

# **Paths to the Past**

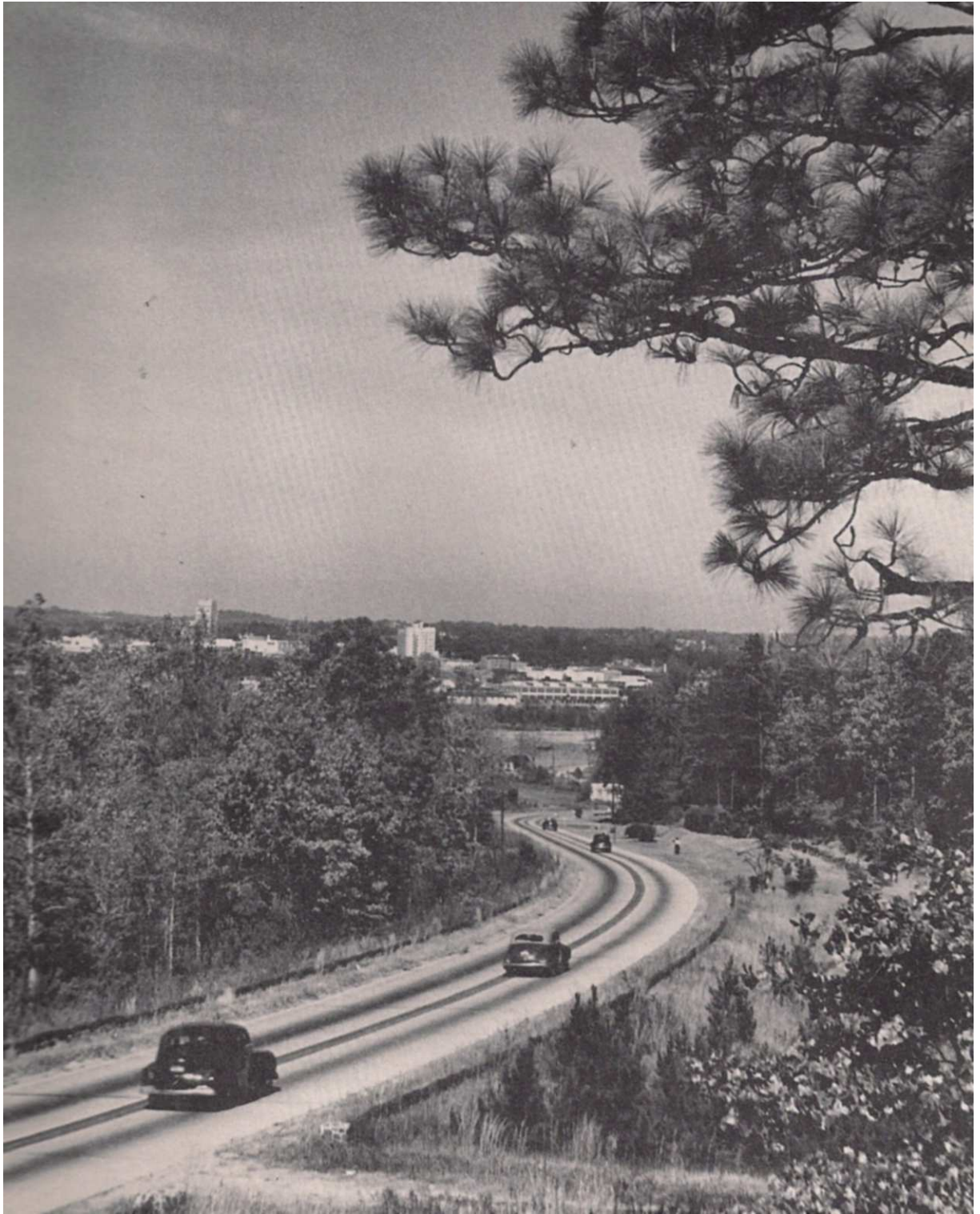
---

**An Overview History  
of Lauderdale County, Mississippi**



**by Laura Nan Fairley and James T. Dawson**

**Paths to the Past**  
An Overview History  
of Lauderdale County, Mississippi



# Paths to the Past

An Overview History  
of Lauderdale County, Mississippi

*by*  
Laura Nan Fairley  
*and*  
James T. Dawson

Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History  
MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI

Copyright 1988 by the  
Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History, Inc.

All Rights Reserved

Manufactured in the United States of America  
Design and production supervision provided by  
Quail Ridge Press, Inc.

*Additional copies may be ordered from*

LCDAH, Inc.  
P. O. Box 5511  
Meridian MS 39302

# CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	6
INTRODUCTION	7
THE LAUDERDALE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY	9
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	11
1 • Foundation on the Frontier	15
2 • Poor Man's Land: The Territorial Transition	21
3 • Carving Out a Country	28
4 • The Calm Before the Storm	42
5 • Trail by Fire: The Civil War Years	55
6 • Reconstruction and Recovery	67
7 • Riding the Rails to Progress	78
8 • The Golden Age	91
9 • Hard Times and Heroes: The Depression Years	107
10 • The Way We Were	123
11 • Famous Folks and Local Legends	134
12 • Finding Paths to the Past	151
APPENDIX: Partial Listing of Elected Officials Lauderdale County, Mississippi	171
NOTES	192
INDEX	196

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

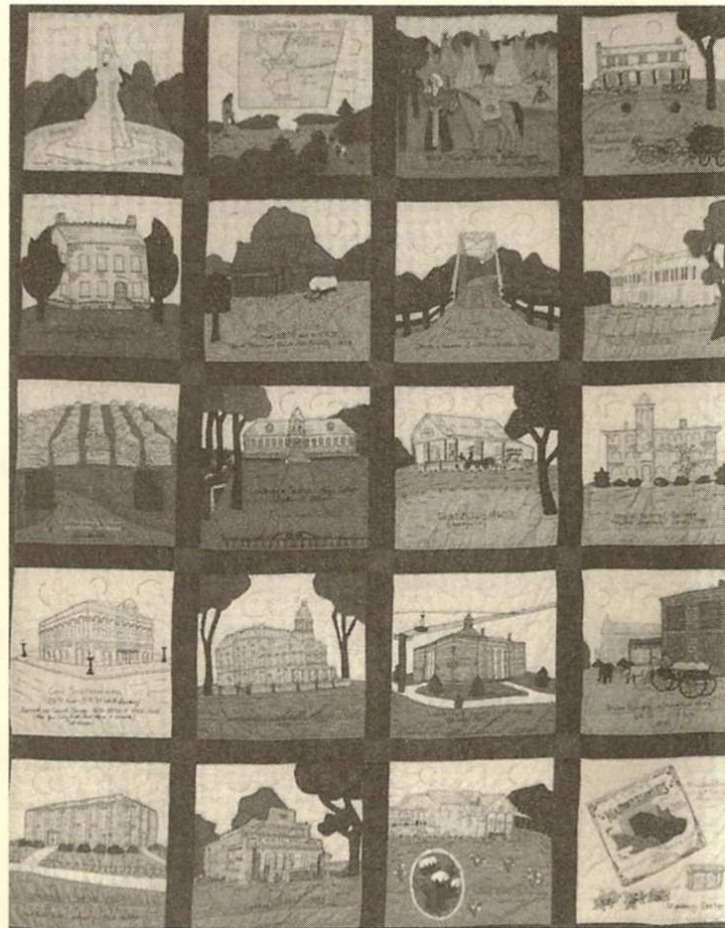
**T**HE writing of this history has been a community effort, with many individuals and organizations contributing time, energy and information. Hours were devoted to various tasks by members of the Retired Senior Volunteers Program associated with the Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History. A younger set, sixth- and seventh-grade students in the Meridian Public Schools' Talented and Gifted program, also contributed, with their special section on "The Way We Were."

Others who played instrumental roles are mapmakers Grady Herrington and Maxey Baucum, photographer Lee Davison, and staff members of the Meridian Public Library and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, who assisted with research efforts. Lee Wilkins assisted with photo selection and editing. Jack Elliott, an historical archaeologist, pinpointed the location of Old Marion's Courthouse Square, and Tom Goldman shared expert advice on local Choctaw lore.

Countless individuals across the county provided information, or assistance, including J.B. Harvey of Marion, Rebecca Brookins, Raymond Gressett, Leslie Hagwood, Birdie Mae Rogers, Anne Flynt, Mary Ellen White, Kathryn Gaddis, William Blanks, W.E. Clayton, Mrs. Evelyn "Ebbie" Smith, Mrs. Lessie Culpepper, C.L. Cahoon, Clay Stewart, Fonda Rush, Kresses Holloway, Kim Gianakos, Mrs. Mary Kittrell Winnard, Mrs. John Walters, and others.

