he was struck by the meteor and carried to a great depth in the ground. Some people said it was an accident. Others said that 'he was being punished for his crimes. In any event, Haddock was never seen in the county again.

Howe'er it be, it seems to me
'Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.
Tennyson

THE SMALLPOX PLAGUE

Whether justly or unjustly the show was blamed for a violent outbreak of smallpox in the county. Whether anybody connected with the show was sick with smallpox or not, was never known, but a few days after the show was given, smallpox developed in several places in the county. The first case reported was at Westville, the next was in the southeastern part of the county.

The first victim around the Rials Creek mill was one of the Fagan boys. None of the family had ever had the disease, and in a short time the whole family was stricken. There were no physicians in the county, except possibly one at Westville and another at Osceola, and the method of treatment brought little relief.

Vaccination was unknown and everybody had to depend on such remedies as the neighbors advised or suggested. Among the Indians were a few Medicine Men, who claimed they could cure almost any disease with such herbs as they could gather in the woods, and a great many of the people believed that the Medicine Men possessed wonderful powers, but very often their medicines did more harm than good. There was an Indian family living a short distance east of the mill, and in some way one of the Indian's children contacted the disease, but he made no report of it to anybody until it was too late to render any assistance.

It was impossible for the Fagan family to secure the services of a physician and, as only a few people in the neighborhood had ever had smallpox, they received only such treatment as a few kind neighbors could give them, Mrs. Fagan and the two boys recovered, but Mr. Fagan died. He was a good man and his death was greatly regretted by all that knew him. There was a man named Matt Leroy working already had smallpox working at the mill that fall and as he had already and recovered, it was quite often that he was called upon to assist those who were sick and help bury the dead. One day just after the mill had been shut down, Leroy noticed a dog that he knew belonged to the Indians over east of the mill, and saw that it appeared to be almost starved. He called the mill owner's attention to the dog, and it was then that they remembered that nothing had been seen of the Indians for more than a week. They decided to go and see if they needed help. When they reached the Indian's wigwam, they found, to their horror, that all the Indian's family was dead except the oldest boy, and he was so weak that he could not stand, though he had managed to crawl to a little pool of water. He was the first member of the family to contract the disease and the only one of the family left in the county that he knew anything about. A large grave was dug and all the Indians buried together and then the wigwam was burned. The boy was given new clothes and something to eat after he had been thoroughly scrubbed by some slaves. When he was able to travel, Joe carried him to some of his relatives who lived on the Chunkey River. Another family of Indians living down on Vaughn's Creek contracted the disease and nearly all of them died. There were a great number of deaths among the white settlers and among the slaves. Later in the winter Mrs. Fagan sold the little shop and they all moved away. There was not another scourge of smallpox in the county for many years.

First available edition of The Westville News — August 1, 1874



Note: This incredible story is taken from the Front page. Our copy of the newspaper is very small and partly blurred, but with the aid of a magnifying glass, it is retold in larger print.

TRUTH AND JUSTICE ARE OUR WEAPONS

"A correspondent of the Morris Town Gazette, writing near Murrysville, Cooke County, Tennessee under the date June 30, gives the most singular snake story we have heard yet. We clip the following;

"A Mrs. Kennedy, woman of about Forty, the wife of an Irish laborer living on French Board street, has for several years suffered greatly from ill health. Her symptoms and complaints were singular. She was afflicted with almost constant pains, so that she could seldom or never rest at night. She stated that she felt something running up and down in the abdomen, that she frequently experienced the creeping sensation, which is called irritability. She had been in the hospital here, and had been treated for various complaints, but found no relief. As her uneasiness and pains continued, as were the attempts to relieve her, but with out success.

Not long since Dr. Perriam Gyles was called into requisition and took charge of the case.

About a week ago, she became subject to uncontrollable uneasiness, and begged Dr. Gyles to perform an operation for her relief. This he was reluctant to do, thinking it would hazard her life, but she persisted in the request and at last he yielded to her importunity when, on Friday afternoon last, assisted by Dr. James Davis of this place and Surgeon William Alexis of Sweetwater, he proceeded to perform the operation. He first made an incision about ten inches long along the medial line of the abdomen. He found a tumor projecting largely about twenty six inches in diameter of irregular form. He opened it and found therein two rattlesnakes, one thirty six inches and the other thirty two and a half inches in length. One of the snakes had five rattles and the other had four rattles and a button. They had yellow and black spots on them with white bellies. They were quite lively and would rattle and strike with vengeance when disturbed. They were killed, and their skins and rattles are in the possession of Col. John Stephens. "The tumor being removed, Mrs. Kennedy was instantly relieved and is now doing well. The Doctor calls the snakes eratalus horridus.

Mrs. Kennedy says she swallowed two small, soft white eggs that she found several years ago, as she was walking out in the field near the Warm Springs, North Carolina. Having just come over from Ireland, she was not acquainted with the bird eggs of America and swallowed those eggs, supposing them to be partridge eggs.

OLD 'LEP' PITTS AND RATTLESNAKES

Old Lep Pitts bore the reputation of being the meanest man in the county. He probably was. He was one of the early settlers on Silver Creek, having moved here from South Carolina about 1830. He owned a few slaves and

had a large family; three girls and five boys. His wife was one of the best, of women, but she never pleased Old Lep. He often gave her terrible beatings. His children lived in constant dread of him. He whipped his girls most cruelly and he whipped his boys as he would an ox. He had a whipping post set up in his back yard for his slaves, where they would be tied and whipped of times till the blood ran down to their heels. He was a man of great size, and weighed nearly three hundred pounds.

One day while Old Lep was whipping his wife, one of his oldest-boys shot him. Old Lep was badly injured, but he recovered. The boy ran away and finally reached their old home in South Carolina. Old Lep swore that he would kill him if he had to go back to South Carolina to do it. One day, soon after he had recovered from the shot he had received, while he was seated at the dinner table, a slave girl dropped a plate of venison she was bringing from the fireplace to the table, and the dish was broken Old Lep grabbed his whip and started towards her. She ran outside and he ordered her to go to the whipping post. She ran to a tree in the yard and stood trembling. In a furious rage he started towards her, with his whip in his hand. As he drew near her she told her that if she ran he would make the dogs catch her. He got near enough to strike her a most cruel blow before she ran again. He stopped at the tree and began calling the dogs. But just at that moment lightning struck the tree and Old Lep was killed.

A rough coffin was made by one of Old Lep's slaves and he was buried in a private graveyard about a mile away. At that time coffins would be laid in the bottom of the vault in the grave and then covered with short planks or puncheons.

Old Lep's family moved away soon after his death and he was soon forgotten. Very few persons were buried in the Little graveyard where Old Lep was buried. The place became mostly a tramping ground for cattle and sheep. The site of Old Lep's grave was obliterated as well as forgotten.

Some ten years after the death of Old Lep, a new settler had a boy to get killed by an accident. For a burial Place somebody suggested the little graveyard where Old Lep was buried. Several neighbors, mostly young men, volunteered to dig the grave. They went and selected a smooth place for the grave and begin digging. After getting down a few feet, they came to a hole, which they decided was a gopher hole, as it seemed to slope down from some point a short distance from the grave they were digging. They thought but little about it until suddenly a large rattlesnake came sliding, down the hole. It was killed and thrown out, but they became more cautious as they dug deeper. They noticed, too, that the hole continued downward, with the same slope. Some one suggested that the snakes probably had a den further down, perhaps in a hollow log. Pretty Soon they discovered that the ground had a hollow sound so they must be coming to the log if there was one. That question was soon settled, for one man struck a wide, loose plank with his shovel. Throwing off the dirt, he lifted one end of the plank, with his shovel and saw beneath it a coffin. The lid of the coffin was partly open, and from under was crawling the largest rattlesnake he had ever seen. Another man cut off the snake's head with his spade, but in doing so, struck the coffin. At once there was the most frightful hissing and buzzing of rattlesnake's rattles they had ever heard. The coffin and entire vault seemed to be full of rattlesnakes. They got out at once, and decided to fill up the grave, as it could not be used anyway. As they filled it they tamped the dirt down with a short pole so as to prevent the snakes from escaping.

While they were deciding on another location, an old settler rode up and after they told him of their finding the snakes in an old grave, he told them it was where Old Lep Pitts was buried. They then decided to go to another graveyard and dig a grave. Most people said they would not bury a dog where Old Lep was buried.

MRS. STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS

Judge John Dickerson moved to Simpson County during the Civil War. Prior to, that time he had resided in Lawrence County and had served as Probate Judge of that county from 1849 to 1859. During his term of office a matter came up that I feel sure will be of historical interest to the people of Simpson County on account of the prominence, of the parties involved.

An old file of the Probate Court of that county, which I examined recently, shows that Robert Martin was the owner of several large plantations on Pearl River and also a large number of slaves. Martin died in June, 1848, and his daughter, Martha D. M. Douglas, the wife of United States Senator, Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, took said property under the will of her father, Robert Martin.

In 1853, Mrs. Douglas died and said property, which consisted of several thousand acres of land and more than one hundred slaves, descended by operation of law to her children all of whom were minors. In November, 1854, Senator Douglas appeared before the Probate Court at Monticello and filed his petition to be appointed guardian of said children, the petition being in the following words: "The State of Mississippi, in Lawrence County. In Probate Court, November term, 1854. To the Honorable John Dickerson, Judge of the Probate Court of said County, Mississippi: The petition of Stephen A. Douglas of the State of Illinois, respectfully shows unto Your Honor that Martha D. Douglas, late of the State of Illinois, and wife of your petitioner, departed this life in the month of January, 1853, leaving three minor children under the age of fourteen years, that the youngest of said children survived her mother only eight months, leaving Robert Martin Douglas and Stephen A. Douglas, Jr., her only heirs at law.

That said minors, as heirs at law of the' said Martha D. Douglas, deceased, who died interstate, are entitled to inherit her property. Your petitioner would further show that Martha D. Douglas died possessed of an estate situated and being in this county, estimated to be about the value of one hundred thousand dollars. He therefore prays this Honorable Court to grant him Letters of Guardianship of the persons and estates of the said Robert Martin Douglas and Stephen A. Douglas, Jr., according to the provisions of the statutes. Stephen A. Douglas. Sworn to and subscribed in open Court, this 27th day of November, 1854, J. N. Cowart, Clerk."

This petition is in Senator Douglas own handwriting and signed by him in person at Monticello on said date. After Senator Douglas had executed a bond in the sum of two hundred thousand, dollars and taken the oath required by law. Letters of Guardianship were issued to, him in the following words:

"The State of' Mississippi, Lawrence County, By the Probate Court of said County. Be it remembered that a term of the Probate Court of Lawrence County, begun and held at the Court House thereof, on the 4th Monday of November in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four, Stephen A. Douglas having entered into bond with sufficient security, as directed by law, he was appointed Guardian of the person and estate, real and personal, of Robert & Martin Douglas and Stephen A. Douglas, Jr., infant children of Martha D. M. Douglas, deceased. And said Stephen A, Douglas is hereby authorized and required to faithfully execute his office and trust as Guardian aforesaid, Etc. Witness the Hon. John Dickerson, Judge of Probate Court of said county, at the Court House thereof, the 4th day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four. J. N. Cowart, Clerk."

In 1860 Stephen A. Douglas was nominated for. President by the Democratic Party. Unfortunately the Southern Democrats refused to support him and nominated John C. Breckenridge for President. This division in the party resulted in the election of Abraham Lincoln and brought



From him to whom much is given, much is expected. Unknown

The State Bird is the Mockingbird.

Captain Poitevent

Simpson County never had but one river town, that was Osceola, founded at the "Bluffs" on Pearl River about a mile south of the present Rockport bridge. It was named in honor of the famous Indian Chief, Osceola, and the first store was opened there about 1830. At that time it was the head of boat navigation. The first boats seem to have been keel boats, but a little later the keel boats gave way to steam boats. The first, line of steam boats was owned and operated by Captain Poitevent, usually known all along the river as "Captain Potervine" and as Captain Potervine he was known until his death.

He was of French descent and I do not know just how his name was pronounced, probably Potervine did as well as any other. His first boat began to make regular trips up the river as high as Osceola about one hundred years ago (1839). He owned several boats from time to time. One of his boats was named the "Eliza Jane" in honor of his daughter of that name. Another was named the "Margaret" in honor of another daughter.

He was a great admirer of Gov. A. G. Brown and he named one of the boats the "A.G. Brown" in honor of the Governor. He had another boat named the "Earl", but I do not know for whom it was named. Another boat was named in honor of his son, "S. R. Poitevent."

At first Osceola was the head of steam boat navigation, but later by removing obstructions in the river he began to go up the river as far as Georgetown, and on rare occasions would go as far as Jackson. The "Margaret" was burned on one of these trips a few miles south of Jackson. Another sunk near Monticello, and a third one was burned down the river near Columbia.

During the Civil War steam boat navigation on the river was almost abandoned on account of cutting trees and letting them fall in the river to prevent Federal gun boats from ascending the river. That was the death blow to Osceola and it was practically abandoned at the close of the war.

The towns of Rockport and Georgetown had sprung up on the west side of the river and Poitevent decided that he could make a great cotton port at Georgetown. Through his efforts and that of others, the Georgetown and Polkville roads were opened for the purpose of bringing cotton from Smith County to Georgetown, However, about the time the road was opened Poitevent died and the railroads were again getting in good condition and so Poitevent's dream was ended.

His daughter, Eliza Jane, was a very brilliant woman. She married a man named Nickleson, who was the editor of the New Orleans Picayune, and when he died she took the paper over and edited it herself until her death.

BEN BAXTER AND THE BEAR

Ben Baxter came to the county about 1830. He had no family and no one knew: where he came from. He was a hunter and trapper and was rarely seen by anyone.

After the trapping season he would take his furs to some market for sale and buy supplies as he needed. He lived in a tent made on the Indian style, and he slept on a cot covered with a bearskin and a woolen mattress. For covering he used a kind of quilt made of wool, which was encased in coarse cloth. The wool was held in place; by a strong thread drawn through the quilt at various intervals. It was rough work but the quilt was comfortable.

A coffee pot and a pan were his only cooking utensils. He never shaved and his hair was only cut about twice a year. His favorite sport was hunting bears, and he killed a great number. His only weapon in hunting was a long knife. At the end of the handle of the knife was an iron ring. To this ring was fastened a strong strip of buckskin which he looped around his right wrist. He seemed to have no fear of bears and when he found one he would attack it with his knife usually killing it at once.

He found a very good market for bear skins after they were properly cured and usually there could be seen five or six bear skins properly stretched and hanging around his tent. They were protected by two or three fierce dogs, which never left the place.

On his hunting trips he carried another dog which was very intelligent and of great assistance to him in his hunting and trapping. His tent was pitched to the north side of Strong River about three miles north of Westville near the old bridge across Strong River on the State Road leading from Williamsburg to Jackson.

One day in the winter, George Allbritton, who lived a little further down the river was out hunting a deer. His dogs were across the river and were on the south side. Allbritton went to the bridge on the State Road, intending to cross. When he reached the bridge he found Baxter's hunting dog in the middle of the bridge, howling piteously. He knew the dog never left Baxter, and felt that something was wrong. And he felt like that the dog was asking for help. He stopped and looked up and down the river for sometime. He finally saw about thirty feet below the bridge an object that looked like a bear. He then went down to the river and waded out far enough to catch the bear by one of its feet. The dog had gone with him and was still howling.

When he had dragged the bear to the edge of the water he found the arm of a man around it. Both were dead. About that time he saw some men crossing the bridge and called to them. They came and helped him get the man out of the water, but they also had to drag out the body of the bear, as they found that, the knife had gone through a bone in the bear's shoulder and was stuck fast.

It was evident that Baxter had attacked the bear when it was on the bridge, as was shown by blood spots on the floor, and both had fallen into the river where they drowned, as neither could be freed from the other.

JOSEPH I. MEADE

Joseph I. Meade was the son of Dr. Thomas T. and Anna D. Meade and was born at Brookhaven, Mississippi on the 19th of October, 1851 (Lincoln Co.)

His parents were natives of Holmes County, Mississippi, and resided at Lexington until they moved to Brookhaven about 1845. He attended the schools of Brookhaven and later completed his education at Pass Christian (Harrison Co.)

Upon reaching the age of twenty-one years he located at Westville and founded the Westville News, the first newspaper to be established in Simpson County (1872).

While editing the News, he read law in the offices of Hon. T. L. Mendenhall, and in a short time was licensed to practice law. He was a man of pleasing manners, a hard student and a fluent speaker. He soon built up a lucrative practice and this, with his newspaper, soon made him one of the most influential citizens of the county, so that in 1875 he was elected to represent the county in the State Legislature.

In October of the same year he was married to Miss Brilla Williams, a daughter of Col. O. W. and Matilda Walker Williams, who lived near Westville. I believe Col. Williams lived about where Walter Banks now lives in Pinola, Miss. In 1879, he was a candidate for District Attorney, being opposed by James L. McCaskill of Brandon and Green B. Huddleston of Forest. He made a most vigorous canvass and received a very large vote, but as McCaskill and Huddleston were both Confederate Veterans and besides Huddleston lost a leg in the Civil War. They received most of the soldiers' votes and Huddleston was elected.

In 1881, Meade sold his paper to Judge T. R. Gowan and moved to Hazlehurst (Copiah Co.) where he continued to practice law until 1886, when he moved to Birmingham, Alabama. He soon took rank as one of the leading lawyers of Birmingham and about 1889 was elected City Attorney and held the office for several years.

He died in the City of Birmingham in the year 1898, being only forty seven years of age. He is buried in the City Cemetery of Hazlehurst (Copiah Co.). I am indebted to Miss Colie Covington of Hazlehurst, a relative of Mr. Meade, for the most of this information.

"The Lasting Quality of Love"
The Comrade that once marched with me,
Or dared adventure reem
My Spirit's comrade still shall be
Tho' silence intervene.

The friend with whom I once have shared
Some banquet of the Soul.
Can never from my heart be spared
Tho' seas between us roll.

This lasting quality in love
A part I take to be
Of that Soul treasure. laid above
And -- Immortality.
William Goodall Frost



Note: This begins a continued series by Mr. Bee King that concern Lewis Dixon or "Free Lewis" and his stories about the Simpson County history. There are over fifty in number.

"Free Lewis" -and Others

Lewis Dixon, generally known as "Free Lewis", was born on Christmas Day of the year 1820. He died in the early fall of 1920, having almost reached the age of one hundred years. His entire life was spent near the head of

Rials Creek. A few years before his death I had a talk with him, and he told me of several incidents that occurred in his early life, one of them being the account of how he obtained his first horse.

When he was a small child, there was an Indian village near the big springs that form Rials Creek, and near the creek bank, a short distance south of the first mill that was built on the creek, was a great tree which the Indians called the Eagle Tree, as the eagles had built their nests in it for many years. The Indians looked on them with something akin to worship and never molested them, thinking it would bring some evil upon them if they should ever kill or disturb the eagles.

The old tree was more than one hundred feet high and probably twenty feet in diameter at the ground. It was hollow and there was an entrance at the ground about three feet high. For years the Indian children had played in the hollow tree. They had covered the floor with white sand and made their playhouse inside the tree. When the first white settlers came, their children also played there with the Indian children until the first mill was built. Just before the mill was built, a great storm broke the top off of the big tree and then it was found that the tree was hollow clear up to the break.

The Indian village came down almost to the edge of the water and a few settlers lived up on the hills just east of the creek and it was great sport for the white children and Indian children to go into the hollow tree at night and look up at the stars. After the storm the eagles disappeared and were never seen there anymore.

When Free Lewis was a very small boy, Gideon Rials built the first mill in that neighborhood. It was built on the same site that all other mills at that place have been built since. With the help of a few slaves and a few white men that he could hire, Rials built a long mill dam before putting in his machinery for the mill. The dam was about five feet high and when built caused water to back up and cover several acres of land, including the land where the old tree stood. In fact, the water got so high around the old tree that the entrance was hidden by the water.

Of course, after that time the children could not use the hollow tree for a playhouse any more, but some of the larger boys among the whites, Indians and slaves delighted in diving under the water and coming up in the old tree. They drove some stakes down inside the tree and made a rough platform of poles and slabs, on which they could climb and rest after a swim in the lake. It was great sport for the boys, and even men would go in there sometimes.

Late one afternoon in the early spring of 1830 or 1831, two men rode up to the mill and asked the owner if they could spend the night with him; as they and their horses were very tired and that one of them was sick. Of course, they were allowed to spend the night, and their horses were put up and fed. They had with them a negro boy about 16 years old and he was riding a horse.

The men stated that they bought the boy in New Orleans and were on their way home in North Mississippi. The sick man rapidly grew worse and it was necessary for the other man to sit up with him, so they had to let the negro boy stay with the slaves on the place. Before they dismissed him for the night ankle cuffs were put on him and fastened together with a chain so that he could not run. After the boy had supper he told Free Lewis that he would tell him something if he would not give him away. Lewis promised that he would not.

The slave boy told Free Lewis that those men did not buy him in New Orleans like they told the mill man, but that they stole him and his brother from a widow that lived not far from Canton. He said they stole them just after dark one night about a month before that. He said that they had horses hitched in the woods near the widow's farm and they took them and put them on two of the horses and tied their feet together under the horses

so that they could not get off or fall off. They then went out to the road, put the slave boys ahead of them and rode all night going very fast but didn't know in what direction. That sometime before daylight they turned into a dim road and went for several miles without passing any houses; then came in sight of a house that stood on the far side of a clearing and rode around the clearing until they got to the house. They all then got down off their horses and a man came out and talked to the men for some time. The slave boys were given something to eat and later carried to the barn loft he thought for more than a week. They were fed and given water by the man who lived there; but they were kept chained all the time.

Late one afternoon the men who stole them came back. They could see through the cracks of the barn. They also saw that they had four horses; but only two of them seemed to be the same horses they carried away. After it was dark they were brought down out of the barn loft and put on the horses again with their feet tied as before; and began riding in another direction. They rode all that night' but stopped before the sun rose and turned into the woods and camped for the day. They had brought some food for themselves and the boys and some feed for the horses.

About night they started again and next morning rode into a little town, and he heard them say that they had some slaves that they had bought at a sale in New Orleans and would like to sell them, but nobody bought them. After that they traveled in the daytime and camped at night, always chaining the boys to the trees. He said they were very cruel men and whipped them nearly every day.

He further said that they sold his brother that very day and he saw that the man that bought his brother pay them in gold and he heard one of them say it was six hundred dollars, and that they put it in their saddle bags. He said he didn't think the man that bought his brother lived very far away. He said he was afraid of them and that he knew they would sell him before very long and that he could never see his mother or brother any more. He said that his mistress was good to his mother and to him and his brother. Then the poor slave boy cried and asked them to save him from that terrible man. He said the sick man was not as bad as the other fellow but tried to do what the other man said for him to do. Free Lewis was very sorry for the poor boy and didn't know what to do. In fact, he was afraid to do anything himself. He finally decided to see the Indian that lived near the mill. After going over everything with the Indian and the slave boy, the Indian got up and said "Me Fix it."

After the Indian had said he would "fix it," he went around to the back of his tent and took a bear skin off of a pole and rolled it up tight and brought it to the room where the slave boy was. He then said to Free Lewis, you take um, me take boy got to big tree, we put um in, they no find um there. So Free Lewis took the bear skin and the Indian took the boy and went down to the lake and waded out to the tree, then went under the water and came up inside the tree. They spread the bear skin on the platform and told the boy to get on and stay there till they came for him. The Indian gave him some dried beef and also a strong hook and line. He told the boy he would be back the next morning and put something on the hook for him to eat and to let it stay in the water and be quiet.

The next morning the sick man was better, but not able to travel. The other got up early and went to see about the boy and found that he was gone. He at once went to see the mill man about him. Of course the mill man knew nothing about the boy, but nothing he could say seemed to satisfy the fellow that claimed him. He almost openly accused the mill man of stealing him. Finding that that would not do, he then said he would ride around and see if he could find any trace of him. In the afternoon he said he was going to Westville and get out "papers" and see if the sheriff could find him. The mill man was very much worried and didn't know what the fellow might do, as he was a "bad looking" man. The sick man didn't have much to say and seemed to get worse during the day. Late that afternoon the other man came back and said the sheriff would be out in the morning. The mill man didn't want to keep them any longer; but the sick man could not travel and the other fellow said he would

pay for their lodging. So there was nothing to do but let them stay. Free Lewis and the Indian hardly knew what to do, as it looked as if there was going to be trouble, but decided that they would wait until morning to say anything. They carried something to the tree for the boy to eat and told him to keep quiet or there would be trouble.

Back in those days everybody got up early and had breakfast before "daybreak". The next morning just as the family sat down to breakfast the deep bark of a bloodhound was heard away off in the distance. The sick man fainted when he heard it and fell off his chair; but the other man ran for his horse and as soon as he had it saddled, ran into the house, got his saddle-bags and all the money the sick man had and rode away in a gallop, going east. The bay of the bloodhound came nearer and louder and in a short time a number of men rode up to the mill man's gate and asked if any strange men were there or had been there. They said that some slaves and horses had been stolen and that they had struck the trail of one of the horses a few miles back west. They said they had been trailing the robbers for several weeks and were sure they were on the right track. The mill man told them that two men had been there for a day or two, but that one of them left that morning and the other man was sick. They went in and talked to the sick man, but could get nothing out of him as he was apparently in a dying condition. They looked at his horse and said it was their horse.

They then started on the trail of the other man and must have overtaken him several miles east of the mill, as it was in the afternoon when they came back. They had the fellow's horse, which they said was theirs and said that when they overtook him he commenced shooting at them and they had to deal with him. They also had his saddlebags and in them were some papers that told who the men were. There was also a receipt for a slave boy signed by a man named Carr, who lived in Simpson County.

When they came back Free Lewis and the Indian thought it best to tell about hiding the boy and to bring him to the house. Pretty soon they came; the Indian bringing the boy on his back and Free Lewis bringing the bear skin. As soon as the boy saw the men he said, "I see Mr. Jim on his horse." Mr. Jim was the widow's brother.

Some of the men spent the night there and some went to Mr. Carr's and paid him back the money he had paid for the slave boy and brought the boy back with them the next morning. The sick man died that night and the men assisted the mill man in burying him. They paid him for all his trouble and gave Free Lewis a horse and the Indian a fine gun.



Free Lewis told me that when he was a small child there were just a few white settlers around the head of Rials Creek, but quite a number of Indians living there. A few of the early settlers owned slaves but most of them did not. At that time almost all the clothing worn by the white people was made at home.

In every home was a pair of cards for carding wool and cotton. Women would card the cotton and wool into rolls, which were later spun into thread on a spinning wheel. While nearly everybody had cards for carding, a great many had no spinning wheels and fewer had looms, on which the cloth was made. For this reason it was common for women to gather at the houses of those who had spinning wheels and looms, and spin thread and weave cloth.

There would always be new settlers coming in and getting acquainted, so that these occasions were very enjoyable to all. Women would come and bring their children and bring something to eat, spend the day and have an enjoyable time. Among the white settlers was a family that lived on the hill east of the creek. There were three members of the family, a man, his wife and a little girl about six years old. One day in the springtime the woman and the little girl went over on the west side of the creek to do some spinning at the house of a neighbor. She carried a lot of rolls with her and told her husband that they would be gone nearly all day. This neighbor had several little girls and besides them there were several Indian girls living near by.

Of course all the children were out playing together, both before and in the afternoon. Pretty late in the afternoon they were playing hide and seek among the willows down near the creek, and were playing there when the woman from the east side of the creek started home. But when the woman called her little girl she did not answer. The children all said she was there just before her mother called and did not know where she was. The little girl's name was Jonie, and her mother getting uneasy called louder and louder for her, but still no answer. By that time all the women were getting excited about the child's disappearance fearing that perhaps she had fallen into the creek and drowned. Soon the men of the neighborhood began to gather and search for her. Some thought that perhaps she had started home and fallen into the mill pond and a number of men waded through the pond hoping to find her, but found no trace of her anywhere.

It was nearly night and no time was to be lost. Horns were blown and dogs were called to put on the trail. Long pine splinters were gathered for torches and soon every man in the neighborhood was there including the Indians and slaves. They searched the creek and pond and all the spring heads, branches and hills all night long but still no trace of the child was found.

Some thought that perhaps she had been attacked by wolves or by a panther, which was known to be in the neighborhood but still no trace of blood was found anywhere. They went to the wolf pit out east of the creek and dug into it. They did find the bones of a small person in the wolf pit, but there were old, being probably the bones of an Indian. After the second day the hunt was abandoned and everybody gave her up for lost.

After the hunt was over Free Lewis asked his most trusted Indian friend what he thought about it. The Indian said "She no lost, she been stole." About a month later, just as the full moon rose and while the sky was perfectly clear, the Indian walked into the mill man's house and said, "Me see little girl in lake."



When Joe, the Indian, said that he saw the little girl in the lake, the mill man told him he must be mistaken, that what he saw was probably a beaver, or an otter, or that it might be a large bird. The Indian still insisted that it was a little girl. They walked along the edge of the lake but only caught sight of something drifting in the shadows of the trees. They could not tell what it was, though the Mill man admitted it did have the appearance of a child, but was confident that it was some kind of an animal. They would have gone out into the lake to find out for certain but about that time a little squall of wind and rain came up suddenly and they went into the house.

The Indian was not satisfied with the explanation given by the mill man and decided to go and tell the child's father. When he did so, the mother of the child began to scream and moan and at once ran to the lake to see for herself. By that time it was raining hard and the wind was high, so that nothing could be seen or heard in the lake. The rain soon passed and the moon was shining again, but they could see nothing unusual in the lake.

However, the mother of the child could not be reconciled and continued to cry and walk along the bank of the lake until it was growing late. Everybody present was more or less excited and the other women of the neighborhood, hearing her screaming, came down to the lake to see what the trouble was. The father of the child and the mill man and Indian searched along the edge of the lake except on the east side which was mostly a marsh where they could not go on account of the dense undergrowth.

Finally someone said, "I hear a child crying on the far side of the lake." Everyone stood perfectly still for a long time and they all heard the cry of a child somewhere out in the lake. The women were all crying and running along the bank of the lake. The men at once decided to go into the thickets on the east side of the lake to hunt the child, but could not find the little dugout that was usually tied up at the mill. The father of the child and the Indian were good swimmers and said they would swim the lake and see if the child could be found.

They got across the open water and then began to wade through the thickets calling the name of the little girl. There was no answer, but finally they heard a low moan nearby, and went to where the child was. They found her lying in the bottom of the canoe and tied so that she could not get out. Her feet were also tied together and her hands were tied down to her body.

In the dim light of the moon they could not tell who she was and they could not get her to speak. They pushed the canoe out into the lake and swam along and pushed it until they got to shallow water and then took it to the bank of the lake. They told everybody to stand back except the mill man, who brought a knife and cut the deer skin strips that held her. Before lifting her out of the boat they saw she was deathly sick from smallpox.

The Indian left immediately as Indians were terribly afraid of smallpox. The mill man and his family, very fortunately, had already had smallpox, but the child's parents had never had it. The mill man then took things in charge. He made the parents of the child go home and took the child to his home for treatment. She was delirious and it was probably the rain that saved her life – that was what the mill man thought -- and he turned out to be a good doctor for the little girl got well. By good fortune nobody else contracted the disease, not even the Indian. Free Lewis said that the next morning after finding the child, the Indian and his family were gone. He didn't know where, but that a few days after the little girl was allowed to go home, he saw the Indian coming back to his wigwam. He was riding his pony and his wife was walking and carrying all they had and a little baby in a basket on her back; the other children and the dogs coming on behind. However, everybody was glad to see the Indian and his family back again as they were good Indians.

The little girl was never able to tell who brought her to the lake that night or where she came from. But a few months later while she was playing with the other children near the mill, some men rode up to the mill and stopped. When they did so she ran screaming to her mother and told that she saw the man that took her away and that he was after her. She crawled under the house and could not be persuaded to come out until her mother told her that the men were gone.

There were two or three Indians in the party that stopped at Rials' mill the day the little girl got so badly frightened, and after she had hid herself, the Indian.. Joe, went and talked with the Indians in the party, and learned that the man who frightened the little girl was a "squaw man" and that he had married a Copiah woman and lived in a little village west of Pearl River on Copiah Creek. He also learned that he was a bad man and was engaged in stealing horses and slaves, as well as money; and that they were now on a trip over on Leaf River to make a change of some horses.

It was noticed that all the white men were riding good horses and that all were well armed. They stated that they would stop at the village at the head of Sellers Creek and spend the night and perhaps longer. The Indians were

riding shaggy ponies as usual, but they said they were going to trade them for better horses and that they might go as far as Chunky River, and that they might be gone many days.

The next day Joe left his wigwam stating he would be gone "maybe a moon." He rode his pony, carried a few traps and his gun and two dogs. Nothing was heard of him for about three weeks. But one day late in the afternoon he was seen coming home. Everybody was glad to see him and anxious to hear what he had to say. But he only said he was hungry and tired and would talk next day. The white men knew that he would do just as he said so waited until the next day and waited for him to talk.

After smoking an hour or so he took a drink of whiskey and began telling what he had learned. Of course he had to tell of all the incidents of his trip; all about the animals he had trapped and what he got for their hides, and the places he visited and various people he saw, and finally told of reaching the Indian Village on Copiah Creek.

He stated that he met the squaw man's wife and that she told him of the time the squaw man brought a little girl to their wigwam and that he was going to get "heep big money" for her but smallpox broke out in the village and the little girl got sick and she told him to take her back where he found her before she died. She said he first refused to take her back, but she told him she was going to drown her unless he took her back. She said that he got on his horse and took the little girl up behind him; first tying her around him so she could not fall off, and rode away. She said that when he came back he told her that he had put her in a little boat in a lake just before she died, and he left her tied so she could not scratch her face. When Joe had finished telling all that he had learned the little girl's father said he would kill the fellow on sight, and as the party passed that way going east had not returned, he loaded his gun and waited at the mill, day after day for nearly a month, expecting their return. But none of them came. So he gave up hope of seeing the man he wanted. However, another party of men came to the mill one day and stated that they were hunting some men who had stolen two good horses and a thousand dollars in gold; that they had tracked them from a point on Chunky River, following them in a southwest direction far forty or fifty miles but finally lost track of them. It was then growing late and as they were tired and hungry, they asked permission of the mill man to spend the night, and of course that was granted, as no man was ever turned away by a settler in those days. For some reason, Joe, the Indian, seemed to be greatly excited and said he would take his gun and maybe kill a big bad wolf.

The big bad wolf that Joe spoke of was supposed to be the leader of a pack of wolves that were destroying much stock in the neighborhood. The settlers around the head of Rials Creek had offered a reward for the wolf, dead or alive. It had once been caught in a bear trap and limped when it ran but otherwise it was as strong as ever. Joe first walked along the dam of the lake on the north side next to the road. He had almost reached the west end of the dam, when he noticed a light on the hill south of the big springs that formed the head of the creek. He knew that no one lived there, so decided that he would walk around the lake and see if anybody was there.

He came back to the mill and went up on the east side of the lake till he came in sight of the fire. He moved very cautiously, crawling on his hands and knees to where he could see that several men were sitting around the fire and that they seemed to be counting some money. They talked very little, but he could occasionally hear some of them cursing and two of them appeared to be blaming the others. Getting a little closer he discovered that there were four white men and two slaves. The slaves appeared to be young men, probably boys, but as they were sitting down he could not be sure. The white men were heavily armed; not only with pistols; but he saw two of three rifles leaning against the tree. They finally seemed satisfied about the money and lay down, and he heard them say they would sleep until moonrise.

They laid their heads resting on their saddles and he noticed that some horses were eating oats nearby. Joe knew it would be about an hour before the moon rose, so he decided to go back to the mill and tell the mill man about

what he had seen. He started back but before he had gone over thirty yards, he heard something running through the woods, coming in his direction. He at first thought it was a horse, but as it came closer he discovered it was a large deer. The night was very clear and he could see well enough to shoot and had raised his gun to shoot when he remembered that he did not want to disturb the men at the campfire.

The deer passed on, but about that he heard another noise that attracted his attention again. He looked closely through the blueberry bushes near the big spring and could make out the form of a large bear. He thought of shooting it, but was again afraid of disturbing the men he had seen, so he stood there a short time watching the bear feeding on the blueberries and listening to its loud grunts. He started to move on again, but just at that time he heard the swift noise of a wolf pack coming over the hill. He detected at once that they were on the trail of the deer that had just passed.

He first thought he would let them pass, but just as they came in sight he recognized the big gray wolf as the leader. He could not resist the chance to shoot it and as soon as it was in range of his gun he fired. The wolves all turned and fled, but he knew had hit the big wolf and thought he killed it. As soon as he shot the wolf, the bear broke through the thickets and ran at full speed in the direction of the sleeping men. He heard the horses trying to get away and heard some of them running through the woods and also heard the men trying to catch them. He knew that he had been discovered so he ran as fast as possible to the mill man's house and called him out and related what he had seen. The mill man was very much disturbed and at once called the men who were spending the night with him. They at once went out to the barn to see if all their horses were there and found that the mill man's best horse and the best horse belonging to the other men, were gone and also found that a slave boy belonging to the mill man was gone.

“The best way to suppose what may come is to remember what is past.” Lord Halifax

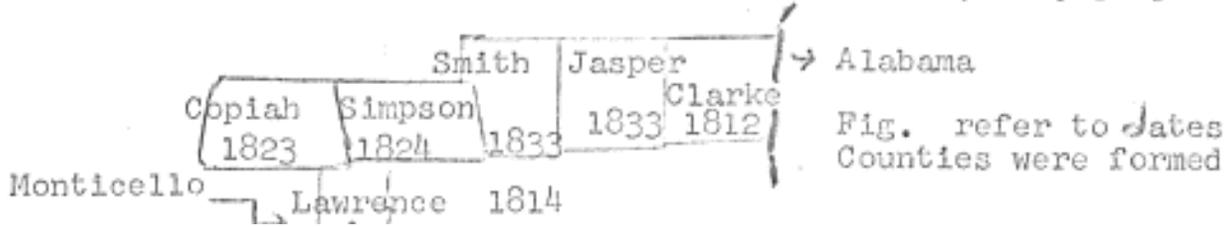


During the excitement occasioned by the shooting of the wolf by Joe, the Indian, the two slave boys escaped and got back to the mill where they could be protected. As the mill man had only one slave, the boy begged him to keep the other boy. He, of course, did not know that the men who captured him were robbers, and thought that they would come to get the boy.

All the men at the mill at once began to make preparations to hunt the robbers and recover the horses. Nothing could be done that night, but early next morning a number of men, started tracking the robbers. It was soon found that they had gone through the woods for several miles, and that only now and then a horse track could be found. It was also discovered that they had separated and gone in several directions.

The men rode hard all day but made very poor headway in getting on the trail of them. However, they rode in various directions for several days and did apprehend a number of men, who were strangers to them, but always found that they were men of the neighborhood they were found in.

They crossed Pearl River and went to the Indian camp, but found nothing there and found no trace of the squaw man, It seemed that he had been absent for several weeks. At last, worn out and tired they returned to the mill and the men from Chunkey River went home.



Soon after that a very unexpected thing happened. Some men living in the neighborhood of the mill had been to Mobile after a load of salt for the merchants of Westville, and after they had returned home, they heard of the robbery. One of them lived near the mill and knew Rials' horses very well and knew a shiftless kind of fellow that lived a few miles down the creek. This fellow claimed to be a blacksmith and kept a few shop tools and lived in a cabin made of logs, a one-room affair with a dirt floor. He had a wife and two small children; kept a few dogs, and had an old dilapidated wagon and two old broken down horses. He sometimes came to Rials' mill in his wagon and bought meal, rice and sometimes flour. He always seemed to have enough money to pay for what he had bought He sometimes had beaver skins to sell, and claimed that he had a number of traps. While he had no near neighbors it was known that men sometimes stopped at his place apparently on important business. Other trappers and hunters had seen them there wondered, and what their business could be. The fact was, this fellow had been looked upon with suspicion for sometime, but nobody had known of him doing anything wrong.

After the man who had been to Mobile heard of the robbery he came over to the mill and told Rials of seeing this fellow and his family traveling east away down near Augusta. He said he was sleeping in his wagon, and that just about daylight he heard a wagon coming and as it passed he looked through a slit in the wagon cover and saw the fellow sitting in the front of the wagon body, and also that he was driving two good horses. He was sure one of two the horses was Rials' horse, as he knew the horse quite well.

He said he never thought much about it at the time as he, supposed they were going either to Mobile or back to Alabama where the fellow claimed he came from.

It was about night when the man told Rials of what he had seen, so nothing was done that day. But the next morning Rials and a few of his neighbors went down the creek to where the blacksmith lived and found that he was absent and had certainly been absent for several days.

They found the two old horses grazing in the woods and almost starved. They found the dogs, too, and a few worthless things scattered about the cabin and found an old spade that still had some dirt on it and appeared to have been used at a recent date. After finding the spade they began to search about digging anywhere. Under the ashes in the fireplace of the dirt chimney they found that a hole had been dug and the filled with coals and ashes. They found nothing else in the fireplace and no other trace of any digging. The hole in the fireplace was about the size of a half-gallon pot. They took the poor old horses and the dogs to the mill and turned them over to the Indian. The next day they prepared to follow the fellow.

It was the intention of Rials and a few of his neighbors to go at once in pursuit, of the blacksmith. But the next morning it began raining very early and rained all day and nearly all the next day. The rains were so heavy that a large section of the mill washed away and had to be repaired. By the time repairs were made, Rials decided that it would be useless to try to follow the blacksmith, and the trip was abandoned.

Along in the fall somebody came to the mill one day and said that the blacksmith had returned. Rials and a few of his neighbors went down the creek to see for themselves and sure enough found the blacksmith at home making repairs to his house. When questioned about the horses he had driven away in the spring he stated that he bought them from some horse traders and that he decided to take a trip back to his old home in Alabama, but after spending a few months in Alabama, he set out on his return to Simpson County. He further stated that when he was in the neighborhood of Augusta, some men came to his camp one night and took both his horses and some money that he had in his wagon.

He said that he had given his wife a part of his money and that was all they had left. With the money his wife had he had bought a small yoke of oxen and came the balance of the way with the ox team. He said he had seen the robbers before and would know them if he saw them again, and was sure that one of them was with the men that sold him the horses in the spring. The old horses that he left were returned to him and it was agreed that if he ever heard of those men being in the neighborhood again he would let Rials know. He said that he had sometimes shod horses for men who came that way and that they might come again.

Just before Christmas, the blacksmith came to see Rials early in the morning and stated that some men had come to his shop in the night wanting horses shod and that he had shod them as best he could in the night time. He said he had taken careful notice of the men and the horses and would know them again. He said there were four men in the party, but that only two of them came into the light and talked to him. He didn't know from what direction they came nor in what direction they went, as they came by a dim road and went back the same way. It was decided to wait and see what developed, if anything.

The next day several men claiming to be from Lawrence County came to the mill making inquiries about some horses that had been stolen from them. Rials told them about a number of men going to the blacksmith's house and having some horses shod. He then went with them down the creek to the blacksmith's house where further inquiry was made.

Rials wasn't able to go further with them, but let one of his hired men go with them, a trusty young fellow who was a good tracker and marksman. He furnished him with the best gun he had and he at once left with the other men on the trail of the robbers. As they had come from the southwest, it was supposed that they would go north or northeast. Some time during the day the men found the tracks of a shod horse. But after going a few miles they found that the shoes had been taken off. They continued to follow the trail of the horses and in a short time it was joined by that of other horses. On close examination of the tracks it was found that the other horses had been shod and the shoes afterwards removed. They were then sure that they were on the right trail, and that the horses had been shod just for a blind.

The following day soon after sunup, just as they reached the top of a high hill some where in Jasper County they saw several men at the ford of a small creek. As they were sure they were on the right track of the men, they decided to separate into two parties and go through the woods until they got ahead of the robbers.

After riding for more than a mile they found themselves some distance in the lead. So they dismounted with one man holding the horses. The others went to the edge of the road and waited for the robbers to come up. It so happened that when they rode up one of the horses in the woods neighed, and both parties began to shoot. Two of the robbers were hit, but not killed, although they fell off their horses. The other turned and rode away as fast as possible and one of them escaped. The others were captured and were carried back to Monticello and placed in jail. They were afterwards tried and sent to the penitentiary, but escaped in a short time.

They were found to be members of the John A. Murrell's clan. At that time it was claimed that Murrell had members of his clan in every county in the state. Nobody ever knew whether the blacksmith belonged to his clan or not. Some thought he was a member but others thought he was not or that if he had been he had decided to live a better life. He died an old and respected man.

"All that tread the globe are but a handful to the tribes that slumber in its bosom"

Author unknown

FREE LEWIS AND THE GREAT FIRE

Just about dark, a trapper came riding out of the woods north of the camp and stopped long enough to tell the campers that a great forest fire was raging a few miles north of them, and unless they got going at once they would lose their wagons and teams. The Woods were dry and a strong wind was blowing from the northwest, so that the fire was moving rapidly. The trapper said it was about three miles to a large creek and if they could cross the creek ahead of the fire they would be safe but no time was to be lost. The order was at once given to yoke the oxen and get them hitched to the wagons. Blankets, bedding and grub boxes were loaded on and the wagons moving in a few minutes. By that time the fire could be seen through the open pinewoods and did not appear to be more than a mile away. It so happened that Mr. Rials started first and he and Free Lewis and Tonie walked along by the side of the team with the driver. Everybody was hurrying and they were making all speed possible, but an ox team never moves very rapidly. The first unusual sight the boys observed was a drove of deer running through the woods at great speed. They crossed the road only a short distance ahead of the wagons. They next noticed a bear and two cubs crossing the road and after that in a few minutes a pack of timber wolves. These crossed the road and were followed a few minutes later by two panthers. Very soon wild animals were coming so fast it was hard to keep track of them. A great many deer crossed the road and they noticed coons, foxes, opossums, turkeys, owls and other wild fowls all going south. The most surprising thing to them was a large alligator coming from the fire. It ran almost as fast as a horse. Mr. Rials said it probably came from a high land pond back among the pines. Later they saw other alligators, but none as large as the first. In the meantime, several men got terribly excited and wanted to whip the oxen hard enough to make them run, but Mr. Rials and others prevented that.

They had gone probably a mile when the fire came in full view. It seemed to extend for miles east and west and was running to the very tops of the tallest trees. It was an unbroken forest on both sides of the road, and their plight was indeed desperate. Burning twigs were falling everywhere and it soon became necessary for the men to walk along by the side of the wagons to whip off the fire that fell on the wagon sheets. This was done with broken pine tops and required constant attention and the fire was getting so near they could feel the heat. The hot smoke almost stifled them as well as the oxen, and to add to their troubles the oxen were getting frantic and some of them were almost out of control.

The heat was intense and fire was falling everywhere, on the oxen as well as on the wagons. Many found it hard to keep their clothing from catching on fire, and looking back they saw that the fire was crossing the road behind them Mr. Rials afterwards said that at that time he thought everything was lost and that most of them would be burned to death. He had almost given up hope, but just at that time a terrific peal of thunder was heard overhead and in a few moments it was followed by a perfect downpour of rain. It didn't last long, but it stopped the fire.

It seemed like a miracle and some wanted to stop and pray, but most of them wanted to stop and take a drink. At the ford of the creek, they let the oxen stop and drink their fill and when they reached the top of the hill beyond the ford, they stopped and made coffee and ate their breakfast, not knowing what was just ahead.

FREE LEWIS' TRIP TO MOBILE

Free Lewis told me that the greatest event of his boyhood days was his first trip to Mobile. He was about twelve years old at the time, and during the summer and fall of that year, he had been working for Gideon Rials, helping around the mill and looking after the cattle and sheep, as well as helping gather the crops. On account of his good service, Rials promised to let him go to Mobile with him when he went to sell his wool and buy salt, a while before hog killing time.

Some time in October, Rials and his neighbors got together and planned a trip to Mobile, to be made about the first of November. At that time nobody dared to make the trip alone on account of the bands of robbers along the road. Before starting on one of these trips fifteen or twenty men would get together and arrange to go at the same time, for mutual protection. After the trip was planned, the first thing to do was to drive the oxen out of the woods every night and feed them on corn to give them sufficient strength to make the trip. The next thing was to have all the yokes put in good condition, or new ones made. As there generally were four yoke of oxen to each wagon, that took considerable amount of time. The yokes were made of gum and the ox bows were made of young hickory

The bows had to be well turned and properly bent so as fit well. Then too, the wagon had to be gone over and put in good shape, the wheels all tightened up and the tires shrunk so they would not be coming off. The next thing to be looked after was the bow-frame for the wagon cover. To-make a good bow-frame required considerable amount of skill as well as experience. The bows were made of thin white oak strips about twenty feet long and set about two feet part. The ends of the strips were fitted into small poles, and usually they also passed through a small pole in the center to hold them in place.

When completed the bow-frame was bent to fit the wagon and allowed to stand for several days to get it in proper shape. The wagon sheet, or cover, was made of a very heavy cotton cloth, which was stretched over the bow-frame.

The wagon sheet was always a few feet longer than the frame, so that the ends could be drawn together to keep out the wind and rain. When the wagons were properly covered, they furnished a very comfortable mode of conveyance, and comfortable places to sleep when it was raining or snowing.

The next thing was the preparation of the load to be carried. This consisted mostly of wool, hides and furs, which had to be well packed and bound so as to take as little room as possible. The last and most important thing from a boy's viewpoint was the grub box or basket. Several days before they were to start on a trip, the women would begin baking bread, and preparing meat and other things for the men to eat. It was astonishing the amount of food that would be cooked. Besides bread, there would be boiled hams, strings of dried sausage, puddings, cakes, pies and custards. In addition to all that, fresh eggs would be carried, to boil, or roast around the campfires; also potatoes and peanuts. Coffee was parched and ground so as to be ready for making at any time. It was quite an event in the neighborhood for a large number of wagons to be assembled for the long trek to Mobile.

Free Lewis said that about twelve wagons left the mill together on that Tuesday morning and they were joined by about twenty more down near the Covington County line. In all there were about forty wagons in the procession when they camped that night a few miles north of Williamsburg.

The first camping place on the trip to Mobile was in a grove of large trees on a high ridge of land. Before reaching the camping ground they crossed a small stream where all the oxen were allowed to drink. That night the wagons were placed in groups of five or six together, along the side of the road and the oxen were unyoked and tied to trees nearby where they were fed. Every wagon carried enough corn and fodder to feed the oxen until they reached Mobile.

While some of the men were busy feeding the oxen, others gathered wood and made fires. After the fires were made everybody brought out their grub boxes and got ready for supper. Water was brought from the little creek, hands and faces were washed, coffee was made and the supper spread, and all fell to eating. As soon as there were a sufficient amount of coals and hot ashes potatoes and eggs were roasted, peanuts and popcorn parched, till late in the night. The men lay around the campfires on their quilts and blankets, smoking and talking before going to sleep.

They slept in a circle around the fires and every now and then some fellow would get up and throw on more wood, so that the fires were kept burning all night.

Mr. Rials had allowed, Tonie, the Indian boy, to take the trip with him, and he and Free Lewis slept near each other. As they were tired they fell asleep almost as soon as they had eaten supper, although they tried to stay awake and hear the men talk.

Sometime after midnight Tonie touched Free Lewis and whispered to him to keep still as wolves were around the camp. The fires were still burning low, and as they looked out among the trees they could see the eyes of the wolves shining in the light. Tonie thought there were about twenty of them and soon noticed that they were creeping closer, so he advised Free Lewis to wake Mr. Rials, but about that time a man got up to replenish the fires and the wolves disappeared. The boys then told him about seeing the wolves and he unfastened some of the dogs and put them on the trail, but soon called them back, for fear they would get lost. The next morning wolf tracks were found all around the camp, but nothing had been molested.

By daybreak everybody was up and getting ready to move on. The oxen were fed only at night, so there was nothing to do but get them yoked up and hitched to the wagons. The only preparation made for breakfast was making coffee. After that was drunk and some cold bread and meat eaten, everyone "lit his pipe" and the signal was given to move on. With the early start made the second day they traveled nearly thirty miles but through a very thinly settled country. Only two or three settlements were passed after leaving Williamsburg. For miles and miles they met nobody and the great pine forests seemed lonesome and desolate. Besides that they were getting into the "outlaw land", and nobody felt entirely safe. After crossing a beautiful stream they camped on a level piece of ground, in a grove of large trees. This time, however, all the wagons were taken out of the road and placed in a circle, and the oxen were tied inside and fed.

Fires were then made, jugs were brought out and soon everybody was in good spirits and feeling fine again. It had been a hard day and all were tired, so soon as coffee was made and supper eaten, almost everyone spread his blanket out and went to sleep. About sundown, while the boys were helping with the wood, Tonie discovered a bee tree not far from the camp and reported it to Mr. Rials. Several young fellows went out to the tree and found that it was hollow, but too large to be cut and besides they did not want to make any noise chopping, as it might attract attention. However, they set fire to the tree and came away. Sometime in the night while everybody was

asleep, the tree fell, and two or three men took a pail and went to see if they could get some honey. They found that the tree had burst and that there was a considerable amount of honey in it, but the bees were very vicious. By the light of the torches they had carried, they managed to fill their pail, but decided to leave it at the tree until morning, for fear the bees would disturb the oxen. When they went back for their honey next morning, they saw a large bear, with its head in the pail eating up the honey. They started for their guns, but just at that moment something else happened.

A MAN NAMED BOGGAN

While they were making coffee, heavy thunder was heard again and in a very short time it began raining and continued to rain for more than two hours. The rain was so heavy they made no attempt to move on until it was over. After starting they soon found trees across the road and were delayed in getting them out of the way, as some of them had to be cut and removed before they could pass. About noon they reached a wide, shallow creek which was overflowing. It was really a broad, sandy hollow with low bank on the east side, but scarcely any at all on the west side. When the weather was dry, there was only a very small stream of water near the east side, but when it rained, the sandy bottom became dangerous on account of quicksand. Very often cattle were caught in the sand while trying to cross it when it was overflowed and drowned. It was said that several men had lost their lives by attempting to cross at such times. As they approached the creek, they saw that a wagon and team had stopped in mid stream about thirty yards from the east bank, and that a man was standing in front of his lead yoke of oxen and seemed to be trying to keep their heads above the water. He was waist deep in water himself and a woman was standing in the front of the wagon holding on to the bow frame and calling for help. When they saw the situation those people were in, about a dozen men pulled off their boots and went as fast as possible to the assistance of the man and his team. When they reached him they found that both the man and his team were deep down in the sand and that the oxen were about to be drowned. Several of the men had been caught in the quicksand before that and knew how to manage. By quick movements they lifted the oxen up enough to keep their heads above the water and as others reached them there was soon help enough to get them out to the bank. They next raised the wagon, and working all together pushed it back to the bank. The next thing to do was to get the ford packed down until it was hard enough to bring the wagons over. This done by driving their own oxen across the creek several times, as rapidly as, they could be driven.

All the oxen being loosed from the wagons and put in line, made a long team and it only required a few trips to get the ford in condition to carry the wagons across. They had to hurry, as another hard rain was coming and they were afraid another rise in the creek would prevent their crossing that day. When they had carried over all the wagons they asked the man they had helped if he thought he could get across without help, and he said he thought he could; but his wife was afraid he could not, and she asked one of the men to drive the wagon across. A man named Boggan drove the wagon to the other side and while they were crossing he was told that they were from Alabama and were moving to Mississippi. Boggan asked them if they had decided on a location, and they said they had not, and wanted to know if he could tell them of a good location. He told them that he did not know of a better location than Simpson County and advised them to locate there.

They wanted to pay Boggan for his trouble, but he would take nothing whatever. The man told Boggan his name was Neely and that he thought he had relatives in Simpson County. He later located near Westville and they met him many times afterwards. After leaving the creek they drove for several miles without further trouble. But about night they came to a large river, which had to be crossed by a ferry. As it was late they camped on a dry hammock. (Note: Hammock - a tract of more or less elevated, thickly wooded land within a marshy region.) near the road, tying up the oxen and feeding them as the night before, inside a circle of wagons. They then gathered wood, made fires and prepared for supper, not expecting any trouble.

While they were preparing supper a trapper came up from the river and stopped to warm and get a smoke. As he left he remarked to some of the men that he was afraid they had picked a bad place to camp but hoped it would be all right. They supposed he had reference to the location, and thought no more about it. After supper while everybody was sitting around the fires talking and smoking three other men stopped at the camp and stated that they were fishing and had been putting a trout line across the river. They talked and smoked for probably an hour and then went away, They had evidently been drinking and were a hard looking set. Several men said they did not like their appearance and were afraid they were up to something. Early in the night it began raining again and continued to rain for several hours, and although they had brought up a large number of pine logs, it was difficult to keep the fires burning and then, too, everybody had to sleep in the wagons. Occasionally somebody would get up and replenish the fires, but it kept raining nearly all the night. Before daybreak next morning everybody was up, coffee was made and drunk, pipes lit up and they were getting ready to go, when it was discovered that about a dozen of their best oxen were missing. They rebuilt the fires and waited for daylight, as nothing could be done before then. Many conjectures were made, but it was the opinion of almost everyone that the oxen had been stolen by the three fishermen. As soon as it was light enough to see, they began trying to find tracks of the stolen oxen, but on account of the rain that was nearly impossible. As soon as it was light enough to see, they began trying to find tracks of the stolen oxen, but on account of the rain that was nearly impossible. It was the opinion of most of them that the oxen had been taken down the river, as the ferry road lay north of them and would have to be crossed if they were taken that way. About a dozen men went out in different directions looking for the tracks, but soon came back stating that they had found none. Some few were in favor of going on, but the others said "no, the oxen had to be found" It was then decided that they would go in groups of two or three and see if the oxen could be located. It was also agreed that they should all return at noon, whatever the result might be. Temple Tullos and Francis Grubbs went down the river, and Ed Brilland and Hugh McFarland went west, keeping near the road, while Vinson Meeks and Will Slaughter went up the river. None of them took guns except Tullos and Grubbs as it was still raining enough to get their powder wet. Meeks and Slaughter let Tonie, the Indian boy, go with them, as he had heard the trapper say that an Indian lived a few miles up the river, and he wanted to see him. Tullos and Grubbs returned before noon, as they had found nothing. They did say that they met the trapper again and that he said it was reported a band of robbers had taken possession of an abandoned farm a few miles up the river, and that doubtless the oxen would be found there. Brilland and McFarland also returned at noon, but nothing was seen or heard of Meeks and Slaughter and Tonie. Everybody got uneasy and felt that something had befallen them. The rains had stopped and the sun shone out so they all felt better and decided to wait a while longer, but to get ready for the worst. All the guns were loaded and put in good condition and it was agreed that if Meeks and Slaughter did not return by two o'clock they would start after them. About that time they saw an Indian coming up from the river and saw that he was coming to the camp. When he reached the camp he stated that two white men and an Indian boy had been badly beaten, and needed help. He said he had taken them in on account of the boy and that they had directed him to come to the camp at once.

About a dozen men, well armed and led by Temple Tullos and Francis Grubbs, started immediately with the Indian and went to his house. Reaching there they found the boys and they stated that they had found the oxen and started driving them back across a strip of open land, when a man riding a large horse stopped them. He accused them of stealing his oxen and that before they could explain everything, he called two terrible looking men and told them to beat them all they could bear. Telling the boys to wait until they got back, they started for the abandoned farm. Their trip had strange results.

As they were starting, the Indian advised them to separate, so that some would be sure to find the oxen. He said for most of them to follow the riverbank, and about two or three to go to the old house, and to take Tonie with them as he knew the way. Temple Tullos and Hugh McFarland took Tonie and went to the house. The rest went up the river. Tullos and McFarland left their rifles with the Indian, but took their pistols. It was not more than a

mile to the house, which was almost hidden by a large grove of liveoaks. The house was enclosed by a rail fence. When they reached the fence they saw an old looking man standing on the front porch. He invited them in and appeared very glad to see them. As it was rather a cold day, they all went in to the fire. The old fellow brought out a jug of whiskey and told them to help themselves. He took a drink himself, and seemed very anxious to talk. He was a large heavily built man, and had a heavy, white beard and coarse reddish hair. As soon as they had taken a drink, and warmed themselves they asked him about the stolen oxen. He stated that he had not seen them, as he rarely left the house; but that there were a number of men living a few miles west of his place, who had been accused of stealing cattle and horses as well as slaves. He said they were very dangerous and that if they went looking for their cattle, they should be careful. He also said he was afraid that they would not find them. While they were talking, someone knocked on the door and the old fellow went out, and they heard him say, "get the horses and be quick." He spoke in a low tone of voice and probably did not think he was heard by the men inside. When he came back he told them to excuse him for a few minutes, while he wrote a note, and then he would go with them. He went into another room and they heard him moving a chair. They heard nothing further, but in a few minutes heard him speak to some one in the room, and immediately afterwards a young clean-shaven man, wearing good clothes, came out of the room and pausing just long enough to speak to them, went outside, shutting the door behind him. The door was fastened by a latch on the outside as well as one on the inside. A latchstring passed through a hole in the door shutter and was used for raising the latch.

Tonie stood by the side of the fireplace and looking through a crack between the logs said he saw the young man who went out, and two other men riding away from the barn at great speed. He said they were riding "mighty good horses".

Tullos and McFarland kept waiting for the old man to come out of the room he had entered, and as he did not come out decided to look into the room for themselves. When they did so, they no trace of him, but did see the old coat and a wig lying on the table and looking further found his "Santa Claus" whiskers under a pillow. They then knew they had been tricked and started out, but found that the latchstring had been cut. Tullos immediately seized a stick of wood and knocked the door down

When they got out again, they saw no trace of anybody but down at a little log house about thirty steps from the main house they heard somebody say, "Men, come and help me, please, do. Walking down to the house and looking through the cracks between the logs, they saw a man chained to a log. He looked lean and haggard, and he told them he had been there a long time.

He said his home was in Mobile and that he was a merchant. He said he was kidnapped by those men and brought to that place about a month before that time. He said they were holding him for a ransom of ten thousand dollars, and that he had refused to pay it, or to let his people pay it, as he had prayed for his deliverance and believed his prayers would be answered.

The door to the little house was heavily barred, but they found an axe and knocked it down. They then broke his chain and set him free. Tears ran down his cheeks as he tried to thank them.

While they were talking to him the other men came up driving the oxen. They said they had found the fishermen branding the oxen and tried to catch them but they dived into the river. Several shots were fired at them, and they said they thought the fish would have a chance to eat them. Getting back to camp they hitched up their teams and crossed the river.

It was growing late in the day when they crossed the river, but as they had lost so much time, in recovering the stolen oxen, they decided to drive a few miles further before camping so as to get as far as possible from the neighborhood of the robber outlaws. After crossing two or three small streams, they drove up on a high level ridge and finding an open place they camped for the night. After feeding the oxen and gathering a large quantity of wood, they built fires and prepared supper. The weather had cleared and in the cool night they enjoyed the long talks around the campfires. The events of day were discussed and various conjectures were made as to what the next day would bring.

It was thought best that a few men should stay awake and keep the fires burning and they slept by the fires. Every now and then some one got up and went the round of the camp to see that all was well. It was a wild, lonesome place, but nothing was heard except the hooting of owls and the occasional howl of a wolf. A frightened deer or two passed the camp and they saw one bear. No one came to the camp. The next morning they started early, hoping to get within a few miles of Mobile before night came on. That morning, as usual, Mr. Rials started first and his wagon was followed by that of Temple Tullos and Hugh McFarland's wagon came next. The old merchant rode in the front wagon, so that he could watch the road. He seemed to be in great fear that he would be recaptured. Tonie and Free Lewis walked along with Mr. Rials, a little way ahead of the team and sometimes would get a hundred yards or more ahead and then stop to rest until the wagons came up. Once when they were some distance in advance of the teams they saw a man running through the woods. They first thought he was after something, but when he crossed the road they saw that he was a negro and doubtless a slave. While they were trying to see where he went, they saw two bloodhounds coming through the woods, apparently on the trail of the negro. As they ran they made no sound, but in a very short time was heard the deep bay of the dogs and knew they had the man treed, or that they were about to catch him. Rials told them at once to stop the wagons and get their guns and go with him. Going down in the woods about a quarter of a mile they found the hounds standing under a large liveoak tree and soon caught sight of the slave sitting on a large limb not very far above the ground. As they came up he begged for mercy and asked them to save him. They drove the hounds away and told the slave to come down. When he got down the hounds attempted to get him, but were kept away. The slave said he had been stolen by some men and carried to a strange place and fastened by a chain in a small log house, with four other slaves. He said that on the day before, some one had pushed an axe through a crack of the house and they had cut their chains and broken the door and got out and ran. He did not know what became of the others.

He still had a small piece of chain on his leg that he had not been able to get off. He ran by holding the piece of chain in his hand. He said he belonged to Mrs. Della Boyakin, not far from Westville. This got them very much interested and they asked about the four other slaves, but he knew nothing about where they came from. He said they were brought there by the same men that had stolen him. While they were talking some said that he saw some men riding through the woods north of them and that they seemed to be coming that way. In a few minutes they rode up and as they stopped the slave ran behind Mr. Rials trying to hide. But there was no need of that for Vinson Meeks raised his gun and cursing like a sailor told the men to get off their horses that they were the men he wanted and that somebody was going to die. Rials and some of the other men told him to be quiet, but he said they were the men that had whipped him and that they were going to pay for it. Two of them were large evil looking men and one was a small man, who said he had nothing to do with the whipping but Tonie said he was the man that told the others to whip them. They denied stealing the oxen, but said they whipped the men because they thought their own oxen were being stolen. Vinson Meeks said he would whip them or he would hang them right there. He was in great rage and wanted to shoot them, but others prevented that and he finally consented that they might go if they would pay him one hundred dollars. Among them they had that much and gave it to him. Slaughter came up about that time and said he would be satisfied with two fine pistols they had. Just as they started to ride away, the merchant came up.

When the merchant came up, he at once said, "there is my horse," pointing at the same time to a horse which one of the men in pursuit of the negro had mounted. The man on the horse immediately said he had bought the horse and could prove it. The question was then asked if the merchant knew who kidnapped him, or if he could point the man out. He said that the man who kidnapped him was an old man and that he wore long white whiskers and a big gray coat. The riders then said they would be going and wanted the negro turned over to them and that if the merchant could prove title to the horse, he could get it through the courts. Vinson Meeks at once told them that they believed the negro was stolen from a woman in Simpson county and that he was going to take him back there and see what the courts would say about that. While these conversations were going on, some young fellows found there was something in a large hollow log lying there, and were trying to get it to come out by beating on the log with heavy pine knots. The man on the horse was at the front end of the log, but was paying no attention to what was being done to drive the animal out. Suddenly, and unexpectedly, a large bear dashed out of the hollow log and ran between the front legs of the horse and almost threw it down. As soon as it could get started, it bolted through the woods at its utmost speed. About fifty feet from where it started, it dashed under a live-oak tree and the rider was swept off by a large overhanging limb and his neck was broken. He was dead when his companions picked him up. They brought him back to where the rest of the men were standing and asked them to take the body to the next village, but Temple Tullos said they would do no such thing unless they went along with them. They not agree to that, but in the meantime two of the wagoners had mounted the other horses and caught the runaway horse and brought it back to the merchant. He said he felt too weak to ride the horse, so Hugh McFarland told him to get into his wagon and he would ride it. The negro was taken and placed in Vinson Meek's wagon and the chain taken off his foot. He was then given something to eat and drink, but was tied with a rope so that he could not get away, as it was thought that he might attempt to run again. However, he did not and returned with them to Simpson County and was given back to Mrs. Delia Boyakin. They left the dead man and the two other horses with the men riding them, but all were confident that the horses were stolen. That night they camped in the vicinity of Mobile and early the next morning drove into the city.

Mobile at that time was a small city, but it seemed wonderful to Free Lewis and Tonie. They had never dreamed of anything like that. They had never seen nor heard of brick buildings and wide streets and rows and rows of houses. But wonders of wonders, was a great sail ship coming up the bay. They could scarcely believe their own eyes it was so marvelous. Then the next day they saw other ships coming in and going out, and the men and unloading them. Indeed it seemed like they were in another world. Then, too, the merchant took them all around to his store and told his sons about how he escaped and how thankful he was to the men who saved him. He gave his horse to Vinson Meeks and suit of clothes to William Slaughter and to Free Lewis and Tonie. He said he gave the suit to Tonie because he had been whipped and to Free Lewis because he was Tonie's good friend. He gave presents to several other men, but he did not remember what they were. The merchant's sons took all the men over to a saloon and treated them almost every day while they were in the city. By the afternoon of the third day they had sold all their furs, wool, hides and other products and purchased what they wanted and had had their wagons loaded for an early start the next day, hoping to have no further trouble yet some of them claimed to have premonitions of what was to follow.

Note: The Americana Encyclopedia gives us another picture of what Mobile might have been like in the early days: Mobile is one of the oldest and most interesting cities in America. It is the city and county seat of Mobile County, situated on Mobile river at its entrance to Mobile Bay, 31 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. Twenty-Seven years after Columbus discovered America in 1492, Spanish explorers mapped Mobile Bay. In 1711 Jean Baptiste Le Moyne established a permanent colony under the name of Fort Louis de la Mobile -- the first part of the name honoring le Grande Monorgue Louis XIV and the last part for the Mauvilla tribe of Indians who lived in the vicinity. The population in 1803 was 810 people. The city grew rapidly after the War of 1812 and was

incorporated as a city in 1819. The first newspaper was published in 1812 and Spring Hill College was built in 1830.

Write injuries in dust, benefits in marble
Benjamin Franklin

Travers Sanders and John Vincent were nephew of Vincent Meeks and had gone with him to Mobile, partly on business, but more especially to buy their "wedding suits," as they were to be married just after Christmas. They were both fiddlers and had bought two violins while at Mobile. That night after supper they fiddled and sang for an hour or two before going to their wagon to sleep. Some time In the night after the moon was up Pollard's wife woke him and told him that she heard a man groaning in the wagon behind them and that she heard somebody passing on horses. Pollard got up and went to the wagon and found that some one in the wagon appeared to be suffering terribly. He knew it was in one of Vincent Meek's wagons, and he went at once and woke Meeks and told him that he thought somebody was hurt and to come at once. Meeks woke two other men and went at once to the wagon where he found that Sanders had been stabbed and was very nearly dead and that Vincent had been hit on the head with some heavy piece of iron or wood, and was unconscious. He also found that John and Travers had been robbed of their new suits and watches and what money they had. By that time everybody in camp was up and wondering if there were any other robberies. Nobody had seen anything or knew anything except Pollard's wife, and all she knew was that she heard men riding away just before she heard the groaning, She was not sure about the direction they had gone but thought they had gone west.

Several men took torches and began to search for tracks and soon found that there were fresh horse tracks on the road going, west, but none on any other road. Nobody slept any more that night. Large fires were made and Vincent and Sanders were made as comfortable as possible by the fire. Sanders was very bloody from the stabs, but was still alive. John Vincent was still unconscious from the terrible blow on the head, and it was thought that his skull was fractured. Somebody went to a house a few miles back east and inquired if there was a doctor in reach of them, and was told that there was a doctor living a few miles south of where they were and that he was a very good doctor when he was not drunk. They said they would get him if possible, whether drunk or sober, and rode away in search of him. They reached the doctor's house some time after midnight and found to their surprise that the house was lighted up there appeared to be several people there. Knowing the country they were in and what had occurred at the camp that night they thought it best to make some investigation before calling the doctor. They saw that it was a small, tumbled-down 'log house, consisting of two rooms and having a dirt chimney, and saw that there were a number of men standing by the fire. They also saw that several horses were hitched near the house and that they had not been unsaddled. They had their horses further back in the road and one held them while others made the investigation. Going very carefully, so as not to arouse any dogs, they finally reached the house and looking through some cracks, saw the men examining some, clothing and watches, and that one of them was drumming on a fiddle. They were confident that they had found the murderers of Sanders and Vincent, but before leaving decided to ride out in the woods and wait for further developments.

It was only a short time before they saw several man come out of the house, mount their horses and ride away; one man saying as they left, "See you later, Doc." They knew then that they had reached the doctor's house, and it best to get him if they could and take him to the camp. Two of the men rode up to the house and called him, while the others followed the robbers. The doctor at first said he would not go among strangers, but they told him that he had to go, as it was a life or death case. He asked them if they had any whiskey and they told him they had all he wanted. He told them then to catch his horse and he would go. One man caught the horse and the other went into the house to see if there were any other people there. It was a dangerous thing to do and he had hardly gotten inside when two men sprang upon him, but they had met their match for the man was Temple Tullos and he was a powerful man. He had his pistol in his hand and first knocked them down with it, and then

held them at bay until the other man came in. The doctor had gone into the other room and as he came out, was also knocked down, About that time they heard others coming.

The doctor was knocked down and run over by a man who was probably trying to escape, as he came out of the same room right behind the doctor and carried a bundle. After running over the doctor, he started towards the door. Temple Tullos called to Jarman Berry, the man who had gone for the doctor's horse, to catch the fellow. Berry was near the door as he ran out, and caught him, but could not hold him as he was a big stout fellow, but he did make him drop the bundle. About that time some other men rode up and fortunately they were the men who followed the robbers. When they came in the door was shut and fastened and they made a search of the house, and found one suit of clothes and a watch in the side room, and on examination of the bundle that had been dropped, found that it contained the other stolen suit. They made a search for the other watch, but found nothing. The doctor told them that the young fellows whom Temple Tullos had been watching had been working for him and he was sure that they had not been away and did not think they were in any way connected with the robbery. He said he knew the men who came to his house and had done some practice for one of them and that he had just been paid what was due him. He didn't say how much he had been paid nor In what way, Of course nobody believed the doctor but they couldn't afford to charge him with the robbery at that time, as they needed his assistance. They told him that his horse was saddled and they were ready to go. But the doctor then said that he would not go and reached for his gun, but they were not to be bluffed in that way. So they ordered him to get on his horse and go with them, and to be "quick about it." He asked to be allowed to get a few things that he might need. But they allowed him no chance to "get the drop on them." So in a few minutes they were on the way to the camp. When they reached the camp Sanders had revived considerably and Vincent appeared to be in less pain, but was still unconscious. They had brought whiskey along and had given the doctor several drinks on the way; so when they reached the camp he had to be helped off of his horse, but he was able to walk pretty straight and after he had examined the men said he would bring them around all right. He first "bled" Vincent and wanted to bleed Sanders, but Vincent Meeks told him that he would have none of that, as he had nearly bled to death already.

Strange to say, after Vincent was bled he regained consciousness.

While the men were away looking for a doctor Mrs. Pollard put a lot of venison into a large pot and had it cooking when the doctor came. After Vincent revived, the doctor said that he was hungry and would like to have some of the venison to eat. Mrs. Pollard "fished out" a large chunk of the venison and put it in a frying pan and told the doctor to help himself. He first said that as it was a cold night he would take another drink before eating, and would also take a pot of coffee. He sat down on a dry log and ate like he was famished. When he had eaten venison and bread until he apparently could hold no more, he said he would take a nap if they would spread a blanket near the fire. When that was done he went to sleep and for several hours was "dead to the world." While he was sleeping soundly somebody noticed a watch chain he carried and on examination found that it was the chain that belonged to Travers Sander's watch, and on taking the watch out of the doctor's pocket, found that he had Sander's watch. They put the watch back into his pocket and said nothing when he awoke. But in the meantime they had told Sanders of what they had found. When the doctor woke he took another cup of coffee and then walked over to look at the wounded men. He found Vincent doing fine and that Sanders was better. While he was dressing Sander's wounds, and was stooping over him, Sanders took hold of the watch chain and asked the doctor where he got it.

When Travers Sanders asked the doctor where he got his watch, he at once said, "I bought it from J. Dent in London, and his name is on the inside of the lid. I bought it in 1825 when I left England." Sanders then said, "My name is Travers Sanders, and I think you have my watch, and if you will look inside the lid you will find my name and the date I bought it." Then the doctor said, "Well, just to satisfy you, I'll see." So he took the watch

out of his pocket and opened it, and sure enough he found the name of Travers Sanders on the inside of the lid. When he saw the name, he looked at the watch for a long time, and turned it over and over, as if he could hardly believe his own eyes. He didn't speak for several minutes and then he said to Temple Tullos, "Please give me another drink." Tullos handed him a black bottle that held about a quart, and the doctor drank and drank until he drank it all. He then handed the bottle to Tullos, and after sitting down again, he said, "Well, I'll be damned." He said nothing more for some time and seemed to be thinking. He then got up again and took the watch and handed it to Sanders, and then called Vinson Meeks, as he understood that Meeks was related to Sanders. He then told Meeks that he didn't steal the watch, and that he had a watch that had evidently been taken in the place of the watch that Sanders bought, and he wanted to prove it. He said he knew the men who came to his house that night and didn't know that they had stolen anything, as they told him they were just back from Mobile and came by to pay him what they owed him, as they would be leaving the country early the next day. Meeks told the doctor that he would be glad to help him catch the men as he wanted them himself for their attempt to kill and murder his nephews. Meeks, Tullos, Butler, Grubbs and Berry then took their guns and told the doctor that they were ready to go, and that if he would tell them where the robbers could be found they would go after them. Meeks told the doctor that he preferred that he stay with Sanders and Vincent until they got back. The fact was the doctor was too drunk to ride a horse and when they left the camp he was lying by the fire gloriously drunk.

They first rode to the doctor's house and made inquiry of the two young men they found there of the whereabouts of the men who were there the night before, and they also searched the place for the doctor's watch. They also asked them if the doctor owned a watch and they said that he did and that it was a "mighty fine watch". Meeks then told them that the doctor's watch had been stolen and they were trying to recover it, and also told them that the doctor was at the camp with the wounded men. Only one of the young men knew where the men they were asking about lived and said they would be found, if found at all, at a log house on an old Indian trail about four miles north of the Mobile road. The young men said that they were working for the doctor, but didn't think he had anything to do with robbing people and thought he was a good man, as he treated a lot of people for wounds of various kinds, mostly knife and gunshot wounds. They said he was a mighty good doctor when he was not drunk. Tullos asked them what kind of drink the doctor liked best and they said he like all, but his favorite drink was a flip made of rum and ale, mixed and made hot. They said that was a fine drink and that they knew how to mix it. Tullos asked them if there was any rum and ale in the house, and they told him there was, but the doctor kept it locked up in a chest and that he had the key. Berry looked at the chest and said that he believed he had a key that would fit the lock, and when he tried it he found that it would unlock the chest. They found a five-gallon keg of rum and a ten-gallon keg of ale in the chest.