*Paths to the Past* would not have been possible without the expert editing of Mary C. Jennings, the support of the Phil Hardin Foundation, corporate sponsors, and the backing of members of the staff of *The Meridian Star*, most notably Ray Cook, whose photograph is featured on the cover, Jerry Painter, who designed the "Paths to the Past" series logo, and Sharon White, who

provided much-needed support and assistance. T.E. Bruister, Brad Ashmore, and professors at the University of Alabama's School of Communication also helped *Paths to the Past* become a reality.



*Lauderdale County's history quilt designed by Birdie Mae Rogers*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

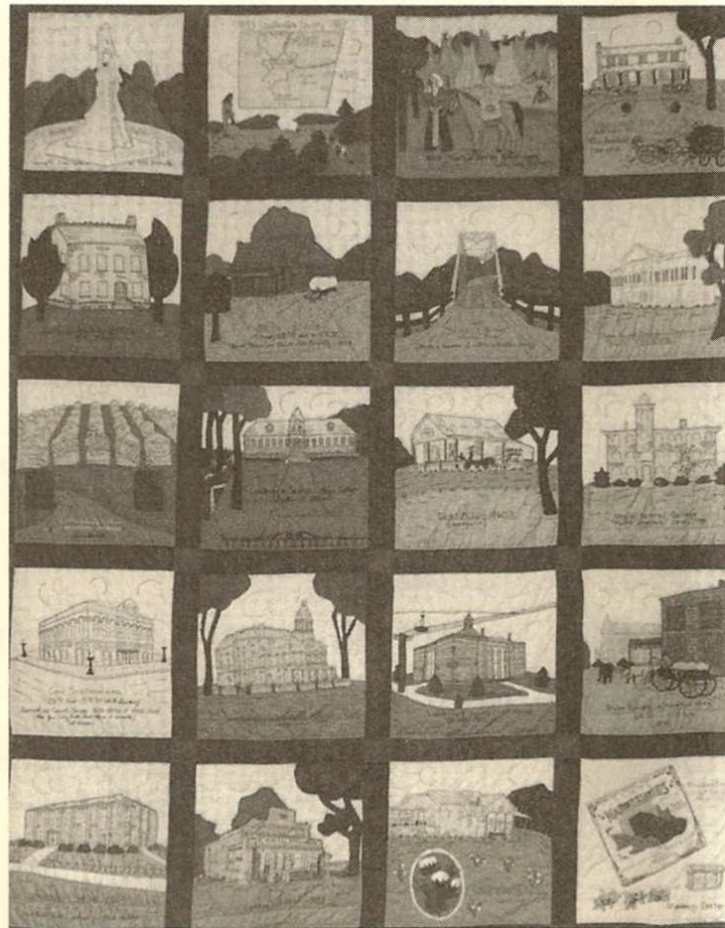
**T**HE writing of this history has been a community effort, with many individuals and organizations contributing time, energy and information. Hours were devoted to various tasks by members of the Retired Senior Volunteers Program associated with the Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History. A younger set, sixth- and seventh-grade students in the Meridian Public Schools' Talented and Gifted program, also contributed, with their special section on "The Way We Were."

Others who played instrumental roles are mapmakers Grady Herrington and Maxey Baucum, photographer Lee Davison, and staff members of the Meridian Public Library and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, who assisted with research efforts. Lee Wilkins assisted with photo selection and editing. Jack Elliott, an historical archaeologist, pinpointed the location of Old Marion's Courthouse Square, and Tom Goldman shared expert advice on local Choctaw lore.

Countless individuals across the county provided information, or assistance, including J.B. Harvey of Marion, Rebecca Brookins, Raymond Gressett, Leslie Hagwood, Birdie Mae Rogers, Anne Flynt, Mary Ellen White, Kathryn Gaddis, William Blanks, W.E. Clayton, Mrs. Evelyn "Ebbie" Smith, Mrs. Lessie Culpepper, C.L. Cahoon, Clay Stewart, Fonda Rush, Kresses Holloway, Kim Gianakos, Mrs. Mary Kittrell Winnard, Mrs. John Walters, and others.

*Paths to the Past* would not have been possible without the expert editing of Mary C. Jennings, the support of the Phil Hardin Foundation, corporate sponsors, and the backing of members of the staff of *The Meridian Star*, most notably Ray Cook, whose photograph is featured on the cover, Jerry Painter, who designed the "Paths to the Past" series logo, and Sharon White, who

provided much-needed support and assistance. T.E. Bruister, Brad Ashmore, and professors at the University of Alabama's School of Communication also helped *Paths to the Past* become a reality.



*Lauderdale County's history quilt designed by Birdie Mae Rogers*



## INTRODUCTION

by *Laura Nan Fairley*  
and *James T. Dawson*

**M**Y own journey of discovering some of life's most valuable treasures—a sense of place, love of my native state and admiration of those who cherish their heritage—has been greatly enhanced through my work on this overview history.

The book, I hope, is more than a summary of the county's story. Like the organization that sponsored the work—the Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History—it grew into a unique compendium . . . a depository of sorts . . . for some highlights of the county's history and heritage. It is unique in many regards. For instance, it is a combination of information

obtained by digging through historical documents and data gleaned from oral interviews with people across the county. It is a marriage of Jim Dawson's research and knowledge of county history and folklore and my own interest in "reporting" on our colorful past.

As is the case with so many local histories, limitations of space and time have forced us to be brief. As many prominent families, historic sites and tall tales as we managed to pack in have been left out. For that, I apologize and urge others to do what they can to document the "rest of the story."

But, we hope the effort does prove to be a



*Fairley and Dawson examine artifacts of county history*

valuable guide to the general public, educators and historians. As a journalist, I was trained to ask questions. One question that I could find few answers for was what it was that set this east central section apart from other areas. My work on *Paths to the Past*, in a way, was an attempt to answer that question by looking back. My own quest began through my association with the Archives and the man who became my partner in this project, Mr. Dawson. As we prepared weekly columns for The Meridian Star, I found that the more I discovered about this county's story, the more I found that was unique and worthy of preservation. The project eventually evolved into this book, which devotes some long-overdue attention to a section of Mississippi that has often been overlooked in other history texts.

Just as times are so rapidly changing, so are Lauderdale County, the state, and the South as a whole. Like so many other Southerners, I hope I can do my part to help us save the best of what we have. When I was growing up, I spent hours listening to rich tales of my own heritage. Today, I fear, television and the rush of modern-day life have at least endangered the time once so wonderfully spent spinning those tales. It is my hope that *Paths to the Past*, more than documenting the history of one county, will serve as an inspiration for others to find the time to share the stories that will help us remember who we are and where we have been. By looking to the past, I believe, we can find factors that have shaped what we are today. With that knowledge, I believe, we can find our way to a better future.

For more than two years, I have received the support and encouragement of both old and new friends too numerous to mention. For that, I will always be grateful. I would like to dedicate my efforts to my namesakes, two farmers and teachers from whom I inherited a love of the land . . . Laura May Fairley and Nan Graham Matheny, my grandmothers.

—*Laura Nan Fairley*

**T**HE work in connection with writing this history has been a joy! It all started one day in the summer of 1986 when Nan Fairley, who was employed by The Meridian Star, came in to get

information for a history-related story on the county. Never in my wildest dreams did I realize what the end result would be. One article led to another and we traveled about the county gathering information and material for the column "Paths to the Past," featured in the Sunday edition of The Meridian Star for some 18 months. As this adventure progressed, we developed a partnership and gathered more and more material on the county's history. Our travels took us across marshy lands, across clay hills, through thickets, down railroad tracks, across ditches, through haunted homes, into dark old stores stocked with goods of yesteryear, down hollows, along streams, and across long-forgotten grave sites.

The travels took us to houses where one-of-a-kind artifacts were shown us . . . treasures from the past. Countless people took the time to share a bit of their own past with us, giving us a better grasp of the county's history. We taped, studied and compiled the interviews. The most enjoyable times were spent with elderly people, men and women, white and black. These are the people who can tell the story because they've lived it. At first, some were leery, but would warm up to us as we talked. In one instance, I remember interviewing one subject who was hard of hearing. I got down on my knees beside his chair and yelled at him to make him know our business. Of course, the extra effort paid off, for both us and him.

Often, as we interviewed, grandchildren would gather and relate things about grandfather and grandmother. They all emphasized the quantity and goodness of grandma's cooking. . . nobody could cook like grandma . . . and grandpa's hard work. There were always smiles of pride on their faces.