After finding the rum and ale, Meeks told one of the young men at the place to get a bowl and they would try a flip, if they knew how to make it. They said the doctor wouldn't like it, but they were willing to make "just a little." They soon found a bowl and first poured in a quart of rum and added about three quarts of ale. They next got a short iron rod and heated one end of it until it was red hot. They then dipped the rod into the mixture and held it for about a minute. They said that was the way the doctor made flip and that the heat burned up all the poisons in the liquor. They all proceeded to drink while it was hot, and the more they drank the better it seemed to get, so it was only a short time before it was all gone. Meeks said he believed he would like some more. So another bowlful was made and it was soon drunk. By that time they were all feeling good and were getting hungry. Meeks said he was hungry enough to eat anything, and asked the "home boys" if there was anything to eat on the place. They told him there was plenty but that he would have to go and see the cook about that. He asked where the cook could be found and was told that the cook was a slave woman and she lived in a cabin beyond the barns.

Meeks went down to the cabins for the slaves and found that the doctor owned several slaves, two men and three women. He said he was looking for the cook, as they were all hungry. Two of the women said they were

cooks and asked him what he wanted cooked. About that time he looked over inside a stockade and saw a large number of chickens and geese. So he told them that as he was "mighty hungry" he believed he would like some chicken. They asked him how many it would take, and he said about twenty, as he was "mighty hungry." They then asked him if the doctor knew about it, but he said, "I am running this she-bang now and I want those chickens killed right now." With that they got busy killing chickens and getting ready for dinner.

The kitchen was a large log house about thirty yards in the rear of the dwelling. It had a large rock chimney and a wide, open fireplace where the cooking was done. Meeks went back to brew some more flip. When he got back he found, as he afterwards said, that a lot of them had "flipped over," though most of them wanted more. While he was making the last bowl of flip, three other men rode up to the house, and hitching their horses, came in. They were rather hard looking men and Meeks felt like they might have trouble with them. But when they got a taste of the flip, they got in a good humor and asked a lot of questions. They also proceeded to make more flip and one of them was getting pretty drunk; in fact so much so that he decided he wanted to sing. So he at once began to sing the "Darby Ram". After he sang that a while he asked where the doctor kept his pet bear. One of the boys told him that the bear was in winter quarters in a big hogshead out in a little house in the backyard that the doctor had built for it. He said he was going to see the bear anyhow and was going to make it dance. Meeks and several others asked him to keep away from the bear. But that only made him more determined to wake it. When he opened the door to the little house, he saw the bear curled up in the hogshead, sound asleep. Not being able to arouse it by noise, he got a stick and began to jab it. The bear soon got enough of that and made a dash for him. As the bear came out the man stepped backwards and tripped over a stump. When he got up he began trying to strike the bear with the stick. One of the other men with him tried to stop him and he turned on the man and struck him with the stick, and was attempting to strike him again when the man shot him.

The bear ran back into his house and one of the boys shut the door. They then carried the wounded man into the house. He appeared to be dying, and they asked where the doctor could be found. Meeks said that they had left him at the camp that morning early and that he might be drunk. Meeks said they would send for him and believed they'd take another drink of flip. About that time the doctor rode up. Free Lewis was riding behind him to keep the doctor from falling off. Four men helped him down and took him into the house. When they got him in the house he smelt the flip and said he would like to have a drink. They told him that a man had been shot and needed attention at once. But he said that he came first and to bring the flip. Somebody told about killing twenty chickens for dinner. But he said there would be chickens when he was dead and gone. Meeks asked him about Sanders and Vincent, and he said, "Well, I'll be damned, I forgot about them; they may be dead. Bring some more flip."

About that time one of the doctor's hired boys came to the door and announced that dinner was ready. The doctor told everybody to go and eat while he looked after the wounded man. So everyone, except Free Lewis, went to dinner. The wounded man was lying near the fire on a buffalo rug, and had been bleeding a great deal. The doctor told Free Lewis to go to the kitchen and bring a pan of warm water. When the water was brought the doctor tried to wash some of the blood away from the wound but found he was still bleeding and that the flow of blood could not be stopped. He then told Free Lewis to go and get his dinner and that he would see what could be done for the wounded man. Everybody was hungry and the cooks had cooked a good dinner; plenty of chicken, bread and coffee, and besides that big slices of fried ham, home-made sausage, eggs, venison, potatoes and "light bread." They ate a longtime, and when they finally went back to the doctor's house they found him laying across the bed, sound asleep, and that the wounded man was dead. They roused the doctor up and told him that the man was dead. He said that he was not to blame for his death, and that the dead man had no one to blame but himself. He told the hired boys to take the dead man and lay him on the bed and that if anybody knew him to send word to his people if they knew them. Vinson Meeks and the two boys lifted the dead man up and placed him on the bed and when the boys were "looking him over" to see if they knew him, one of them noticed

that he wore a fine watch and chain that looked like the doctor's watch and chain. He called the doctor to see if it was as he described it. He then asked Vinson Meeks to take the watch and chain and follow his directions in making the examination. First, to open the watch and see if he found the name of the maker, as he had bought it from J. Dent in London; and to look inside the lid on the other side of the watch and see if he found the name of Rupert Spencer, which was his name. On making the examination, Meeks found the names mentioned. The Doctor then told Meeks to count the links in the chain and see if there were eighteen. When Meeks counted the links he found there were eighteen. So he handed the watch to the doctor.

If anybody knew the dead man they would not admit it. The doctor then asked Meeks to take the two hired boys and the slaves and select a place to bury the man, and have a grave dug. Meeks went out into the woods and selected a high hill for the burial site. He then put the men to work digging the grave and went back and assisted in making a rough coffin for the dead man. He also asked if anybody knew what became of the man who fired the shot. Nobody seemed to know who he was, nor what had become of him.

The doctor had taken a "liking" to Free Lewis and among other things had told him of the pet bear. He told Free Lewis that he would be glad to show the bear to him, but that it had gone to sleep for the winter. But someone said that the dead man had awakened the bear and that was the cause of the killing. The doctor then said he would see about that, and went out to the little log house made for the bear, and opened the door. When he called the bear it came out and seemed glad to see the doctor. Free Lewis was told to go to the kitchen and tell one of the slave women to bring a bowl of honey for the bear and to tell the other women to bring more dry, clean moss to put in the hogshead for the bear to sleep on. The woman soon brought a large pail of honey in the comb, and it was very amusing to see the bear "gobble it down".

It would take a big gob of honeycomb in its mouth and look around in the most satisfied way at everybody, like it wanted them to know how much it was enjoyed. When it had eaten all the honey and licked the pail clean, it turned and shook itself, and giving a big grunt went back to its little house, The house was plastered with dried mud and was ceiled overhead with slabs which were also covered with dried mud. It was a very comfortable little house. About the time the coffin was finished several men rode up to the doctor's house and inquired for a man named Kidd. One of the men said he was the sheriff. The doctor went to the door and said, "Hello, sheriff, get right down and come in." The sheriff said, "No, I'm looking for a man named Kidd, and was told I might find him here." The doctor said, "Well, he may be here, but if he is he is a dead kid, but come in and see." The sheriff went into the house and the doctor asked him to look at the dead man and see if he was the man wanted. After the sheriff examined the man he said he was quite sure that he was Kidd, and said he might as well be going, as there was nothing more for him to do. But the doctor said he would do no such thing and that he must stay for dinner and that they would have a bowl of flip. The sheriff said that was a "mighty good" suggestion, and after he was served, he said it was the best he had tasted in a long time.

Dinner was then announced for the sheriff and the men. By the time the sheriff was through eating, the coffin was ready and the dead man was placed in it. The doctor asked if there were any preachers present. One fellow, lying on the floor pretty drunk, said he was a preacher. The doctor said, "Well, if you are I want this fellow's funeral preached right now, he stole my watch and I want you to give him hell." The preacher was helped up and said he would "see that he got justice." The preacher asked the doctor if there was a Bible in the house and the doctor said, "Of course there is a Bible in the house. You don't think I am a heathen do you." The preacher said no, that he thought the doctor a very religious man. The doctor said, "That's what I am, but you better take another flip before you start." The preacher preached until he fell. Everybody said it was a grand funeral sermon and as grand as they had ever heard. Several said they doubted the fellow going to hell after hearing such a fine sermon.

Somebody then thought to ask the sheriff what the man was charged with and the sheriff said he was charged with slave stealing and murder. Anyway they took him out on the hilltop and buried him. The preacher did not go as he said he was not feeling well. He said he would take another dipper full of flip and see if he wouldn't feel better. He probably did as they left him on the doctor's floor sound asleep. After the man was buried, Meeks and the other men from the camp started back, taking the doctor with them. They had found him to be a very jolly fellow and really a good doctor and well educated his only failing" being that he drank too much. Free Lewis rode with the doctor again and the doctor insisted that he remain with him, as he needed a boy like him around the place. Free Lewis told him that he could not stay but might return some time and stay with him. Free Lewis said that several years later he made another trip that way and went to the doctor's house but found no trace of him. Even the house had been burned and the place abandoned. When they got back to the camp, Sanders and Vincent were up and feeling well enough to travel. The doctor remained in the camp until morning and everybody took a "great likin" to him and begged him to come to Simpson County with them and locate there. He promised to come but never did. Early the next morning they started homeward. The snow had melted and the sun was shining. Everybody was feeling fine as they expected to be at home in a few days. They camped in a great pine forest that night, not expecting anything to happen.



While in Mobile several men bought horses, saddles and bridles and new guns. Among them Free Lewis remembered Joe Boggan, Jarmon Berry, Sam Butler, Anthony Sutton and Hiram Walker. Vincent Meeks already had the horse that the merchant had given him, but he bought a new gun. The wagons were heavily loaded, mostly with salt and lumber. Nearly all the men in the party bought enough lumber to floor their dwellings and make door shutters. They also bought a lot of brown sugar and what was called sugar house molasses, and sacks of coffee.

When they first started, they thought they could reach the river before night but after they had gone twenty or more miles, they saw that they could not reach the river that day and that it would be, better to camp some distance from the river and not risk having trouble with the robbers above the ferry. After a camping place was selected, Vinson Meeks and several others took their guns and rode off towards river to hunt for deer and wild turkeys. After going about a mile they shot a deer and two of them returned to the camp with it. The others rode on toward the river. Before reaching the ferry, they turned north through the open pinewoods and came to the river at a point almost opposite the place where the stolen oxen were found. They stopped in a thick grove of liveoak trees and got down to let their horses rest a few minutes. While they were standing there, they saw a negro run down the west bank of the river and jump in and start swimming towards them. They knew the negro had not seen them so they waited to see what would happen next, if anything. The negro was nearly half way across, when they saw two large dogs plunge into the river and start after him and almost immediately three white men appeared on the top of the west bank. They were riding large horses and carried guns, but made no attempt to cross, as the river was wide and swift. Just before the negro reached the east bank, the dogs were getting close enough to seize him and they heard him say "Lawd have mercy". Meeks and Berry were standing nearest the river and Meeks said to Berry, "you take the one on the right, I'll take the other." They fired just as the dogs reached the negro. Both dogs attempted to turn but got no further. When they shot the dogs, the men on the other side shot at them and also shot at the negro, but were too far off to strike anybody. They told the negro to come out and come to them. When he got out he tried to run from them, but they caught him and found that he had a broken chain on his leg and was covered with bruises and sores. He seemed to be very tired and was almost too weak to walk. They asked him the name of his master and to their great surprise he said he belonged to Anthony Sutton. They asked him where Anthony Sutton lived, but he didn't know. He did not know what state or county he lived in, just knew that Anthony Sutton was his master. They had seen the men on the other side of the river ride away and were quite sure that they would cross at the ferry and attempt to retake the negro.

So no time was to be lost. They mounted their horses and one of the men took the negro up behind him and then turned back toward camp. They rode south near enough to the river to see what the ferryman was doing and when they came in sight saw that he was crossing the river on his way to the west bank, and they saw several men on horses, apparently waiting for the ferry. They turned and rode through the open woods for a mile or more and then took the road to the camp. When they reached the camp they called for Anthony Sutton, and asked him what he would give for a runaway slave. He said he would give a "good deal" if they caught him. They then told him to come and look at a slave they had captured. When he came up he at once recognized the negro as being his slave George. They then told Sutton about finding him in the river and how they had saved him. George then told them about how he had been stolen by some "bad men". He was brought to a place on the other side of the river and chained in a room with some others, and how he escaped. When he had finished, Vinson Meeks said, "We'll tend to that gang."

During the night the weather turned cold very rapidly and most of the men feared a blizzard was coming on. They were up early and as soon as coffee could be made they were ready to be going. Everybody was anxious to get home. Even the oxen seemed to know that they were "homeward bound," and traveled faster than usual.

They reached the river early in the morning and started crossing at once. Four wagons and teams were taken over without any accident but when the fifth wagon and team was about half way over, the ferry rope broke almost in the center, and before the ferryman could catch the broken rope, it had gotten beyond his reach.

The boat at once began to drift down the river, carrying the wagon and team and two or three men, who were helping with the load. The ferryman called for one of his men to cut the rope at the bank and bring it to him in a canoe. By the time the canoe reached the boat it had drifted a considerable distance down the river and was beginning to turn a bend and looked like it was going to capsize.

The ferryman managed to get the rope fastened to the boat before it capsized and lashed the other end of the rope around a tree. This stopped the boat, but about that time it was discovered that the boat was leaking and that it had struck a snag. By that time a man had brought the other piece of the rope and everybody went to work to try to get the oxen and wagon off before the boat sank.

All pulling together, they managed to get the boat to the cast bank of the river and then drove the oxen off. Then with a long chain fastened to the back axle of the wagon, and the oxen pulling and everybody pushing, they got the wagon back on the bank. After this was done they set to work to get the boat out of the water. It took a long time and was hard work, but at last they succeeded. The boat was then turned on its side and it was found that there was a large hole in the bottom, and that it would be some time before it could be properly repaired. Then it was found that the ferryman had no other rope that he could use as a ferry rope and would have to send to Mobile to get one. He told the men it would be impossible for him to take them 'across that day, but if they would wait he would try to take them over the next day. He told them that there was another ferry about 12 miles further up the river, but that they might have to ferry themselves across as the ferryman was usually out hunting when he wasn't drunk.

After talking the matter over, they decided to try the other ferry and told the men who had already crossed, to drive on and they would overtake them later. They then turned north, taking a very poor road, running nearly parallel with the river. They reached the upper ferry about noon and saw that the ferryboat was on the west side of the river, but saw no ferryman. A little log house stood on the bluff above the road on the east side of the river, and one of the men walked up to the door of the house and knocked and then called. After he had called several times, a big, old fellow opened the door and came out on the little porch. He seemed to be very friendly and invited the man to come in and get warm. The old man was wearing a large coat and a fur cap. He had long

hair, almost gray, and wore a heavy white beard. As soon as Vinson Meeks saw him, he ran up and said to the old fellow, "Ain't you the man I saw down close to the other ferry about a week ago?" The old man said he was not, but Meeks at once said, "Yes, you are, and I'll show these men how that false beard comes off." With that he grabbed the old fellow by the whiskers and gave him a quick jerk. But to his great surprise the whiskers didn't come off. The old man called for his son, who was in the backyard butchering a deer. In a moment the son was there with a large knife in his hand. The other men seeing there was going to be trouble ran up, some with their whips and some with guns. Meeks apologized to the old man and explained why he had caught him by the beard, and that seemed to satisfy him, but his son began cursing and said he was not going to stand for that and rushed at Meeks with the big knife. But before he could strike Meeks, somebody knocked him down. He attempted to get up, still cursing, but was knocked down again and the knife taken away from him. Several men then went around in the back yard and found that two slaves were helping with the butchering of the deer. As the people living there did not seem to be engaged in farming, it was decided they must be slave runners, and the slaves were asked to tell where they came from and not to be afraid. They both said they had been stolen from a farm near Paulding just a few days before and that they had been afraid to try to escape. They said they wanted to go back to their master, as he was good to them. One said his name was Jack and the other said his name was Joe. Vinson Meeks had also gone around to see them and he asked about the old man, and they told him that he just pretended to be an old man and that he had a real beard but that he had a false beard that he put on in the daytime. Meeks went back to where the old man and his son were standing, and before anybody knew what he was going to do, he knocked the old man down and pulled off his false whiskers. They were fastened by a buckskin string and were hard to pull off. He then jerked open the old fellow's coat and found that it was stuffed in front with several folds of buckskin and wool worn over a steel breastplate. Meeks took that off and it took a lot of persuasion to keep Meeks from killing him, as he said he knew he was the same man who had him whipped. In the meantime, the man who claimed to be the son of the old man, said he was not his son at all and that he had recently been hired by a lot of slave runners and that he wanted to get away from them. Somebody told him to get into a canoe and cross the river and bring the ferryboat; but two men went with him to be sure that he would play no trick on them. The ferryboat was soon brought over and in about an hour all the wagons had been carried across the river. While the wagons were being carried over Vinson Meeks, Hiram Walker, Francis Grubbs, Temple Tullos and Sam Butler went through the house and found a large number of guns of various kinds, and from what the slaves said, they were confident that there were a number of others in the clan, probably near by. They then took the "old man" and tied him, and then took the slaves and told them that they would send them back to their master. They were glad to be allowed to go. They put the "old man" in the last wagon that crossed over, and then decided to take the other man, but saw nothing of him. He had escaped while they were getting the wagons across the river. They drove about fifteen miles that afternoon through a desolate country, all open pinewoods, Not a single settlement was seen, nor did they meet anyone. It was nearly night when they reached the Mobile road and they saw by the wagon tracks that the other wagons had probably gone on. Several of the men, who were riding horses, then rode on and overtook the wagons a few miles ahead when they overtook them they found that they had stopped and were having some trouble with some men, who claimed to be looking for some runaway slaves. The men told them they knew of no slaves and had none with them. But that had not satisfied the slave hunters and they were proceeding to search the wagons. As the men with the wagons had been taken by surprise, they could not resist and it was probably fortunate that the others came up just at that time. Vinson Meeks ordered the searchers to get out of the wagons and give up their guns. He then had them tied; then told two of the other men to turn back and tell the other man with the wagons to come on and that they would camp there for the night. While preparing camp a number of men rode up and stopped one of them said they were looking for some slave runners and said they were from Shubuta. They were told to wait there until the other wagons came up.

When the other wagons came up, Vinson Meeks told Jack and Joe to look the men over and see if their master was among them, and at once they pointed him out and they also recognized several of the other men from

Shubuta. Jack and Joe were then asked if they could point out any of the men who had stolen them, and they pointed out three men in the crowd; one of them being the man who had possession of them at the upper ferry. The Subuta men then told the others to drop their guns. One or two of them tried to escape, but there was no chance. They were then bound and put on their horses and with them the slaves, Jack and Joe. They all rode away.

They were invited to stay in the camp for the night, but they said they would try to reach Shubuta, by morning, where the slave runners would be tried. Everybody was tired, and they slept well, not being disturbed by anything, except a pack of wolves that kept howling through the night.

Early next morning everybody was up and anxious to be on their way home. The weather had turned warmer and the day was fine. Several men rode on ahead and said they would probably kill a deer or bear. In about an hour after the wagons had started somebody heard the reports of guns some distance ahead, and, after going about a mile further, found two of the men who had gone ahead of the wagons, had stopped and were dressing a deer. That was good luck for it was a large deer and, they were getting "short" of meat. About that time they heard other guns, still further ahead and when they reached the other men found that they had killed a buffalo. It was the first one that most of the men had ever seen, and was about as large as an ox. Several men stopped and helped dress it, so that the meat could be carried along in the wagons. The man who shot it kept the hide and used it for a rug for many years. Sometime before noon, they reached the forks of the road where the Shubuta road turned north, and somebody looking to the north through a grove of liveoak trees saw something that looked like a man hanging from a live oak limb. The wagons were stopped and a number of men went to investigate the matter, and when they reached the liveoaks found three men hanging to the limbs, and that they had been dead long enough to be very cold. They were quite sure that they were the three men from Shubuta. They left them hanging there and reported the matter to a settler several miles further west. This settler advised them to take a road leading further north and to cross the next river at a toll bridge, as it was a much better road than the one they were on.

They took his advice and reached the toll bridge late in the afternoon. It was a long narrow bridge and was covered over like a house. When they were within about one hundred yards of the bridge, the keeper motioned to them to stop. A few of the men walked up to the bridge to see what was being done, and found that some men were driving a large flock of sheep to Mobile, and were trying to get them on the bridge. There were gates at the end of the bridge and banisters on the sides about six feet high. The gate on the east end was shut, so that the bridge keeper could count the sheep before they crossed. Just as the keeper opened the east gate, a number of sheep crowded against the banisters on the south side and broke some of the planking. One sheep at once went through and into the river and the others began following as fast as they could jump. The sheep owners rushed in as soon as possible, but before they could reach the break, fully forty of the sheep had gone into the river. Everybody tried to help save them, but in spite of all that could be done, the most of them were drowned. The bridge keeper took a large canoe and picked up several of them, and everybody had plenty of mutton for supper. The sheep owners then penned their sheep and all decided to camp for the night.

The sheep owner penned his sheep in a small field on the south side of the road and after the sheep were driven into the field. The three wagons in which the feed was carried were driven in and the sheep were fed from folding troughs that were carried on the sides of the wagon bodies. The sheep were given oats, corn meal and some hay so that they could be kept in good condition until they were sold. This field was only partly cleared, much of it being covered with a thick growth of liveoaks and pine. Mr. Rials and the others with him camped on the north side of the small stream where the ground was open; but the oxen were carried across the stream and tied among the pines on a hillside. The pines on the hill seemed to be mostly what was known as spruce pine and the growth was very heavy. The bridge keeper had a large quantity of pinewood piled by the side of the road

near the east end of the bridge and he told the men that they could use all that they wanted for fires. Accepting his offer, they soon had large fires burning and by the time it was getting dark they had made coffee eaten supper and made ready to roll into their blankets.

The keeper kept a man at the bridge all night so that anyone wanting to cross the river would not have to wake him. The man at the bridge that night said his name was Jim and he, was a jolly young fellow, who liked to talk and liked a dram. So every now and then he would come out to the camp and talk awhile and get another drink. He slept on the bridge and it was his duty to keep the gates shut and collect the fares, but about nine o'clock all was quiet and everybody was asleep. Sometime after they had all gone to sleep, Jim came over and told them to get up for it was snowing. The fires were again started and everybody got up and put their blankets into the wagons and got in themselves, all hoping that the snow would soon stop. But it grew heavier all the time and continued snowing all night and until nearly noon of the next day. The snow was fourteen inches deep when it stopped. The bridge keeper said it was the biggest snow he had ever seen. The roads were blocked with fallen and 'bending timber; there was no chance to move on. Luckily the spruce pines, in which the oxen were tied, did not break, although they were loaded with snow. The sheep owner arranged with the bridge keeper to let him pen his sheep on the bridge. The bridge keeper lived in a large log house on the east side of the river and invited them all to come to his house and take their meals and stay where they could keep warm until the roads were open again.

There was nothing to do but wait, although everybody was anxious to be moving on. Some fretted and some grumbled but most of them took the matter as something to make the best of it. Two men got in a canoe and went down the river, talking their guns and plenty of ammunition. Sometime after they were gone, it was noticed that two guns appeared to have been fired at the same time, and they thought that perhaps the men had been attacked by some large animal. So two other men took a canoe and went down the river, carrying their guns. They were scarcely out of sight, when the report of two guns, apparently fired at the same time was heard again. Almost everybody felt uneasy, and some even volunteered to go down the riverbank and see what had happened. But the bridge keeper warned them against doing that but said he would get into his Indian canoe and go himself.

Note: The story continues with the hunters.

Sam Butler and Anthony Sutton (1830 Census) went down the river in the first canoe and as they wanted to try out their new guns, were on the lookout for game. After they had gone about a quarter of a mile, they came to a big bend in the river, and looking further down under the low hanging trees they caught a glimpse of two panthers on a snow covered sand bar. One was devouring a dead sheep that had drifted against the bar and the other was standing a little ways back, as if waiting for a chance at the sheep. They saw that the panthers had not seen them, so they lay down in the boat and let it drift under the trees until they were in about thirty yards of the panthers. Then selecting the one each man would shoot, they both fired. One of the panthers was killed instantly but the other appeared able to get away, and was rapidly moving across the sand bar when it saw them and at once turned as if going to attack them. They had let the boat drift as they loaded their guns and it had almost reached the bar when the panther turned. No time was to be lost and both fired at once. This time the panther was killed but it was only a few feet from the boat when it died.

The men in the second canoe were Francis Grubbs and Temple Tullos (both in 1830 Census) and they came up while Butler and Sutton were examining the panther. Both boats were then tied and all the men got out with their guns and were preparing to skin the panthers when they heard the noise of other animals coming through the woods toward the river. All stand with their guns ready, they waited the coming of the animals they had heard. In a few minutes a large deer bounded over the riverbank onto the sand bar. It was closely followed by

four big, gray wolves. Somebody said, "kill the wolves and then we'll get the deer." With that they all took a shot at the wolves and killed three of them. The other got away, although it was limping as it left. The deer swam the river and got to the other bark before they could reload. The bridgekeeper reached them about that time and helped them skin the panthers. Back in those days their skins were used for rugs and people valued them very highly. The bridge keeper took the wolf hides as he said there was a bounty being paid for them. On their return to the bridge, they shot a large alligator that was eating one of the sheep that was drowned. They thought they had killed it, but it sank before they could reach it.

The next day everybody was anxious to be moving on, and it was decided to take axes and try to get the swamp cleared of fallen and overhanging trees as they felt that when they reached the pine forests the road would be passable. They found the work very hard and made slow progress, and besides the snow, they found the weather was growing much colder. Nothing could be done, and for the next two days they made fires and spent the time as best they could. Some hunted, and as game was plentiful, they soon had all they wanted. On both days some of them would take their axes and go a little further through the swamp, clearing the road of trees.

Late in the afternoon of the second day, they saw a man coming down the Three Noached Road from the east. When he came up to them they saw he was almost exhausted and seemed to be in great distress. As soon as he was warm enough to talk, he, told them that he and his family were moving to Mississippi and that they came from Alabama he said that they had camped a little more than a mile back east from the river and had been caught in the snow. He said they had used all their food and that his horses had given out as he had no feed for them. He further stated that his little baby was very sick and that he was afraid it would be dead before he could get back. He said he had heard guns over towards the river and hoped that he would find someone that could help him. The bridge keeper's wife heard what the man said, and at once urged all who would to go at once and help the man. They took their axes to clear the road and took feed for the horses and food for his family and when they were ready to start, the bridge keeper's wife said she felt like the little baby was dead and that she was going also.

The natural flights of the human mind are not from pleasure to pleasure but from hope to hope. – Samuel Johnson

Mr. Pollard from Alabama

About a dozen men went at once to assist the man from Alabama. Some took axes to clear the road and some rode horses, so they could bring his wagon to the bridge. The bridge keeper's wife rode a gentle horse and carried two or three woolen shawls, as she felt sure they would be needed. When the wagon was reached, they found the man's wife sitting by the fire, holding the baby in her arms and found two small children, both barefooted, standing by her side. The two horses looked like they were almost started, and there was a little dog lying by the fire, but it was so weak that it didn't even bark. The Bridge keeper's wife took the little baby, and wrapped it in a warm shawl and then taking it in her lap and taking the two little children up behind her on the horse, she rode away. The mother of the children was placed on another horse and sent along with her. As soon as the team could be changed, they all started for the bridge. The old horses were fed and the little dog given all it could eat, and the woman and children given a place by the fire at the bridge keeper's house. Everything that they knew to do was done for the little baby, but it died during the night. The next morning Mr. Rials took some of the new lumber in his wagon and made a little coffin, and out on the hillside some other men dug a little grave. It was a sad burial and these people wept as if their hearts would break as they came away and left the little baby out there in the snow. During the day several men went hunting and killed a lot of game. Two men went down the river in a boat and shot a very large garfish. Further down the river they came to an Indian camp, where they bought some moccasins for the two little children from Alabama. At the Indian camp they unexpectedly found an Irish peddler, with his pack of goods. The Indians said they had found him half buried in

the snow out on the road west of the bridge and that he was "heep big drunk" when they found him. There was an empty bottle lying by his side, and he had probably tried to keep warm by drinking whiskey. The Indians said he was found by their dogs and that they brought him to their camp as the roads were too much blocked by timber to carry him to the bridge. They said they intended carrying him there when he got sober enough to travel. The Indians had never molested the pack of goods but said that if the peddler lived they would take him and the pack to the bridge. They were afraid he had pneumonia, and he probably did. But with their care and attention they thought he would get well. When they got back to the bridge they reported the matter to the people there, and some men went after the peddler, but decided that he was too sick to be moved at that time. The next morning, the roads were open enough to travel and as soon as possible the oxen were yoked and hitched to the wagons and all moved on. It was good to be going home at last. The man from Alabama said his name was Pollard and he asked to be allowed to join them. He said he would like to settle where they lived and have a home among them. He came on with them, and after reaching Simpson county located where D. W. Welch now lives.



Soon after supper deep thunder was heard in the southwest and it was only a short time before it began to rain. Everybody had to get into the wagons to sleep. The rain came down in torrents and lasted throughout the night, but stopped about daylight. The campers had all slept sound and as soon as it was light enough to see, they began to get ready to move on. While they were yoking the oxen it was discovered that a number of them were missing, six yoke in all. It was first thought they had broken loose in the night and were nearby. But on further examination it was found that six yokes were also missing and that the oxen had evidently been stolen during the rain.

Search was made for tracks, but on account of the rain, none could be found. However, somebody noticed a few bushes out on a dim road leading north from the road they were on. There was no road leading south. So it was decided that six men would take the horses they had and that two would ride back east along the way they had come, two would ride further west, and the other two would follow the dim road north; all to ride as far as they thought it necessary and to report as soon as possible. Jarman Berry and Anthony Sutton rode back east, Temple Tullos and Sam Butler rode west and Vinson Meeks and Francis Grubbs went north. Berry and Sutton rode back to the site of the last camp, and finding no trace of the oxen turned back. Temple and Tullos rode about twenty miles west, but found no trace, they also turned back. Meeks and Grubbs had gone about fifteen miles north before they found any sign of the oxen. There they found that the rain had stopped when the oxen reached that point and that the tracks were plain enough from there on north. They were still in an open pine forest and knew that they could be seen for a long distance, so they decided to go as near as possible to the oxen without being seen and turn into the woods when they came in sight of them. Going about two miles further they caught sight of the oxen going over a long hill. They then turned west so as to get near what appeared to be a swamp. After reaching the swamp they followed the eastern edge and would occasionally ride out among the pines until they got a glimpse of the oxen. It was their idea that the thieves would stop sometime in the morning to rest and to get something to eat. They wanted to be sure that they would not be overpowered before they recovered the oxen. After going another mile or so, they saw a small log cabin near the road and saw that the oxen had not come in sight of the cabin on account of a hill. They then rode further north and when out of sight of the cabin turned east to the little road. They dismounted and waited to see if anybody stopped at the cabin. Sure enough, when the oxen were opposite the cabin, the two men driving them stopped them and went up to the cabin. A dark, heavy-set man came to the door, and probably invited them in, as they immediately went into the house. As they entered the house they left their guns leaning against the house on the outside.

So as not to be suspected, Meeks and Grubbs mounted their horses and came down the road as if riding south. It was their purpose to ride-up to the cabin and first take the guns, but a boy, who happened to be outside, saw them and ran to the house. Knowing he would tell, they galloped up to the house and reached it just as the men came out. Both started for their guns, but Meeks and Grubbs had their guns in their hands and told them not to touch the guns, but to come on out. They seemed to hesitate, but about that time the man of the house pushed them out and jumped out after them with a gun in his hand. Before he could raise it, Grubbs leveled his gun on him and told him to drop the gun or he would kill him. He readily obeyed and then handed all the guns to Meeks and Grubbs. Meeks then told the man about the theft of the oxen and why they were after the other men. He claimed to know nothing of the affair and said he would help them in any way he could. They had him tie the thieves up to some trees until he could prepare a little "bite" for them to eat, as they were hungry. He had his wife prepare them a very good meal. He wanted no pay, but Grubbs gave his wife a gold dollar. She seemed very proud of it. While they were eating, one of the thieves called the man of the house and talked with him a few minutes. He then came to Meeks and Grubbs and asked them if they would take one hundred dollars in gold for their trouble. After thinking it over a moment or two, they said they would take the one hundred dollars. Then they turned the oxen and started down the road again. Years later they learned that his wife was a sister of the thieves. As they rode away they had fear of an ambush. They knew they were in a dangerous place.

Meeks and Grubbs took the guns that belonged to the cattle thieves and tied them on their saddles, but gave back the gun that belonged to the owner of the cabin. They told the other men that their guns would be left at the camp under a pile of green pine tops, and that they could get them there. The thieves made no reply and Meeks and Grubbs felt sure they were going to have trouble with them before they could reach camp. It was twelve or fifteen miles to the camp and they knew it would require a long time for the oxen to travel that far, besides the oxen were already tired. They had the advantage of open pinewoods and could see for a great distance, but they knew that on account of the swamp to the west, that the thieves could get near them without being seen. It was then about noon and the sun was shining, but another big rain appeared to be coming out of the southwest. They hurried the oxen as much as possible, and after going about three miles reached the foot of a long, steep hill, almost bare of timber. There they decided that Meeks would ride around the east side of the hill until he was opposite the top and then to hitch his horse and go to the top of the hill and watch until Grubbs came up with the oxen. Grubbs was to let the oxen rest until Meeks gave the signal to come on.

Meeks reached the top of the hill as they had planned and secreted himself in a small cluster of young pines. He had not been standing there but a few minutes when he saw three men come out of the swamp and go to some large trees that were standing out in the woods. He saw that they all carried guns and that they appeared to be looking in the direction of the oxen. He then gave Grubbs the signal to move on. He could see from their movements that the men had seen the oxen and no doubt planned to recapture them, and also recover the money paid them.

The next move made by the men was to move around the west side of the hill until they reached a large log lying a short distance west of the road. They then settled down on the side of the log opposite the road, where they lay quite still. Just after they sat down by the log, Meeks noticed a gun barrel sticking up over the log. When Grubbs came up, Meeks motioned for him to let the oxen pass and then come to him. When Grubbs reached him, Meeks said, "watch me, be ready." Meeks then took a shot at the gun barrel sticking up over the log and evidently struck it and knocked it out of the owner's hands. All three of the men jumped up at once and two of them shot into the cluster of pines. Meeks and Grubbs ran out of the range of the oxen and shot at the men as they ran off. As Meeks afterwards said, "his blood was up" and he shot to kill. One of the men was certainly struck and probably killed, as they saw him fall and crawl to a tree. They were sure that another had his arm broken. Meeks and Grubbs had a "close call" as Meeks had the lock of his gun broken and Grubbs got a

bullet through his coat. Both would doubtless have been killed if they had not kept the guns they took from the thieves.

After the battle was over they walked down to the log and found a broken gun barrel. The stock was splintered and the hammer and locks broken. Meeks was very proud of the shot he made. After waiting awhile they heard horns being blown in several directions, and were quite sure others were coming to the assistance of the men they had shot. They moved on and fortunately perhaps for them, another big rain came up, and as good luck would have it when they had gone a few miles further, they met Sutton and several others coming to hunt them. The rain came down in torrents, but they kept going, and as they rode along Sutton told them of a terrible thing that had happened.

Two miles or more west of the camp was a large creek, flowing south, and on the west side of the creek was a blacksmith shop, which was operated by two brothers named Knight. They had come into the neighborhood the year before, from Georgia. They were single men, but had entered a tract of land, built a small log house and the shop. In addition to their blacksmith work, they mended guns and kept a supply of ox yokes and bows for sale. They also did a good deal of trapping and hunting, and usually had venison and buffalo meat for sale. They kept the meat during the winter months in a small log house built near the shop. Quarters of venison and buffalo meat would be hung on hooks that were fastened to short chains and suspended from a joist across the top of the little house. Besides the meat they kept for sale, they also tried to keep a small supply of salt, coffee and sugar, all of which was scarce in those days. Money was also very scarce, and most of their pay was in furs. When they accumulated a large stock of furs one of them would go to Mobile and sell them. They were sober, hard-working men and attended strictly to their own business. They had no relatives in the neighborhood, except a widowed sister, who lived about a mile from them. The husband had been killed by a falling tree that same year, and she was left with two small children, a little girl about ten years old and a little boy about six. The Knight brothers were arranging to build a house for them on their land and move them before the winter was over, and had already laid the foundation of the house.

As was often the case in the early settlement of the country, it was soon known abroad that the Knight brothers had a lot of money.

When Berry and Tullos rode west that morning hunting the stolen oxen, they stopped at the shop and asked one of the men if he had seen them, and he stated that he had not; but suggested that if they had been stolen, they had been carried either north or east, as most of the stolen horses and cattle were carried that way.

As they returned they saw nothing of the Knights, but saw two large, black whiskered men riding rapidly away and going north. They rode large, strong looking horses and carried guns across their saddles. Berry and Tullos did not stop, and really thought but little about the men they saw, as nearly everybody carried guns and rode good horses.

Sometime after the rain had stopped, probably about ten o'clock, the widow's little girl went to the shop to get something from her uncles. But when she reached the shop she found no one there. She looked all through the shop and the house, and seeing no one, she peeped in the house where the meat was kept. The door was usually locked, but now was standing partly open. When she looked in she was horrified to see her uncles covered with blood and hanging from the meat hooks. She fled screaming and a man who happened to come up at that time tried to stop her, but could not. He was sure that something terrible had happened and stopped to make some investigation himself. He had two dogs with him, and he expected they would get in a fight with the Knight dogs, but they did not appear. His dogs soon began barking at the little smokehouse and he went around there and saw what had happened. Feeling like he might be suspicioned, he rode at once to see their sister, Mrs.

Woods. As soon as possible they went back to the shop and with her help he got the men loose from the hooks and carried them into the house. They had apparently been dead for an hour or more. Some other men came about that time and it was only a short time before several people were there. One had come by the camp and he rode back to ask for help in catching the robbers, as it was evident that the Knights had been murdered and robbed.

Mrs. Woods didn't know anything about their money, but knew their watches were gone and that a new coat had been taken. On examination it was found that both of the Knights had been terribly cut with knives and that they must have made a hard fight, but had been overpowered. Their hands were tied behind them and the hooks had been caught in their throats, evidently before they died, as even their boots were almost filled with blood. When Meeks reached the camp and heard the full particulars of the murder, he said, "Follow me, men, we'll tend to them varmints. While they were getting ready to start on the hunt for the robbers, a man rode into the camp from the southwest and stated that he had two good horses stolen the night before, and that a neighbor had been murdered and robbed. He said that he lived about twenty miles down the creek and that he trailed the horses north for a few miles before the rain started, but lost the trail after the rain. He said he believed the robbers belonged to a gang that had a hideout on the Chickasway River. He further said that it was reported that the gang was led by a fellow going by the name of Lopez, who claimed to be of Spanish descent, and claiming to have come from South America and had been known to speak of how the Spaniards executed Indians by binding their arms and hanging them on iron hooks fastened in their throats, where they were left to die. From the manner in which the Knights had been killed they were quite sure that Lopez was connected with the murders and robberies. It was agreed that no chances would be taken and no quarter given if the murderers were found. Another man who came to the camp a little later said it was his opinion that the robbers went north about twenty miles to the home of a man who was suspicioned of being an accomplice, and he was sure they would stop there to rest and eat. He said that there was a road leading east from that place to the Chickasway River, and that they would follow that road to their hideout. He said it was a very poor road, but had been an old Indian trail for many years. They decided to follow the road north that they had traveled that morning hunting the stolen oxen, until they got to the hill where Meeks and Grubbs had shot the robbers and then turn northeast so as to avoid being seen by anyone at the house where the oxen were found. Just as they were leaving, a brother of the man who was murdered the night before, came up and said he wanted to go with them. Free Lewis said he was the "maddest man" he ever saw. It was about the middle of the afternoon when they got away. There were about a dozen men in the party and they were well armed. Riding about twelve miles they came to the hill where the shooting had occurred but had passed no houses and seen no one. It was an open pine forest so they left the road at the top of the hill and took a northeast course through the woods. After traveling five or six miles they came to a road leading east. There they stopped and examined the road for horse tracks, but found none that had recently been made. It was then thought prudent to let one man ride along the road and the others ride through the woods keeping in sight of the man on the road, as one man riding alone would create no suspicion. Meeks, as leader of the party, rode east on the road and after going a few miles came to a small house standing on the north side of the road. It was a log house, but had a very neat appearance and had a front porch. It was enclosed by a fence made of rails and the gateposts were high and pointed at the top. A woman was standing near the gate and Meeks decided to talk to her, as it seemed that she wanted to say something to him. She told him that her husband was suffering a great deal and needed help. Meeks went in and found that her husband had been shot and was unable to walk. The man did not want to, talk but the woman said that he had been shot and robbed by some of the Lopez gang while coming home from Mobile. He only had forty dollars but they took it all. She said if she had Lopez's head she would stick it on her front gatepost as a warning to robbers.

Meeks then told the woman about the murders and robberies and that he was on the trail of Lopez and his gang. It was then arranged that he would join the other men in the woods and if the robbers passed before night, the woman would send her little boy to tell them. It so happened that in less than an hour the little boy came running

toward them and stated that four men had passed and that Lopez was in the gang. No time was to be lost. They rode back to the road. The woman described the four men and they rode away at full speed. When they first caught up with the gang they turned and offered to fight; but seeing that they were outnumbered, took to flight after firing two shots. Meeks and his men started shooting and soon had them all knocked out of their saddles. As they came up they kept shooting as long as any of the gang moved. When the fight was over, all the robbers were dead except Lopez. He was helpless but still cursing. The brother of the murdered man ran up with a big bowie knife and said he was going to cut Lopez's head off. Lopez said, "Damn you, cut it off." But the fellow couldn't get it off until he twisted it off like he would a hog's head. He then rolled the head in a saddle blanket and carried it back to the woman's house and she stuck it on the gatepost.



The next day was Sunday, but the campers started on and that day had a most unusual experience.

Early the next morning, the campers started early. Everybody had slept well the oxen had rested for a day or more, and the long teams were moving west again towards home. They reached the Knight place soon after sunup and stopped to tell Mrs. Woods of their encounter with the men who had murdered her brothers and how they overtook and killed them. They also gave her the watches and some money that had been stolen from her brothers. While they were at the Knight place, a number of men rode up from the south with a large pack of dogs. They said they were hunting a large gray wolf that had done a great deal of damage in that section of the country. They said it seemed to have a charmed life, as nobody had been able to shoot it and most of the dogs were afraid of it. They said that most people believed it was a werewolf. (were-wolf: a person able to assume a wolf's form) They also stated that an old French doctor named Johnville, who lived on the road further west, was believed to have the power to change himself into a were-wolf by rubbing his body with some kind of ointment, and they really believed it was the old French doctor they were after, but that they had sent for a new pack of dogs and were going to try to catch him. They said the old doctor had but little practice but always had plenty of money. He lived, they said in a big single room log house about fifteen miles further west on the north side of the road. Meeks and several others told them that there could be no such thing as a were-wolf, but most of the party said there had been were-wolves in that country ever since it was first settled, and that north of Biloxi there were numbers of them and plenty of witches, too. They said the old doctor's mother was a witch and that the devil taught her how to change a man into an animal, and that sometimes they changed themselves into panthers, but mostly into wolves. The hunters tried to persuade Meeks and several others to take the hunt with them but all declined.

They promised however, to listen for the dogs and if they could be of any help in catching the were-wolf they would do so gladly.

The hunters then took a course south and said they would make a circuit of about twenty miles and felt sure that they would be able to find the trail of the wolf. After that several drinks were taken by nearly every-body and then the hunters turned south and the wagons moved west. Just as Meeks and Grubbs were getting on their horse Mrs. Woods warned them to be careful when they passed the old doctor's house, as she believed what those men had said, and that nobody could kill a were-wolf, but that it could kill anybody, and that often it killed little children and ate them. She said it was very dangerous.

As they drove on nearly all of them talked about what the hunters had said and it appeared that nearly all of them believed in witches; but that most of them did not believe in were-wolves, or that any man could change himself into an animal. After going three or four miles, they were joined by several other men who knew about the wolf and were going towards the doctor's house.

They also said it was generally believed that the doctor got a lot of his medicine from the devil and could change himself into any kind of an animal. They said he had been away from his house for several weeks, and there was no telling what he was doing. They also said the doctor's house was haunted and that no body would go about it at night. They said the doctor had no family and owned no slaves. One man said that he had frequently called on the doctor and that he was a very pleasant gentleman; that he did his own cooking and could prepare a fine meal. He also said that his house was well furnished and kept clean; and that he was a good surgeon and treated a great many people for wounds.

The men who were riding horses were a short distance ahead of the wagons, and just as they got in sight of the doctor's house, they heard a pack of dogs a mile or more off to the south. They appeared to be going towards the doctor's house so all moved up as rapidly as possible so as to get in sight of the house before the dogs came into view. When the wagons reached the house, everybody stopped, as they could see the dogs coming over a high hill, and sure enough right ahead of them was the "biggest wolf" they had ever seen. It was nearly white and was coming at great speed. Nobody tried to shoot it, as the hunters had said they wanted to catch it. Almost before anybody had time to think, it reached the road and crossed right under a wagon and made a dash for the doctor's house. The front door was standing a little ajar and the wolf went bounding in, the dogs right behind it. The hunters were coming up, but just as they reached the road, the dogs came tumbling out of the house with their hair standing on end, and in wild flight.

When they came in sight of the doctor's house they were surprised to see smoke coming out of the chimney. It indicated that a fire had been recently made, as the smoke was dark and heavy. It had turned cold again, and they were glad to see a fire. Feeling sure that the doctor was there they rode up near the house and hailed. The doctor came to the door, and invited them to come in. Of course, Meeks and Grubbs did not know him, but the hunters did, and they at once introduced them to the doctor. He was a man of very pleasant manners and quite well dressed, his clothes being new and clean. He said that he had been away nearly all day and had just built a fire and would make some coffee at once. They were glad enough to get a chance to warm, and the man who had been mauled by the panther needed some attention. He showed his wounds to the doctor and told how he had received them. The doctor examined them and then prepared some kind of ointment, which he used in dressing them. He seemed to know exactly what to do and appeared to be very efficient.

Meeks and Grubbs found that the wagons had gone on, but Free Lewis and Tonie had been left with Mr. Rials' horse and told to come on when the hunters came back. They were out at the road and were very cold, as they had no fire. They had seen the doctor go to his house, but were afraid of him, as from what they had heard they thought he was very dangerous. When called they were glad of a chance to get to the fire. The doctor said he would like to keep them as he needed some boys like them. They quickly told him they could not stay, as they were needed at home. After the hunter's wounds were dressed, they all said they would be going; but the doctor said he would not be treated that way, and they must have coffee with him, and that he would make some punch. When he mentioned the punch everyone said that nothing would come in better as it was such a cold day. The doctor took a large bowl out of his cupboard and placed it on the table. Then he took what appeared to be about a pound of sugar and put in the bowl, then added two bottles of rum, two bottles of cognac, one bottle of brandy and a glass of whiskey. He stirred it all for several minutes and left it "to set", while they drank coffee. The coffee was good, too, and everybody drank from two to three cups. There was much talking. The doctor said it would take at least an hour for the punch to set, so they kept talking and drinking coffee. In about an hour, the doctor took several little "drinking gourds" out of the cupboard, and giving one to every man, told them to help themselves to the punch. Most of them said it was the first they had ever drank, but they all pronounced it fine. Free Lewis said it surely did "loosen up their tongues, and it seemed at times like everybody was talking at once. While they were drinking punch, Francis Grubbs asked the doctor about the gray wolf. The

hunters tried to stop him, but Grubbs kept talking and told the doctor about the hunt and how the gray wolf ran into his house, and how they hunted it and failed to find it, and about the panther, and what a hunt they had taken. When Grubbs had finished his account of the panther hunt the doctor said he knew nothing of the panther they had seen, but that there were a number of black panthers in the neighborhood. He said the "gray wolf" was his dog and that it was half wolf. The doctor's house had a dirt floor and he said the dog stayed in a large hole under his bed, when the weather was cold, and he was sure that it was there then. He said it was only about two years old and was not dangerous. He then gave a low whistle and the dog came bounding out from under the bed. It was a large, shaggy animal, larger than the average wolf, and its hair was a beautiful gray color. It seemed to be very kind in its nature and was really a beautiful animal. It lay down near the fire for a few minutes and then went back to its den in the ground.

They talked and drank punch for more than an hour. The doctor boiled some eggs and made some "flap jacks," got a jug of syrup out of the cupboard and they had a pleasant meal. Late in the afternoon they left. The doctor said he would not tell them, goodbye as he was going to Bill Johnnigin's that night to a "rooster fight", and would see them there as their wagons would about reach Johnnigin's place by night and the fight would be worth seeing. It surely was.

The wagons reached Bill Johnnigin's place about night and since Doctor Johnville had told about the rooster fight that was to take place there, they decided to camp and witness the fight. Bill Johnnigin was a blacksmith and wagon maker. He had a large shop on the north side of the road. It was built of logs and was about thirty feet square. The shop had a chimney and was a very comfortable place to work. Johnnigin did not work himself, as he weighed nearly four hundred pounds, but he owned several slaves and he also hired several white men to do most of his work. He was nearly always at his shop and had a large cot on which he slept a good deal of the time. He also sold whiskey, rum, brandy and ale. It was said that he was his own best customer. He also took great interest in horse racing, chicken fights, gander pullings and other rough sports of that time.

Meeks, Grubbs and Temple Tullos were very anxious to witness the chicken fights, as they all indulged in the sport themselves when at home. They went over to Johnnigin's shop a short time after they had camped for the night, got acquainted with Johnnigin, sampled some of his liquors and told him that they would be back for the fights after they had eaten supper.

Just about dark Doctor Johnville arrived. He came in a kind of gig (light, two-wheeled open carriage) and had two game roosters that he was willing to bet could whip anything there. Bill Johnnigin said he had a coop full that could whip the doctor's roosters any day.

By the time it was dark there were more than a dozen men there with roosters, which they were betting could whip anything that wore feathers. It was cold and Johnnigin said they would have the fights in the shop so everybody could be comfortable. The slaves brought in great armfuls of "fat" pine and the chimney roared with the heat of the big fires. They also brought in a large quantity of "fat" splinters for making torches, so that the shop was almost as light as day.

As Meeks, Grubbs and Tullos had no chickens, it was decided to ask them to serve as referees, which they agreed to do. Free Lewis and Tonie, the Indian boy, got a chance to see the fights by holding torches and they had a wonderful time that night. They were offered whiskey to drink, but Mr. Rials told them not to drink as they might be needed during the night.

The shop, of course, had a dirt floor and four posts were driven in the ground and ropes stretched around them so as to have a place for the fights, it being agreed that no one would go inside the ropes. By the time the first

flight started, the shop crowded with men, but they were mostly men of that neighborhood and seemed anxious to get acquainted with all the men in the camp. Everybody was offered a drink, and Free Lewis said he didn't think that any one refused a drink. The first fight didn't last long, as one of the roosters was soon knocked out, but the second fight was between a rooster that belonged to the doctor and one that belonged to Johnnigin. It was fast and furious. The betting was running high and it looked first like one and then like the other would have the better of it. Everybody was talking and all were taking sides with one or the other.

The roosters fought until they could scarcely stand, but still fought on until both seemed exhausted. Nearly everybody thought they were dead, but suddenly the doctor's rooster straightened up and crowed. Johnnigin's rooster was on him at once, but they were too weak to continue the fight. It was decided to call it a "draw", as the prize roosters belonging to Johnnigin and the doctor were to be the last to fight. There were a number of other roosters that fought and some of them fought well. Everybody was drinking and it seemed like everybody was betting. Some of them already had too much liquor and were getting quarrelsome. It was soon thought best to give the doctor's rooster and Johnnigin's rooster a chance to show what they could do. Johnnigin's rooster was a black game and a magnificent bird. The doctor's was also a black game. Its comb was but a red streak across its head. It had spurs that looked like steel. When they were put in the ring everybody crowded up, the torches were all trimmed, and Johnnigin had his cot brought up to the ropes where he could see the fight. He took another big drink, then the doctor took one and the fight started.

Johnnigin kept a large quantity of wagon material on the upper joists of his shop and just over the place where the chicken fight was going on, some wagon sheets had been stretched across the joists, and on the sheet were something like fifty straw brooms that Johnnigin's slaves had made to sell. They had been for the Christmas trade, and Johnnigin allowed the slaves to have the money they got for the brooms. About the time the last fight got well started, somebody holding one of the torches carelessly let the torch get to the brooms, and the fire at once spread through all of them. The whole top of the shop seemed to get on fire at once. Dr. Johnville and Johnnigin both reached for their chickens immediately. But just as they did some man jerked the wagon sheets off from the joists and the burning brooms came tumbling down over nearly everybody. While the doctor was trying to reach his rooster, the burning brooms set fire to his wig and he had to snatch it off, and Johnnigin reaching for his rooster, fell over the ropes and was too drunk to get up. The fire was all over him and four men rushed to his aid and threw him over on his cot. One of the slaves caught the rooster before it was burned to death and took it to Johnnigin's house. The doctor got out with his rooster, but was so drunk that he forgot his wig. He didn't notice it until some time later. The brooms were all thrown out and the fire all whipped out. But about that time it was noticed that Johnnigin's clothing was on fire, and somebody called for water; and a fellow standing near the door saw a pail that appeared to be full of water, and thinking it was water, threw it on Johnnigin. It was wet enough to quench the fire, but instead of it being water it was red dye that Johnnigin used in his Indian trade. The next thing anybody knew Johnnigin's wife ran in, and seeing Johnnigin all covered with the red dye, screamed at the top of her voice that somebody had murdered him, and for somebody to take him to his house. Without any further examination four strong men took him across the road to his house and put him to bed. He was apparently dead and the word at once spread that he had been murdered. Suspicion at once fell on Dr. Johnville. Several men asked where Dr. Johnville was, but nobody seemed to know. The man they had known as Dr. Johnville had apparently vanished, but there was a bald-headed man in the shop that nobody had noticed before. When somebody called Dr. Johnville, the bald-headed man said, "Here I am, what do you want?" But another man said "That is not Dr. Johnville, for this man is bald-headed, and Dr. Johnville has hair on his head." The doctor was very drunk, but he saw he would have to make some explanation, as there was such a commotion about the killing of Johnnigin, and he found that he was being charged with the murder. So he told Vinson Meeks, who was standing near him, that he always wore a wig and in some way it had been pulled off when the burning brooms fell on him. He asked Meeks to please find it for him if he could. Meeks and several other men began searching for the wig and soon found it where the chickens had been fighting. It was considerably singed and was about

half full of chicken feathers when they found it and handed it to the doctor who being drunk, as he was clapped it back on his head with the front part behind and a fringe of chicken feathers sticking out all around. The doctor didn't notice but immediately put on his hat. Then seeming to be more "as himself," he walked over to Johnnigin's house. Johnnigin's wife wanted to drive him off and accused him of it killing her husband, and saying "Just look at the blood on him. Mr. Rials and Vinson Meeks had gone over to see if Johnnigin was dead, and they told Johnnigin's wife to let the doctor examine him, but she would not allow that, but wanted the doctor arrested at once. She sent somebody for an officer to take charge of the doctor. Meeks and Rials and several others of the party saw that the doctor was in danger of being lynched, so they decided that they had better take some hand in the matter themselves before it was too late.

About that time two brothers of Johnnigin's wife came to the house and seemed to get into a terrible rage. They said they would kill Dr. Johnville at once, and were cursing and threatening all sorts of things. They acted like they were drinking and were armed. Dr. Johnville didn't appear to be afraid of them; but it didn't seem like anybody was taking his part in the affair, so Vinson Meeks told him to go down to the camp and that he would see that he got a square deal. The doctor went to the campfire and drank a cup of coffee and somebody called his attention to his wig. He took it off and arranged it and put it on again straight, after he had cleaned the feathers out of it. Most of the men had never seen a wig before, and one of them asked him if it was a scalp. Almost before the doctor got his wig arranged, the two brothers of Johnnigin's wife came blustering down to the camp, threatening to kill the doctor. But just as they reached the camp, a big red-faced man, who worked for Johnnigin, suddenly stepped up and knocked them both down and began kicking them, and after he had kicked them several times he took their guns away from them, and told them to leave there. They left and were seen no more that night. The red-faced man said his name was Sullivan and that he knew the brothers were nothing but a pair of cowards. He also said that Johnnigin was simply drunk and that he would be up in an hour. He then said there was a big jug of bumbo in the shop and if they would join him, he would go and get it. He said it was a fine drink. All agreed to join him and he went to the shop for the bumbo, but when he got there he found that the jug was empty. There was a good fire in the shop and he sent word to the men at the camp to come up to the shop, as he would have to make the bumbo. Free Lewis and Tonie were also told that they might go and see it made. When they got to the shop, Sullivan got a three-gallon jug and put a lot of brown sugar and some nutmeg in it. He then poured in about a gallon and half of rum, and then added some whiskey. He then took a long stick and stirred the mixture for several minutes and then filled the jug with water and stirred it again. Then after letting it set for fifteen or twenty minutes, he stirred it again. He then told everybody to come up and help themselves. Nobody hesitated. It seemed so good that Temple Tullos gave Free Lewis and Tonie a drink. They thought it was fine.

While they were all drinking and everybody was "feeling good" somebody knocked at the door, which had been fastened, and when it was opened Johnnigin walked in. He was still covered with what looked like blood, but he was ready for a drink of the bumbo. While he was drinking the bumbo, Sullivan looked at him carefully and then, without saying anything, went and looked at the pail of red dye. As he expected, he found it empty. Then it occurred to somebody that the dye was the stuff that had been thrown on Johnnigin when his clothing was on fire. There was a lot of laughing as well as talk, and then Johnnigin and the doctor shook hands, and drank some more bumbo. It was a great time. Free Lewis said that about that time his head "got to swimming," and he didn't know anything until morning and that hat when he woke up the oxen were all hitched to the wagons and everybody was ready to go. They expected to reach home in two more days, and probably they would if it had not been for something else that happened during the day.

The weather had turned warm and when the sun shone out it seemed almost as hot as summer. Everybody felt good and they had a good day and they estimated that they had gone at least twenty miles before night came on. They decided to camp in a grove of liveoaks that stood on the south side of the road, at the foot of a high hill.

There was a fine spring coming out of the hill and a pretty stream running off through the liveoak grove, where they watered the oxen. The hill was somewhat circular in shape so that the grove stood almost surrounded on the south and west sides by the hill and on both sides of the road was a heavy pine forest. There, was very little undergrowth in the liveoak grove and the tops of the trees were so thick that they shut off the light of the moon, which was just about full. The grove was a beautiful place to camp and the light from the camp fire reflected from the green leaves of the liveoaks made the place look almost like a fairyland, that is, Sam Butler said it did, so Free Lewis knew it must be so. Feeling like their long trip would soon be over, they talked longer than usual that night and drank "lots" of coffee, and whiskey, too, but nobody got drunk. It was probably about midnight before everybody was asleep, and Free Lewis remembered that he heard Francis Grubbs say just before he went to sleep, that he believed he heard thunder in the southwest. Free Lewis said it was about three o'clock that night when he heard Mr. Rials calling him and

Tonie and telling them to get up. Somebody had already started the fires and coffee had been made when they awoke. In the southwest was a terrific roar of thunder and the lightning was terrible. Every moment it was getting nearer. The oxen were frantic and many of the men were trying to keep them quiet. Nobody knew what to do and in fact there was nothing that could be done. It was not long before the storm struck the hill and the only thing that saved them was the hill itself and the liveoak trees. The tops of the trees from the hill fell on the tops of the oaks and many of them were bent until it looked like they would break with the weight of the timber falling on them, and some did break. But as by a miracle almost, nobody was killed, and very few were hurt. The oxen had been tied on the north side of the wagons when the storm was believed to be coming, and that saved them. Several wagons were badly damaged, but none of them broken down. After the storm passed the rain fell in torrents and for an hour or more it looked like they would have to move camp; but finally it ceased. By that time it was almost daylight and everybody was trying to find out what damage had been done, and what the chances would be for going on. While Mr. Rials, Free Lewis and Tonie were looking to see what damage, if any, had been done to Mr. Rial's wagons, Mrs. Pollard came to Mr. Rials and said she believed she heard a little baby crying somewhere off in the woods. Mr. Rials told everybody to be still and listen. They had almost decided that Mrs. Pollard was mistaken, when, sure enough, they heard the cry again. Several men at once started in the direction of the crying child, but again it stopped and in the tangled mass of timber they couldn't tell where it was they last heard it; but, they kept searching for nearly an hour. As it appeared to be useless to search further, they turned back. But just at that time Mrs. Pollard came up and said it would never do to give up and that she would find that baby if it took all day. Going again in the direction they had heard the last cry, somebody saw what looked like a piece of cloth in a tangle of muscadine vines. Mrs. Pollard at once said, "There it is, there it is." And sure enough it was the baby. They helped a man up on the vines and he finally reached the baby. At first they all thought it was dead, but Mrs. Pollard said, "No, no, it's not dead. The Lord has sent, me this baby In the place of my baby who died." They took it to the fire and warmed it and then gave it something to eat. It was a little girl and appeared to be about two years old. It was badly bruised, but not seriously hurt. The next thing to do was to find its people.

Note: Muscadine is a kind of sweet pear that attains a height of ten feet. Has large dull green, maple-like leaves, yellow flowers and pointed fruits. The seeds are oddly shaped and fantastically sculptured".

After the baby was found, they were quite sure that its parents had been killed or terribly injured. So a number of the men began to hunt for them, while others took axes and went west to see what the chances were of getting away. It was not long before one of them returned and stated that the road appeared to be blocked for at least a quarter of a mile, and that hundreds of trees were across the road. In the meantime a man had come from the east, and calling from the edge of the storm's path, said that he had come, to see, if he could be of any help. He didn't know that anybody had camped at the liveoak grove, and was surprised when he saw all the campers there; but he said he was glad to see them for he was sure that the man who lived on the hill above the spring

was in need of help. The man was riding a mule, but not being able to ride any nearer the camp he hitched his mule and came on to the camp. He said that a man named Powell had recently moved there from one of the eastern states and built a log house on the hill above the spring. The only members of the family were Powell, his wife and one small child. After looking at the baby they had found, he said he thought it was their child. It was decided to try and find Powell and his wife, before trying to cut a way through the fallen timber. They had not searched very long before they caught sight of the body of Powell's wife floating in the spring branch near the edge of the liveoak grove. She had doubtless been killed instantly by a falling tree, as her head was broken and otherwise badly mangled. It appeared that she must have been thrown into the water by the falling tree. To their surprise the body of Powell was found under the muscadine vines, where the baby was found, and from the fact that he still held a little baby's cloak in his arms, it was thought that he was holding the baby when he was blown away, and that his weight had carried him through the vines when he fell. The man who had come to them said the Powell had no relatives in that neighborhood and that he didn't know where he came from. He also said he would be glad if Mrs. Pollard would take the baby, as he didn't feel like he was able to take it. Mrs. Pollard said at once: "The Lord sent me this baby in the place of the one he took, so I'm going to keep it." Everybody was glad she did. Anthony Sutton said that Powell and his wife must be buried before they moved on. It so happened that Mr. Rials had bought several shovels in Mobile and he at once put the slaves to digging a grave. And Anthony Sullivan took some of the lumber he had bought in Mobile and he and some others made a large coffin. They dug the grave up on the hill where Powell had lived, and buried him and his wife there, in the same coffin. While standing on the hilltop, Vinson Meeks looked over the path of the storm and found that only a few trees obstructed the little road that ran north, and thought that by going north for a mile or more they could get out of the path of the storm and back to the road they wanted to travel. So taking several men with axes he went north along the little road, and sure enough found that only a few trees had fallen across it. They cut the logs as fast as possible and by noon had a way open for the wagons. When dinner was over the wagons were started north and kept going until they were out of the path of the storm, then they turned southwest through the open pine forest until they reached the road going west. The man with the mule went with them until they reached the road and he told them that he would advise others who might come that way. Before leaving the camp some of the men made a search for such things as they thought Powell might have had so that if anything was found it could be given to Mrs. Pollard. But they found nothing of any value except a woolen shawl. Powell had nothing in his pockets except a knife and a few coins. While they were at the grave a little dog came up and whined most piteously. It seemed to be asking somebody to take it, and Mrs. Pollard said she would. They didn't get far that day for the weather turned cold again and they camped early, thinking to get an early start the next day, but they had another surprise in store for them.

FREE LEWIS con't. and JARMAN BERRY

About daylight the next morning somebody called attention to a large fire west of where they were and apparently on the road they were traveling. Two or three men caught their horses and rode off to investigate the fire. One of them soon came back and reported that a dwelling, belonging to a man named Jordan, had been burned. Mr. Rials said for everybody to come on as soon as possible and try to give the man some assistance as his kitchen had also caught fire and his outhouses were in danger also. The oxen were soon hitched to the wagons and they moved on to the scene of the fire. It appeared that Jordan had left early to look after some traps he had out on the creek and that before leaving home, he had built a big fire, thinking the rest of the family would soon be up; but that they had overslept themselves and when they awoke the chimney and roof were on fire. Jordan had no neighbors nearer than three miles so no help could be expected.

Jordan's wife and two small boys managed to get out the small amount of furniture they had, and fortunately the kitchen was built about thirty yards from the building. By arrival of the men from the camp, it was saved. When the wagons reached Jordan's place it was too late for any further help in the way of putting out the fire, and some said they had as well drive on, and one or two wagons started, when Jarman Berry, who was a "big hearted"

man, said, Well, I don't feel like we would be doing right to go off and leave these poor people like this. Here are seven little children and winter is on; so I suggest that we just light in and built them a house and if everybody will lend a hand, we can built it before night. I have some lumber in my wagon and if everybody who has lumber will just give as much as one plank each, we will have enough for the floor and the doors". About that time somebody said "Hurrah for Jarman." It was decided to let Berry take charge; and he did, with a will.

Mr. Rials had bought some saws and spades in Mobile and they already had plenty of axes; so a number of men were put to work cutting straight, smooth pines for house logs, which were plentiful and near by. As they were cut down and into proper length, others split them in halves, and still others took spades and began to peel them. One man rode off to inform the nearest neighbor and get what help he could. He found the neighbor to be a jolly good fellow and he and his wife got a lot of things and put them in a small wagon and came right on to the Jordan place.

This neighbor, whose name was Jones, sent one of his boys to tell other neighbors of the burn and to tell them to come and help. A few hours before noon, a dozen or more people had arrived, all bringing something they thought would be needed. Jarman Berry told them what he had decided to do, and asked for all the help he could get. One fellow came, who said he was an expert in building dirt chimneys and he took charge of that part of the work. Others "got out" boards for covering the house, and it was going up rapidly when the noon hour arrived. Some of the men had helped Mrs. Pollard prepare something to eat, and two men had gone a short distance from the road and killed a deer and Jordan had come home bringing two beavers. A young woman, named Taylor, had taken charge of the preparations for dinner; so after all it was more like a picnic than anything else. Two men got a little too much whiskey and had to be "laid out" for a few hours, but that did not interfere with any of the work. By three o'clock in the afternoon the house was up and the roof had been put on and the chimney built. It was a good, wide chimney, too, and the chimney builder had made hogs on the sides for children to sit on. (not known what 'hogs' might be like). The next thing was the floor and the doors. So many planks were contributed that it was decided to build a small side room to the new dwelling. Some of the neighbors had also brought lumber, as well as saws and axes and other tools. Jones, the jolly neighbor, sometime about four o'clock, suggested that as it would take until about night to complete everything, the men with the wagons should strike camp again and they would send far and wide for everybody within ten miles or more to come over and have a dance in the new home.

Mr. Rials wanted to move on, but as nearly everybody insisted, they finally decided to stay for the dance. The dance was well attended. Free Lewis said that he noticed that Hiram Walker danced "a lot" with Miss Taylor, Hiram Walker was a widower and Free Lewis said he was not surprised when he heard a few months later that he and Miss Taylor were married.

FREE LEWIS AND FRANKLIN PLUMMER'S HORSE

The next morning about four o'clock, Mr. Rials called Free Lewis and Tonie and told them to start the campfires. While they were getting the fires made, they heard wild turkeys gobbling over beyond a high hill. As they had not had a chance to try their new guns they asked Mr. Rials to let them go and try their luck with the turkeys. Mr. Rials told them to be careful, as it was an unusual time for turkeys to be gobbling, and that it might be a decoy. Taking their guns and plenty of ammunition, they started in the direction of the turkeys. They first went west along the road until they were near the foot of the high bill. They walked very carefully so as to make no noise and after a steep climb reached the top of the hill. Just before reaching the top they dropped down on the ground and crawled to a point where they could look down on the other side. Then lying very still, they looked all about trying to locate the turkeys, At the foot of the hill beyond them, was a little hollow that seemed quite bare of trees except a little border of small pines that screened the most of the hollow from their view.

It was getting light enough for them to see for a considerable distance through the timber, but they saw no trace of the turkeys. Free Lewis started to say something to Tonie, but Tonie motioned him to keep still. Tonie then said "me see smoke." Lying perfectly still, they watched the smoke and found that it was rising from the little hollow, just beyond the small pines. Then to their surprise they heard a turkey gobble right down in the hollow. Free Lewis wanted to leave, but Tonie said "wait me see buffalo," but it turned out that the buffalo Tonie saw was a horse and that .it was being led by a large man wearing a heavy black beard. He wore a wide brimmed hat and had a blanket thrown over his shoulders. They were quite sure he was armed, but saw no guns.

He hitched the horse about thirty yards from the little hollow, then another man carried something to the horse for it to eat. Soon both men appeared to be busy around the fire in the hollow. Then they were surprised to hear the turkey gobbling again, where the men stood. Tonie then said "that no turkey, that a man." Just after that they saw another man coming to the little camp leading another horse. After that horse had been hitched and fed the turkey gobbled again, and then they saw a man coming from another direction leading a horse. This horse was also fed, and then there was more gobbling until five horses had been brought up and fed. By that time it was light enough for Free Lewis and Tonie to see all that was going on. There were five or six of the men and they appeared to be preparing something to eat and they could see them drinking very often from a bottle. Occasionally one of them looked towards Free Lewis and Tonie, but they were lying so still that they could scarcely be seen. All the men kept watching in all other directions and appeared to be getting restless. While they were eating Tonie said to Free Lewis, "me know that big man with the heavy whiskers and I know that horse. That's Mr. Franklin Plummer's horse, don't you know, the one he rode to court at the mill, and that man is the preacher that preached up above our house last summer." Free Lewis said that he knew Tonie was not mistaken. About that time they opened their saddlebags and they saw them getting out a lot of things and spreading them on the ground.

FREE LEWIS AND THE SADDLEBAGS

Tonie and Free Lewis were lying near the end of a large hollow log. Just about the time the men down in the little valley sat down close together, as if dividing something, Tonie touched Free Lewis and pointed towards the end of the log, at the same time raising his gun. An immense rattlesnake had crawled around the end of the log and was moving in their direction, its head erect and rattles buzzing. They had no time to move, but before it reached them, Tonie shot it. Almost immediately another large rattlesnake came out of the hollow log and Free Lewis shot it. They shot the snakes while lying on the ground, but at once got up and started to leave, but then noticed that the men in the Valley were running towards their horses in great haste. Seeing the men leaving they decided to wait and see what direction they would take, but to their surprise, saw that they all apparently went in different directions. Seeing no more snakes and the men being gone, they decided to go down to the foot of the hill to see what kind of a camp was there. When they got down to the camp they found nothing except a small fire and a few scraps of bread and meat, and had turned to go back up the hill, when Tonie said, "Me see some saddle pockets." Sure enough, they found that a pair of saddlebags had been left not far from the camp. They were afraid to take the saddlebags, but looked inside and found a Bible, a hymnbook and a bottle of whiskey, also a few dirty clothes. There were some names in the Bible, but as neither of them could read, they couldn't tell what the names were.

By that time, the sun was up and they hurried back to the camp. Before they reached the camp they met the wagons already on the road. Mr. Rials gave them something to eat and they told him of what they had seen, and that they thought one of the men was the preacher that held a meeting that summer at the bush arbor, up on the hill east of the mill and that they were sure he was riding the same horse that Mr. Franklin Plummer rode to court at the mill when they tried Enoch Perrett for shooting Berry Powell. Mr. Rials said they were probably mistaken, but to satisfy himself, he took three other men and went with Free Lewis and Tonie to the camp where

the saddlebags were left. On making an examination of the books in the saddlebags, they found the name in Bible of the preacher, just as he boys had thought.

They took the saddlebags to the wagons and Mr. Rials said that if the preacher ever came back to the mill, he would return them to him. Mr. Rials was in the front of the wagon that day and Free Lewis and Tonie rode with him, and of course had a great deal to say about their hunting trip and the snakes and the men in the valley. Mr. Rials said it was doubtless a band of robbers and that they had been stealing horses. They were driving through a very hilly country and before they had gone more than a mile, and as Mr. Rials' wagon was reaching the top of a high hill, they saw a man coming up the hill on the other side, riding a large black horse. Tonie was the first to see him and he at once said, "Me see man and horse, be quick," but nobody was quick enough, for the man at once turned away from the road and rode at full speed through the woods. Several of the men saw him and all were sure that he was the preacher. He was a big fellow, with a heavy black beard and was wearing broad brimmed hat, and dark clothes. Vinson Meeks fired his gun and called to him to halt, but that only seemed to increase his speed. Francis Grubbs was quite sure that he was riding Franklin Plummer's horse. Some of the men wanted to follow him, but Mr. Rials insisted that they move on. Vinson Meeks said he would like to capture him and if as many as three others would go with him he would try it.

FREE LEWIS AND GEORGE PORTER

Vinson Meeks was very anxious to follow the preacher and capture him and the horse, but most of the men said they wanted to get home, and besides it was beginning to rain and was growing colder. So the order was given to move on; but before they had gone many miles they met Joe Plummer, William Gibson, Sheriff Dan Farrington and two or three other men from Westville, who stated they were on the trail of some thieves who had stolen several horses and robbed a store at Westville two nights before. They felt quite sure that they were on the right trail. Vinson Meeks and Mr. Rials told them of what had occurred and gave them directions, to the camp where the robbers were when Tonie and Free Lewis found them. By that time it was beginning to snow, and although the sheriff asked several of the men to join him, they decided to keep going. They drove as fast as possible and had gone probably twenty miles or more when night came on. They camped in a grove of large pines and made fires of dry logs to keep warm through the night. It was still snowing, but the big pines kept most of the snow from falling on them, so they stood around the fires eating and drinking coffee, and telling yams until late in the night. Some of the men spread blankets on the ground by the fires and slept awhile; but finally everybody decided it was best to sleep in the wagons. Everybody had gone to sleep except Vinson Meeks and Temple Tullos when they were all surprised by hearing a man call Mr. Rials. As everybody had heard a call, they were at once out of the wagons and back to the fires. Nothing further was heard for sometime, and then there was another call for Mr. Rials to come quick, for he was dying. Several men went at once in the direction of the man calling and soon found him lying on the ground and apparently in great pain. He had fallen off his horse, but the horse was still standing by him, as he held the bridle reins in his hand. Several men took him and carried him to the fire, and somebody else brought the horse. It was found that the man had been shot and was suffering terribly. He was shot through the body and everybody was wondering how he had been able to get to the camp. When laid by the fire, he became unconscious, and it was more than an hour before he revived enough to speak. He then said that some men had followed him through the woods while he was lost. He said he started home, but took a short cut across an open pine country, as it was snowing and was much nearer home that way. He was asked how he knew Mr. Rials was in the camp, and he said that the night before he had 'passed by the camp and recognized Mr. Rials and several other men, but didn't stop, as he had to meet some other men at a camp and he was already late. They bathed his wounds with warm water and gave him such attention as they could, and kept him warm. He became unconscious again and everybody was afraid he would not revive, but finally he did and seemed a little better. Mr. Rials asked him his name and he said he was George Porter, and that he was a preacher, and that he knew Mr. Rials, because he had preached at Mr. Rials' mill the summer before. Mr. Rials then brought the Bible that was found in the saddlebags and asked him if it was his; and after

looking at it he said it was. They then asked him where he got the horse he was riding and he said he bought it in Paulding. He said it was the best mare he had ever owned. Then somebody said that Franklin Plummer's horse was not a mare. Vinson Meeks said, "Well, I'll be damned" . They took the best care they could of the wounded man, and while he was still conscious they got him to give directions to his home.

FREE LEWIS AND THE BURIED GOLD

As the wounded man appeared to be growing weaker all the time, Mr. Rials said he thought it best to keep him near the fire. So he had two short logs cut and brought up close to the fire, and then had some planks laid across the logs so as to make a small platform. Blankets were then spread on the planks and the preacher was wrapped 'up in other blankets and placed on the planks. To keep off the snow, a small frame was made and placed over him and some covering was spread over it. By that time it was nearly midnight and everybody was tired and needed sleep. Mrs. Pollard had gotten up and had assisted in dressing the preacher's wounds, and she said she would stay up and that she and Free Lewis would look after him. The preacher had either become unconscious, or gone to sleep, and it was probably about three o'clock in the morning when he aroused again and called foil Mr. Rials. He seemed to be in-great pain and was bleeding again. When Mr. Rials came, the preacher took him by the hand and said, "I am so glad that you are here. I must tell you something before I die, for I am going to die. But first, please pray for me and ask 'the Lord to forgive me for my sins. Mr. Rials said he was not a praying man and asked Mrs. Pollard to pray for him, and she kneeled down in the snow and prayed for him; just a short prayer. Then he said to Mr. Rials, "Set down by me, I must tell you something, for I can't die this way. I am not a preacher and I ain't never been. I pretended to be a preacher, and when I held my meetings my partners stole horses and slaves and robbed houses. My mare was stolen by one of my partners, but I don't know who from. I want this lady to take the horse as a gift, she has been so good to me. It was my partners who shot me, as they thought I had a lot of money, but I buried it close to Westville by a cedar tree at the fork of the road. I don't know just how far from Westville, but not far. If you can find it I wish you would take it. While I was holding the meeting at your mill last summer I buried some gold under a chimney hearth at a house somewhere down towards Westville. I don't know who owned the house, they were away from home. I dug up some of the hearth and then dug a hole and put the money in it and then filled it up again and drug the ashes back over the hearth. I can't tell you how to find it, but I could go to it if I was well. Before we got through what we had yesterday, we heard a shot and we ran to out horses and tried to get away from them, for I felt like they were going to take what I had; but I didn't have much, and I am going to give you that and ask that you see that I am decently put away. My name is not Porter, and I wouldn't have my poor mother know this for all the world. She lives in Alabama. Oh, how I wish I could see her again. May the Lord have mercy on her poor soul, is my prayer."