Yes, it was a real experience, the collecting of our own history . . . tracking the history Lauderdale Countians made as they walked through their lives . . . just as you and I are making history as we walk down our own paths. May you all leave your footprints in the sands of time, leaving everlasting memories behind.

My efforts in writing this history are dedicated to a most precious little four-year old. She calls me "Pap-Paw," the sweetest words on earth. Her name is Tracy Renee Dawson.

—*James Thomas Dawson*

# THE LAUDERDALE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

*Paths to the Past: An Overview History of Lauderdale County* is only one of many projects of the Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History, Inc. The organization has a brief but rich history itself, having evolved in a few short years into what is becoming a model for city and county records management programs.

The LCDAH was first conceived in 1983 as Lauderdale County was observing its sesquicentennial. By January of 1984, the Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors had established the Archives Department and appointed Jim Dawson in March, 1984, to develop the department, utilizing volunteer contributions of time, effort and funds.

Under Dawson's direction, members of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program were enlisted, their initial work focusing on indexing and abstracting county records, some of which dated back to 1835.

By October of 1984, the LCDAH was organized under the laws of Mississippi as a non-profit organization, and a tax exemption was received later. Representative Rick Fortenberry sponsored a state (local) measure that allowed both the city and county to donate funds to the Archives, since the effort involved both the city of Meridian and the county.

As membership grew, Dr. Tom Wacaster, executive vice president of the Phil Hardin Foundation, and Dr. Bill Scaggs, president of the Meridian Junior College, provided initial support and direction. The young organization received a Phil Hardin Foundation grant for planning purposes. As a result of the grant, a group of knowledgeable persons from across the state gathered in Meridian in September of 1985

to map out a plan of action for the Archives, setting three goals: the establishment of an Archives; the establishment of a museum; and the writing of a factual county history.

Since then, the LCDAH has followed the plan. A second Phil Hardin grant supported research by Nan Fairley, then a graduate student at the University of Alabama, during the summer of 1987. Working closely with Jim Dawson, she composed a supplemental guide to local history for use by teachers in both the city and county school systems, while gathering information for the overview history.

*Paths to the Past*, which covers the history of Lauderdale County from its roots in the eighteenth century through the Great Depression, represents yet another accomplishment of the Archives, one that fits into the overall plan for the growth of the organization. The history, written by Jim Dawson and Nan Fairley and edited by Mary Jennings, is only one of many publications sponsored by the LCDAH. Profits from the sale of the book will go towards making the future of the organization even brighter as Dawson leads the Archives into its fifth year of existence. Other publications, which cover aspects of the county's past not fully covered in *Paths to the Past*, will also contribute to further development of the organization.

Further accomplishments highlighting Archives' achievements include the award of a grant for a Scholar-in-Residence program from the Mississippi Committee for the Humanities. The scholar, Dr. Lloyd Lewis, gathered information and material on the impact of railways on Lauderdale County and Meridian, which may serve as a foundation for a museum. The Archives also actively pursues other grants to help it

achieve its overall purpose—establishing a well-organized records management program for Meridian and Lauderdale County.

Throughout its existence, the key element to the success of the LCDAH has been the cooperation of Lauderdale Countians and others with connections to the county. Dr. Bill Scaggs, president of Meridian Community College, noted: “Jim Dawson has involved just about everybody in this effort and this is great—people feel a part of this effort.” Buck Greene added, “This Archives effort has everybody in the county on fire with interest in the past.”

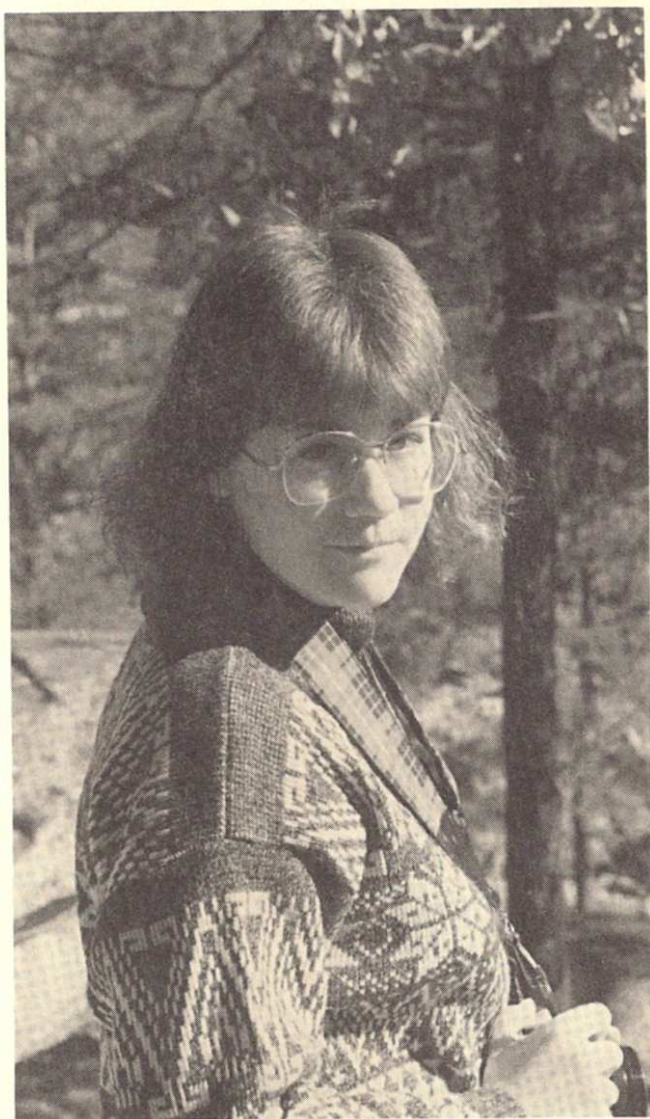
As Dawson looks to the future, he said of his volunteer efforts, “It is a labor of love, and I hope I can be around to see further growth of the organization as the people of Lauderdale County enjoy the present and future benefits of the Archives.”

For more information on the Archives, *Paths to the Past* or any other Archives-sponsored publication, interested persons may write: LCDAH, P.O. Box 5511, Meridian MS 39302.



*Meridian Street Scene, 1920*

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



### Nan Fairley

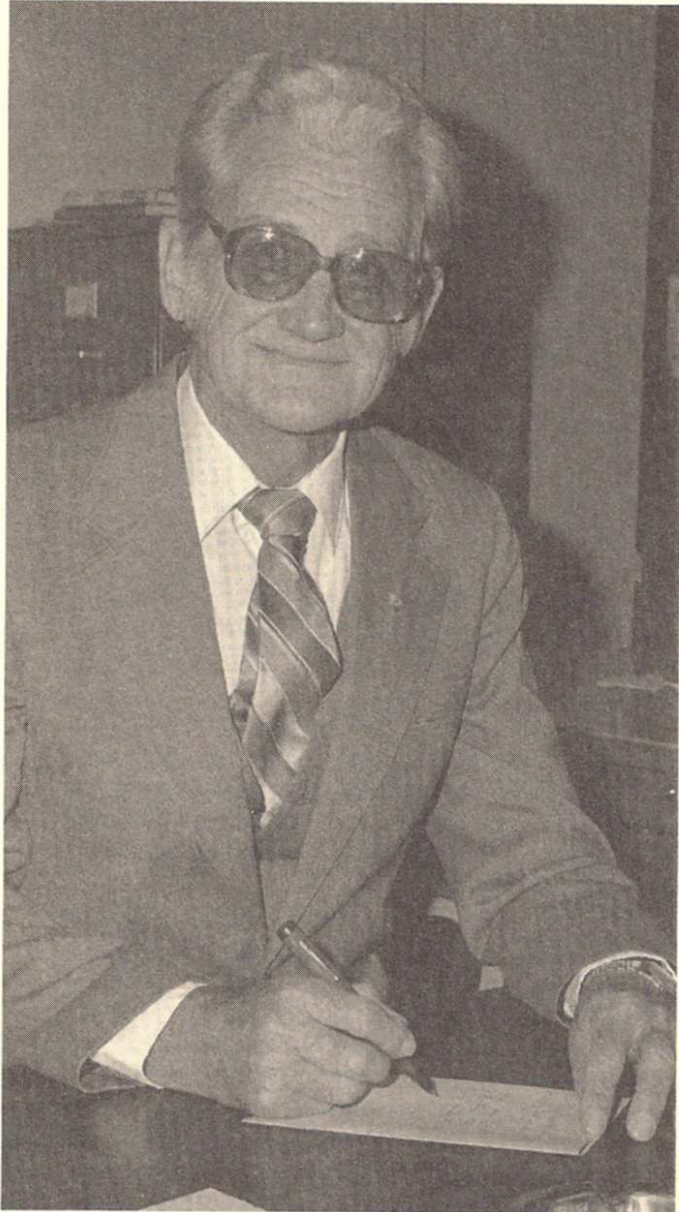
A native Mississippian, Nan Fairley brings a background in journalism and sociology to her work with the Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History.