Just after he had told Mr. Rials what he did, he fell asleep. At first he appeared to be suffering a great deal, but gradually his face took on a look of peace until he looked as innocent as a child. He never woke again, and about the break of day he died. Mr. Rials at once had some men to make a coffin and when it was finished, the dead man was wrapped in heavy blankets and placed in it. Somebody in the crowd said there was a little graveyard a few miles ahead, so Mr. Rials had the body taken there. They got permission from a settler to bury him there and it was not long before a grave was dug and the man buried. Mr. Rials was a good man.

FREE LEWIS AND THE BURIED MONEY

They camped that night at a little creek not far from the Simpson county line. On account of the snow everybody had to sleep in the wagons; but large fires were built, and as it would be their last night on the road, they sat up late drinking coffee and talking of the events of the trip. Among other things Free Lewis remembered that a great deal was said about the money the "preacher" had told about burying near the mill at the forks of the road near Westville, and there a lot of "guessing" about the location of the money buried and about how much there was, because nothing had been said about the amount. Free Lewis said that if any money was ever found, he never heard of it. But there were many reports about money having been found, and that out southeast of

Westville at the old Belk place, a large number of cedars were dug up, but that the digging was always at night and nobody knew whether anything was found or not; and he heard that trees were dug up at every fork of the road for several miles around Westville. He also said that so many chimney hearths were dug up around in the neighborhood of Mr. Rials' Mill that for several years people were afraid to all leave home at once for fear that the hearth would be dug up before they got back. He never heard positively that any money was ever found; but after he was a grown man, he heard many reports about the buried money and that it was even reported that the "preacher" had several thousand dollars buried. Some said as much as fifty thousand, but he knew better, for he had heard all the man said about the buried money, and he never said anything about the amount. Mr. Rials said he didn't think there could have been very much. The next morning they started early and reached the Simpson county line about ten o'clock, and soon after that the men began to separate, as they took to the various roads to their homes. Nearly every man, as his wagon would drop out of line, would take a jug of liquor out of his wagon and offer everyone a drink. Free Lewis said that "hardly anybody ever refused." But he didn't see anybody drunk. Late in the afternoon Mr. Rials reached home. A big crowd was at the mill and all were glad to see them, and they were "mighty glad" to get back. It had been a great event with Free Lewis and Tonie. Free Lewis said he couldn't remember the names of all the men who went on the trip, but did remember besides Mr. Rials, Vinson Meeks, Francis Grubbs, Temple Tullos, Samuel Butler, Hiram Walker, Anthony Sutton, Jarman Berry, John Vincent, William Slaughter, Travers Sanders, E. Brilland, Howell Sumrall, Arthur Mangum, Joah Mitchell, Allan Sorrels, William Drummons, Reuben Beasley, Francis Womack, Jesse Williamson, Richard Nall and Frank O'Neal. Mr. Rials took care of Mr. Pollard and his family for a few days and then let them live in a house near the mill until they had built a small house on the land they entered, just south of where Mr. M. Q. Holbrooks now lives. The little girl Mrs. Pollard rescued from the storm, when a grown woman, married a young man named Brown, and not many years thereafter moved to Texas. Nobody ever claimed the black mare the "preacher" had given Mrs. Pollard, and she kept it the balance of its life.

Sheriff and the men with him recovered Franklin Plummer's horse and captured two men, but he didn't know what was done with them.

FREE LEWIS AND THE "DESOTO PIGS"

Sometime in the early spring, after the trip to Mobile, Tonie was out hunting. He carried his new gun and always preferred to hunt by himself, although he would not object when other boys offered to go with him. On this trip he had killed no game, but had caught a fawn and brought it home. He also told Free Lewis that he had found three little DeSoto pigs in a pine thicket out towards the pigeon roost, and that he wanted to go back the next morning and catch them. The Indians called the wild hogs, living in the woods, "DeSoto Hogs," because they believed the breed was brought to this country by DeSoto. On May 30th, 1539, Hernando De Soto landed on the west coast of Florida with six hundred men and started on his expedition across what is now known as the Southern States. He crossed the present states of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana and a part of Texas. In order to insure his men from starvation he brought more than one thousand hogs from Spain. On the long voyage from Spain, which took several months in the sail ships of that day, the hogs became very gentle, and De Soto had no trouble in having them driven along with the expedition. But of course, on a long journey like that, many of them were lost in the woods, and in the various battles with the Indians many were killed or driven away; so that in the course of a few years the DeSoto hogs were found all along the route he had traveled on his trip of three years. When De Soto died on the banks of the Mississippi River on May 21st, 1542, he still had more than seven hundred hogs. After his death when the Spaniards returned to Spain, the hogs were left along the banks of the Mississippi.

On the course of nearly three hundred years they became very numerous and very wild. The Indians never killed them for food, as they much preferred venison or buffalo meat. The early settlers in the county found the wild hogs here and gave them the name of "razor-backs," a name by which they are still known; but the Indians had

always known them as De Soto's hogs. Like most wild animals, they were easily tamed, and when Tonie found the pigs, he was very anxious to catch as many of them as he could and tame them. Tony said the sow would leave them early in the morning and that by slipping along to where they could see her leaving, they would have no trouble in catching the pigs. They took some sacks to carry them in and also took their guns. When they reached the pine thicket, they moved very cautiously until they got in sight of the straw bed in which the sow left them. Tonie whispered to Free Lewis to stop while he crept close enough to see if the sow was gone. He soon saw that the pigs were all scattered about the bed and that the sow was in a great rage and that something had gone wrong with her. He motioned to Free Lewis to come on to where Tonie was lying, he stopped and they both lay very still, trying to discover what was disturbing the sow. Finally Tonie pointed to what appeared to be some large animal lying near a large log. It first appeared to be very still, but on looking closer, they found that it was eating something. Tonie said to Free Lewis, "You shoot um." Free Lewis took careful aim and when he shot the animal it gave a great leap and sprang towards them. Free Lewis feared it would reach them before Tonie shot it; but just as it got in full view, Tonie shot it. They then found that it was a large panther. They left the pigs and dragged the panther home. Its hide was used for many years as a rug for Tonie's wigwam. The next day they went back for the pigs, but found no trace of them or the sow.



To those who knew him not, no words can paint,
And those who knew him, know all words are faint. Elias Boudinot

Note: Further research is noted only for the reader's comparison. Another instance of historians different versions as we refer, to the 1946 Encyclopedia Americana. Vol. 26, p. 138.

The source of the hog is shrouded in mystery although the true swine, the wild boar was probably developed in the Asiatic continent. Fossil remains have been found in Europe and India but not on the North American continent.

The Peccaries found in Mexico and other southern countries are not to be confused with the true domesticated hog that is of such great commercial value today.

Vol. 21 p 461. The Peccary is of American origin and is a small pig-like animal closely allied to the true swine. The canine teeth do not protrude; the bristles are much thicker and very long on the throat, head and nape of the neck. Besides a more complex stomach, the Peccaries possess a small gland situated on the rump, which secretes an offensive smelling fatty substance The Indians cut away this pouch immediately on killing a Peccary to prevent its contaminating the flesh.

A STORY OF RETRIBUTION

Robert Magee, one of the largest slave owners of Simpson County was kind to his slave, but he had a neighbor who also owned slaves. He was cruel and furnished them with as little to eat and wear as was possible.

Robert Magee always planted large fields of rice, and nearly every year after the rice was cured and threshed out there would be a little house on his farm nearly full of loose rice.

His slaves, knowing the destitution of the slaves on the adjoining farm from year to year would bore holes in the floor of the rice house and collect sacks of rice, which they carried to the slaves on the adjoining farm. Of course Robert Magee knew nothing of that; in fact, it was never told until after the Civil War.

One cold day in the early spring, Robert Magee's wife, Peggy, was riding by one of the fields of their neighbor and observed one of his slaves plowing on the fields. She noticed that he was coming to the fence by the side of the road, and waited until he reached the fence. The only garment he wore was a long, loose shirt. He was barefooted and bareheaded. She knew him well, and when he reached the fence she asked him why he didn't put on more clothes, because it was bitterly cold. He told her that he didn't have anymore clothes; then he turned half around and lifting his shirt up to his face, began crying. She said no more, and rode on. The poor slave went on with his plowing. There was nothing Peggy could do about it, but she had great sorrow for that poor slave.

He had been born and reared on that farm. He belonged to another man. He could not free himself. He knew that if he ran away he would be chased and torn by dogs, and then severely whipped. He had seen that done too often. His case was as hopeless as that of the mule he plowed or the ox that he drove.

That was about 1855. Ten years later that slave was set free. He didn't know what it meant, but he was free. He got away from that farm and found work at a watermill where cotton was ginned and wheat and corn were ground.

A few years after he had secured this work, the owner of the mill left it almost entirely under his control. One day, this same former master, then old, broken and penniless, came to that mill and asked that same slave to credit him for a pack of meal. The man who had been a slave, and who had suffered so cruelly under this man who had been his master, and knowing that he would never be repaid, gave him a bushel of meal.

I know of no case of retribution that equals this.

JOHN HARRIET

In January 1834, John Harriet settled on the south side of Strong River near the present Bridgeport bridge. He built a small log cabin and cleared a few acres of land to plant corn, but spent most of his time hunting and trapping. Game was plentiful, and beaver and otter skins brought a fair price. Harriet was a very successful person in trapping and preparing the furs for market. He kept several dogs and usually carried the oldest dogs with him when visiting the traps. The young dogs were left at home.

One day in the spring when trapping season was about over, Harriet took his best furs to Ocoola to sell, or trade. He told his wife and two boys that he would be away all day. The boys were twins and about nine years old, and he promised to bring them some new clothes provided they took care of everything all right. Harriet had two horses and he rode one of them on his trip to Ocoola. Soon after Harriet left home, a neighbor who lived about three miles away sent a boy to ask Mrs. Harriet to come immediately as his wife was dreadfully sick. She at once had the other horse caught and saddled and leaving the two boys to take care of the house, set out for the home of the sick woman.

When she left home, she didn't notice the young dogs had followed her until she was more than a mile away. The old dogs had gone with Harriet. She thought nothing of the matter, as she expected to return soon, but finding the woman in great pain and suffering she remained much longer than she expected so that it was late in the afternoon when she set out for home. The young dogs were with her, and as usual were running rabbits and other small game along the way. When she got in sight of the house she saw a large bear was clawing at the door trying to get inside.

She knew bears when she saw them, but couldn't understand why it was trying to get into the house. She at once set the dog on the bear, but she made short work of them, sending them sprawling as they came up. In a few moments the dogs were completely outdone. She called the boys, but got no answer, and she was afraid they had

been killed. She thought it fortunate that she was still on her horse, but she couldn't afford to go away and leave her boys to the bear. She kept calling and wondering what to do, and hoping Harriet would come, but the matter was soon settled by the bear as with an extra effort it jerked the door shutter down and rushed in the house. Mrs. Harriet almost fell off her horse with fright, and when she saw the bear coming out, she screamed at the top of her voice for she saw that the bear had something in its mouth that she took to be one of her boys. As the bear started into the woods, she saw, that the bear had a cub and a piece of quilt in its mouth.

When the bear was out of sight she jumped off her horse and ran in the house, and found that her boys were safe and had not been hurt. She then found that the boys had been in the woods and found the cub in a big sinkhole and had brought it home. When they heard the bear at the door they got in the bed with the cub and pulled a quilt over them to keep the bear from getting them. Harriet returned home and went in pursuit of the old bear but It was too late then.

LISH MAY and RANSON WILLIAMSON

A great many people enjoy practical jokes and find them a source of much merriment, regardless of how much they may humiliate the innocent victim. one of the oldest and most persistent of the jokes is the snipe hunting joke. It was largely indulged by young men of the South before the Civil War, when visited by their cousins from the north. And later by college boys in the various colleges of the country.

The plan of the snipe hunt is very simple. Several boys or young men find some one who knows nothing of snipes and proposes a snipe hunt. If they succeed in getting their victim to go, they secure a large sack, usually a "gunny sack" and a barrel hoop and go to some place they have selected near a ditch. When they reach the ditch the hoop is fastened in the mouth of the sack and the boy who is to catch the snipes gets in the ditch at some narrow place and presses the hoop down between the walls of the ditch until it reaches the bottom. When the others have gotten him placed, they tell him to stand and hold the sack while they drive the snipe down the ditch, where they can catch them. They tell him they may be gone for several hours before they can round up the snipes and drive them to the ditch. They then go home or elsewhere and leave him to get back the best he can.

My good friend, Lish May, was once a victim of one of those snipe hunting jokes. Usually country boys know the nature and habits of snipes, but as Lish didn't live near a marsh or big pond he probably knew nothing about them. He only knew that there was a bird known as a snipe. Then, too, he was only about 12 years old, and so never thought of a joke being pulled on him.

Late one Saturday afternoon he had gone over to his uncle Robin Williamson's to spend the night with his cousin, Ranson Williamson. Some neighbor, boys had come in after supper, and it was suggested that they go snipe hunting. They asked Lish if he had ever gone snipe hunting and he told them he had not. They told him it was great fun and that he could catch a sack full of snipes in "no time". He agreed to go and they soon procured a big gunnysack and a barrel hoop, and then they set out for a long ditch on a hillside. When they reached the ditch, they fixed the hoop in the mouth of the sack and told Lish to get down in the ditch and hold the sack with the mouth pointing towards the head of the ditch. Then they left and went to the house of one of the neighbors. He was getting cold as it was late in the fall and he was getting lonesome for he heard owls hooting in the swamp.

Soon he saw a little spotted dog further up the ditch, and saw it was slowly coming towards him. Then in a few minutes he noticed a slight rustling in the ditch, like birds approaching. So, pressing the sack down on the bottom of the ditch he waited and soon saw they were birds and they were going into the sack. When all had gone in he closed the sack and got out of the ditch.

He reached his uncle's house, just as he was getting up, and left the sack on the front porch. His uncle asked him where he had been and he told him he had been snipe hunting. His uncle was astounded and told him that those boys had made a joke out of him. His uncle said, "You say you caught the snipes?" Lish said, "Yes sir," "Well bring them in here." He brought the sack and his uncle saw there was something in the sack. Reaching in the sack, he brought out a partridge. He kept taking them out until he had taken out nineteen.

The family all got up in about an hour and they had a grand breakfast of fine partridge. When Ranson came home the joke was on him.

"DOON" HUTSON"

It seems that in all ages of the world, people have believed in the power of snakes to "charm" their prey. Whether true or false, I am not able to say, but from the statements of many people I have known, it appears that in some instances they can. I think of Mr. "Doon" Hutson, who once told me of an incident that came to his knowledge when he was a small boy.

At that time most people had no wells and depended on springs for water. The wash place was also here and once a week, the family wash would be taken to the spring to be washed. On the occasion mentioned, a woman with her three little girls had gone to the spring to do the wash. Two of the girls were ten or eleven years old, but the third one was less than three. There was a large log lying on the ground just west of the spring, and for years the children had played on the log while the washing was being done.

About nine o'clock one of the other girls noticed the little girl on the log dancing and waving her arms while she made some kind of noise. She called to her mother to look at the little girl dancing, but just as she did, the other girl said, "Oh, Mama, Mama, look at that snake." When their mother looked, the little girl was still dancing and cooing and slowly advancing toward the snake. Her mother called to her but she paid no attention to that. There was a pot of boiling water on the fire. The mother grabbed a bucket and filled it with boiling water, and ran as fast as possible toward the log. The snake was an immense rattlesnake and was lying at full length on the log, its head toward the child.

Excited as she was, she managed to throw the full bucket of water on the snake. The snake immediately rolled off the log and they kept throwing boiling water on it until it was killed.

When the little girl was taken off the log, she fainted and her body became perfectly limp. When she recovered from the fainting spell she said "where my purty?" They believed she was all right, but soon after she was taken with a convulsion, something she had never had before. They carried her to the house and one of the girls went to the field for her father.

Soon after he reached the house, she recovered and again asked for her "purty". They thought she was doing fine, but almost an hour later she was seized with another convulsion and her father asked a neighbor to go to Westville to get a doctor. He went as hurriedly as possible and the doctor came at once, but when he reached the home, the little girl was dead.

THE STORY OF A HAUNTED HOUSE

Anyone traveling the old Brandon and Bunker Hill road 60 or 70 years ago would no doubt have noticed a quaint two-story house on the first hill east of Dry Creek. It was supposed to have been built by Dr. Youngblood about 1850, and he lived there several years thereafter.

About 1856 or 1857, a very peculiar disease broke out in that part of the county and caused many deaths, especially among the slaves. It was probably a malignant type of influenza. Some white people and a number of

slaves died after taking it, and the slaveholders were greatly alarmed. No doctor was found who seemed able to treat it properly.

Dr. Youngblood had only a small practice, and had not treated any of the cases, but he fell on a plan that he thought would succeed. Hearing that Jack Hayes, a strong, able-bodied slave, belonging to William Hays, had died, he engaged the services of two neighbors and right after Jack was buried went to the little graveyard where he was buried, some four or five miles northwest of where Dr. Youngblood lived and by moonlight one night dug up Jack's body. Youngblood wanted the body taken to his house, but the two men refused to let the body be taken on their horses, and it was placed on Youngblood's horse behind his saddle and carried to Youngblood's home.

They were all drinking heavily, but managed to take the body into the yard and lay it on a bench. The next morning the two men returned and the body was taken into the upper story of Youngblood's house, and placed on a table.

They took an old cotton basket with them and a handsaw and axe. After stripping off the clothes Jack wore and throwing it into the basket, they proceeded to hack the body to pieces with the saw and axe. As the body was dismembered, the parts were thrown into the basket.

When that was done, they carried the basket down stairs and out to an old barn on Youngblood's place. The basket was placed about the middle of the barn and it was set on fire. The barn, burned down and destroyed all of Jack's body except a few bones.

Dr. Youngblood owned a few slaves himself, and of course they knew what had been done with Jack's body, but Youngblood warned them that they would be severely beaten if they mentioned the matter to any other slaves.

He then had his two neighbors to give it out that Youngblood had dissected the body of Jack Hayes and discovered the cause of the disease, and that he knew how to treat it. This report spread rapidly and many people who had never been treated by Youngblood before sent for him when they become sick. Strange to say, he was very successful of his treatment of the disease. The only remedy he used was a cordial composed of sassafras too, rock candy and whiskey. He gave large doses and advised his patients to drink freely. Whether he cured anybody or not could not be known, but the epidemic soon passed and the disease died out.

Youngblood was highly elated with his success, but he had no idea of what was to follow.

Doctor Youngblood soon had cause to regret that he had disturbed the body of Jack Hays. He said afterwards that he was drunk at the time and he certainly must have been under the influence of liquor when he removed Jack's body. Of course after carrying the body to his house, he had to dispose of it and to chop it up and burn it to carry out his scheme.

It was soon reported that the ghost of Jack Hays had been seen by some possum hunters as he stood at his grove looking for his body; then others reported having seen it at the house of Dr. Youngblood. Then a patrolman reported meeting a block man on Dry Creek bridge that looked like Jack Hays, but that when he asked for his passport he disappeared, and his dogs either would not or could not trail him.

A little later a report was made that possibly it was the body of a young white woman who had mysteriously disappeared that had been chopped to pieces and burned instead of the body of Jack Hays; also another report was that it might have been the body of an Irish peddler who was last seen near the house of Dr. Youngblood.

With all reports getting out, Dr. Youngblood soon found that he had no practice. He could not know at that time that the young white woman would return in the next years, as she had simply ran away and married a traitor; nor could he know that the peddler would return the following year.

He sold his place and moved down on Pearl River probably into Lawrence County.

JACK AND JIM MALONEY

Two Irishmen, named Jack and Jim Maloney, came to Simpson County about 1838 They were ditchers and secured a great many jobs of ditching in the southeastern part of the county. They were large, strong men and very efficient in digging ditches. Both drank a good deal of liquor and Jim often got drunk. He was deaf and dumb, and when on a drunk was hard to control.

Jack looked after him and was about the only person who could manage him when on one of his sprees. One winter they contracted with Joseph Carr to cut a long ditch for him. The ditch was not very far from the home of a man named Smith, who lived on the Westville road. Smith had a well near his front gate, and people in passing often stopped there for water.

The well curb only came about two feet above the ground, though the windlass was of the usual height. Many people had advised Smith to build the curbing higher, but he had neglected to do so. Late one Saturday afternoon, Jim Maloney began drinking and by sundown was getting pretty drunk. Jack was also drinking and paid no attention to Jim, who later in the night, wandered off.

Sometime in the night he reached Smith's place and decided to get a drink of water, as he was getting very thirsty. He knew where the well was located, as he had often stopped there for water. Being drunk as he was, he blundered over the low curbing and fell in the well. Fortunately the well was only about thirty feet deep, and the water only about three feet deep.

Jim was not badly hurt and soon realized his situation. He could make no noise, so had to wait until someone came to draw water in the early morning. He waited and waited until he was quite cold and very sober. He tried to dig into the sides of the curbing but could not break through the thick planking. Finally daylight came, and then about sun up some one came for water.

The well bucket was let down and Jim grabbed it. When he started up, he found that it was not going. Smith's boy was trying to draw the water and he couldn't pull up the weight of Jim. He got frightened and ran to the house and told his father that there was a bear in the well and that he couldn't pull it up.

Another boy then said, "Oh, I'll kill it," and ran for his gun. Smith had not paid much attention until he heard the gun. The boy had gone to the well and fired into it. Luckily his gun was a rifle and the ball struck the 'curbing just above Jim's head. When Smith heard the gun, he ran to the well and told the boy to carry the gun back to the house. He then let the bucket down again and when he tried to pull it up, found that there was a heavy weight on it. He was astonished, but felt sure that it could not be an animal. He called to see if any one would answer but there was no answer. He was getting nervous himself, and decided to wait until he could send for somebody. He had started his boys down to Carr's place to ask for help, when he saw Jack Maloney coming. He waited until Jack reached his house and then explained the strange happening to him.

Jack went to the well and looked down. He said that he saw something that looked to him like a man. He then said, "who is down in the well," but got no reply. Then the thought struck him that Jim was probably in the well. A strong well rope was obtained, and a heavy stick tied to the end to be lowered, and it was let down. When it was drawn up Jim was holding to the stick.

He was very weak and cold, but a good drink of whiskey revived him. He said that would be his last drink, and it probably was as he, was never known to get drunk again.

THE STORY OF A WOMAN AND AN INDIAN

Brewer H. Jayne and his brother, Anslen H. Jayne, built the first sawmill in the county. It was built on Strong River, near the present town of D'Lo, in 1834, under the direction of L. B. Gibson. In addition to the sawmill, they also ground corn and wheat and cleaned rice.

Anslen H. Jayne lived on the north side of the river and Brewer Jayne lived on the south side. The river could only be crossed by a ford, so most of their wagons and teams were kept on the north side of the river, as their principal markets for lumber were Jackson and Brandon.

Early one morning in the fall of 1835, they left early with loads of lumber to be delivered in Brandon. They reached Brandon about noon and as soon as their wagons were unloaded started home. Brewster Jayne lived in a large log house built in the usual style of that period, with wooden shutters and a little window was closed by a sliding shutter as it was intended that a scaffold would be placed on the outside for firewood, but the platform had not been erected.

Brewster Jayne's wife was a very spirited woman and on account of the many dangerous animals in the country she had learned to shoot a gun. On the day the Jayne brothers had gone to Brandon she had the children to feed the cattle and eat supper before dark as she knew it would be late in the night when Jayne returned.

The children had eaten supper and were sitting around the fire, while Jayne's wife was operating a spinning wheel near the middle of the room. She had been busy spinning for more than an hour, when one of the children ran to her very much frightened, and pointed to the little window by the side of the chimney. She looked at once and saw the face of an Indian through the little window. His face was streaked with stripes of red paint and his scalp lock was tied with a red string. He looked very dangerous and she very much frightened herself, as she had never known an Indian to do such as this before.

She asked him what he wanted but he made no reply. She then told him to go away, and he answered, "Me not going." She then said, "if you don't go away I will shoot you." He then said, "Woman no shoot gun," and started climbing through the window.

She had moved up close to the wall where the gun was hanging in a rack and when the Indian started climbing through the window she shot him. He fell backwards and she didn't know if he was killed or not. She closed the window and they all kept very quiet until her husband come home about two hours later.

When he come home she told him about shooting the Indian. He called one of the wagon drivers, and they took a torch and went around to where the Indian was supposed to be. When they discovered him they thought he was dead, but an examination found the top of his forehead had split the skin clear across the top of his head. He was stunned but seemed to be recovering. They laid him on the porch, but the next morning he was gone. Some

Six Town Indians come to the mill the next morning and said that the Indian that was shot was a Copiah Indian, and that he had lost his mind. He was not heard of any more.

The date of Anselm H. Jayne's entry being Aug. 17, 1832, and the date of Brewster If. Jayne's being Dec. 31, 1833. They made further entries in 1837 and 1838.

In 1835 they began the erection of a water mill on Strong River at what is now called "the rocks." The frame work of the mill was made of very heavy 'timbers, all hewn and fitted into grooves in the rocks. Some of the grooves can still be seen.

The dam was also built of very strong, heavy timber. So as to withstand the floods on the river and the whole structure was of heavy timbers and very strong. They operated both a grist mill and a saw mill. The top runner of the grist mill weighed 5,000 pounds and brought from Covington, La, by ox teams.

A STORY OF TWO BABIES

In the fall of 1854 Bainbridge Anderson and his wife, Mary, moved from Georgia to Simpson County. He bought an improved farm on the Brandon and Williamsburg Road a few miles north of the Covington County line. The dwelling was a large house and stood on the west side of the road and the barn, sheds and outhouses were on the east side of the road just opposite the dwelling.

Anderson owned a few slaves but didn't do much farming because his principal business was raising cattle and sheep. He usually had more than a thousand sheep and spent most of his time looking after them. Every year he sold a large number of cattle and a large quantity of wool. With plenty to do, life was interesting enough for him, but was very hard and lonely for his wife.

They had no children and both were members of the Episcopal Church, but in some way the report had gone out that they were Catholics, and no one would visit them; so the only company Mrs. Anderson had besides her husband was the slave woman and Mrs. Shannon who lived only a short distance from them. Mrs. Shannon was the wife of Peter Shannon an Irishman, whose principal business was ditching. The Shannons had no children and they were Catholics but that made no difference with Mrs. Shannon. She treated everybody alike, and often visited Mrs. Anderson.

One Sunday afternoon in September of 1856, a young man and woman riding in a buggy, stopped at Anderson's gate and asked if they could secure shelter for the night. A great storm was coming out of the southwest and was just about reaching the Anderson farm, and it was almost night. Anderson was standing on his front gallery and told the couple to come in; to hurry before they got wet. They hurried in, bringing nothing with them except a small handbag.

Anderson called a slave to attend to the horse the young man was driving and to feed it and put the buggy under the shed. When the young man came in he introduced himself as Williams, and the young woman with him as Mrs. Williams. They were then introduced to Mrs. Anderson. The Andersons were very glad to have them for the night.

The storm was terrific and much timber was blown down. The rain lasted more than half the night. They all sat up late; the young man told them that he was a school teacher, and that he was teaching a school about twelve miles away. He further stated that as he had not been able to reach his boarding house on account of the storm, he would be glad to leave early the next morning. The Andersons told him that they always had breakfast by candlelight and he could stay until after breakfast.

The young man and his wife were given the south front room in which there were two beds. Immediately after breakfast the next morning Williams and his wife went on their way, Anderson would accept no pay for their lodging but insisted that they come again. Some time after sunup, Mrs. Anderson had occasion to go into the room occupied by Williams and his wife. In one of the beds she found two babies apparently about the age of one year each. They were both sound asleep and dressed in unusually good clothes; however, they did not appear to be twins, nor even sisters, as one had black hair and the other a perfect blonde.

Another reason for their thinking that the babies were not sisters was because they were dressed differently. Their clothing was of expensive material and well made, but not alike in any respect. Anderson and his wife were greatly puzzled over the matter, and Anderson was inclined to believe that Williams and his wife had played a trick on them. He decided to go at once and see Williams, but as he didn't know where Williams was teaching, it was about noon when he reached the school house. He found Williams there.

When he told Williams of what had happened, Williams thought that Anderson was playing a joke on him, and was greatly disturbed about the matter. He told Anderson that as soon as school was out that day, he would drive up to Anderson's home and take his wife and see what could be done about it.

In the meantime one of Anderson's slaves told Mrs. Shannon about the babies being left at Anderson's home. She went at once to see the babies, and when she walked in and saw them she said, "Ain't they little darlings. Give me one of them." Mrs. Anderson said that she couldn't because they were not hers.

Williams and his wife reached Anderson's home late in the afternoon and looked at the babies, but they could give no account of them and said that they had never seen them before. They further stated that they had no children as they had only been married a few months. They told Anderson that they would gladly assist him in locating the parents of the babies if they could.

A few weeks later Williams and his wife were astonished to hear that they had been charged with kidnapping the babies. They went at once to see Mr. Anderson and his wife about this report but were told that the report had been by others and not them.

A little later the report was made that Anderson had kidnapped the babies. Then it was reported that Williams and Anderson together had kidnapped them, and one man made himself busy enough to go up into Rankin County where the Baptist Association had been held and inquired if any babies in that neighborhood had been stolen, but he heard of none. Then another rumor went out that Anderson had murdered an old couple over in Smith County and stolen their babies.

Anderson and Williams investigated and found that an old man had been killed by a falling tree and that his wife died probably of heart trouble, and that they had no children except a grown son. Anderson and Williams were greatly annoyed by the rumors going through the country that they were kidnappers, and finally Anderson decided to sell his property, and did so.

He adopted the two little babies and he and Williams then moved to Ellis County, Texas. Who the babies were and where they came from was never known until many years after the Civil War, but that is another story.

When Anderson adopted the two babies he gave them the names of Rachel and Rebecca Anderson, and by those names they were afterward known. After Anderson located in Texas he engaged in the mercantile business, and

soon became a very wealthy man. In the course of a few years he almost forgot the circumstances under which the children were brought to them, and loved them as if they were their own.

In 1870 Williams and his wife were elected to teach a school in Holmes County, Miss. It was a country school and supported by farmers. Several months after the school opened they heard the story of the two babies being stolen from that neighborhood before the Civil War. Knowing what they did of what occurred in Simpson County, regarding two babies they become very much interested in the matter. They found that one baby was the child of a man and woman named Pendleton; the other the child of a man and woman named Morton. Both Pendleton and Morton had been large slave owners before the Civil War but at that time were almost bankrupt.

Pendleton and his wife had several other children, but Morton and his wife never had any children except the one that had been stolen, which was the little blonde. The kidnappers who stole the children had demanded two thousand dollars for their return, and this amount had been raised by Pendleton and Morton and sent to a designated place where the babies were to be returned to him on payment of said sum, but the man who was to make the transaction was never heard from anymore and with all their efforts they were never able to get any further trace of the babies.

One Saturday, Williams and his wife went to Morton's home and told them of what had occurred at the home of Branbridge Anderson in Simpson County. The Morton's became highly interested in the matter and wanted to go at once and see Mr. Anderson for themselves, but Williams advised them to wait until he could hear from them. The Pendletons also wanted to go. Williams then wrote to Anderson and told him of what he had learned. Anderson soon replied and told Williams that he had told the children that they were adopted children, and that they thought they were his own children, but as they were now about 16 years old, he would tell them and that he would be glad to have their parents or supposed parents, come and see them.

When Williams's school closed Pendleton and his wife and Morton and his wife went with Williams to Texas. There they visited the Anderson home. They were soon convinced that the girls were lost children. Mrs. Anderson had kept the little dresses they wore when brought to her home and Mrs. Pendleton and Mrs. Morton fully described the dresses before they saw them.

Everybody was convinced that they were the lost children. Anderson persuaded the Pendletons and Mortons to move to Texas and locate near him. They did so and became prosperous again.

A STORY OF GOLD SEEKERS

Turner Wilson located in Simpson County near the river town of Ocoola and about two miles east of the present town of Rockport in 1830. He became the largest slave holder in the county, and owned and operated a large farm on the east side of Pearl River.

He was probably the wealthiest man in the county prior to the Civil War, and for many years thereafter. He was probably supposed to have a great deal more money than he actually had, but in any event he had a large amount of money in gold. Many people thought he had large quantities of money buried around his house. This rumor was largely circulated after a jar containing \$5,000-00 in gold was found and carried away by a negro living on the place. The loss was discovered soon after the negro left and he was followed and the money recovered.

A year or two after that, about 1895, Wilson moved to Westville, and strange in which he had resided for many years, entirely vacant.

This house rested on a brick foundation and had three brick chimneys and was a very substantial building. Soon after Wilson moved to Westville, unknown parties, supplied with mineral rods shovels and other equipment, began digging for gold, or buried money, around the big house. Large holes were dug in the stables, chicken houses and other houses with dirt floors. it was not very long before one of the chimneys was undermined by those digging and fell; later another chimney was undermined by the digging and fell, then the third chimney fell after being undermined.

Not satisfied with digging about the chimney they began digging under the brick pillars until at last the entire house fell to the ground.

It is not certain that any holes were dug under the house, but the building was destroyed beyond all repair by their constant digging.

They dug great holes around the trees in the yard and around the gate post of the yard as well as the lot. Their digging continued over a period of several years, but so far as is known nothing was ever found.

Wilson was kept advised of this constant digging for money but it never seemed to worry him. Of course, he knew whether he had left any money there or not and he probably had not but it was rumored that he had buried a lot of money at Westville.

There were no banks in the county during the years in which he lived in the county, and there is no doubt but that he buried a great deal of money from time to time as he was an unusually successful man. While for more than sixty years of his life he was supposed to be a very wealthy man, no attempt was ever made to rob him, even during the Civil War period when he was reported to have \$10,000.00 in gold.



Legend has it the first cocktail was served in 1776 in a New York bar decorated with chicken feathers.

What sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity. - Joseph Addison.

All snakes feed on other animals, especially vertebrates.

Prey are always swallowed whole as no snake has teeth for or chewing. Many snakes simply engulf prey, swallowing it alive and killing it with digestive juices.

Snakes are valuable to the extent that they are a great help is keeping the rats and mice under control.

SAM WILLIAMSON

About 60 years ago, Sam Williamson was living a mile or more northeast of John Hays' mill, where Walter Cone now lives. Sam was an easy going, good natured sort of fellow, holding no ill towards anyone. He was a fairly good farmer and also a doctor of sorts, not that he tried to do any practice as he had never studied medicine a day in his life and had only a limited education. However, as doctors were very scarce in the county at that time, Sam was frequently called in by sick neighbors, and he had a very good success with his homely

remedies, as they were mostly of herbs and were his own concoctions. At any rate he cured more than he killed and no complaint was made.

At that time there was living on the road from Sam's place to Hays' mill, a fellow named Buck Stewart, a high-tempered, quarrelsome fellow, and in spite of Sam's good nature there sprang up between Buck and Sam quite a feud brought about, I believe, by the killing of a dog that belonged to Buck. There was no proof that Sam killed the dog, but suspicion pointed to him and Buck believed that Sam killed the dog, although Sam denied having any knowledge of the killing.

Buck's animosity grew by what it fed upon and soon reached to such a high pitch that he gave it out that the next time that Sam passed his place he was going to cut his head off and set it on his gatepost. Whether Sam heard of this dire threat or not is not known, but the following Saturday Sam wanted to go to Westville So started early and passed Buck's place without any interference.

He returned late in the afternoon and when he reached Buck's place was astonished to see Buck and his wife and one of the largest of Buck's boys come running towards the gate, all armed with butcher knives, cursing and making terrible threats. Sam was not armed so he decided that he had better not try to pass Buck's place without something to protect himself with. He then turned and went back to Hays' mill and borrowed a single-barrel shotgun from Dave Hays. The gun was loaded with squirrel shot but Sam thought that sufficient.

He then started home and as he again reached Buck's place, the whole family came out again armed with butcher knives and threatening to kill him. Just as Buck started out of the gate, Sam shot him in the corner of his left eye, several shot striking the eyeball, and others striking his eyebrows, nose and face. Buck fell at the gate and the others ran back into the house. Sam, thinking he had killed Buck and not wanting to shoot anyone else, rode on home. After picking Buck up and carrying him into the house, some of the family ran to tell Mr. Dave Hays of the shooting.

When Hays heard of it he went at once to see about the matter and found Buck bleeding terribly and apparently wounded There was no doctor nearer than Westville and that was 10 miles away, and night was coming on. So he advised sending after Dr. Sam, as he. was generally called. At first Buck's family would not agree to that, but fearing Buck was dying, decided to let Hays go after him.

In a short time Sam came and after he had examined the wound, got a pair of scissors and trimmed off the fragments of torn flesh and washed the blood away. He then laid some cotton on the wound to stop the blood until he could prepare a lotion for the wound.

This lotion was made by pouring a quart bottle about half full of gun powder and then filling it with water. After shaking the bottle until the gun powder was dissolved, he began pouring the solution into the wound until the blood was stopped. After that he made a poultice of mutton suet, saturated with fresh pine resin, and applied it to the wound, bound up Buck's head with a strong cloth and put him to bed. He told his family to keep him in bed a day or two and he would be all right. Sure enough, in the next few days Buck was out again.



Breathes there a man, with soul so dead,

Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Scott

THE STORY OF A CRIME

In the fall and winter of 1900, Frank Ammons was engaged in the mercantile business at Braxton. He was one of the leading merchants of the county and had been for many years. The Gulf and Ship Island Railroad had recently been completed and Ammons lived about one mile north of town. He found it nearer from his store to his home to walk along the tracks of the railroad than to go by the public road.

He usually carried a lunch with him in a small satchel as there was no restaurant in the town. Sometimes he would be detained until night before he could go home. The railroad company had a section crew working on the tracks near Braxton. Among the crew was a man named Harveston and another man named Beaver. Nearly all of the section crew traded with Ammons and carried monthly accounts with him. Harveston and Beaver did most of their trading with Ammons and also had accounts with him.

One day after there had been a great deal of business, Ammons did not get out from the store until after dark. He then started home walking along the railroad between the tracks. He never thought of being molested, but just as he reached the little creek north of the town he noticed two men standing by the side of the railroad. He thought nothing of that and kept walking, but just as he passed them one of the men struck him on the head with a heavy stick and he fell backwards, striking the back of his head on one of the rails, which seemed to have fractured his skull.

The men grabbed the satchel, which he carried and ripped it with their knives. They evidently expected to find money, but found only a few remnants of his noon meal. They then fled.

Sometime later Ammons was found by members of the section crew who were proceeding along the tracks in a hand-car. He was carried back to his store and then home in an unconscious condition. He died the next day.

In some way it was suspicioned at once that Harveston had killed him, and a posse was sent the night of the killing to the home of Harveston's father near Brookhaven, and there it was found that Harveston had just arrived. He was arrested and brought to jail at Westville. Beaver was later arrested and placed in jail.