While working on the overview history, she was also completing requirements for her master's degree in journalism at the University of Alabama, where she received the School of Communication's Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award in 1988.

Nan, who has worked on newspapers across the South in a variety of positions, also holds a bachelor of arts degree in journalism and sociology from Mississippi University for Women, where she received the Mississippi Press Women's Editorial Award Scholarship and MUW's journalism scholarship.

Through her involvement with the LCDAH and association with Jim Dawson, she received a Phil Hardin Foundation research/writing grant in 1987, the result of which was *Bringing History Home*, a supplemental guide to local history for educators now being used in the Meridian and Lauderdale County school systems. She wrote a weekly column for *The Meridian Star*, "Paths to the Past", which provided the foundation for work on the county history.

A native of West Point, she is the daughter of the late Dr. W.E. Fairley and Cora Virginia Fairley. Her connections to East Central Mississippi come from her grandparents, the late Rev. and Mrs. O.B. Matheny and the late Mr. and Mrs. Robert Fairley, of Clarke County.



## Jim Dawson

As executive director of the Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History, Inc., Jim Dawson has received the Retired Senior Volunteer Program's Recruitment Award, the Governor's Distinguished Service Award, and was recently appointed a director of the Mississippi Society of Archivists.

Although he was born in Oklahoma, his connections to Lauderdale County run deep, both his parents being natives of his Whynot. His paternal grandfather, James Eli Dawson, was a farm overseer, and his maternal grandfather, Thomas A. Means, a sawmill owner, surveyor, and farmer. He is the husband of Agnes G. Cardwell Dawson and father of Kenneth Wayne Dawson.

Dawson was valedictorian of his Whynot Consolidated High School class and went on to specialize in recruitment during his 20-year career with the U.S. Navy. After retiring from military service, he began work with the Mississippi State Employment Service. In 1984, he retired as the metropolitan manager of the Meridian Office of the Mississippi State Employment Service. During his years with the agency, he garnered many honors, including local, state, national and international awards for service to veterans.

After "retiring" for the second time, Dawson launched the drive to establish the Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History. What began as a one-man operation with a few volunteers is today an active and growing agency. Dawson says his volunteer work on behalf of the Archives is "my way of giving something back to the county that means home to me."

# **Paths to the Past**

An Overview History  
of Lauderdale County, Mississippi



*East Mississippi Female College graduates of 1888*



# 1 • Foundation on the Frontier

**T**HIS story of Lauderdale County begins in a rugged land inhabited by Indians, Scouts and 'Countrymen.' During the eighteenth century, the hills, valleys and ridges that would later be shaped into Lauderdale County were the domain of the Choctaw, the tribe that would eventually be pushed out of its homeland by a wave of settlement from the east.

In this land, from the 1700s to 1830, forces that would shape the future of East Central Mississippi came together to form a Southern-style melting pot in a land where the fingers of the Appalachian foothills reached down to touch vast, virgin pine forests. Streams and springs, varied soils and a mild climate made the area attractive to Indians who roamed the land and made it their home hundreds of years before the arrival of the first Europeans.

The forces that forged the county would begin to emerge in the eighteenth century, creating a pattern sharply divergent from the "plantation-based" past featured in many Mississippi history books. Indeed, the story of the county's early years took unique twists not found in other regions of the state, or the nation, due to the nature of its settlement. The pioneers who chose to stop in the rugged, unsettled territory of the Choctaw were a different breed. Mingling with the Indians, who opened their hearts and cornfields to the white strangers, the first settlers were independent, stubborn and resilient, characteristics that survived in their descendants.

Long before the county was established, in 1833, the foundation for the future was being laid by men like Choctaw Chief Pushmataha,

Frenchmen Pierre and Charles Juzan, the English 'Tories' who opted for life on the Indian-occupied frontier to escape American rule after the revolution, and Sam Dale, a Scotch-Irish scout from Georgia. A cornerstone was the pioneers' pathways—Indian trails followed by European explorers in the 1700s and later expanded by American scouts. Over these paths came the builders of the county.

But the Choctaw role was perhaps the most important factor in the formative years. Indeed, without the cooperation of the Choctaw, the story would have no beginning. Today, one lasting mark left by the Indians can be seen in the countless Choctaw names left behind for creeks and communities such as Alamucha, Chunky, Sowashee, Okatibbee, Kewanee, Toomsuba, and Tallahatta.

The Choctaw first opened the door to the future by trading with European explorers and trappers. Those of four nations would eventually trade with the natives. If the Choctaw could have envisioned what the arrival of the European strangers would ultimately mean to their culture and homeland, they might have rejected rather than welcomed the gift-bearing "pale-eyes."

But, the connection with Europeans did begin and grew after the French took over the Spanish fort in Mobile in 1699, though all but the most adventurous explorers at first ignored the interior lands. Among those who did venture into the area was the Frenchman Regis Du Roulett, who journeyed to villages in the region as early as 1729 to present gifts of coats and trinkets to Indian leaders while he explored the interior for

his mother country.<sup>1</sup> Although white encroachment into Choctaw lands was slight during the early part of the eighteenth century, that course would change as European competition for land and trade in the interior intensified and spawned several conflicts.

French influence had extended northward from the Gulf Coast during the early part of the eighteenth century, while the English, coming south and west from established colonies, began to court Indian alliances. In the 1750s, the British incited a number of Indian villagers to rebel against the French, who held onto their influence over the majority. The French-English conflict divided the Choctaw and led to the Choctaw Civil War. This war left behind a name for the Battlefield area in northwest Lauderdale County. One of the bloodiest battles occurred where the Lauderdale, Neshoba, Kemper and Newton county lines now converge. The conflict ended with the French victorious, cementing local Choctaw ties to that nation.

However, the Choctaw continued as a rope in the European tug-of-war when the area was ceded to the English in 1763. Spain had acquired the Louisiana Territory from France that year by the Treaty of Paris. In turn, Spain granted its portion of the region then known as West Florida to the English. As a consequence of treaties made in far-off lands, the Choctaw found themselves subject to an old enemy, the British, after more than 50 years of disruptive forces had chipped away at the very core of their once-peaceful existence. By 1765, the Choctaw had signed a treaty with the British defining the eastern boundary of the Choctaw Nation.

Bordered on the east by the English and on the west by the Spanish, the Choctaw became pivotal, and the gift-giving originated by the French continued with their successors. As a result of such contact, the Choctaw began to adopt agricultural practices, gathering in villages surrounded by their productive fields. The Indians' ties to the Europeans grew stronger as they traded their bountiful produce and deer hides as far south as Mobile.

After the American Revolution, the Choctaw found themselves again the object of 'power politics' when the Spanish moved eastward to regain control of the Floridas, which included the Choctaw Nation. After 1781, the Spanish flag flew

over the territory. The young American government signed its first treaty with the Choctaw in 1786, recognizing the Choctaw as an independent nation. Spain had viewed the Choctaw land as a buffer against American expansion, and had little impact on Indian life. By then, the Choctaws were more closely associated with the French and English who had come to live and establish families among them.

During the last years of the eighteenth century, more white settlers found their way through the piney woods to the area that would become Lauderdale County. English 'Tories', known as Countrymen, arrived to escape the consequences of the American Revolution. They joined those French trappers and traders who had already adopted the Choctaw way of life in a frontier far away from the established settlements on the Gulf Coast and at Natchez.

By 1798, Spanish rule ended in West Florida, an area then encompassing what would become the state of Mississippi. In rapid succession, Spain had ceded the Louisiana Territory to France, which in turn sold her claim to the United States, ending European juggling once and for all. But the Indians' trouble with white men was far from over, as the formation of the Mississippi Territory in 1798 broke the dam that had been holding back settlement. However, during the territorial days to 1830, the future county and her surrounding neighbors remained in Choctaw hands, a fact that slowed the influx of pioneers and promoted the growth of more settled regions of the Territory to the south and west.

The threat to their homeland was growing, however, as a few white settlers found their way into the backwoods to live basically as their Indian neighbors did. The threat would grow even stronger as arrivals from the east, some following the trail blazed by the "Father of Lauderdale County," Sam Dale, began to arrive in the early 1800s.

A closer look at the Choctaw begins with a visit to Coosa, a village site that once served as the center of government and commerce for the southern district of the Choctaw Nation. The center of the district extended into what later encompassed portions of Lauderdale, Jasper, Kemper and Clarke counties. Coosa, as the major Choctaw town, thrived from the late 1700s

into the 1800s, with a population of approximately 1,200 at its height.