Both denied killing Ammons but at the spring term of Circuit Court they were indicted for the murder of Ammons. Honorable Sylvester McLaurin was District Attorney. When the case came up for trial, Beaver made a confession and threw the blame of the killing entirely on Harveston. As Harveston was a man of no means, the Court appointed Colonial C. M. Whitworth to defend him. Harveston plead not guilty, but was convicted of the murder of Ammons and sentenced to be hung.

Beaver was sentenced to serve a term in the state penitentiary, and I believe was later pardoned.

Harveston was hung at Westville on the 31st day of May 1901, and he died protesting that he had not killed Ammons.

This was the last public hanging in Simpson County, and it is said that more than 3,000 people were present.

The TULLOS FAMILY and the McLAURIN CLAN

It has been said that every member of the Tullos family is a politician and there, seems to be a lot of truth in that for back in 1822 William Tullos, his brother and, Temple Tullos, came to this section of the state and located about two miles south of Old Fayette hill. They were slave owners and, successful farmers. When the county was organized in 1824 William Tullos became a candidate for Representative at the special election held on August 4th of that year. He was opposed by Stephen Howell and Jacob Carr. Howell was elected having received 73 votes while Tullos received 43 and Carr 39. At the regular election on August 3, 1825, Tullos was again a candidate for Representative and, was opposed by Robert Laird and James B. Satterfield. Tullos was elected, as he received 80 votes, Laird 45 and Satterfield 40. Tullos was never a candidate for Representative again, but was twice a candidate for Sheriff the first time in 1845, when he was defeated by William McCaskill and the second time in 1865 when, he was defeated by Henry Moore. In 1865 he was appointed Circuit Clerk by Judge John E. McNair in the place and stead of T. L. Mendenhall, who happened to be absent when the June term of the Circuit Court convened. Tullos made no effort to hold the office, as he did not feel that he was entitled to it, but at the request of McNair continued to assert his claim to the office until the question could be passed on by the Supreme Court, at which time Mendenhall was reinstated. Tullos was a very progressive man and very successful in business. He became a large slave owner and had extensive farm interests. I understand that he died about the beginning of the Civil War.

About 1845, his daughter Ellen Caroline Tullos, married Lauchlin McLaurin of Smith county and to them was born eight sons, the famous "McLaurin Clan." The oldest was A. J. McLaurin, who served as district attorney, member of the Legislature, member of the Constitutional Convention, Governor and United States Senator.

The second was Doctor A. G McLaurin, who served as a member of the Constitutional Convention. The third was H. J. McLaurin, who was also, a member of the Constitutional Convention and a member of the legislature. The fourth was Sylvester McLaurin, who served a district attorney for twenty years. The fifth was W.K. McLaurin, who was also a member of the Legislature and Circuit Judge for many years. The sixth was Wallace McLaurin, who was appointed Internal Revenue Collector by President Cleveland. The seventh was Walter McLaurin wh was Railroad Commissioner at the time of his death. The eighth, the only on now living, is Col. Sidney McLaurin lawyer, banker and politician.

Surely it would have pleased William Tullos if he could have lived to see his grandsons fill so many high places.

Lauchlin McLaurin was also a successful politician. He was four times elected Representative from Smith County, first In 1841, next In 1861 then in 1865, and last in 1875. In 1881 he was elected Circuit and Chancery Clerk of Smith County.

APRIL 22, 1943

MRS. GUS P. BROWN STATES INTENTION OF ENTERING CAMPAIGN

Mrs. Gus P. Brown of Weathersby tells the News that she will probably be in the race for Superintendent of Education. She is now connected with the Mendenhall School system and it is likely that she will wait until the close of school before making her formal announcement for this office.

Mr. Marshall Magee, son of Mrs. Addie Magee, and Miss Helen Nelson were married the 10th day of April. The ceremony was performed Richland, Missouri where Mr. Magee is district manager of the Central Power Company. The bride is a native of Richland.

TULLOS AND THE SLAVE JOHN

Tullos soon found that he could get no help from anyone at Williamsburg, and also found that John didn't have his permit; so he at once returned to Rials' mill and reported that he had accomplished nothing, and that John

would be sold into slavery unless something was done immediately. Mr. Rials said he felt that he was under promise to protect John, and that he would go to Westville and secure a copy of the permit, and advised Tullos to get several men to go with him and to be ready when he returned from Westville. Rials, was, gone only a few hours, and while he was gone Tullos got several daring young fellows to go with him to Williamsburg. They were well armed, rode good horses and were determined to secure John's release.

Taking the permit they started at once to Williamsburg, but when they arrived there they found that somebody had satisfied the Board of Police that John was a runaway slave and had made proof of ownership and taken John away. They presented the permit to the Board, but they said it was too late, and that all they could do would be to see the owner and take the matter up with him.

They learned that the man who claimed John was a brother of one of the members of the Board. The sheriff told them they had better drop the matter, as the man who claimed John was a very dangerous man; but he finally gave them direction to his place. As they left Williamsburg they saw two members of the Board of Police riding out of town in the direction the sheriff had given them, which was nearly north. Inquiring of a man they met on the road, they found that they were only about a mile from the place they wanted to reach. They were quite sure the fellow had been advised of their coming and that probably something would be done with John before they arrived, and that they would not find him if they rode on together. They turned off into the woods out of sight of the road, and decided to let Tullos go to the house on foot and inquire for a lost horse. Just before Tullos reached the road again he saw the same two men who left Williamsburg ahead of him riding back towards Williamsburg.

When he reached the place and hailed, a woman came to the door, and when asked about her husband she said he and his brother had left early that morning to take a runaway slave back to his master over in Copiah county, but a boy about ten years old, said, "You know he ain't, that nigger's in the fodder loft." The woman at once said, "Shet your mouth, you don't know what you're talking about." But the boy said, "Yes, I do and you know it." About that time the woman picked up a board and started for the boy, but failed to catch him.

Tullos then told her he had lost a horse and was looking for him, and wanted to know if a loose horse had been there. She said she had not seen one. Tullos then thanked her and went back to the other men. When he related what he had heard, they mounted their horses and rode up to the place and told the woman that they were after a slave that had been stolen and that they had been advised that her husband had arrested one and had him in custody. She denied knowing anything about a slave, but just then she said that she saw her husband and his brother coming and that they could talk to them. Tullos told the other men that he would do the talking. So when the men reached them, the first thing that Tullos said was for them to drop their guns and consider themselves under arrest. There was nothing else to do, so they both dropped their guns, and asked what they were being arrested for. Tullos told them it was for stealing a slave. They said they knew nothing about a slave, but Tullos said, "You needn't start lying. That slave is in your fodder loft." He then told one of his men to go and get John and bring him down. Sure enough, they found John in the fodder loft and when John walked up with the man they asked John if he knew the men who brought him there. He said he knew one of them and that he was the man who told about the free woman of color that he had started to see.

Tullos then told the two men that was strongly tempted to hang them right there, and if he ever heard of their being in Simpson County he would hang them without notice.

John Tullos

Many people indulge in practical jokes without ever thinking what the result may be. The late John Tullos once told me of a prank, that he and two other mischievous young men played at the closing of a revival meeting at the tabernacle at Rials Creek about the summer of 1880.

A very popular preacher had been holding a protracted meeting at the tabernacle, and had been having large crowds, especially at night. On the night of the closing of the meeting, people had come in large numbers and a great many had come in wagons and had brought all their children. Quilts were spread on the floor of the wagon bodies on which the babies and very young children slept during the services. There were probably twenty wagons around the tabernacle, and as the closing services ended by much singing and shouting the children were left to themselves almost entirely. A short time before the services closed, Tullos and the two other young men began changing the sleeping children from one wagon to another until about all of them had been moved. Two small children had been placed in the back of a buggy that belonged to a rather pompous young man, who was there with his sweetheart. Just before the services closed, the three went up to the altar for prayer, looking as innocent as lambs.

It was rather late when the meeting closed and everybody was anxious to get home so as soon as the oxen or mules could be hitched to the wagons, the people were on their way home. The night was dark, and all were tired as well as sleepy, so nobody noticed the children until they reached home and a few did not notice the difference until the next morning. There was great consternation in the neighborhood during that night. Nobody knew where their children were and of course, didn't know where to go find them.

The next morning nearly everybody was out looking for the lost children. Some were very angry and threatened to whip at first sight the man, or men, who had moved the children. Tullos said that luckily for him and the other two, nobody suspected them. The young man who took his sweetheart home in the buggy, had the misfortune to waken one of the children just before he reached her home. His sweetheart immediately jumped out of the buggy and said she would walk the rest of the way home. He couldn't persuade her to stop or to even listen to him.

He didn't know the children and couldn't leave them there in the road, so he took them home and explained the matter to his mother. She didn't know the children but said she would take care of them until their parents came for them. She told her son that she was quite sure that another young man who had been paying attention to the same girl and placed them in his buggy. About the middle of the next day, the parents of the children came for them, and after they had gone the young man went back to see his sweetheart and explain the matter, but she refused to talk to him, except to say that she would not stand for his trying to unload his unlawful brats on her. About that time, her father came to the door and ordered him to get off the place and to stay off. He left but swore that he would whip his rival the next time he saw him.

He did meet him in Westville a few weeks later and had a fight, but was arrested and put in jail, and the matter ended by his having to pay a fine.

Tullos and the two other young men had a many a good laugh over the escapade, but kept it all to themselves.

JOHN McFATTEN

Among the early settlers of the county were many adventurers and fortune seekers, mostly from the Atlantic states. After 1832, many came, no doubt, because imprisonment for debt had been abolished by the Legislature of Mississippi. Nobody ever asked any questions of a new settler, as to why he came or what trouble, if any, he had had in the state he came from. In fact, it was considered impolite to ask such questions of a new settler. Every one was accepted at "face value" on arrival. This often resulted in disappointment, heart burnings and tragedies.

One such case was that of John McFatten. He came to the county about 1833 and located at Westville, He was a man of pleasing address, had some education and was a millwright and carpenter. He soon secured work in various parts of the county, especially in the southeastern eastern part. He had no family and after spending a year or more in the county, he married an orphan girl and bought a small farm eight, or ten miles southwest of Westville. His wife was very industrious and they were great favorites with their neighbors. McFatten found plenty of work to do, and, when not at work elsewhere, he made additions to his house, barns and fences.

Some six or seven years had passed, two children had been born to them, one a little girl about five years old and a little boy of three. McFatten was so well liked by his neighbors, that they talked of "running" him for sheriff. McFatten was well pleased with the idea, and doubtless intended to be a candidate. But one day while he was working on a water-mill some distance from home, one of the children became very sick and his wife thought it best to take it to Westville for treatment. A neighbor woman took her and the child in a wagon and after reaching Westville and having the child treated she decided to go to the post office. She had never done so before, and never could give any reason for so doing. But the postmaster told her there was a letter for her husband and that she could get it by paying the postage, which, was twenty-five cents. She didn't have twenty-five cents, but borrowed it from her neighbor. When the letter was handed her she decided that it must be very important and as she could not read, she asked the postmaster to read it to her. But he, declined, and she then went to the sheriff's office and had the sheriff to read it to her.

While the sheriff was reading the letter, Mrs. McFatten sat down and began crying. When he had finished reading she got up and thanked him, then took the letter and walked out. While she was a woman of no education, she was very determined and when she "made up her mind," nothing could change it. It was several days before McFatten finished his work and came home. His children were glad to see him, but he at once noticed the coolness of his wife, but thought it was one of her whims and got busy about the place. Night came on and when he sat down to supper his wife handed him the letter and told him that he 'had better go back to his family, as they needed him. He knew there was no use in trying to explain anything. He ate no supper, but went out on the porch and sat, smoking a long time. His children played with him until they were tired and went to sleep in their little bed near the door.

Late in the night when he felt sure that all the family was asleep, he walked into the, room and kissed his little children and went out again, and sat down on the porch. He knew his wife was awake, but she had nothing to say. Finally he heard her talking in her sleep, and took his hat and walked away.

He was never seen by his family again. Mrs. McFatten gave up her little farm and went to Westville, and operated a boarding house for a few years and then moved to Texas and rented a hotel in a thriving town and did quite well.

Her son, little John McFatten on account of his handsome appearance and fine manners, soon became a favorite with almost everyone. He attended school and received a good education, by the time he was 16 years of age.

About that time an old lawyer in the town gave him work in his office which enabled him to read law. When he reached his twenty-first birthday he was licensed to practice law, and became a partner of the lawyer who took him into his office.

As a lawyer, he was very successful and after being admitted to the bar, he became a judge. About the beginning of the Civil war a man by the name of McFatten came to Westville and made inquiry of the people there of John McFatten, who had last been heard from at Westville many years before. He said he was John McFatten's son,

and that his father had disappeared from his home in Virginia about 1833; that his mother was dead and he was trying to locate his father. He remained in Westville several days, and while there learned of his father's second marriage, and secured the address of the lawyer, John McFatten. He also learned from a man who had traveled through many counties in Texas that a man by the name of John McFatten owned a large ranch in one of the western counties of the state and was very wealthy. He gave the name of the county but could not give McFatten's address. The man from Virginia then left for Texas and called on his supposed brother, who received him very kindly, and made him acquainted with his mother and sister. After talking over what had been told him at Westville with the family, the two brothers went to the county where their father was supposed to be and found that he owned the ranch and had accumulated a large fortune but had recently died and that a number of people who claimed to be his heirs were claiming his property. Judge McFatten was soon able to convince the court that their claims were fraudulent.

If you think that one individual can't make a difference in the world, consider what one cigarette can do in a nine-room house. - Bill Vaughan

The more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war. - Adm. Hyman Rickover, USN

FERDINAND SIMS

Ferdinand Sims located on Dabbs creek, near where W. T. Hemphill now lives. In 1835, he had a little farm and spent most of his time hunting and trapping. He took great delight in hunting bears, but as bear hunting was always dangerous, he decided to build a bear trap.

About a mile from his house he found a pit several feet deep, and ten or twelve feet long. It was about six or seven feet wide. He thought it an ideal place for a bear trap, and in a few days had the trap constructed. It was a heavy trap and very strong and if a bear should get caught in it, there would be no getting out.

Sims was well pleased with his work and at once baited the trap with honey, and then visited it every day. He had two small children, a boy about twelve years old and a little girl about ten. He took them with him one day to see the trap. They expected to find a bear in the trap, but no bear had been caught. They returned by an Indian camp on the creek and saw the Indian women making baskets and saw some of the men making bows and arrows and blow guns. An Indian woman gave a basket to the little girl and Sims bought a blow gun for the boy. The next day, Sims went out hunting as usual, and also visited his traps on the creek. He came home late in the afternoon very much disappointed on account of his failure to catch a bear. After eating something he decided to go again to the trap to see if he had caught a bear. His wife and children sat up late, as they were expecting him to return early in the night with a bear. They finally went to sleep, thinking that perhaps he had gone by the Indian camp.

Late in the night, the boy was awakened by the howling of a pack of wolves. It excited him and he jumped, up and asked his mother if his father had come home. She said that he had not. The boy then said that he was going to hunt his father as he was afraid something had happened to him and that the wolves were after him. His mother said that could not be true for his father had a gun and could take care of himself, but the boy said he was going. He went out in the yard and picked up a large number of pitch pine splinters and brought them in and lighted a torch. He then grabbed his blow gun and was just starting when his little sister said she was going. They were both determined to go, so the boy carried the torch and some splinters and the little girl carried the blow gun and some splinters. Soon after they started, they decided that the wolves were near the bear trap.

They hurried as fast as they could, and called to their father. There was no answer, but the wolves were certainly at the bear trap, in large numbers. Waving his torch, the boy almost ran into the pack before he was noticed by the wolves.

The children reached the trap and found their father had been, caught in the trap and could not get out. At the other end of the pit they saw a buffalo, and the wolves were trying to reach it. The buffalo was making a brave fight for its life, and there was one dead wolf in the pit. Their father was badly hurt and unable to get out of the trap. The wolves could not be driven away and were getting bolder. The boy then told his sister to take a large torch and stand by the trap and keep the wolves from getting to their father while he took another torch and ran to the Indian camp. He ran as fast as possible but had to stop now and then to keep some wolves from biting him. He soon reached the Indian camp and several big strong Indians hurried to the pit where Sims was caught. They carried their guns and killed some of the wolves, and then took Sims out of the trap. While they were doing that the buffalo got out and Sims had the trap destroyed.

Year	Population of Simpson County	Taxes Collected
1825	984	\$ 318.75
1830	2,167	\$ 635.66
1845	4,734	\$ 1,744.00
1860	6,080	\$ 3,722.00

MURPHY, DAN TEDDER, AND TEMPLE TULLOS

About 1830, an Irishman by the name of Murphey, settled about a mile east of Rials Creek mill. He had no family but lived alone in a small log house that he had bought. He claimed to be a millwright and carpenter. He did, some trapping and traded with the Indians when not otherwise engaged. He was a large man and quarrelsome, and as he drank heavily, he had a great many fights during the time he lived in that neighborhood. He soon acquired the reputation of being a bully and would frequently pick a quarrel just for the sake of a fight. He kept a good saddle horse and, a very large dog, which he always kept chained. The dog was very fierce and was really dangerous.

Sometimes in the early fall it was reported that Murphey's dog had gone mad, but Murphey would not allow it to be killed. Nobody really knew whether the dog was mad or not. But news spread and everybody was on the watch for it. One Saturday morning in September somebody heard the screams of some children up on the hill, and saw them running at full speed for the mill, and the next thing they saw was Murphey's dog coming down the hill. It had broken its chain loose from the stake that held it and before anybody had any time to do anything it was among the people at the mill snapping at the other dogs and at anybody that got in its way. It was very evident that it was mad.

After reaching the mill it took the path along the den and crossing the foot bridge started west along the top of the dam. It so happened that two little girls were playing in the path on the dam, and it was impossible to help them before the dog would reach them. A dozen or more men shouted for them to run, but they were so frightened when they saw the dog approaching them that they could do nothing but scream. Men started running after the dog, but there was no hope of reaching them before they could be bitten.

Just at that time a woman at the west-end of the dam came running and screaming, "Lord, save my children, Oh, God save my children." As if by a miracle it seemed Dan Tedder was fishing on the side of the dam and when he heard the commotion, he jumped up and ran to the top of the dam. He tried to catch the dog as it passed him, but missed it, but he caught the end of the chain and by a quick jerk he threw the dog into the pond. He then jumped in the pond and gave the chain a twist around the top of a small stump that stood above the water. The

dog at once took after the old fellow; but he was in water only about three feet deep, as he could move around the stump faster than the dog could swim. He finally got the chain fastened to the stump by a buckskin string that he carried in his pocket, and then managed to get away without being bitten. By the time anyone could get there with a gun, the dog was drowned. They shot it several times to make sure it was dead. Everybody said "Uncle Dan" was a hero, and he soon had taken so many drinks that he had to be carried to his home on his ground slide. Joe the Indian did the driving.

Later in the day Murphey came to the mill in a great rage. He had heard that his dog had been killed and that Dan Tedder killed it. He said he would whip Dan Tedder on sight, and that he was going to hunt him up and whip him or kill him. Just then Temple Tullos, who happened to be at the mill, walked up to Murphey and said "Here's the man you can whip if you want to whip anybody. You ain't going to whip Dan Tedder. You ain't nothing but a low down coward and a horse thief and everybody knows it. The quicker you get out of the country the better it will be for you." Murphey made no reply, nor did he resent what Tullos had said. He got on his horse and left for home. Most people thought there would be trouble, but that night Murphey disappeared. He was never heard of again.

GEORGE BRUCE

George Bruce and his wife moved from Brandon to Westville about 1846. They had no children except a little boy eight or nine years of age.

Bruce had been working in a store at Brandon for several years, and liked the mercantile business. Soon after reaching Westville, he bought a store building and opened a store. He was a man of pleasant manners, was strictly sober and allowed no drinking in his store and, for that reason, soon did a very profitable business, and kept adding to his stock of goods.

Early in the fall of each year, he would go to New Orleans and buy a stock of new goods, so as to keep his stock up to date. One fall he was a little later than usual in getting out to New Orleans, and when he reached the city, he found that yellow fever had broken out in the French quarter of the City. He hurriedly bought what goods he needed and returned to Westville.

He didn't think that he had been exposed to the fever and tried to forget it. He said nothing to his wife, and hoped for the best, but a few days after his return, he became very sick and sent for the only physician in town.

The physician was a young man, had attended school in New Orleans and had seen cases of yellow fever. He questioned Bruce about his trip and then sent to Brandon for the best physician at that place, a man who knew Bruce and wanted to help him if possible.

When the doctor from Brandon arrived he saw that Bruce was a very sick man. Bruce's house had already been quarantined and he advised that it would be extended to the whole town.

Nearly everybody had left Westville already, and others kept going until the town was almost vacant. Bruce's wife was with him constantly and the little boy never left his daddy for a moment. He slept in a little bed by the side of his daddy's.

The doctors could not persuade him to leave his daddy for scarcely a moment. He hardly seemed to sleep at all. In spite of all that could be done Bruce died. The few who attended his burial, predicted that his wife and little

boy would be dead in a few days. But in spite of the prediction of the doctors as well as the neighbors, neither Bruce's wife nor his little boy contracted the disease and there was not another case in the town.

At that time, it was the universal belief that yellow fever was contagious. Nobody had ever thought of it being carried by mosquitoes, and it was strange that the physicians had never considered disease.

This case should have been a lesson, but it was not. Later, Mrs. Bruce moved with her brother to Texas.

In 1905, it is doubtful that the Panama Canal could ever have been completed with out the admirable achievement of the sanitation work under Colonel William C. Gorgas of the Medical Department of the United States Army. Attention was devoted to the draining and oiling of marshes for the destruction of mosquitoes propagating malaria and yellow fever.

At one time the loss of life was one third of the working force.

GEORGE BRINSON AND THE FRIENDLY BEAR

George Brinson, a prosperous farmer living a few miles southeast of Westville, had the misfortune of losing his dwelling and barns by fire in the late winter of 1846. He owned no slaves, but he and his three boys, assisted by neighbors, succeeded in building a large single room, with shed for his horses, by the time for starting crops. Brinson's house that burned was a double penned house, with a wide hall between the rooms.

It was his purpose to build another on the same plan, but he did not have time to complete it at that time, so for the benefit of the boys, he added a loft to the main room and the boys slept there. The north end of the house was gabled, but the south end was left open, as he expected to complete the house that summer.

The spring of 1847 was extremely mild, and farming was begun very early, nearly everybody was through planting corn in February, and through planting cotton in March. Crops were being cultivated rapidly, and at every gathering it was remarked that it was the earliest spring they had ever seen. On the 15th day of April, George Brinson and his two oldest boys finished plowing a field of corn that they expected to "lay by" at the next plowing. They came from the fields, tired and hungry, and ate a warm supper.

George lighted his pipe and sat on the porch awhile. The boys were in the house parching some peanuts. Suddenly George Brinson noticed that the air was getting very chilly. He went into the house, and said that he believed there would be frost that night.

The oldest boys had been sleeping in the loft, which was reached by steps on the outside. The third boy, who was a little fellow wanted to go up and sleep with his brothers, as it was getting cold. His father allowed him to go. Pretty soon, everybody was asleep, and all slept sound throughout the night.

When Brinson woke about daylight he found the bed covered with snow, and snow was all over the floor. He jumped up in great alarm, and built a fire as soon as possible.

While he was dressing he called the boys, but got no answer. His wife became frightened, and told him to hurry and see about them. He went outside and started up the steps. When about half way up he met a large bear coming down, In trying to avoid the bear he lost his balance and fell off the steps.

He got tip just ill time to see the bear disappearing through the woods. Fearing the boys had been killed, he hurried up the steps again. He found the floor of the loft covered with snow, and found that the bed was

covered, except about one half of it where the bear had slept. The boys were perfectly warm, and didn't know that the bear had slept with them.

During the day, the weather turned warm and the snow melted, but the crops were ruined.



The late H. A. Geiger once told me of an incident that took place soon after he moved to Westville. Early in the spring he and Estus Drummond, Elmore Belk and Barksdale Berry arranged to go down on the river the next Saturday day night on a fishing trip. They hired "Uncle Plato" Black, an old colored man, to take them down to the river in his wagon.

They carried with them plenty of canned goods, cheese and crackers for supper, also carried frying pan, salt, lard, etc, in case they caught a fish before supper. Also carried two bottles of "Old Crow" as a protection against snakebite.

They reached the river a short time before sundown, and began setting out, their hooks, about fifty in all. After getting the hooks set out, they returned to the wagon, built a fire and decided to eat something. They had some sardines, a can or two of salmon, cheese and crackers. Estus Drummond opened a can of salmon by cutting the lid straight across both ways, and then pulling back the four point. They were hungry enough to enjoy their supper and were about half through when Uncle Plato came up with a large fish weighing about 15 pounds. Uncle Plato was given a drink of Old Crow and told to prepare the fish for supper. They ate no more of the canned goods and Estus Drummond, who was eating from the can of salmon, pushed the points downward into the can and set it aside. The rest of their supper was placed in a box nearby.

After the fish was fried and eaten, they sat around the fire for several hours, talking and smoking. About midnight, they decided to spread their blankets and lie down awhile first taking a drink of Old Crow. Probably about 3 o'clock in the night, they were awakened by the sound of something like a tin can being struck against the spokes of the wagon wheels, and quite a thrashing of the small bushes around the wagon. Somebody said, "what is that?" Barksdale Berry said, "I bet my dog has his mouth fastened in that salmon can." It was quite dark but he jumped up and grabbed the can to release the dog, but when he got hold of the can, it would not come loose, but he heard the furious rattle of a rattlesnake apparently right at him. Everybody jumped up. The buzzing of the rattlesnake became more furious. It seemed to be everywhere.

Uncle Plato was in his wagon and they called for him to get them a light, as he had some "fat splinter" in his wagon. Before he could get the light the snake seemed to be right in their midst. It was thrashing around every way, had knocked 'the coffee pot and frying pan whirling, and everyone thought it was coming towards them.

Finally Uncle Plato got the light going, and then they saw the bulk of the snake. Estus Drummond had an old revolver, and he attempted to shoot the snake, but when he fired, every cartridge exploded at the same time. He missed the snake. Nobody could find a stick, but at last Estus got his pistol loaded again, and shot the snake four or five times. It soon lay still.

They built another fire at a different place, took another drink of Ole Crow, for they surely needed it. They sat around their fire until daylight, then they measured the snake and found that it was over seven feet long.

It had stuck its head into the salmon can and eaten the remaining salmon, but its head caught on the points when it tried to pull its head out of the, can. It had certainly been all around them before it was caught in the salmon can. On their hooks they had more than 50 pounds of fish, but they took no more fishing trips.

MISSISSIPPI STATE TREE: The Magnolia

SLAVES AND THEIR OWNERS IN 1824

Duncan McLaurin	12		Vinson Meeks	8
Daniel McLaurin	5		Riley Mitchell I	1
Hiram Walker	2		Robert Laird I	1
Delila Boyanton	2		William Gibson 5	5
David Berry	6		William McNulty I	1
James Boggan	18		James Bounds 2	2
Joseph Boggan	5		Beasley Campbell 1	1
Willis Walker	1		Elizabeth Rose 2	2
Jarmon Berry	5		Eli Nichols 6	6
Stephen Berry	4		Neal Little, 3	3
William Morris	4		John McNair 3	3
Mrs. Mary Dear	1		Archibald Thompson 12	12
William Massey	2		William Myers 5	5
Matthew Traylor	1		Lewis Smith 6	6
Anthony Sutton	6		John Collier 3	3
John Nall	4		Jacob Carr 1	1
Frank O'Neal	1		Frederick Carr 5	5
Richard Sparks	2		Mrs. Mary Moor I	1
Thomas McManus	1		John Rhodes 2	2
Jacob Neely	2		Willoughby Tullos 6	6
Ezekiah Mitchell	1		William Tullos 3	3
James Welch	2		John Campbell 3	3
			Sarah Fletcher I	1

At the commencement of the Civil War there were about 2000 slaves, in the county.

A bill of sale on display in the Mississippi Department of Archives and History at Jackson, will doubtless be interesting. It is in these words: "State of Mississippi, Simpson County, August 10th, 1838. Received of John Myers, Jr., the sum of \$2200 for two slaves, a boy by the name of Dave, about 24 years of age; a girl by the name of Zilpy, about 26 years of age. Said slaves I do warrant sound in body and mind and slaves for life and said slaves the right whereof I do warrant and forever defend unto the said John Myers, Jr, his heirs and assigns forever, from myself, my heirs and assigns and all other claims whatsoever given under my hand and seal. Lewis C. Gibson."

1823 Capped head facing left \$5 gold piece Designed by the illustrious John Reich, who made his mark on the early history of the United States Mint by designing a variety of lovely coins having a portrait of the symbolic

Very Rare Type of \$5 Gold Piece



Miss Liberty wearing a turban, which most numismatists now call the capped head. The date we offer, 1823, is particularly important, we think because of its association with the excessively rare 1822 half eagle (of which just three pieces are known). But the entire era of the 1820s is known for its rare gold, for apparently most of the small mintages were melted over the years during period periodic governmental recoinages. Now, a mint state 1823 half eagle would cost many thousands of dollars, assuming one were able to locate one - in fact, tens of thousands of dollars would be the correct price range.

JACOB CARR'S SLAVE "UNCLE TOBY"

Dancing was greatly enjoyed by the early settlers of the county and during the fall and winter parties would be given by nearly everybody in a neighborhood and the young people would come on horse back for many miles around, and participate in the dances, which were known as square dances or Virginia reel. This was especially true of such neighborhoods as the early Scotch settlements in and around what was afterwards known as Janesville, where most people were "well to do," and the houses were large and comfortable. At those parties it was customary to have several good fiddlers, who were mostly slaves. But good fiddlers were scarce and hard to find.

Among the many fiddlers of that neighborhood was a slave belonging to Jacob Carr. He was old, and was generally known as "Uncle Toby." He had been a cripple for many years, and for that reason his master had furnished him with a very fine fiddle, and allowed him to keep the money he made at the dancing parties. Uncle Toby was a great favorite with the young folks and was always in demand when parties were given. In fact no dancing would start until Uncle Toby arrived. He took great pride in his accomplishments.

One moonlight night in November, about the year 1835, a dance was to be given at the home of one of the large slave holders, a few miles from where Jacob Carr lived, and, of course, Uncle Toby was requested to be present. After he had eaten supper, he tuned his fiddle and "rosened" his bow, and then placing them in a sack which he swung over his shoulder like the sacks used in picking cotton, he took his walking stick and started to the dance, thinking of the money he might make.

Although the moon was full and the night was clear, the road seemed very lonesome to Uncle Toby and he started whistling a lonely tune. When he had gone about a mile, he thought he caught the glimpse of some animal near the road. He waved his stick and it disappeared; but he decided to walk a little faster. He had gone only a little distance, when he caught sight of two animals near the edge of the road. He waved his stick again and they slunk back a few steps and then came on again, and in a few minutes were followed by others. He knew then he was being trailed by wolves, and he hurried on as fast as possible. Next he heard the howl of a wolf some distance away, then another one nearer. Knowing he was in great danger, he walked faster than ever. Pretty soon they were snapping at his heels. So he swung his stick and scolded them, but to little purpose.

He remembered that there was a dilapidated cabin near the road, a short distance ahead, and felt that he might be safe, if he could reach it. Still walking and attempting to strike the wolves with his stick, he was making slow progress, and he saw that they were getting bolder all the time. One had already bitten him slightly but a hard lick with his stick drove it away. When he got in sight of the cabin, he turned and struck at them several times and then ran, but he knew they were at his heels. By one supreme effort he reached the cabin door and closed it as he rushed in. The door could not be fastened and he knew they would soon break in and devour him. The roof was very low and he noticed a hole in it that he thought he could get through, so propping the door as best he could, he climbed up on the roof and for a few moments felt safe again. But the wolves soon broke the door and were proceeding to reach the roof. Sitting near the hole in the roof, he struck them with his stick as often as they appeared. He heard others howling in the woods, and knew he could not keep them beaten off much longer. Thinking that his time had come, he decided to play one more tune on his beloved fiddle. To his surprise they at once became quiet and by playing tune after tune he kept them quiet for more than an hour. In the meantime the young men were looking for him, and after waiting a long time past the hour he was expected, three or four mounted their horses and started after him. As they got near the old cabin they were surprised to hear a fiddle. Somebody said, "That's Uncle Toby, sure." As they rode up to the cabin the wolves slunk off into the woods. They took Uncle Toby behind one of them and were soon back at the party. Uncle Toby was badly shaken up, but a good drink soon had him "weaving the bow" as well as ever.

JOHN BASCOM

At Mrs. Sallie Leggett's boarding house in Westville, she one day told me the following story. It shows, in some measure the hard living conditions of the early settlers of the county.

John Bascom and his wife, Jane, came to the county about the year 1830. They had two small children, both girls, Pauline aged about three and Mary, aged about one. John bought a small tract of land about three miles from Westville and about three miles, from Strong River Church. He had very little money, and after for the land, had no money with which to buy a horse. But he traded an old rifle for an ox and broke it to plow. He and Jane enjoyed going to church, but they had no way of going except to walk. It was too far to carry the children. So Jane went very seldom. John would go and when he got back Jane would ask him about the people he saw and about what they wore. She liked to know, although she rarely had a new dress. John got along very well, but life was very lonely with Jane.

The nearest neighbor lived more than two miles away, and she seldom saw anyone except the family. The following winter John made a cart. It was a rough cart with shafts so that it could be pulled by the ox. The wheels were cut from the end of a large log. He made a body of rough planks. On Sunday, if there was preaching at the church, he would walk and drive the ox and Jane and the children would ride in the cart. Sometimes they would go to Westville in the same way. Things like that were not uncommon, for many people in the county went to Westville in carts. Wagons were almost unknown.

Two or three years later a man moving west lost one of his oxen by accident and somebody told him that he might buy a good ox from John Bascom. He was riding a beautiful bay mare, and he rode over to John Bascom's house and told him that he would like to buy his ox. John told him that the ox was not for sale, but that he would trade it for the mare he rode. They finally traded, but John had to drive the ox to the camp of the owner of the mare. When John came back home riding the mare, the children thought it wonderful. They named her Fannie and John would put them on her hack and lead her around the lot. Fannie was as gentle as a dog, and nothing pleased the children more than to be on her back.

Then soon after John bought a saddle for Jane and she would ride to church and take the children with her on the little mare, one sitting in her lap and the other riding behind. When the children got up in the morning the

first thing they would do was to go and see if Fannie was safe. They had heard of horse stealing and were always afraid of losing her.

One morning Pauline went to the lot and came running back and told her mother that there was a small horse in the lot with Fannie. She said she knew it was very tired as it could hardly stand up. It was Fannie's first colt and she lived to bring the master five or six other fine colts. So that when Pauline and Mary grew up and married and went away to homes of their own, John and Jane gave them each a fine horse. John and Jane had no more children, but they kept hired help and they got along quite well.

When Fannie was about twenty-five years old John said that she must work no more. She was let to live as she always lived. She had her same stable, plenty of everything to eat and good water to drink. A few years later Pauline's husband died and a few months later she died. Pauline left two little girls, six or seven years of age. John and Jane brought them to their house to live. Like their own little girls, they were named Pauline and Mary. They soon learned to ride Fannie and nothing they had was too good for Fannie. They would slip out little lumps of sugar for her and she was very fond of sugar. A few more years went by and Fannie began to decline. John had a doctor to examine her. The doctor gave John some medicine for her, but said that Fannie had lived out her life for she was then thirty-three years old. The little girls watched her all the time. One morning early little Mary ran to the lot to see about Fannie. She saw that Fannie was lying full length on the ground. She touched one of Fannie's ears. It was cold and Fannie was lying so still that she knew Fannie was dead.

If there is a spirit world where good horses live again, Fannie must be with them.

THE HORSE

The natural food of the horse is grass. Dried grass in the form of hay is the standard food of the domesticated animal. Timothy and Clover, well cured, is good. Oats are the standard grain feed. Water and salt should be available at all times.

The Encyclopedia Americana lists eighteen Modern Breeds of horses (1946)

More Notes: from the seventeen pages-- The earliest known horses come from the Lower Eocene deposits of Europe and North America some 50 million years ago. The first discovery was a small animal about the size of a fox terrier dog.

The evolution of the horse has been one of a fairly regular development of structure within the single zoological family, and it has attracted much attention because it concerns an animal in which man is unusually interested. In the course of untold centuries by reason of man's training and breeding of him the horse has become the most useful, most valuable, and one of the most docile and faithful of all animals.



THE PREACHER AND ROAD DUTY

Among the early settlers of Simpson County were a considerable number of preachers, most of them more or less transient, but some of them became permanent settlers. As a rule their sermons were from two to three hours long but seem to have been enjoyed by their congregation. They preached once each month at their churches, giving two sermons, one on Saturday and the next on Sunday following. With few exceptions all of these early preachers have been forgotten and those who are now remembered at all, are remembered not for their good deeds, but for something said or done that struck the public humorously, although the country must have been made better by their passing this way.

Brother M. lived somewhere south of the present town of Magee, and he preached once each month at a church a few miles north of John Hay's store, near where Walter Core now lives. Hays sold nearly everything including liquor. One cold Saturday morning, in December, Brother M. stopped at Hays' store to warm. He was on his way to church, but Hays insisted that he take a small drink, as that would warm him up. He handed Brother M. a tumbler and told him to help himself. Happening to notice that Brother M. filled the tumbler to the brim and drank it all.

He knew that wouldn't do and that he had better keep him in the store. He then insisted that Brother M. sit down by the fire and warm himself before going on and brought a large rocking chair for him to sit in. Very soon he noticed that Brother M. was fast asleep. He told people who inquired that he was not to be disturbed as he was sick.

About two o'clock Brother M. woke up and walked out on the store gallery. He looked up at the sun and said it must be nearly preaching time, and if Hays would have his horse brought he would be going. Hays had fed his horse, so he had a boy catch it and saddle it and lead it up to the store gallery so Brother M. could get up. Fortunately, the horse took the road home instead of to the church. The next day Hays was standing at his front gate when Brother M. passed. It was still very cold and Hays asked him to stop and warm, but got no reply. Brother M. didn't even turn his head.

At all churches in those early days was what was called a horse-block or mountingblock. Usually it was just a section of a large log about four feet high with a step cut in one side and was used by the women who came on horse-back, in getting on and off their horses. It was also custom in those days for the preacher to read the hymns line by line, as the congregation sang it.

One day Brother H. was preaching at one of his churches and had just begun reading his favorite hymn, the first line being, "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound," the congregation singing it after him. Just as they finished singing the first line, he noticed two ladies riding up on horseback and also noticed his son, Zeeberry at the back door. In the same tone of voice he said, "Zeeberry, go help those ladies down." The congregation, without noticing the difference, sang those words also. However, Brother H. noticed it and had them to start again, as he was sure the Lord would punish him if he did not correct it.

During his ministry, Brother H. held a protracted meeting, which resulted in adding about twenty new members to the church. The baptizing was in Strong River, Brother H. was very tall and lean and he always wore black trousers and a long coat. He didn't want to get his trousers wet, so he borrowed a pair of trousers from one of his members a big fellow who weighed two hundred and fifty pounds or more. Of course, they were entirely too big, but he fastened them around his waist with a string and proceeding with the baptizing. Among the last to be baptized was a big fellow weighing about two hundred pounds. To baptize him Brother H. waded in a few feet further out near a deep hole in the river.