According to Choctaw descendant and Meridian attorney Tom Goldman, Pushmataha, a famous Choctaw leader, governed the Indians from this village, which was situated near the present-day location of the Meridian Naval Air Station. Today, the bluff overlooking Lost Horse Creek in the rolling hills of northeastern Lauderdale County reflects little of the thriving Choctaw village, which once spread out for more than a mile. But the Indian village played a significant role in the history of both the Choctaw and early white settlers, by furnishing the greater part of overall influence in the area for seventy or eighty years prior to the birth of the county.

One historian described the attractive features of Coosa, a name derived from the Choctaw word meaning "reed-brake," saying,

In addition to corn and vegetable patches, it had orchards of peaches and plums. The waters of two streams abounded in fish. Bears, deer, turkeys, squirrels, panthers, and wild cats made their homes in the dense canebrake. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Many Choctaw are buried near the site, now pastureland of the Roy Frederickson farm. Listed on the National Register of Historic Sites, the Coosa area was explored by a Smithsonian Institution archaeologist in 1927. Many artifacts reflecting heavy European trade during the eighteenth century were uncovered at the village site then.

As an agricultural people, the Coosa Indians were capable of producing up to 250 bushels of produce from one acre. Surplus goods, along with deer and bear hides, were traded for European implements. In addition to trade, another connection forever fixed the Choctaw role in local history. As the earliest French, English and Scotch-Irish married into native families, the 'melting pot' that would influence countless descendants began to take shape. In the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth, many white men married Choctaw women, further merging two races and cultures. Even today, family lines reflecting Choctaw roots are common in the county.

The link between the Choctaw and European settlers is illustrated by the story of Charles Juzan, of French descent, who operated a trading post in Coosa. He was the son of one of the first

whites known to have lived in this region, Frenchman Pierre Juzan. According to Goldman, Pierre Juzan had acted as a trader for the Spanish after their reoccupation of Mobile and subsequently received a large land grant in this area for his services.

His son, Charles, would bridge the French and Choctaw cultures when he married Phoebe, the daughter of Oklahoma, and gained both respect and status in the Coosa world. George S. Gaines, an Indian agent headquartered in Fort Stephens, Alabama, from 1805 to 1825, left an account of his encounter with Juzan in 1806, noting:

He had an Indian family, having married a niece of Pushmatahaw [sic]—lived well in a neat cabin, entertained travellers and sold goods to the Indians, was respected by the white and Indians—was of a respectable French family. The Indian town of Coonsa [Coosa] was where he lived. This was also the residence of Pushmatahaw.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to Frenchmen like the Juzans, another group began to merge into the Choctaw world. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, "The Choctaw saw a large influx of white and mixed blood Tories who, not embracing the American uprising against England, fled their homes in the colonies and sought refuge beyond the colonial frontier in Indian country."<sup>4</sup>

Another group, blacks, also have an historical link to the Choctaw. Blacks, in fact, were in the area before the first permanent white settlers ever arrived. One purpose of Frenchman Du Roulett's mission in 1729, Goldman said, was an unsuccessful attempt to retrieve black slaves who had been captured by the Choctaw from the Natchez Tribe. The local Indians had taken the blacks when they sacked a French garrison.<sup>5</sup> These blacks would remain with the Choctaw for years to come, some of them going with the Indians when they left for Western reservations and others staying in the area to become the ancestors of generations to come.

One indication of the number of whites who came to adopt the Choctaw fields as their own is the Armstrong Indian Census of 1831. That count, which lists whites who were then connected by marriage with Choctaw in the area, includes the names of Lewis Bryan, Henry Gavin, George Johnston, John Anderson, William Langphier, Richard Booth and Benjamin Garvin. The

census also reflects the fact that a number of black slaves were living with the early white settlers. Allen Yates, for instance, owned twelve slaves, while Charles Juzan had twenty.<sup>6</sup>

Goldman, himself a descendant of an English 'countryman,' Daniel Anderson, and his Choctaw bride, said many residents of the county can trace their roots to such unions. He suggested, "Many of the early settlers were poor hill farmers not much better off than the Indians. Being of Scotch-Irish descent, they were familiar with a clan system similar to the Choctaw way of life, and they blended in well." Goldman estimated that "several hundred" white men were absorbed into the Indian culture during this period and pointed out, "The Choctaw did not view them any differently than they did the other Indians.

They accepted them in the tribe. Most of them came down here after the Revolutionary War."<sup>7</sup>

Historian Sam Wells noted the offspring of these marriages were significant as "... the mixed bloods and their white parents acted as both a buffer and catalyst to white intrusion upon Indian lands and customs."<sup>8</sup> He adds, "... these Tories, traders, and soldiers helped spawn a new generation of mixed bloods which spanned the new world and the old, making possible the eventual erosion of Indian culture."<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the Juzans and others who represent the Choctaw connection, two men stand out as key players in the formative years of Lauderdale County—Choctaw Chief Pushmataha and his white contemporary, Samuel Dale. Both men reportedly had a fondness for "firewater," a common weakness possibly resulting from the rigors of life in the wilderness. Both witnessed one of the most dramatic transitions in Southern history, as one way of life was replaced by another. And both played pivotal roles in bringing about the change, as they helped open the door to civilization for the region. The wilderness warriors, one the son of Scotch-Irish immigrants and the other a full-blooded Choctaw, both earned permanent places in the colorful pages of Southern pioneer history through their daring deeds on the frontier.

Young Sam Dale got his first taste of adventure in military service in 1793 after the death of his parents in Georgia. Left in charge of a heavily mortgaged farm and eight younger brothers and sisters, Dale accepted a burden of responsibility he would carry dutifully the rest of his life.

As commander of a militia scout company, Dale acquired a reputation as a "fierce Indian fighter and a bad enemy to have."<sup>10</sup> After his company disbanded in 1796, his knowledge of the Indian frontier would come in handy as he went into business as a freighter. By 1803, he was using that knowledge for the American government as a guide for a party mapping a highway from Georgia through Indian lands to the Mississippi River. Over this primitive route, Dale would eventually guide hundreds of Eastern families seeking a better life into the Mississippi Territory. After the turn of the century, Dale ferried pioneer families from Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia into the region, carrying Indian goods to trade on his return trip east.



*Sam Dale Monument in Daleville*

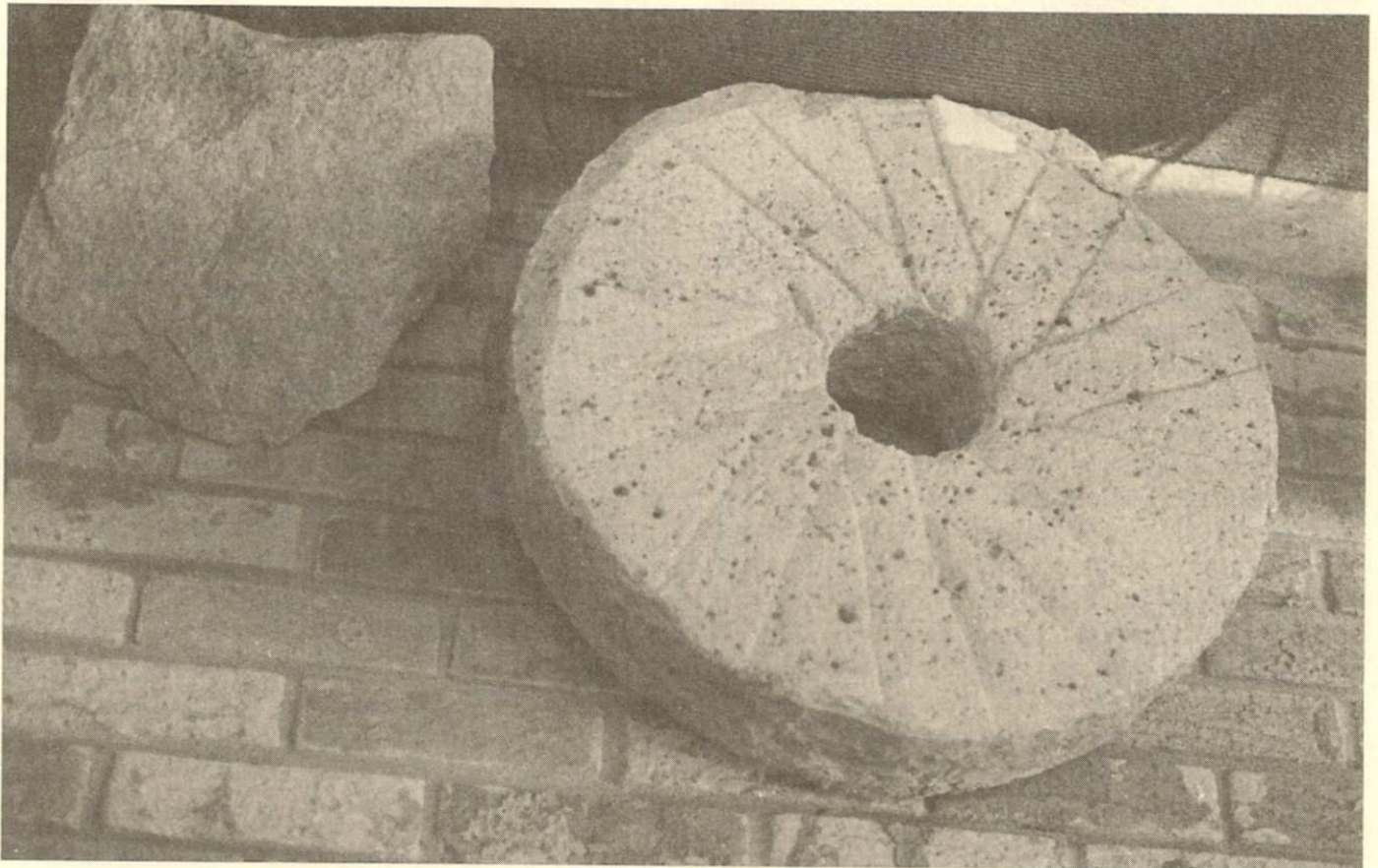
As he grew older, Dale tried to settle down, running a trading post and milling business in Creek country to the east. But, his bent for adventure drew him back into military service. Dale participated in Indian battles in West Alabama and East Mississippi during the early 1800s. Shortly after the Fort Mims massacre in 1813, "Big Sam" became a household word in the Mississippi Territory as his militia retaliated against the Indians. His fame would be sealed by other military exploits, including his famous canoe fight on the Alabama River. In that battle, which took place on a journey from Pensacola, Florida, on the Wolf Path Trail, Dale and his companions were attacked by a band of a hundred Creek Indians. Against great odds, "Big Sam" killed nine singlehandedly, according to legends.

In December, 1814, Dale and his speedy horse Paddy were called into action by General Andrew Jackson, during the War of 1812. Drawing on his familiarity with the frontier, Dale broke records by carrying dispatches from the War Department to New Orleans from Georgia in less than eight days. Later, Jackson, who had witnessed Dale's

determined race to New Orleans with the critical dispatches, said, "There isn't a man this side of Hell can stop Big Sam."<sup>11</sup>

Later in life, Dale's restless nature would be tamed by the beauty of the Choctaw land, and he purchased two sections from Choctaw Chief Ichohopi near Lizelia. From that base, he would eventually assist the American government in the removal of his Indian neighbors to Western reservations. "Big Sam" died in 1841, and his remains were removed from his homestead to Daleville in 1965. A statue stands today in the small community that bears his name, a permanent tribute to a man described as physically and morally like the Indians he dealt with.

Like Colonel Dale, Pushmataha was drawn to the "glory of a martial life" at an early age and won a reputation as a fierce warrior as he rose through the ranks of Choctaw fighters. Born in 1764, Pushmataha was to live at various locations throughout the area, his chief headquarters being in Coosa. In his early years, the Choctaw brave led war parties against the Osage, a tribe located across the Mississippi River.<sup>12</sup>



*Stone from Sam Dale's grist mill, once near Lizelia*



*Sketch of Choctaw Chief Pushmataha*

Because of his skills as both a warrior and orator, Pushmataha became Mingo, or chief, of the Six Towns District of the Choctaws, which included the Coosa area. Pushmataha helped pave the way for friendly relations between the Choctaw and early white settlers. For example, when Tecumseh visited the Choctaw village with the goal of inciting a war in response to white encroachment, Pushmataha stood firm against the plan. In the Creek War of 1813, Pushmataha and his warriors joined the American forces, leading a battalion of faithful Choctaw followers in the Holy Ground campaign. Partly due to Pushmataha's influence, "It has ever been a mat-

ter of boast with the Choctaws of Mississippi, even down to the present day, that the Choctaws as a nation never bore arms against the Americans."<sup>13</sup>

Like Dale's, Pushmataha's importance on the frontier was not limited to his military exploits. In fact, one of the most significant events of his life was his participation in negotiations surrounding the 1820 Treaty of Doak's Stand. As Halbert notes, "In the negotiations on this occasion, he displayed much diplomacy and showed a business capacity equal to that of General Jackson, against whom he was pitted, in driving a sharp bargain."<sup>14</sup>

Just four years later, in 1824, Pushmataha died as a result of "croup or quinsy, with excessive and habitual intoxication," while visiting the nation's capital with a delegation representing Indian concerns. He was buried with full military honors on Christmas Day, far from his beloved homeland. Dr. Gideon Linsecum, who lived in Choctaw country from 1822 to 1825, was an eyewitness to the grief the Indians suffered as a result of their leader's death. He wrote,

I passed his house soon after the news of his decease had reached the nation; great numbers of families had collected there; had set up and ornamented many poles and were holding a great 'cry' for their much loved chief.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps the tears fell, also, in mourning for the slow death of their way of life. Pushmataha, like his friend Sam Dale, had died ". . . just about the time when the old order was passing away, and the new order with its missionaries, its schools, its churches and its translations of the Sacred Scriptures was coming in to revolutionize all the ways and ideas of the Choctaws."<sup>16</sup>

Wittingly or not, both Pushmataha and Dale had helped set the wheels in motion for the next stage in the formation of Lauderdale County, a massive pioneer push from the east. The migration would culminate in the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, which would close the door on the first phase of area history and open the door to the next.

## 2 • Poor Man's Land: The Territorial Transition

*The country gave character to the people: both were wild and poor: both were sui generis [unique] in appearance and production, and both seeming to fall away from the richer soil and better people of the western portion of the state.*

—W. H. SPARKS

**B**ETWEEN the turn of the century and the signing of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830, the lands that would be shaped into Lauderdale County remained isolated, far removed in distance and nature from the 'civilized' areas east of the Pearl River. The Choctaw, by hanging onto their homelands in spite of the arrival of more and more white settlers seeking opportunity on the frontier, created a buffer slowing expansion to the west, even after the state of Mississippi was formed in 1817. Besides the Indian presence, other factors kept the region relatively removed from the effects of a flood of emigration that began to pick up steam after 1800. Trails into the area remained primitive, and better prospects pulled many onward to more developed regions along the Mississippi River. Civilization, indeed, had not arrived. During the territorial days prior to statehood, this thinly populated, Choctaw-dominated land was essentially lost in the shadow cast by the more settled Mississippi River region.

This point was illustrated by Ephraim Kirby in 1804 when he wrote President Jefferson noting:

The people inhabiting this section of the Mississippi Territory are peculiarly cut off from all communication with other parts of the United States.—It is about as easy to pass by land from hence to Georgia, as to Natchez. In either case, the traveller must go through several hundred miles of wilderness, possessed by savages, and be compelled to encamp in the woods, and swim unfordable streams.<sup>1</sup>

W. H. Sparks concurred on the wall of separa-

tion that continued to stand when Mississippi was created in 1817, saying that, between the eastern settlers and the inhabitants of the settled river counties, ". . . there was little communication and less sympathy; and I fancy no country on earth of the same extent presented a wider difference in soil and population, especially one speaking the same language and professing the same religion."<sup>2</sup>

These facts made the region that would become Lauderdale County and her surrounding neighbors a land apart during the first decades of the nineteenth century. However, some of the first permanent white families and the few black slaves who accompanied them began to arrive when the land still belonged to the Choctaw, joining those of French and English descent who had already put down their roots in the area. These first families represented a new ingredient in the settlement recipe. They were, oddly enough, attracted to the region for the very reasons that most early settlers in Mississippi bypassed the area for the more developed regions. In fact, one drawing card for these pre-1830 settlers was the area's isolation—and the independence and freedom that isolation afforded.

Furthermore, the piney woods of the Choctaw, with its rugged, red clay hills, ridges and woodlands, resembled the areas of Georgia and South Carolina the newcomers, mainly Scotch and Irish families, had left behind. This fact created a kind of psychological magnet, causing some of the pioneers to stop their ox-carts and wagons here as men like Sam Dale began to use their Choctaw

connections and emigrant highways to bring settlers in during the first part of the nineteenth century.