Just as he started baptizing the fellow, the string broke and the trousers started failing. Brother H. turned the fellow loose and grabbed his trousers. The big fellow fell over into the deep water, and as he couldn't swim, was about to drown. Fortunately, two husky fellows who could swim jumped in and pulled him out. After Brother H. got his trousers tied again, he asked the new member to come back and finish the baptizing. But he said he would wait until next year.

After the Civil War all able-bodied men from 18 to 50 years were required to work the public road ten days in each year. But preachers were exempt from road duty, provided they actually were engaged in the duty of their calling. Brother H. was pastor of a church not a great distance from Westville, but for some reason the pay was very poor. About the end of the year he rode into Westville one cold day, and meeting some of his friends, one of them asked him if he would preach at the same church again next year. Brother H. said that he would not as all he had received for his year's preaching was a sheep skin, which was on his saddle, a pair of wool socks and four dollars and a quarter in money. After looking far away, as if in meditation he turned and said to them, "if it wasn't for working the public road I'll be damned if I would preach another sermon.

THE STORY OF THE BABIES AND THE BEAR

In ancient times it was generally believed that all children were under the special protection of the gods. Whether true or false, this was a very comforting belief to those ancient people. There were many other beautiful ideas and beliefs in those ancient days, one being that of the new moon. It was believed that the new moon was the silver hunting bow of the goddess Diana with which she shot her golden arrows.

About 1840, George Sistrunk and his wife settled on the west prong of Silver Creek. They had little twin girls, about three years old. At that time there were still many bears in the county, and most people were afraid of them. George Sistrunk cultivated a small farm, and also engaged in hunting and trapping. He was also a bee hunter -- that is, he hunted for trees in which bees had built their nests, and was very successful in finding them.

One day in the summer he found a bee tree, which contained a large amount of honey. After cutting down the tree and securing the honey he found that he had two large wooden pails full of it in the comb. He carried it home and the pails were placed on the floor of the kitchen and covered with a heavy cloth, which was secured by strong cord tied around the top of the pail.

Bears were very fond of honey, and would eat all they could get. They frequently broke into houses in search of honey.

One day sometime after finding the honey, Sistrunk was called away from home to be gone most of the day. His wife got busy working in her garden and lost sight of the children. Sometime before noon she left the garden and went to the house to prepare dinner. When she walked in she got the surprise of her life, for down at the other end of the room she saw a large bear eating honey from one of the pails. It had torn off the cloth and was helping itself. As it would pick up a mouthful of honey comb it would move back several inches while eating it. On each side of the bear were the two little girls laughing and chattering and eating honey which they picked up from the floor as bits of it were dropped by the bear. The one standing on the right of the bear laid her hand on the bear's shoulder as it reached down to pick up a piece of the honey comb. They seemed to be enjoying themselves as much as the bear. When the mother saw them all together she was at first too frightened to speak, but she got a gourd full of water and threw it on the bear. The bear seemed to be as much astonished as the mother, and immediately leaped over the pail and went out the back door and on into the woods. When Sistrunk came home with his dogs it was raining, and they could not follow the bear.





This and That



(Editor's note: This is a reprint of the column "This and That." written by the late Bee King of Mendenhall which appeared in the Simpson County News on Jan. 24, 1946.) Jack Starling was a blacksmith he located in Westville about 1830. His family consisted of himself, his wife and his son, Tom, who was about ten years old. Starling lived on the south side of the street east of the courthouse. His shop was on the north side about where tile Westville News office used to stand. Starling owned two slaves, Green and Polly, his wife. Green did all the work at tile shop and was very efficient in his work. Starling was nearly always at his shop during working hours and was very rarely away from home at night. He never drank liquor and soon had a good trade.

Starling was often visited by a man from Natchez, who claimed to be a cousin of Starling. This man was well educated and of pleasant address. Sometimes on those visits he would remain several days, visiting the saloons and playing poker. He was always well dressed and seemed to have plenty of money. People often wondered why he would visit the blacksmith so often.

Starling was not very well educated and took no part in public affairs. One day in the saloon something was said about Starling's ability to make anything he wanted to make, and the man from Natchez remarked that perhaps Starling made counterfeit money. The idea soon spread, and very soon everybody thought Starling was making counterfeit money. There was no proof of this, but Starling soon found that, he was suspected of making counter money as some men approached him with the design of getting him to make some for them. He very plainly told them that he did not make it, and would not.

It was nearly a year later when Starling's cousin visited him again. He spent the afternoon with Starling at the shop and about night Starling sent his little boy to a store for some articles. As the boy was returning home he happened to hear the name of his father's cousin called, and secreted himself to hear what more would be said. He learned that they would get his kinsman in a poker game at a certain saloon, accuse him of cheating and throw their pistols on him and take all the money he had and kill him. The boy told his father what he had heard, and he and his cousin decided to give them a trial.

Starling's cousin went over to the saloon, took a small drink and suggested a game of poker. Soon after that was said, three other men joined in and said they would play a few games. Soon after the game started, Starling walked into the back door of the saloon with two pistols in his hands. He stood near the entrance to the room where the game was going on and watched. Pretty soon one of the men jumped up with an oath charging Starling s cousin with cheating, and at the same time drawing his gun, just as another man was getting up. Starling stepped in with both pistols on the men and ordered them to throw up their hands. Whirling on Starling they found themselves facing those guns. They knew Starling was not to be cowed by anything they could do. There was nothing for them to do but surrender.

A few days later they tried to waylay Starling, but he was too quick for them. They soon left, Westville and Starling was bothered no more.

GOVERNOR HENRY STEWART FOOTE

The "hottest" political campaign in the state prior to the Civil War, was that of 1851. The whig candidate for governor was Henry Stewart Foote. The democratic candidate was Jefferson Davis. The democrats were confident of winning the election, although the opposition was strong from the beginning.

Judge J. L. McCaskill once told me of the campaign so far as it affected Simpson County. He was a boy at the time, but took great interest in the election. He stated that early in the year, Jefferson Davis visited Westville and made a speech. Davis was a soldier, and had the bearing of a soldier, was well dressed, and a man of fine appearance. He was not a lawyer, but was a well trained speaker.

At that time there were four or five saloons in Westville, and there was much drinking, and a few fights, but strange to say, everybody, even the whigs paid close attention to Davis' speech and it was well received.

Davis was not a "hand shaker" and made no effort to meet the people and never entered a saloon while in Westville. Soon after making his speech, he rode away in company with some friends.

It seemed at that time that it was a foregone conclusion that Davis would be elected. Later in the year, it was announced that Foote would speak in Westville on a certain day, well in advance. The Whigs became jubilant and made every effort to get out a large crowd.

It turned out as they wished, the day was fine, and there was the largest crowd that had ever assembled in Westville. The whigs came to hear Foote give the democrats "hell." The democrats came to cry him down.

Foote arrived early, shook hands with everybody drank freely and had a good word for everybody.

When the time came for him to speak, he seemed to be at his best. There was great applause from the beginning. Foote at first gave the democrats no cause to try to cry him down but, as he, proceeded further, he began lambasting the Democratic Party in a manner they had never heard before. Foote was one of the ablest lawyers in the state, was a forceful speaker, and had few equals at the bar or on the stump.

As Foote lambasted the democrats the whigs yelled delight, for they had a speaker who would tell the things they wanted to hear. Some of the democrats got together and started to cry Foote down, but that, only "made him worse," Foote was fearless and had met hostile crowds before.

Fights broke out all around the edge of the crowd. The saloons were running full blast.

Foote had a loud voice, he grew louder. His abuse of the democratic, party was terrible. He didn't mince words. He knew the majority of the crowd was with him. He spoke for more than two hours. The whigs were wild with delight.

The fighting grew fiercer. Two men were shot, several were cut badly. Two saloons were almost wrecked by the fights inside. There were more than fifty fights during the day and many men had to be carried home in wagons, some badly wounded, and some merely drunk, but everybody conceded that it was a great day. Foote didn't carry the county, but he was elected governor.

JOE FINEY

Everybody called him "Old Joe." His name was Joe Finney. He settled in Westville about 1840 and opened a shoe shop. The shop was on the north side of the street east of the courthouse. It had been used for a storehouse. Old Joe lived in the back of the house and had his house in the front. He made saddles, bridles and harness as well as shoes. He was a good workman and soon had a fine business. His family consisted of himself, his wife and a daughter about thirteen years old at that time.

Old Joe soon acquired the reputation of being "close" and no doubt he was. He rarely let work out on credit, and nearly always demanded full pay before letting his work out. Old Joe was very fond of whiskey, but never bought any. It was customary in those days to offer others a drink, if a man had a bottle or jug of whiskey and many of Old Joe's customers would offer him a drink, when in the shop.

He was never known to be a drunk, but the quantities he could drink without getting drunk was amazing. He was like a funnel, no matter how much he swallowed he was never full.

It was said that he could drink a quart without stopping and never show the effects of it. People tried to get him drunk sometimes, but never succeeded. While he always had a good business and evidently made a good deal of money he put little on his family, and almost nothing on himself.

A few years after he located in Westville, his daughter married a very fine young man by the name of Thomas. Old Joe had opposed the marriage and became very furious when his daughter married. She was forbidden to ever come to his house again and he was never known to speak of her or speak to her anymore while he lived.

He blamed his wife his daughter's marriage and drove her away from home. After that Old Joe moved his bed into the front of his house where he could rest when not at work. He did his own cooking, and ate but little. He would never take a meal at a restaurant, and lived on as little as possible. He had a few friends who tried to persuade him to send for his wife, but nothing could change his mind. He would simply say that he didn't want to see her again.

One day, a man from the southeastern part of the county came in with a saddle that he wanted repaired at once. He brought into the shop a jug of whiskey, sat it down and told Old Joe to help himself, if he liked whiskey. The man evidently didn't know Old Joe's habits. He told Old Joe that he had other business in town and would be back in about two hours for the saddle. Old Joe promised to have the work done by that time.

When the man returned, he found that the saddle had been repaired and that Old Joe was lying on his bed. He also found that his jug seemed very light. He called Old Joe, but got no answer, so being, in a hurry to get going, he walked up to Old Joe's bed and shook him, and it seemed to him that Old Joe was getting cold, though it was a hot day.

The man walked down the street and found a doctor and told him that he thought Old Joe was dying. The doctor walked up to Old Joe's shop with the man, and found that Old Joe was dead. His wife and daughter were sent for. In Old Joe's bed was found a little leather bag containing nearly one thousand dollars.

MRS. LEGGETT'S BOARDING HOUSE

While boarding at Mrs. Leggett's boarding house at Westville, she told me the strange story of little Joe George. He was the only child of Mrs. Virginia George, a widow from North Carolina, who was teaching at Westville. Joe was eleven or twelve years old. Joe's father had died when Joe was only a few months old, and his mother had no picture of his father. Joe never grew tired of fishing. It was his greatest delight, and every chance he had,

he was off with hook and line to the banks of Town and Brown's Creeks. He was successful, too, and brought home as many fish as anybody.

One Saturday morning in the springtime, he and two other boys went fishing on Brown's Creeks about a mile north of Westville and some distance above the Brandon and Westville road crossing. The morning was fair and cool, and they had a nice string of fish when they reached that road. The two boys wanted to go home, but Joe insisted on going further down. They agreed and kept on down the creek to the mouth of Town Creek. Fishing as they went.

There had always been a bad spot of quicksand at the mouth of Town Creek. Joe probably knew nothing of that, for he had waded out, into Brown's Creek to loosen a hook, and then kept standing in the water fishing. When he started to move, he found his feet sticking down in the sand nearly to his knees. He threw his hook and line out on the bank and tried in earnest to get out, but his struggles only sent him deeper in the sand. The sand was nearly to his pockets. He became alarmed and called the two boys. They felt that he was in distress and came at once. When they reached him and found his condition so bad, they made every effort to get him released, but could not. The sand was getting around his waist and they were sinking themselves. Just at that time they saw some men coming and they called to them for help. The men took some rails from a nearby fence and laid them beside Joe and then standing on the rails, proceeded to dig him out. When they got him out he was unconscious and very cold.

One of the men wrapped his coat around Joe and they hurried to his home in Westville. His wet clothes were taken off and he was wrapped in warm blankets and given some stimulants. He went to sleep, and finally roused a little, but was soon unconscious again. A doctor had been called and said that congestion was setting in. About an hour later he revived again and said a few words. Soon after, although it was a bright, sunny day, the lights of his life must have been fading, for he suddenly began repeating the little prayer his mother had taught him, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep." Then after a long silence, "If I should die before I wake, I pray." There was another silence. The prayer was never finished.

Those standing by thought he was dead, but after a long pause, he suddenly woke and pointing toward the door said, "Mama, I see Daddy." His mother looked towards the door. When she looked back at Joe, he was dead.

VINSON MEEKS AND VOO DOO ISM

Voo doo ism, serpent worship and sadistic rites probably originated in Africa. It maybe that the fierce heart of the sun produced strange ideas and images in the brain. Certain it is, that many of the slaves brought direct from Africa, possessed those strange beliefs. A case in point was that of Millie. She and several hundred others of her tribe were captured by a stronger tribe and sold to a slave dealer, on the west coast of Africa near the mouth of Niger River, then were brought to America to be sold as slaves.

Vinson Meeks, one of the early slave owners of Simpson County bought Millie and her baby, at the slave market in New Orleans about 1824 and brought them to his home on Silver Creek. She was a small woman, with heavy jaw and protruding teeth. She knew only a few English words. It was very difficult to train Millie to do any kind of work, and, Meeks left her training almost entirely to other slaves. Only one of his slaves, a young woman, took any interest in Millie, but she learned a great many of Millie's strange beliefs and chants.

When any one died, that Millie knew, whether white or black, she would beat her chest and croon her mournful chants, at night for nearly a week. A few months after she was brought to the county, her baby died. She

mourned terribly for many days, then all at once, she grew calm and told the woman she had found a new baby. The woman didn't know what she meant, but noticed that she had been slipping away during the day and sometimes at night and she wondered what Millie had, found.

She reported the matter to Mr. Meeks, and he directed her to watch Millie and see that she didn't run away.

She soon noticed that Millie always went down a certain grassy lane to a patch of broom straw, where she disappeared. One day soon after she saw Millie starting down the lane, and she very cautiously followed, on the outside of the lane. She finally located Millie lying on some straw, and then to her horror, saw that she was nursing a large rattlesnake. She turned and ran back to Mr. Meeks and reported what she had seen.

Meek took his gun and went back with the woman, but told her not to disturb Millie as she would probably be bitten if she was disturbed. They both watched and waited. Finally the snake, drew off to itself and began to coil itself up in the straw, Millie turned over and stretched herself. Then she got up and went to the house. When she was out of sight, Meeks shot the snake and then carried it to a brush pole and burned it.

He didn't want Millie to be able to find it. Millie mourned terribly and kept saying that somebody had stolen her poor baby. She soon said that she would find another baby, and one moon light night, the same woman who had been watching her, heard her making a low, humming noise in her cabin, and presently noticed a large rattlesnake entering

Millie's cabin thru a knothole in the door. She ran and called Mr. Meeks and he came with his dogs and they caught the snake as it was getting thru the knothole and pulled it back. Meeks killed it and then getting a light he searched the place for other snakes and found several.

Meeks then found that Millie was terrifying all his slaves and that he had better get rid of her. A few days later he sold her to a slave trader, who carried her away.

EDMOND VANZANDT

One of the most colorful figures of the early years of Simpson County was Edmond Vanzandt. He was a son of John Vanzandt, who came from North Carolina about 1820 and settled in Simpson County.

Edmond Vanzandt was a small boy when his father first came to the county and most of his life was spent here. His father was a slave owner and was able to give Edmond a good common school education, as most slave owners employed teachers from the eastern states to teach their children. There were no free schools in those days and the teachers were generally well educated, most of them being ambitious young men seeking their fortune in a new country.

When Edmond Vanzandt reached the age of 21 years, he was able to secure employment in a store in Westville, and afterwards engaged in the mercantile business himself. He was a man of fine appearance and manners took great interest in public affairs and soon became one of the most Influential men in the county.

In 1845 he became a candidate for sheriff. His opponents were William McCaskill, O. J. Dye, William Tullos and Robert Southworth. McCaskill had been elected in 1843 and was serving his first term, and he was a very popular man, was reelected, but Vanzandt received the next highest vote and when McCaskill resigned in 1846, Vanzandt again offered for the place at the special election held on September 29th of that year. In that election Vanzandt received 163 votes, while G. H. Webster received 60 and William Chatham received 51. In 1817 Vanzandt was again elected sheriff, defeating Jeremiah Fortenberry by a vote of 258 to 170 for Fortenberry. In 1849 he was re-elected without opposition and again in 1851 without opposition.

Vanzandt was a very cool, courageous man and did his duty as sheriff. But of course, at that time, there was much drunkenness and a great many lawless men. In dealing with them, Vanzandt made many enemies and too, his health was failing, but in 1853, he made the race for Circuit Clerk and by a hard fight managed to defeat young T. L. Mendenhall, who was just then coming into prominence in the county.

On account of his health he was not a candidate again and I understand that he died about the end of his term as Circuit Clerk.

WYATT MILES

A few years after the Civil War, Wyatt Miles, who lived a little southeast of the town of Harrisville, owned and operated a store. The storehouse fronted south and was a very substantial building with heavy double doors at the front. In those days, whiskey was sold almost everywhere, so Miles kept some whiskey on hand for his customers but not in very great quantities. He didn't like to sell whiskey so he kept the whiskey in his smokehouse in five-gallon jugs. He didn't allow drinking in the store and customers had to take their whiskey away when they bought it.

One day in the spring of the year, there came a great storm out of the Southwest. The path of the storm was nearly a mile wide, and it caused great destruction. There were about a dozen men in the store when the storm was coming. Miles asked all to help hold the door, and by all bracing themselves against the door, they kept it from breaking in, but the top of the building was blown off. The storm soon passed and was followed by a downpour of rain. All were wet and cold when the rain ceased. Miles then said, "Well boys, if I had some whiskey, we would take a drink, but I know it is all gone for the smoke house is blown away. I had three five gallon jugs in there, but I know they are gone."

One man said, "I'll go see." He went to the place where the smokehouse stood and not a sign of it was left but the three five gallon jugs of whiskey had not been moved. He carried one to the store and all took a drink. Then they began taking notice of the damage. They found that the barn had been blown away, but that a large cow that was in the barn was not injured, but was on the outside of the lot fence grazing around. The roof had been torn from Mile's residence, and many houses in the neighborhood had been destroyed.

A few days after the storm some men crossing the path of the storm a few miles south of Miles' place were attracted by some vultures in the top of the trees along the edge of the path of the storm. Looking up, they saw what they took to be the hair of a woman, hanging from the broken top of a tall pine. The top of the pine had been twisted off and there was a deep split on the broken top.

They secured axes and cut the tree down. When it fell, about twenty feet of the top of the tree broke off and split open. In this part, they found the head of a woman, but so battered and crushed it could not be recognized. No part of the body was found, as it had evidently been torn away when the head was caught in the split in the tree. It was their opinion that the woman had struck the tree just as the top wag twisted off and been caught in the split before it closed.

No one ever knew who the woman was or where she came from, or how far she had been carried by the storm. The head was about sixty feet from the ground when it was discovered.



This and That



THE J. F. WEAVER LUMBER COMPANY - D'Lo

At the very kind invitation of Mr. J. F. Weaver, I recently visited the manufacturing plant of the D'Lo Manufacturing Company, which is owned and operated by the J. F. Weaver Lumber Company.

I found it extremely interesting, and for benefit of the readers of the News, who have not visited the plant, I will give a brief description of it.

The whole plant, including yards, roadways, railroad tracks and buildings, covers an area of forty acres, though fourteen more acres have recently been added to the grounds. The offices, warehouse and gasoline station, are on the street running north and south, or old Highway 49. The sawmill, recently installed, stands a little further away. It is operated by steam, and band saws with shotgun feed, are used. When the lumber leaves the mill it is carried on live rollers, over endless chains, along a roller bed one hundred and fifty feet long. As the lumber moves along on the chains, it is removed by persons standing by to four by four cross boards are fifty-four inches long. When the lumber has been stacked on them to the height of about six feet, a yardmaster, usually called a straddle buggy, and is a powerful machine, straddles the stack of lumber, and the wings of the yardmaster drop down by a movement of the machine and the steel blades at the ends of the wings pass under the ends of the cross bars, then by another movement, the load, weighing from two-three thousand pounds, is lifted a short space above the ground. The yardmaster then carries the load to the yards for stacking, and there is left for several months to be dried by air and sun.

The amount of lumber stacked on the yard is usually about three million feet. When sufficiently dry, the lumber is carried to the main building to be manufactured into the various products that are now being manufactured. The main building has not been entirely completed, but will be soon. It is one hundred feet wide and three hundred long. It has a concrete floor built on the level of the floor of the cars that stand on the sidetracks of the railroad alongside the building. The building is of steel with aluminum siding. There is not a post in the building, the steel girders overhead being one hundred feet long.

Machines, too numerous to mention, have already been installed, and are in operation. At the north end of the main building, which is being rapidly completed, is the electric dry kiln, where the lumber will soon be dried. A short distance south of the main building, is the building, which was built during the war period. It has concrete flooring, but is built of wood. It is one hundred feet wide and one hundred and fifty feet long and contains a number of machines, all in use.

While this plant is designed mostly for the manufacture of lumber, a great many other things are made. A very interesting feature of the plant is the manufacture of prefabricated houses. By this means a person can order anything else. All he had to do is to give the plan and dimensions of his house, and every piece of it will be cut out, from foundation to the roof, and sent to him to be erected without waste or loss. Mr. Weaver stated that he had already sold about fifty of these houses and was getting orders for more all the time. I noticed a large truck standing loaded with a whole house ready to move away.

This plant is a wonderful addition to the Town of D'Lo, and the entire county. At present one hundred and fifty persons are employed at the plant and about fifty are employed in the woods. When the main building is completed, about two hundred persons will be employed at the plant. The weekly payroll is now forty-five

hundred dollars and will be more than five thousand dollars. The plant has already cost more than half a million dollars, and will cost more than a million when plans now contemplated are completed.

Mr. Weaver is a fine, friendly man, farsighted and with ability of a very high order. With all of his business activities, he finds time occasionally to give a few moments to his two dogs, which follow him continually; and although one of them has lost a front leg entirely, it follows him with that devotion only a dog can show. A man who loves his dog, will always have friends.



DOCTOR J. L. PATTON

Doctor J. L. Patton was an educated man and took great interest in public affairs, and enjoyed talking of past events and the manners and customs of the pioneer days in the country.

When I was a small boy I heard him tell of attending a house raising at the home of Egleston Overby near Rocky Creek in Simpson County. He was a boy at the time, but he remembered the people who were there as if it had been but recently. When he reached the place, he saw about twenty men and women there and also a number of boys and girls. There was a large amount of logs all hewn, boards, rafters, sille, blocks, chimney sticks and plank, ready to be used in building the house. The men and women all wore homespun clothes, and all were bare-footed except two or three very old men.

Overby had built a small log house when he moved there, which was in the spring of 1835. He remembered that the women were busy at the little log house making a quilt and cooking. On the outside was a large pot in which a large quantity of meat was being cooked. There was a dirt oven in the yard, where bread and potatoes were cooking.

The work on the house began early and went on rapidly. While the young men and middle-aged men went on with the work, the old men sat around a fire and smoked their clay pipes and talked. There was an old fellow who everybody called "Uncle Billy," who claimed that he had fought in the Revolutionary War under General Francis Marion. He loved to talk of how he rode with "Swamp Fox" and how wonderful General Marion was.

He also said that he had seen General George Washington and General Greene. He still dressed in the revolutionary style, wore knee trousers and a long frock coat, both of homespun cloth. He wore stockings and low quartered shoes. He had come out from the "Carelinies" as he said, with his daughter. His appetite was good and there was nothing he enjoyed more than a drink of good whiskey. The doctor had noticed that Uncle Billy took a number of drinks during the day, but their only effect was to "loosen up" his tongue, and set him talking about riding with the Swamp Fox.

Another old man had fought in the war with the Seminoles and the Creeks. He claimed that he was in the Battle of Burnt Corn under General Andrew Jackson. He was not so interesting as Uncle Billy, but he loved his pipe and his nowl just as well.

Two other old men had fought in the War of 1812, and been with General Jackson in the Battle of New Orleans. They disputed each other in a number of things, and after taking several drinks, began to quarrel about what happened at the Battle of New Orleans and wanted to fight, but about that time the order was given to get ready for dinner. The work stopped at once.

The men all went to the spring and washed their hands and faces from a tub. Then before sitting down to dinner

everybody took a drink of whiskey. The dinner consisted of corn bread, potatoes, venison, fresh pork, mutton and turkey. There were no cakes or pies, but there was plenty of potato pudding, which was very good.

The house was finished about the middle of the afternoon and was to be dedicated that night with a dance to "smooth down" the new floors, which were made of plank sawed with a rip saw. The rip saw planks were not all of the same thickness, and made a very rough floor, but they were driven together so as to prevent cracks in the floor.

The doors and windows were made of the same kind of planks and were hung on wooden hinges. The chimneys were made of sticks and mud. However it was a comfortable house and lasted a long time.

Responsibility, the high price of self-ownership. - Eli J. Schleifer

Man's fear of ideas is probably the greatest dike holding back human knowledge and happiness. - Morris L. Ernst

A STORY OF PIONEER DAYS

In 1832 the tobacco crop in the hill country of northwestern South Carolina was almost a complete failure. To add to the troubles of the tobacco growers the price was very low. At that time tobacco was the only "money crop" of the failures of that section. After the crop was gathered and sold, a number of tobacco growers got together and decided to move to Simpson County, Mississippi. In that number were James Gardner, Matthew Carter, William B. Slater, John Smith, John McDuffie, William Peacock, Harmon Powell, Andrew J. Wilcox, John Brown, Phillip G. Clark Henry Powell, Henry Walker, Pete Brewer, Young Welch, George I. Boggan and David Hays.

When they got together to decide on their move they found that it would require many months to get ready. Many of them had no wagons and many others were lacking in equipment for such a long trip, as it was about 900 miles. They decided to proceed to secure wagons and teams and leave the following year in the early fall, and it was agreed that they were to plant early corn and sweet potato crops so that they could be gathered early. At that time all wagons were handmade in local wood shops, and required a great deal of time to make a wagon. The hubs were made from locust trees and the spokes and felly of the wheels were made of well seasoned oak. The rest of the wagons were strong and well built.

The wagon bodies were made on the Conestoga plan, and were very much like a boat; in fact, they could be used as a boat in case of necessity. They were long and the sides were about 30 inches high. In the center they were 5 or 6 feet wide and the ends were about four feet wide.

The bow frames for the wagon covers were high, and when placed on the wagon a tall man could walk from one end to the other without striking his head on the top of the bow frame. The wagon covers were made of heavy cloth and came well down on the sides of the body. The ends of the wagon covers were furnished with strong cords that could be drawn closely together so that on cold days the wagons were almost as comfortable as a house. Most of the wagons were drawn by oxen and it required three good yoke of oxen to draw a wagon. Many of the men had difficulties in securing sufficient teams, but they finally succeeded.

The teams had to be supplied with well made yokes and plenty of oxbows had to be secured. The work of building the wagons kept all the wagon makers and blacksmiths in the neighborhood very busy all through the spring and summer of 1833. Besides the wagons and teams all had to be well supplied with a large quantity of

tar to be used on the wagon afterwards. Tar was obtained from what was known as pitch kilns by which the tar was extracted from pine faggots or splinters.

It was their intention to get started about the 15th day of September, 1833, but an epidemic of measles broke out about that time, and they were delayed until about the first of October.

All of the men who were moving to Mississippi were married except Young Welch and George Boggan, who were really nothing but boys, as they were only about seventeen years old. Both of them wanted to take a trip as they had relatives in Simpson County. Young Welch was related to the wife of Frank Grubbs and George related to Gideon Rials, both of whom already resided in Simpson County.

Young and George did not plant any corn in 1833, but they worked in wagon shops and become experts in making wagons, wagon bodies, bow frames and ox yokes. They had no wagon or team but at odd intervals, they made a light running Conestoga wagon for themselves. During the spring and summer of that year they operated a number of tar kilns and made a lot of tar from pitch pine they found back in the hills. They made several barrels of tar, which they sold for enough money to buy a fine yoke of oxen. They also did enough work and sold enough tar to buy plenty of provisions and feed for their oxen to make the trip. They were very proud of their wagon and team, but as they had only one yoke of oxen they bought two extra pull chains in case they should need help in crossing a stream. George also had a little yellow Mule named Tommy which he desired to carry with him, and as he was small and Young was large they agreed that Young would drive the wagon and George would ride the little mule.

All of those who were moving met at the little village nearby on Saturday before leaving the following Tuesday. There they met all their neighbors. After talking of their trip, told them goodbye while many toasts were drank at the saloon and much banter and joking. It was a very sad occasion and many wished they had never promised to go. On the following Sunday they visited relatives, and those visits were very sad indeed, for they knew that they probably would never see one another again. On Monday they loaded their wagons so as to be ready to start early on Tuesday morning. The wagons were well loaded, not only with household goods, but every wagon carried what was called a grub box which was filled with provisions. There were also half a dozen extra wagons for currying feed for the teams. Besides that nearly every man was supplied with a right considerable amount of money so that they would be able to buy what they might need at such towns and villages as they would pass.

On Tuesday morning George and Young were the first to reach the village which was the starting point. George carried his gun and his two hunting dogs, and Young was seated in the front of the wagon. Pretty soon the other members of the party began to arrive. A few men rode horseback and let their boys do the driving, but most of the men drove their own wagons. There were about thirty children in the party of nearly all ages. As George and Young had the livest driving and fastest team, and as George was riding his mule, it was decided that they should take the lead. At a given signal the procession started. They traveled ten or twelve miles that day and camped near a small stream of water. Camp fires were built and supper prepared and most of them, for the first time in their lives, slept on pallets around the camp fires. On the whole trip great quantities of coffee were made and after supper they would sit around the camp fires, and smoke, drink coffee and tell of their experiences during the day. Several of the men were good fiddlers and would get out their fiddlers and play until everybody was sleepy.

On the second day they started early, George and Young taking the lead and it was fortunate that they did. As they were getting ready to leave camp that morning, a great storm seemed to be coming up from the South. There were heavy black clouds and great roar of thunder. Some suggested that they stay in camp until it had passed. Others thought it better to go on. It was finally decided to leave at once. When they had gone about two

miles the storm struck the road behind them. It soon passed and then rain came down in torrents. They had to stop until the rain was over.

About the time the rain ceased, one of the men come running along by the wagon asking if any one had his little girl, Fanny, in their wagon. None had seen her. There was nothing to do but go back to the camp and see if she could be found. George Boggan loaned the man his mule and several of the men who had horses went with him. Before they reached the old camp site, they found the road so blocked with timber that they had to hitch their horses and proceed on foot. When they reached the camp they found the road covered with fallen timber. They felt sure that the little girl was dead, but were going to find her if possible. They called her several times and then a man heard her answer. Then a little bit later they found her sitting in the open end of a large hollow log. She was unhurt. Her father took her in his arms and scrambled over trees and brush until they reached the horses. When they reached their wagons and reported what they had seen of their camp, they were thankful for their escape, for if they had waited for the storm to pass their outfit would have been destroyed and many of them killed.

The rain was so heavy that all the small creeks and branches they crossed were overflowed. George Boggan was again in the lead on his mule. In the afternoon he saw a wagon standing in the middle of a small creek and a man standing in the front with a small yoke of oxen. The oxen had stalled and couldn't pull the wagon any further. George got down to the creek and jumping off his mule waded in to help the man save his oxen. He then called to Young to bring his oxen and the pull chains.

In a short time Young had loosened the oxen from his wagon and fastened the pull chain to the ring of his ox yoke and reached, the creek. He then swung his oxen around and took the ends of the chains and waded down to where George and the man were standing. Then he fastened the chains to the end of the wagon tongue and went back

and started his team. They soon had the man out of danger, and the wagon out on high ground. The water had run through the wagon body and his wife and two little children were almost drowned.

The next morning they moved on again, and soon after they started they met some men who told them the Indian chief, Jim Boy, was causing a good deal of trouble in Southeast Alabama. They also told them that they were in the neighborhood of Chief Cornstalk, but that he appeared to be friendly. They moved on as rapidly as possible as winter was coming on and, they had many large rivers to cross.

They crossed the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers on ferries, but they crossed the Chickasaw Hay at the covered bridge, which was a toll bridge; they crossed Leaf River near the present town of Taylorsville. They reached Simpson County in February, 1834, and at once arranged to rent land for that year. Later they entered and located on land in Simpson County as follows:

William Peacock entered land now owned by Taylor Peacock; David Hays entered land now owned by Homer Hays; James Gardner entered land now owned by K. W. Allison, G. M. Welch and Reno Westerfield; John McDuffie, entered land now owned by Wiley Ainsworth; Harmon Powell entered land now owned by Mrs. A. R. Magee and J. J. McLendon; John Brown entered land now owned by Mrs. Stanley McLendon, W. A. McLendon, W. E. Grayson and B. R. Lee; Pete Brewer entered land now owned by M. Q. Holbrook; George I. Boggan entered land now owned by Mrs. M. J. Fortenberry Matthew Carter entered land now owned by G. M. Welch; William B. Slater entered land now owned by R. H. Mitchell, G. M. Phillips, the D. H. Finch Estate and D. L. Finch; John Smith entered land now owned by L. R. Grantham and T. Overby; Andrew J. Wilcox entered lands now owned by Wiley Ainsworth and J. J. McLendon: Phillip G. Clark entered land now owned by Mrs. Ida E. Sykes; Henry Powell entered land now owned by Mrs. Dena Coleman, W. G. Luttrell, Miss

Aileen Millis and J. J. McLendon.

If you have a gift ...bring it.
If you have a song...sing it
If you have a talent ...use it.
If you have love ...diffuse it.
If you have sadness...bear it.
If you have happiness...give it
If you have religion...live it
If you have a prayer...pray it.
If you have a kind word...say it.

There is no true freedom except through the discipline of truth. - Unknown

He cannot make progress who dares not make decisions. - Unknown

No reward can bring back lost time. - Unknown

Minds are like parachutes. They won't function unless open. – Unknown

Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,
Life in three words health, peace and competence.
Pope

Blessed is he that considereth the poor.
Old Testament

JASON EVERETT and THE LETTER

A few months after the court house and jail of Simpson County were burned in 1844, the Board of Police let the contract for the erection of a new courthouse and jail. Both houses were to be built of brick. The brick were burned near Westville and all the necessary lumber was obtained from nearby mills, but had to be first dried and then dressed by hand. All this took time and it was in the year 1845 before actual work was begun on the building. The work gave employment to a considerable number of workmen, among whom was Jason Everett, who was a native of Vermont. He was a brick layer and carpenter and was very efficient in his work, He was a man of considerable education and well informed on all public questions. He secured board at the leading hotel in Westville and spent most of his leisure time in reading and talking with the other boarders. He never drank whiskey, but enjoyed smoking his pipe.

It was soon noticed that he never received any mail, and that he never spoke of his people in Vermont. Many supposed that he left his old home on account of some trouble. His rather inquisitive landlady tried to get some information regarding his early life, but did not succeed. All she learned was that he was born in 1795 and that he left Vermont when he was 21 years of age, and that he had never returned, and that he had never written to any of his people. He did say that there had been no trouble, but that he had drifted away and was really ashamed to write.

He said that when he left home, his parents were living and that he had a brother and two sisters. He never gave the name of his post office in Vermont and no one could induce him to say what it was.

He was very liberal and always contributed to those in distress. Except for one severe heart attack, Everett was in good health all the time he lived in Westville, which was about three years.

Sometime during the year 1846, two men from Vermont came to Westville on a prospecting trip. Everett was out of town at the time and they didn't meet him, but when it was learned that they were from Vermont, many questions were asked them about him. They stated that they knew a number of people in Vermont by that name and might be able to locate his people and they would try. Nearly a year later a letter for Jason Everett reached Westville. In the upper left hand corner was a request that if not called for it would be returned to Mrs. Mary Allen, Brattleboro, Vermont. When the postmaster handed the letter to Everett, he looked at it a long time, then slumped down in a rocking chair in the corner of the building. He sat very still and some one noticed that there were tears in his eyes. Soon after the letter dropped from his hands. The Postmaster felt that something was wrong and rushed to the chair. Everett was dead. The letter had not been opened. Many wanted to open the letter, but the postmaster would not allow that and it was returned to Mrs. Allen.

PAT MULCHAHY and MIKE O 'BANNON

The first Simpson County Courthouse burned early in 1844, and later in the year work was begun on a new courthouse. Among the men employed were two Irishmen, Pat Mulchahy and Mike O'Bannon. Both were carpenters and brick layers. They were about forty years of age, strong and well built. The only thing they liked better than a drink was a fight.

Like most Irishmen of that time they took great interest in politics. Mulchahy was a democrat and O'Bannon was a whig. The presidential campaign was on when work was begun on the new courthouse. A dozen or more men were employed, and the arguments were often ended in a free for all fight.

There were five saloons in town, three of them operated by Whigs and two by democrats. Almost every day there were five or six fights in and around the saloons. Mulchahy delighted in singing a rebel song, with the refrain "Oh Henry Clay, Oh Henry Clay, You Better Go Back, You Better Go Back To Stay." He rarely concluded his song before some whig knocked him down. Then Mulchahy gave them a fight that would have done credit to Sullivan and Kilrain.

O'Bannon provoked many a fight by yelling in a loud voice: "James K. Polk and George M. Dallis, One For Hell, the Other the Gallis." He nearly always gave this rhyme in a crowded saloon after taking a drink.

The fights were terrific: jaws were broken, teeth knocked out, eyes often nearly punched out, and many a man had to be hauled home. Strange to say, Mulchahy and O'Bannon never fought, though they would visit the same saloon and drink together.

When drinking together they delighted in singing Irish songs. Both were fiddlers, and when they were drinking, playing the fiddle and singing their Irish songs, crowds would gather to listen and applaud. Perhaps love for the old country was the tie that bound them.

When the election was over and it was found that Clay had been defeated, O'Bannon took a week's spree. While on this spree a big rough fellow, who had voted for Polk, made an insulting remark to O'Bannon. When O'Bannon attempted to strike him, he fell, and there was loud laughter, but like a flash, Mulchahy was on the fellow who insulted O'Bannon, and when Mulchahy had finished with him and asked if anyone else wanted to fight, nobody took the challenge.

Like thousands of others O'Bannon wept bitterly when the news came that Henry Clay had been defeated. He was sitting at the counter of the drinking saloons when the news came. He drank and drank and could not be consoled. He had heard Clay speak in the State Capitol at Jackson that same year and he couldn't believe that Clay could be defeated. Clay was the ablest leader of his party, its greatest orator and personally one of the most popular in America. No party had a grander leader than Henry Clay.

Curiosity is the wick in the candle of learning. - William A. Ward

JAKE PERKINS

Jake Perkins came to Westville about 1845. He claimed to be from Alabama and was a millright. He helped to build a few mills, but later was employed at a tan yard near Westville. He didn't like the work and soon after secured work at a still on the creek north of Westville. He liked to sample the whiskey as it came from the still, but he never allowed himself to get drunk. But after taking a few samples he would boast of the money he had, and he delighted in showing a few gold coins that he carried loose in his pockets. He also loved to boast of the wealth of his Uncle John in "Alabama".