Kirby, appointed by President Thomas Jefferson to serve as a U.S. Commissioner in the Mississippi Territory east of the Pearl River, left behind candid descriptions of the nature of the settlers just after the turn of the century. In his reports to the president, he described one group that began to arrive in this area as less than commendable “. . . almost universally fugitives from justice, and many of them felons of the first magnitude,”<sup>3</sup> who were seeking a place of refuge rather than future farm land. Yet another group, according to Kirby, joined the Europeans living with the Choctaw and the “fugitives” hiding out in the region after 1800. These settlers were escaping a different type of shackle—poverty. The penniless pioneers in this group who settled on unoccupied lands had come into the area “. . . to avoid the demands of creditors, or to gain a precarious subsistence in a wilderness.”<sup>4</sup>

In agreement with Kirby’s assessment, W. H. Sparks observed the eastern section of the state as initially settled by “. . . a different people: most of them were from the poorer districts of Georgia and the Carolinas.” Furthermore, he left further evidence that its isolation—rather than civilization—attracted some pioneers into the unsettled region, noting:

True to the instincts of the people from whom they descended, they sought nearly as possible just such a country as that from which they came, and were generally refugees from a growing civilization consequent upon a denser population and its necessities.<sup>5</sup>

As time went by, the arrival of whites, from a trickle in the eighteenth century, swelled as settlers were drawn to the frontier by “. . . ambition and individualism that modern Americans can hardly understand.”<sup>6</sup> These land-hungry settlers eyed the Choctaw’s productive fields with envy, and some were able to obtain land from Indians they befriended. The War of 1812 brought more whites, as some of the soldiers liked what they saw as they passed through the area on military missions. Veterans would return later to establish some of the first plantations and settlements in what would become Lauderdale County. While unstable conditions slowed growth in Mississippi during the war, with peace came a new push and



*Remains of early settler's cabin in Snell area*

areas east of the Pearl began to “catch up” with the western river towns, at least in population, as the territory began an explosive expansion.<sup>7</sup>

In the period that followed the war, one of this area’s earliest pioneers, Libbeus Hunter, arrived in 1815 with his wife, Clarkie Davis Hunter, and four sons. He settled on property acquired from Indians near present-day Whynot. This early settler came from Cartwright County, North Carolina, and his sons—Libbeus Jr., Anthony, Ed and Isaac,—would spread Hunter roots throughout Mississippi and Alabama. In fact,



A. D. Hunter of Meridian, Anthony Davis Hunter's great-grandson, lives in Meridian today, his place in local history assured by his pivotal role in the historic flight of the Key Brothers in 1935, an event beyond imagining when Libbeus loaded his family and all their belongings on a wagon for a journey to a new world just over a century before.

Economic factors also spurred the rush westward from the older states, good land becoming a scarce commodity in the Upper South as early as 1790. Charles Lowery surmised that exhaustion of the soil, the heavy duties placed by the English on rice, tobacco and other staples after the Revolutionary War, and the development of Eli Whitney's cotton gin (1798) were factors that would lead to population increases and contribute to the formation of the new state of Mississippi.<sup>8</sup> According to Lowery, migration into the Mississippi Territory "... constituted the greatest population movement the nation had ever known."<sup>9</sup> He pointed out that, after the War of 1812, the westward movement reached "... such momentous and unprecedented proportions that some observers began to predict the depopulation of the older states" and added that after peace was established "... the flood-gates were opened, and a veritable torrent inundated the Territory."<sup>10</sup> By 1820, the population in the state would reflect a tenfold increase over that of 1800.

Another pivotal event prior to the establishment of the county was the signing of the Treaty of Doak's Stand, which Choctaw Chief Pushmataha helped negotiate in 1820. It involved a land swap by which the Choctaw agreed to exchange the southwestern third of their land fronting the Mississippi River—more than half a million acres—for lands in what became Arkansas and Oklahoma. Although the Choctaw held onto their local lands, the signing of this treaty speeded up the transition from Indian to white domination by opening up thousands of acres for settlement. More and more settlers from the east got their first view of this region as they passed through on their way to the newly acquired land. That year, approximately 220,000 had arrived in the new states of Mississippi and Alabama, although more than a decade stood in the way of a full-scale pioneer push in East Mississippi.

Even after statehood and the signing of the

Treaty of Doak's Stand, the Choctaw barrier blocked full settlement of the east central sections, but the Choctaw had witnessed the disappearance of their game, traded bits and pieces of their lands to whites whom they had befriended, and had begun to recognize, sadly, that they were losing their grasp on what remained of their homelands. As early as the first decade of the 1800s, Kirby was urging federal intervention to improve the lot of early settlers in the eastern sections, saying he was "... of the opinion that it would not be difficult to convince the Choctaws to move west of the Mississippi."<sup>11</sup> He illustrated the impact white encroachment had had on the Choctaw when he reported to President Jefferson, "... although they are numerous and originally a brave people, they are miserably poor. The settlements have advanced upon them until the game has become scarce, and the debauchery resulting from their frequent intercourse with white people has increased their poverty and distress to an extreme degree."<sup>12</sup>

Mississippi historian John Ray Skates pointed out that land-hungry pioneers had little sympathy for the Choctaw who had compromised by adopting the white man's ways. He suggested, "Ultimately, what the Mississippi frontiersman wanted was not that the Indian adapt or assimilate, but that he cede his lands to the federal government, thereby creating a vast new public domain that settlers and speculators could then buy up at bargain rates."<sup>13</sup> As local historian W. B. Allison explained,

... the pioneers had almost as expansive ideas of what constituted elbow room as did the Indians themselves. Led by such wide rangers as Samuel Dale, they believed that 100 acres was all right to build a cabin on, but a fellow couldn't do all his hunting in his own yard, and friction between the races became acute."<sup>14</sup>

By this time, the tide could not be turned, and the Choctaw gave in to the pressure that had grown into coercion since statehood became a fact in 1817. The document signifying the capitulation—the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek—would be the key that would open the door to the formation of Lauderdale County. That treaty spelled the end to the Choctaw hold on the last of their Mississippi homelands and opened the door that permitted the birth of the county and its neighbors.

This final treaty of the Choctaw, negotiated between the forks of the Dancing Rabbit Creek in Noxubee County, was not signed without great agony and debate. About 6,000 Choctaw, or one-fourth of the Indian population, came to the conference to meet with delegates from President Andrew Jackson, Secretary of War John Eaton and General John Coffee.<sup>15</sup>

Representing Choctaw concerns at the historic conference were the leaders of the three districts, Greenwood Leflore, Moshulitubbe, and Nit-takechi, then chief of the Coosa district of this area. Eaton and Coffee spelled out their objective—removal of the Choctaw to western lands they had acquired in 1820—as negotiations began in earnest on Saturday, September 18, 1830. By the following Friday, coercive efforts of Major Eaton, which included a threat of armed force, had taken their toll, and many Choctaw who opposed the treaty simply went home. Leflore became a prime negotiator and worked to get certain articles included. The following day the treaty, including Article 14—which spelled out terms for allotting land to each Choctaw head of a family who chose to remain and become a citizen of the United States—was read. Other articles gave special land considerations to chiefs, compensation to other individuals, and outlined plans for removal to the West. Many of the protections guaranteed the Choctaw in the treaty signed on September 27, 1830, were later denied. But the Choctaw choices were limited, as Halbert noted, “Intimidation and moral coercion simply made the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek.”<sup>16</sup>

After the treaty took effect, more coercion was on the way. In the affected area, which included what became Lauderdale County, some 500 square miles of land was registered for by Indians who wanted to remain. There is little debate on the point that thousands of other acres would have been held onto by the Choctaw, but it “. . . was made difficult for the Choctaw to sign up for the land which had been promised under Article 14.”<sup>17</sup> Fraud and force eventually drove most of the reluctant Choctaw to Western lands and consequently today, of what was specifically designated for Choctaw individuals and families in the treaty, “. . . not a single piece of land had remained in Choctaw ownership.”<sup>18</sup>

On Dec. 23, 1833, Lauderdale County was born. The greater part of the territory acquired in

the treaty with the Choctaw was divided into 16 counties, including Lauderdale, named in honor of Col. James Lauderdale, a hero of the War of 1812. In addition, the act approved by the Legislature also created the counties of Noxubee, Kemper, Clarke, Oktibbeha, Winston, Choctaw, Tallahatchee, Yalobusha, Carroll, Jasper, Neshoba, Smith, Scott, Leake, and Attala.<sup>19</sup> Later, Newton County would be carved from a section of Neshoba.

The first commissioners appointed to help organize the new counties were Samuel Grayson, Asa Hartfield, William Ellis, Robert James, Henry Hale, H. W. Ward, C. Dyer, George Evans, J. Bidwell and Norman Martin.<sup>20</sup> Martin was the only official known to have lived in Lauderdale County.