People who knew him well paid no attention to his boasting and most of them knew that he had no money, except the few coins that he carried. But to impress them more he bought one of those hollow low belts that were commonly used at that time by people who had money that they wished to carry with them. These belts were usually worn under a person's clothing, but Perkins wore his belt over his shirt but beneath his coat. He pretended to have a great deal of money in the belt. The owner of the still advised Perkins to quit boasting of the money he had, as it would probably get him into trouble. But Perkins told him he was able to attend to his own business.

One rainy day two strangers came to the still and bought some whiskey, which they proceeded to drink. Then they got into a conversation with Perkins, and of course he boasted of the money he had and showed them the loose gold coins in his pockets. About that time the owner of the still was called up town and he left the two strangers at the still with Perkins. When he returned to the still the two strangers were not there, and he saw nothing of Perkins. He called, and receiving no answer, became uneasy and went in search of him. About fifty yards west of the still, he found the body of Perkins lying behind a log near the roadside. He had been shot in the back of his head, and had been robbed of the gold coins, and the hollow belt had been cut open. Evidently there was nothing in it except some pieces of paper that had been stuffed into it.

The sheriff was notified and pursuit was made of the two strangers. They were overtaken a few miles west of the still and offered no resistance to arrest. They claimed that they left Perkins at the still a few minutes after the owner went to Westville. They did not have the gold coins that Perkins carried. However their pistols carried the same kind of bullet that killed Perkins. Some people thought that the owner of the still killed Perkins but very few believe that.

A few years later a man who had never been suspected, just before he died stated that he had killed Perkins because Perkins had betrayed his sister in Alabama. His wife said he was "out of his mind" and that he had no sister.

THE FICKLIN FAMILY

One day in the spring of 1858, George Smith was crossing Pearl River in a canoe. When about the middle of the stream he noticed a canoe drifting down the river towards him. He waited until it came to him, then saw that

there were two boys asleep in the canoe. He hitched his boat to the drifting canoe and carried it to the shore. After fastening the canoe, he took the boys out and asked them their names. They said Joe and Jimmy. They did not know any other name. They appeared to be about five years old. They wore comfortable clothing, but were very hungry. He took them home with him and made every effort to locate their parents, but failed to do so. Smith and his wife had no children of their own, and were glad to have the two boys with them.

After the Civil War, Smith moved to Ellis County, Texas and engaged in farming. His nearest neighbor was a man named Ficklin. They lived about a mile apart and had frequently seen each other in town, but never visited each other. Ficklin had several children, and one day in town, Smith remarked to Ficklin that their boys resembled one another very much. Finklin had never seen Smith's boys and asked him to bring them over to see his boys and bring his wife as the family would be glad to see them all.

The following Sunday, Smith, with his wife and two boys, visit the Ficklin family As soon as introductions were over, Mrs. Finklin, became very excited and ran to the Smith boys and asked them their names. When they told her, she said at once. "Mr. Smith, are these your own boys?" He told her that they were not, but that he and his wife loved them just as if they were their own boys. He then told her how and when he had found them. Then, Finklin said that when they were moving to Texas, in the, spring of 1858, he found the ferry rope broken and had to wait until another could be procured. While they were preparing dinner on the bank of the river, they suddenly noticed that the two boys had disappeared. They began to search for them and could trace them down to the river, but no farther. They searched the river for the next two days trying to find them. They finally gave them up as lost and came on to Texas.

The Ficklins agreed for Smith and his wife to keep the boys, but to allow them to visit them as often as they desired. The following winter Smith and his wife both died of pneumonia and by the will left all their property to the two boys.

PARSON SAM WEATHERFORD

Parson Sam Weatherford located in the southeastern part of the county sometime after 1830. He bought a small farm and built a substantial dwelling besides barns and out-houses. He owned no slaves and was bitterly opposed to slavery. He said it was a sin for one man to own another man. He was a very devout church man and allowed no work to be done on Sunday, not even cooking. All food had to be prepared the day before, if it was to be eaten on Sunday. He was well educated and he claimed to be a member of the Lutheran Church. Whether he was a preacher or not, was never known. He was frequently called upon to preach, but always excused himself.

On account of his views on slavery, he was very much disliked by the slave owners of the community and they rarely went about him, which was probably just as he wanted it to be. There was at that time a free person of color, who found it hard to secure work. Parson Weatherford heard of him and employed him. He built a warm, comfortable house for him. Sandy was his name and he was about thirty years of age, was intelligent, healthy and strong. Weatherford paid him the usual wages then being paid to laborers. Weatherford planted no cotton, but grew a large quantity of corn, wheat, oats, peas and potatoes. He owned a number of fine horses, also a team of oxen and a wagon. He also owned cattle and hogs.

Weatherford traded in Westville, but he went there very seldom; nearly always sending Sandy to get what he wanted. He always paid cash for what he bought, payments always being in gold. Weatherford always seemed to have plenty of money, though he never worked at anything. Sandy attended to the crops. From time to time, Weatherford hired slaves to assist Sandy. These slaves were, of course, provided with permits to work for a

number of days, sometimes for a week and sometimes for a month. Weatherford paid them full wages. Sandy saw that they were fed and furnished bedding.

They worked openly in the fields, or about the house and barns. Even Sandy never knew where they came from, or the names of their owners. They were always brought to Weatherford's place at night. They were not locked up at all and went about as they pleased. Quite often Sandy found that the slaves he had been working with on a certain day had been replaced in the night by others, but that made no difference to him.

More than thirty slaves had disappeared from that part of the country. Many people had grown suspicious of Weatherford. One afternoon, Weatherford sent Sandy to Westville for a few small articles. Sandy went on horseback, got the articles and returned sooner than expected. He reported that he had heard that a raid was going to be made on Weatherford's home that night and that Weatherford would probably be hung. Weatherford had a lot of gold, which he placed in saddlebags. He then gave the rest of his property to Sandy. Then he and his wife mounted the best horses they had and left the country. They were never heard from again.

SOL VON BLOOM

Disaster seems to follow some men all the days of their lives. Sol Von Bloom was no exception.

He was a Dutchman who came to Westville about 1840 and engaged in the mercantile business. He had a wife and two small children, both little girls, age about four and two years. Von Bloom was a social, friendly man, made friends easily and soon had a good business. He was well pleased with his new home. Then about the year 1843 an epidemic of scarlet fever struck the town. Von Bloom's little girls contracted the disease and both died the same day. It seemed more than Von Bloom's wife could bear. She began to pine away and it soon developed that she had tuberculosis--then called consumption. About a year later she died and was buried beside her children. For a long time Von Bloom was like a man in a daze. He took no interest in anything, but friends kept coming to him and trying to encourage him. He began to take more interest in his business and was soon the leading merchant in the town.

Then another disaster came, for one night his store caught fire and was burned. He saved only a few goods and those were badly damaged. Fortunately, he saved what money he had. About a month later he started to New Orleans to buy a new stock of goods. On his way the stage coach in which he was riding was held up by a band of robbers and Von Bloom was robbed of all the money that he had. He came back to Westville and worked for a while for Hurst, another Dutchman, who was in business at Westville. He saved a little money and then went to Cincinnati and joined the firm of W. H. Goode and Company. He did well and in a few years had accumulated a considerable fortune. Then one summer he decided to come to Westville and have tombstones erected at the graves of his wife and children. He boarded a steamboat at Cincinnati and at Louisville the boat caught fire and was burned at the water's edge. Von Bloom, in trying to swim, ashore, was drowned.

SLAVE RUNNING

Contrary to public opinion, the life of a slave owner was not an easy one. To purchase slaves required a large outlay of money and to keep them depended on the slave owner's care and vigilance. Besides accident, disease and death, there was a constant loss of slaves in other ways. Slaves were sometimes stolen or run-aways. Robbery of all kinds was possible but slave-running was by far the most profitable. A young slave in good health would often bring more than one thousand dollars and almost any slave would sell for as much as six hundred dollars. All sorts of schemes were resorted to by slave runners. One of these was under the pretense of freeing the slave. There was always, during the days of slavery, a considerable number of men in the county who were opposed to slavery and as a rule never owned slaves. They had, but little to say about the matter, as they considered it to be something they could do nothing about and they did not want to offend their neighbors. Then there frequently came into the county members of slave running clans, who under the guise of being

abolitionists very quietly went among people who owned slaves, to learn the names of widows and old men who might be persuaded to set their, slaves free.

Then when a likely subject was found and approached on the subject, it was told them they had to be very quiet about it, but if they cared to see the slave set free, they would carry the slave to Ohio and free him. They always stated that they belonged to an organization that was interested in freeing slaves. It was surprising how often they succeeded in obtaining the permission of the owner to carry the slaves away. Of course, when they got possession of the slaves, they were taken away and sold. Some of the slave owners of the county soon caught on to this and sometimes later a slave that had been supposedly set free by the widow or a slave owner was recognized and bought by one of the McLaurin's of Simpson County at a slave sale in New Orleans.

After a time there was more vigilance than ever among the slave owners, and two or three men who were suspected of being connected with the scheme were horse whipped and made to leave the county. About two years later, a man and his wife came to Westville and secured board at a small boarding house. They were people of fine manners and pleasant address; seemed to have plenty of money and were well educated. They stated that they desired to locate in the county and wanted to buy a large farm and a number of slaves. On account of these statements, the slave owners did not suspect them of being abolitionists and talked very freely to them. They looked about over the county and examined several large farms but just never found anything that suited them. But one day a small son of a widow who owned four or five slaves, overheard them talking to his mother and heard her tell them that she had decided to set two of her slaves free, as they had been faithful servants for a long time. He also heard the man give her directions for delivering the slaves to him, which was to be secretly done. When the boy heard his mother give the names of the slaves to be set free, he was greatly surprised for they were her best slaves. He said nothing but went at once to his uncle and told him what he had heard. His uncle got busy, and about two o'clock that afternoon, a dozen or more slave owners assembled at Westville and called for the man who wanted to buy a farm and slaves. When he came out he was seized, then stripped of all his clothing and smeared with tar from head to foot. Then he was placed in an empty barrel, and about fifty pounds of feathers were poured over him. Then he, was placed on a pole, carried to the court house and turned loose. He was then given two hours to get out of town. He still has one hour to his credit.

JOHN WELCH

One of the early settlers of Simpson County was John Welch. He and his wife, Patsy, were both Irish. Their only child was a small boy about two years old. They located a mile or more east of Rials Creek Mill. John's principal occupation was ditching. He was large and strong, did good work and secured many contracts in the southern part of the county. After he had selected a location, neighbors came and offered their assistance in building a comfortable log house, and with their help he soon had as good a house as anybody in the neighborhood. John was witty, and good-natured, and was very popular with his neighbors. He was always invited to house raisings and long rollings and his wife was invited to the quiltings and social gatherings.

John and Patsy were pleased with their location and often gave quilting parties and log rollings to which their neighbors were invited. Then almost suddenly they noticed that quilting and other entertainments would be given to which they were not invited. John also noticed that his company was not wanted by any body except those he worked for. He and Patsy wondered what the cause was.

Then one day at the mill, a foolish young fellow walked up to John and said to him "Is you a Catholic? " John, somewhat nettled, said, "Of course I am, what else should I be?" John then realized that he and Patsy were almost ostracized. They worried about it a great deal. They loved company and liked their neighbors. They did not want to move away. John had many contracts and wanted to carry them out. It was very hard on Patsy.

Then the hardest blow of all fell. Their little boy became very sick and soon died. Nobody came about them though they knew that his death was known in the area. John's brave heart almost gave up and Patsy could hardly bear up against these calamities. John went to the mill and bought a few planks from a man who was building a house. He did not say what he wanted with the planks, but carried them home and made a coffin for his child. When it was finished he said to Patsy, "We will go to the little graveyard and I will dig a little grave for our dear, sweet boy. He had no wagon, but had a ground slide and owned a little mule. He hitched the mule to the slide, and then placed the little coffin on it. Patsy led the mule and John walked beside the slide with his spade on his shoulder. They passed the mill and saw several men standing on the mill dam, but no one spoke to them. When about half way from the mill to the graveyard they met Mrs. Pollie Williamson, then a young and very spirited woman. She was returning from Westville and was riding a good horse. She knew John and Patsy and she immediately stopped and asked them about their troubles. She had heard of the death of the little boy. She at once said, "This won't do; this is a shame. Wait, at the grave till I get there."

She rode away at full speed till she reached the mill. Then she called to some men who were there and asked them what they meant by letting a man bury his own child. One shiftless fellow spoke out and said, "I don't have no truck with Catholics." She then said, "You don't have no truck with anything else that looks like work."

In the meantime Mr. Rials shut down the mill and came out. When he heard what "Miss Lottie", as she was called, said, he said, "Men, this won't do. We must go and see about this." Nearly all of the men went at once and when they reached the graveyard, found John digging the little grave. Mr. Rials said, "Stop, John, we will do this for you." When the little boy was buried, all apologized for the way they had treated John and Patsy, and more than ever tried to make them happy and contented. Other children were born to John and Patsy and they lived long and happy years, always true to their faith.

COLON FLOYD AND THE COLD-BLOODED KILLER

One of the most brutal of the early outlaws in Simpson County was Lorenzo Cox. He was probably the most cold-blooded of all the robbers, murderers and killers. He operated over a large part of south Mississippi, and his name was dreaded wherever heard. He made the boast that no man could insult him and live. He was always heavily armed and a "dead shot."

One time, a man living near the present Mount Zion Church happened to own a very large, fierce dog. Old Lorenzo in passing the place one day was almost bitten by the dog. He didn't see the owner of the dog, but thought he was at home. So he sent word to the owner of the dog that he would be killed on sight at the first opportunity. The man and his wife were so frightened that they sold their place and moved to Texas.

On one occasion, Colon Floyd, an early settler of the county, started on a business trip to some point in Covington County. He was riding a good horse and carried a considerable amount of money. On the road he was joined by a man who said his name Hunter. They traveled together for a few miles and Floyd told the man that he was going to see a certain man on some business. Hunter at once told Floyd that he knew the man and was going that way himself. Some distance further along the road they came to a dim road leading in a southwest course. Hunter advised taking that road as it was nearer. Floyd didn't like the appearance of Hunter, and refused to take his suggestion. Hunter then said he would go on with Floyd.

At the next house, Floyd pretended to be sick and stopped. The owner of the place was sitting on the front porch and invited Floyd to come in. Hunter rode on. When Hunter was out of sight, Floyd told the man that he stopped because he had gotten afraid that he would be murdered by Hunter. The man told Floyd that it was fortunate that he stopped, as the man was not Hunter, but was Lorenzo Cox. He further advised Floyd to go back

home as fast as he possibly could, or he would be ambushed and murdered. He also rode with Floyd for several miles to protect him.

Cox had killed so many men that there was a price on his head. At one time several men went to his home to kill him. They fired his house in the night and thought that they would get him as he ran out, but either he was not at home or his wife managed to get him out without detection. The next day, two or three of the men went to the burned house to see if he had been killed. That was what he suspected they would do, so he secreted himself and killed two of them. The men wounded Cox but failed to kill him.

The following year, sons of one of the dead men came from Texas to kill Lorenzo. They found him in his field, but he reached his gun before they could kill him, though he was severely wounded. He killed one of the brothers. His wife was probably dead at this time, and nothing was heard of Cox for about two weeks, then some men passing that way observed vultures on the roof of his house. So ended the life of Lorenzo Cox.

CHARLIE HOFFMAN

Charlie Hoffman and his wife, Peggy of Massachusetts came to Westville in 1845. Hoffman claimed to be a carpenter, brick layer and stone cutter. He secured work on the new court house and proved to be a very efficient workman. He rented a small house and soon became acquainted with nearly everybody in the village.

Hoffman drank very little, although there were six saloons in Westville, where the workman on the court house and others would assemble after quitting time, drink liquor and play poker. Hoffman was very expert in the game of poker; in fact, so expert that he soon found that very few would play with him.

Hoffman and Peggy were both bitterly opposed to slavery. He made no secret of his views on that question. He often stated that if he should become the owner of a slave, he would set the slave free. Even though he had to take the slave to a northern state to do so.

One day in the early winter of 1846, a slave trader came to Westville trying to sell the slaves, but without much success. Nearly everybody who wanted to buy slaves felt that it would be unsafe, as they feared that the slaves had been stolen. The slave trader spent most of his time in the saloons playing poker. He was also very efficient at that game, and it was soon found that he had very few equals.

Hoffman had not engaged in any of the games, but had often stood by and watched the slave trader play; then one Saturday afternoon, at the slave trader's request, Hoffman took part in a game. It was not long before everybody was out except the slave trader and Hoffman.

The stakes were running high. Hoffman put one thousand dollars in gold on the table, which the slave trader could not match. He then said to Hoffman that he would put up two slaves, Sam and his wife, Mary. Hoffman won again. and the slave trader turned Sam and Mary over to him. That ended the game and the next day the slave trader left town with the remainder of his slaves. Hoffman carried the slaves to his house and gave them the little house in his back yard in which to live.

The men working on the court house would often ask him when he was going to set his slaves free. His answer would be that he had to wait until he went north. He soon found that Sam relieved him of a lot, of work around his home. Sam attended to his horse, cut wood, cleaned the yard, and drew water.

Mary was a good cook and relieved Peggy of the drudgery of housekeeping. They began to decide that slavery was not such a bad thing after all and it was soon noticed that Hoffman had nothing more to say about freeing the slaves.

In 1847 he bought two more slaves. And then at the close of the Mexican War, he bought a slave woman and her three small children. He then moved away from Westville, but instead of going north, he took all his slaves and moved to Texas.

Note: The Mexican War ended May 30, 1848.

Doctors

R. E. Giles, son of William Giles b. 1829 near Nottingham, England came to Westville in 1859. During a heavy snow fall (8 inches) the good doctor put on 3 pairs of pants; heavy wool socks; heavy shoes, with long wool socks over them; coat and overcoat; plus a large wool shawl, to answer out-of-town calls. Called his horse "Kennesaw Mountain". He had left two sisters in England. One died young and the other married a Mr. Hoffman. Later Dr. Giles brought her grandchildren to America.

William Estes came from North Carolina in 1853. Built a Mill known as Estes Mill Creek.

A. L. McRae, a native of Virginia and graduate of U. of VA. Studied at U. of Baltimore. Wife and only child (dau.) died in Yellow fever epidemic of 1878.

George John Daniel Funches b 1819 in S. C. Graduated from Memphis, Tenn. Succeeded by Henry King Farmer in 1887 in the Legislature.

John Franklin Alford b 1842 Studied medicine at U. of Louisiana. Began his practice in 1870.

Samuel T. Mosly, native of VA b. 1816 came to Simpson Co. about 1840. Served in Mexican War under Col. A. K. McClung.

George Julius Caraway b 1857 in Miss. attended Medical College of Alabama at Mobile.

Henry Lafayette Guynes b 1858. Educated at Tulane U. in New Orleans.

Collins McRea Hyde b 1865 Educated at Memphis Medical College

Emanuel Plummer Neely b 1862 attended Tulane U. Located at Harrisv.

Edmund Dewitt Barron b 1864 attended Tulane. Located Copiah Co.

Wyatt S. Miles, native of Simpson Co. b. 1865 Educ. at Tulane U.

John Duncan Wilkerson, native of Smith Co. b 1864. Educ. U. of Tenn.

Doddridge McCallum, native of N.C. b 1834. Grad. of U. of S.C. also studied at U. of Mich. Located at Westville in 1867. After 1907 resided in Weathersby

Christopher Norman native of Madison Co. b 1828 Grad. of Memphis Institute & U. of La. Was a surgeon in Civil War. resided D'lo.

Thomas M. Walker native of Rankin Co. b 1863. Attended lectures at Vanderbilt U. in Nashville. Tenn. Started practice 1887. First located in Jefferson Davis Co. Remained there until the Gulf & Ship Island Railroad was built then moved to Mendenhall.

John L. Ware native of Simpson Co. b 1873. Attended lectures at Memphis Medical College & U. of Nashville. Tenn.



Caduceus

The Staff considered as a symbol of the Greek god Hermes and the Roman god Mercury. The fable tells that Apollo gave his staff to Mercury in consideration of his resigning to him the honor of inventing the lyre. As Mercury entered Arcadia with this wand in his hand he saw two serpents fighting together; he threw the staff between them and they immediately wound themselves around it in a friendly union. The staff entwined with two serpents is the symbol of the medical profession.

(kah-dyoo'-see-us)

JOHN SIMMONS AND HIS SON JOE

John Simmons, a native of Ohio, located at Westville about the year 1834. He bought a tan-yard and saddlery. All the work was done by slaves, but they were expert in their trade, and Simmons soon had a profitable business. Good saddles were in great demand and brought a fair price. Simmons also took great interest in horse racing, and kept a number of horses, both for racing and trading. In the fall of that year he returned to Ohio, and on his return stopped in Kentucky and bought a slave and two race horses. He and the slave, Tom, rode the horses from Kentucky to Westville. Tom took great delight in riding the race horses, but was getting too fat for horse racing. Simmons had one son, a boy name Joe, who was the son of his first wife. Joe was about fifteen years of age. Tom and Joe spent much time together, although Tom had to work hard at the tanyard. Simmons would let Tom train the race horses, but on account of his weight would not allow him to ride in the races. That nearly broke Tom's heart and he became slack in his work. One day Joe heard his father say that he was going to sell Tom and that a man would be there the next week to buy him. Joe felt disturbed about that and the two of them began to lay plans to prevent Tom from being sold.

They finally decided to go to Ohio and then Tom would be free. If they left the first of the following week, they would be gone before the man came to buy Tom.

They selected the best horses that Simmons owned and they managed to secure enough food to last them a few days. Joe borrowed a little money from a neighbor. Just after dark on the day, they started on the road north. It rained early in the night and there was no way of tracking the horses, although it was the next day when Simmons discovered they were gone. At first he thought that Tom had been stolen and that Joe had been taken for a "blind". Tom and Joe kept going north, but traveled mostly at night, for fear of being questioned by

patrolmen. When they were asked any questions, Joe always said he was going back home and that Tom belonged to his father. By good luck they finally reached Ohio. Joe decided to sell the horses and he got a fair price for them. Tom had no trouble getting work. Joe remembered that John Freeman was in business there and that he used to know him in Westville.

Simmons hired several men to help him locate his boy, as well as the slave and they went out in all directions, but could find no trace of them.

When he returned to Westville, he found that two other slaves had been stolen, and that two horses were missing. He managed to get a trace of the horses and he and two other men followed them. They were only about a day behind. The thieves evidently assumed no one was following and slowed down. They rode on after night until they came to a large barn near the roadside. Seeing a light at the barn, they stopped and made investigation. People and some horses were inside. However in quietly looking into a nearby shed they found two slaves tied to a post with two guards watching.

After a long time everything quieted down and Simons and his men decided to wait for daylight before rushing the men to release the slaves.

At daybreak, the thieves got the surprise of their lives when they were awakened by Simons. They could offer no resistance. As soon as the slaves were released, they were told to take the thieves guns and tie them securely with rope. The slaves also got on the other horses and the group started on the return trip.

The thieves were placed in jail in Westville and Simons hired two men to keep watch at night, as he was afraid that an effort would be made to release them. An attempt was made, not long after, when the thieves broke out of jail. In the mixup the thieves were shot and later died.

No one knew who had assisted them in the break-out and no inquiry was made.

Simmons offered a large reward for the boy. Nothing was heard of Joe and the slave Tom and many false leads were investigated. The time passed slowly until—

Early in May of the year 1851, W. J. Goode & Company of Westville, received notice of the shipment of a bill of goods from Cincinnati, Ohio, and Goode went with his freight wagons to Vicksburg. When he appeared at the office, he was told that the goods had arrived and that a young man from Cincinnati wanted to see him. The young man was at the hotel and when sent for, he introduced himself to Goode, giving his name as Joe Simmons. He asked Goode if John Simmons was still living at Westville, and was told that he was still there, but in very poor health.

Goode had never known Joe but had heard of his strange disappearance many years before. He at once arranged to take Joe with him to Westville.

Joe was well dressed and appeared to be in good circumstances, and had letters of credit from the firm that shipped the goods to W. J. Goode & Company.

They were on the road almost five days before reaching Westville. When they arrived, Goode sent for John Simmons. He didn't state what his purpose was in sending for him, but requested that he come at once. He looked old and tired, but when the young man walked up to him and put his arms around him, the poor old fellow burst into tears. He was so overcome, that for many minutes he could do nothing but sob. After making

apology for giving away to his emotions, he told Joe to "come back home." Goode sent a slave to carry Joe's Small trunk, and Joe took his father's arm and they walked over to the Simmons home. That night Joe told of his adventures during the past sixteen years that he had been away. He stated that Tom was well and had a nice family and a good home. Joe said that he never spent the money he received for the horses but invested it in real estate, which has become very valuable, being worth more than twenty thousand dollars. Joe spent a month with his family and finally persuaded his father to return to Ohio. Simmons sold his property, taking the four slaves with them, where they would be free in Ohio.

THE FOX BROTHERS

In 1846, W. J. Goode and Company contracted with Benson and Beverly Fox from Hinds County, to build a new storehouse on the west side of Main street in Westville. The Fox brothers were twins, about 30 or 35 years old. They dressed well and were men of good appearance. They were so nearly alike that it was said nobody could tell one from the other. They dressed just exactly alike wore the same kind of hats and boots, had their hair cut at the same time and were clean shaven at all times. Instead of calling one another by their given names, each one called the other Bud.

The Fox brothers employed several men to assist them with the work and were getting along fine until one Saturday afternoon there was a large number of drunken men in town, among them being a trapper named Hatch. The trapper was a large man and had a very overbearing personality. On some pretext, Hatch got into a quarrel with one of the men working for the Fox Brothers and then knocked him clown and was proceeding to stomp him when one of the Fox Brothers interfered and told him to quit stomping the man. Hatch then said "I'll give it to you" and started toward Fox with a large hunting knife in his hand. Fox shot Hatch before Hatch could reach him and he was carried into the back of the saloon and laid on the counter and later was carried to his boarding house. For a few days, it was thought that Hatch would die but he did not and slowly recovered.

In the meantime Mr. Fox had been arrested, charging him with assault and battery with intent to kill. One of the Fox Brothers had been arrested, that is. About a month after the fight had occurred the case was set for hearing in the Justice of the Peace court and when one of the Fox brothers was brought into court he entered a plea of not guilty. Both of the Fox brothers were in the court room and when Hatch was asked Justice of the Peace to point out the man who shot him, he looked at the two brothers a long time and then said he could not tell which one shot him. That created quite a laugh. Then Hatch asked that all that had been present at the time of the shooting be called as witnesses. Almost everybody in town was in the courtroom and about 30 witnesses were called, but none of them could tell positively who shot Hatch.

The Justice of the Peace discharged Fox, but said he did not know which one he was discharging.

Quite some time later, Hatch was killed in a drunken brawl in Gallatin, the county seat of Copiah County at that time.

While enormous strides have been made in communication in recent years, there's still a lot to be said for the smile.

Franklin P. Jones.

BEAR ADVENTURE

One, day at the noon hour, at the Fenn Hotel in Westville, I heard A. Q. May, the Chancery Clerk ask an old lady, who was present, to tell her adventure with a bear.

The old lady was Mrs. Amanda Ainsworth from Covich County. She was very old but her memory was perfectly good. She said, "Well, it was not much of an adventure, but was exciting enough while it lasted." Everybody present gathered around to hear her relate the story, which was about as follows:

She then said, "My father was James S. McCaskill and he located on the north side of Strong River, a mile or more east of the mouth of Big Creek, in 1828. I was his only child and was then about ten years of age. Of course I was petted a lot and allowed to do almost as I pleased. I often saw bears as well as other wild animals. I was not very much afraid of bears, but was dreadfully afraid of panthers. I never saw but one or two of them, but had heard them scream at night and it was terrible to me.

One day some Indians came to our house with a lot of baskets to trade for meal and cloth. There were several of the Indians, but only two Indian women came to the house. While they were trading with my mother for cloth, I went out to where the other Indian was and found an Indian boy playing with a little bear. I wanted the bear and ran back to my mother to get her to trade for the little bear, but the Indian woman said, "Me no sell um. Of course that ended it, but she told me that there was an old bear living in a little cave across the river and that she had two cubs that I might get if I was careful enough.

"My mother at once told me that I must not try to get them. I was then about 12 years old and had but little fear of wild animals excepting the panthers. The next day I slipped away from the house and went to the river.

I walked down the river until I found a large tree had fallen across the river. It made a good foot log and I walked across on it. I walked very carefully through the woods until I reached the steep hills. Then I stood by a large tree and watched for the old bear. I did not see her that day, but I kept going across the river watching for her, and a few days later, saw her going into her cave, and saw the cubs come to the mouth of the cave to meet her.

"It was getting late and I went home. I didn't get back for several days for there came some great rains and the river overflowed in some places. I kept watching the river until it got off of the swamp. Then the next day about the middle of the morning I went to the big foot log on the river. The sun was shining and it was a lovely day. There was a great drift of logs and brush against the log and one end of it was a foot, or more under the water, as the river was brimming full.

"I wouldn't wait as I was determined to get one of those cubs. I waded, through the water on the foot log for some distance, and then crossed over to the, other side, I hurried through the woods to a tree where I could watch the cave. I waited and waited and had almost decided to go back home, when I saw the old bear come out of the cave. I watched her until she finally went over the hill. I thought, she was more than 100 yard away.

"I ran at once to the cave and crawled inside and caught one of the cubs. I then ran at full speed to the river, but just as I reached the foot log, I saw the old bear coming, and she was coming fast. Luckily I was barefooted and ran across before the bear reached the river. I turned up the river, and saw her plunge into the river. If she had kept on the foot log she could have caught me, but she went into the drift and it took her several minutes to get across.

"I reached home just ahead of her, and the dogs kept her off of me. I put the cub in the kitchen that night and thought it was safe, but the next morning we found a hole in the roof and the cub was gone. I often wondered what would have become of me if the old bear had caught me."

A SLAVE WHO WAS A KING

George Montrose, a young Englishman, came to the county about 1828. He bought a large tract of land and owned a considerable number of slaves. In the winter of the same year he visited New Orleans and attended the slave market. There he saw a young slave extremely well built and very strong. After considerable jockeying, he purchased the slave. He bought no other slaves and then he came home. He noticed on the way that the slave never spoke at all, but acted more like a frightened animal. George felt sure that the slave would run if he got a chance, was surprised at his not running when he did have a chance. This slave never said anything until he was told to join the other slaves in doing some work. Then to George's great surprise, the slave told him that he was a king and that he did not have to work, and he was not going to work. To add to George's surprise, the slave spoke good English.

George first thought he would conquer him by whipping him, but then decided to test him out and find why he claimed to be a king. The slave said that his father before him had been an Ashanti king and that when his father died he became king. He stated further that he owned many slaves in Africa, and that one day while he and a number of the slaves were hunting elephants they were attacked by a band of slave hunters who lived south of them; that he and a large number of his slaves were captured and carried to the coast and sold to a slave trader. Then they were put on a ship and brought across the ocean and sold. He stated that he and hundreds of others were herded into the ship like cattle, and that they were more than two months in crossing the ocean. He said that many of the slaves on the ship died on the way, and were thrown into the sea.

He further told George that a missionary, had visited his father in his lifetime and had persuaded his father to let him be carried to Montrovia and educated. He further stated that if George would send him back to Africa his people would raise a large sum of money for his release. That set George to thinking, and he asked the slave to give him the name of the missionary he had mentioned, and his place of residence. The slave told him, and George then told him that he would write to the missionary and that if what he said was true he would set him free, provided his people would raise ten thousand dollars for him. George then told him that as he was a king he would not make him work until he heard from the missionary. It was several months before George heard from the missionary. When he did the missionary's letter stated that what the slave had said was true, and to bring him over and he would see that he was paid the \$10,000. George decided to risk it, and he sold his other slaves and his farm and took this slave to Mobile where he engaged passage for them to Montrovia. When they reached Montrovia, they met the missionary, and he took them to the old home. There his people met him with great joy and gave a grand festival. The money was paid. Later George went to England, and later to the United States, making a brief visit to Simpson County.

MRS. LOTTIE WILLIAMSON

Dr. McCollum tells one of his stories about "Aunt" Lottie Williamson. One spring in crop planting time a man in that neighborhood had one of his legs broken by some accident. He was not able to walk for several months, and what little crop he had was made by his wife and a little girl about ten years old. Then in the early fall there was an epidemic of measles through that neighborhood. They were very sick and the man relapsed. It was generally thought that he was going to die. The neighbors decided to have a prayer meeting at this man's house and pray for him. Several of them met there one night, and many prayers had been made when a large boy walked into the doorway and said, "I come to bring Aunt Lottie's prayers." The boy said, "No, I want somebody to help me bring it in". Then two or three men went out with him to his wagon and helped him take a box to the front gallery and someone brought a torch. Several other torches were carried and the box was opened. In the box was a ham, a side of bacon, a bushel of potatoes, half a bushel of meal, a peck of flour, a gallon of molasses, a gallon of milk, some green coffee and some butter and eggs. Also a small jar of lard. The women put everything in its proper place and they discovered that the man's cupboard, like old Mother Hubbard's, was bare.

Then one of the women said, "Well, Aunt Lottie's prayer is worth more than all the prayers that you men have made, and we ought to be ashamed of ourselves. I suggest that we have another prayer meeting tomorrow night and all of us bring something to these poor people."

They all agreed, and the next night they all came back with a good many other people and brought a lot of things for the sick people. They also brought feed for his horse and cow. The man and his wife got well, and in a few years were prosperous.

BASCOMB PORTER

John McDonald was an itinerant horse trader, and for many years following the Civil War, he would come into the county with a drove of horses. He always rented a pasture and barns from Col. Williams who lived about where Walter Banks now lives. McDonald kept all kinds of horses, many of them unbroken and half wild. One Year he rented pasturage from Col. Williams and brought with him his nephew, Bascomb Porter. Bascomb was a tall, slender boy about 15 years old, and very timid. He was also afraid of horses, and never tried to ride one unless it was perfectly gentle. McDonald and Bascomb both boarded with Col. Williams.

One Sunday afternoon while McDonald was away five or six neighbor boys came along and persuaded Bascomb to go with them to the pasture. These boys knew that Bascomb was afraid of horses and they determined to play a trick on him. They drove several of the horses into the barn and caught one of the wildest of them. They suddenly seized Bascomb and in spite of his struggles placed him on the horse with his back toward the horse's head. They then took a small rope and tied his feet close together underneath the horse. They then opened the barn door and gave the horse a slap with the bridle reins and let it go. It ran at high speed around the pasture. Bascomb managed in some way to keep from falling underneath the horse. As it was making its second round one of the boys opened the pasture gate and the horse dashed through and across the road into the woods. Very fortunately for Bascomb it ran between two saplings. Its head and neck went through all right but its head and shoulders wedged between the two trees and stopped it.

Bascomb was screaming at the top of his voice and the horse was kicking and squealing and making every effort possible to get loose from the trees. It so happened that a small boy had run to Col. Williams and told him about what the boys had done to Bascomb. He at once grabbed a heavy riding whip and started in the direction of Bascomb and the horse. He soon reached them. With his knife he cut the rope that bound Bascomb's feet and took Bascomb off the horse. Bascomb was nearly dead and fainted as the colonel removed him. Col. Williams led the boy off to one side of the road and then caught one of the saplings and pulled it off far enough to loosen the horse. The horse was badly hurt and scarcely able to walk for awhile. When Col. Williams got through with that bunch of boys most of them were not able to sit down for days. Col. Williams then carried Bascomb to his house and put him to bed. When he got well enough to travel his uncle sent him home. He was afraid some of the boys that Col. Williams had whipped would want to take vengeance on Bascomb.

GEORGE JENKINS

A few years before the Civil War George Jenkins lived a few miles East of Westville. He lived in a small house built on public land, and he cultivated a few acres, which he planted in corn and potatoes. His main business was making baskets, axe handles, or yokes and ox bows. He was very expert in making cotton baskets. He owned an old horse and a cart and on Saturdays would go to Westville and sell his baskets and the other things he had made, or exchange them for provisions.

Jenkins owned no land at all and he cut the timber that he needed for his business wherever he could find it. Two young farmers lived not very far from Jenkins, and one spring while they were working in their fields they heard Jenkins back in the woods calling for help. They ran to him as soon as they could. They found him lying

by an old hollow stump and found that an immense coach-whip snake was coiled around his leg, and seemed to be tightening its coils. After some time they cut a green stick and struck the snake's head, killing it. After that the snake's coil loosened and they pulled it off of Jenkin's leg.

Jenkins was unable to get up and was terribly frightened. He said his legs felt like they were broken. The young men carried him home and laid him on his bed. They examined his legs and found that they were blue, and he appeared to be in great pain. A few days later Jenkins and his wife moved to Westville. He would never go into the he woods again, and always complained of a cramping in his legs. The young men said the snake was 14-feet in length and was wrapped around Jenkin's legs three or four times.

ANN SPOTTSWOOD

About 1830, Miss Ann Spottswood opened a small school in Westville. She was a native of Massachusetts and well educated. She had a brother living in Westville, who was postmaster. Miss Ann lived for a few months with her brother, but not being able to get along with her brother's wife, she bought a place a short distance north of town on the Brandon road. The dwelling on the place was built of hewn logs, and consisted of a large room, side room and front porch. Miss Ann had a kind of ell built behind the house. It was also built of hewn logs and was about sixteen feet long and ten feet wide.

On the back side of the room she had a heavy shelf of hewn logs about five feet above the floor that extended the full length of the room. She used this room as a store room, and had the door fastened with a heavy lock. She owned a slave woman, Milly, who was strong and able to work. Miss Ann kept her busy all the time when she was at home and after Miss Ann had taught a few months she gave up the school and bought a few cows. She decided that she could sell the milk and let Milly, do the milking, as she was getting on in age and not able to do too much.

At that time there were plenty of cattle in the county, but very few good milk cows. Many people had no cows at all, so Miss Ann soon had a considerable number of customers. She kept the milk in the store room, and never allowed anyone to go in with her when she went for milk - not even Milly. She carried a heavy key fastened on a string tied around her waist. Most people thought Miss Ann was "quare", but as she attended strictly to her business, it just seemed to be her way of doing things.

One day in the spring a year or two later, a little girl about twelve years old, went to Miss Ann's house to buy some milk, and for the first time, found that Miss Ann was away from the house. She walked around looking for her, but saw nothing of her, nor of Milly, but she happened to notice that the door to the store room was open. Out of curiosity, she walked in and over to the long shelf where the large bowls were sitting. She walked close enough to see if there was milk in them, but just before she reached the shelf she noticed a movement in a stone jar that was used for a churn, sitting under the edge of the shelf. Looking into it, she saw a large snake swimming in the buttermilk, trying to get out. She started to run, but before she did, she glanced down the shelf and saw several large snakes lying on the shelf between the bowls of milk, She got out as soon as possible, and of course told what she had seen. That ended Miss Ann's trade, but she soon had other things to think about. A rattlesnake bit Milly one day while she was sweeping the house, and she died in a few hours. Miss Ann sent for her brother, but didn't want him to kill the snake. He paid no attention to that, and when he got through killing snakes the place was clear of them.