The new Lauderdale County, bounded on the north by Kemper, on the east by Sumter County, Alabama, on the south by Clarke County, and on the west by Newton County, had a land surface of approximately 680 square miles. Helping to smooth the way during the county’s infancy were its sheriff, Isham Pace, and first circuit clerk, John Culbreath. Joseph A. Marshall represented the new county in the state Senate, while Sam Dale served in the lower house. Dale then owned land near Lizelia, where he operated a trading post with a grist mill and other shops.

The effects of the signing of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek and the subsequent removal of many Choctaw were immediate. During 1830, population in the state jumped by 175 percent. Skates pointed out that land selling for \$1.25 an acre sparked a speculative boom, which fueled wildcat banking, easy credit and “flush times.”<sup>21</sup> The boom would not fade until the financial panic of 1837.

Despite speculators’ success in driving up land prices in some areas, an eighty-acre tract could be had for a mere \$100. Consequently, the race for land was on, as citizens of the older South—North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia and Virginia—poured in. By the end of the pivotal decade, the county’s population would have doubled, to more than 5,000 white pioneers living in the county by 1840.

Though most of the settlers coming into the area from the east had no, or relatively few, slaves, black population in other parts of the state soared during the 1830s, increasing during the

decade by 197 percent, and created an almost-even ratio of 52 percent slaves to 48 percent whites by the end of the 1830s.<sup>22</sup>

For the most part, the often-poor pioneers who settled in the east central sector were most interested in survival, and could barely support themselves, much less large numbers of slaves. Besides, the "cotton kingdom" developing in western counties along the Mississippi River was far from the reality of this region. Rather, the majority of piney-wood farmers "... eked a livelihood from herding livestock and planting subsistence crops in the bottom lands near streams. Egalitarian, independent, and poor even by Mississippi standards, the piney-woods people desired most of all to be left alone."<sup>23</sup> Planters—and the luxuries of their lifestyle—were indeed rare in this section of the state. Here, in what was still considered backwoods by the more sophisticated settlements to the west, "... lived farmers, Scotch-Irish families from the hills of the Carolinas, and they did not farm cotton, nor own slaves, nor import china, nor drink Madeira."<sup>24</sup>

While the creek bottomland provided enough vegetables for survival, many of the early settlers depended on their cattle and hogs, which were allowed to graze freely in the towering pine forests. Once a year, these herdsmen would round up their livestock and drive them to market in Mobile. In the new county, a variety of soils and terrain could be found, from rolling hills to swampy backwaters and sandy flats. The one common denominator found in the area was the immense virgin pine forests, bearing essentially ignored promises of a rich harvest that would not be realized until decades later. Some areas of the county, including the fields cleared by the Coosa Choctaw in north-central sections, held more potential for immediate profit and were quickly snapped up by such men as Sam Dale.

For the most part, in the first areas settled, the soil and terrain held little hope for big-time farming profits. But, as Sparks suggested, the settlers who put down stakes here

... were not agriculturists in a proper sense of the term: true, they cultivated in some degree the soil, but it was not the prime pursuit of these people, nor was the location sought for this purpose. They desired an open, poor, pine country, which forbade a numerous population."<sup>25</sup>

During the first half of the nineteenth century,

J. F. H. Claiborne found the differences that divided settlers east of the Pearl from those in western sections of the state still in place. On a trip through the Piney Woods, he observed Western-style cattle round-ups with a uniquely Southern twist practiced by the herdsmen who allowed their livestock to run freely through the forests. Once or twice a year, he wrote, the cattle would be collected, marked and branded in "... a stirring period and quite an incident in the peaceful and somewhat monotonous life of the woodsman."<sup>26</sup> Sparks agreed that the herdsmen of the region provided a sharp contrast to the aristocratic set of Natchez,

These ran wild, half naked, unwashed and uncombed, hatless and bonnetless, halloing and yelling in pursuit of rabbits and opossums [sic], and were as wild as the Indians they had supplanted, and whose pine-bark camps were yet here and there to be seen. ...<sup>27</sup>

While his description may have been an exaggeration, the "wild herdsmen" did seem to be in the majority until the arrival of a more ambitious, and prosperous breed of farmer who began to bring some degree of sophistication to the region during the 1830s and 1840s. While they may not have had the resources of large plantations, Claiborne found on his journey that "... the good old customs of Virginia and Carolina still prevail," with hospitality a common trait found in even the poorest homes in the Piney Woods.<sup>28</sup>

With little opportunity for earning currency at hand, some of the more industrious hill farmers relied on their livestock and resources like butter, cheese, eggs, honey and chickens. As Claiborne observed, "In the fall, winter and spring the road is lined with small carts, built of pine boards and covered with an awning of striped cotton, loaded with fowls, driven by little boys and sometimes by females"<sup>29</sup> on the way to market.

All evidence seems to indicate the first settlers arrived in the new county armed with little but faith, hope and a stubborn streak. Many came into the area with all their worldly possessions bundled onto an ox-drawn cart. After a long and treacherous journey, some may have staked out their claim in Lauderdale County simply because they were too tired to travel on.

Although firsthand accounts of the pioneer experience in Lauderdale County during the first

part of the 1830s are rare, Mrs. C. E. Flourney, who was born in a tent as her family was making its way from South Carolina in 1835, did leave a valuable description when she was interviewed in 1917. In that interview, she told a Texas newspaper reporter that her family, the Wilkersons, lived in Lauderdale County for 20 years before her father's restless nature once again led the family west, into Texas.

According to her story, few white families were living in the county during the 1830s. Indians, reluctant to leave their homeland, were more common, as she noted, ". . . it was full of Choctaw 'redskins' living in huts made of pine saplings."<sup>30</sup> Mrs. Flourney suggested that the Choctaw often lent a helping hand to their new white neighbors, "Many of the squaws learned to sew, spin and weave by helping the white women do this work. This was the work the 'white squaws' had to do in those good old Mississippi days."<sup>31</sup>

Confirming that amenities were limited during the early years of the county, Mrs. Flourney said,

I was 20 years old before I ever saw a match, a lamp, a cooking stove, concentrated lye, a washboard or a sewing machine. We had to borrow fire from a neighbor, or get it by striking it with our tinder horn device. We had to keep an ash hopper for getting lye with which to make soap, and in washing we used a batten instead of washboard. We cooked in a fire-place or by a fire in the yard. We sewed with our fingers and burned pineknots for giving us light."<sup>32</sup>

Another account of the pioneer lifestyle in the area was written by Mary J. Welsh, who described life in Kemper County's Wahalak in 1834. She arrived there in 1833 at the age of 10 after a trip from St. Stephens, Alabama, over a path that was ". . . grubby, stumpy, muddy and sloshy."<sup>33</sup> Her description of life in the new country opened up by the removal of the Choctaw provides a graphic portrait of the hardships endured by the new settlers. According to Miss Welsh, the long, hard journey from the east prevented these first families from bringing all but their most essential belongings, making even the simplest furnishings for the primitive cabins a luxury. Among the few items crowded onto the ox carts for the journey, "provident" housewives would manage to include ". . . their feather beds and bed clothing, a bedstead or two, a few chairs, a little table furniture, a few things for the

kitchen, and the indispensable wheel and cards."<sup>34</sup> The wheels were used in spinning, and the cards culled seeds from the cotton used to make shirts and other apparel.

Contentment rather than wealth seems to have been the main goal of many of the early families. As Miss Welsh explained, "In truth, contentment . . . smoothed the rough places and rounded the sharp corners of life for these hardy pioneers and helped to convert their rude log cabins into palaces. They fully realized that 'a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth.'"<sup>35</sup>

Wresting a new home from the wilderness included preparing the fields for life-sustaining crops "one stroke at a time." Vast fields of pine were cut and burned to make way for fields. Recalling the sight of burning brush and stacks of logs, Miss Welsh wrote, "The approach to a hilly city . . . such as Vicksburg or Meridian . . . after nightfall comes nearer to reproducing the scene than anything else I ever saw."<sup>36</sup>

Some of the earliest black forefathers of current descendants living in the area arrived as slaves who played a vital role in clearing the fields and building the first homes. These blacks, Miss Welsh said, were sympathetic to the Indians whose homelands their white owners had acquired. She noted that the abandoned Indian graves inspired superstitions, and the same blacks claimed that the sad sounds of whispering pines were ghosts of Choctaw mourning their homes. Even after massive movements of Choctaw to the west, many Indians lingered in the area, helping white farmers harvest crops in the fall, and selling venison, baskets, and bows and arrows during other seasons.

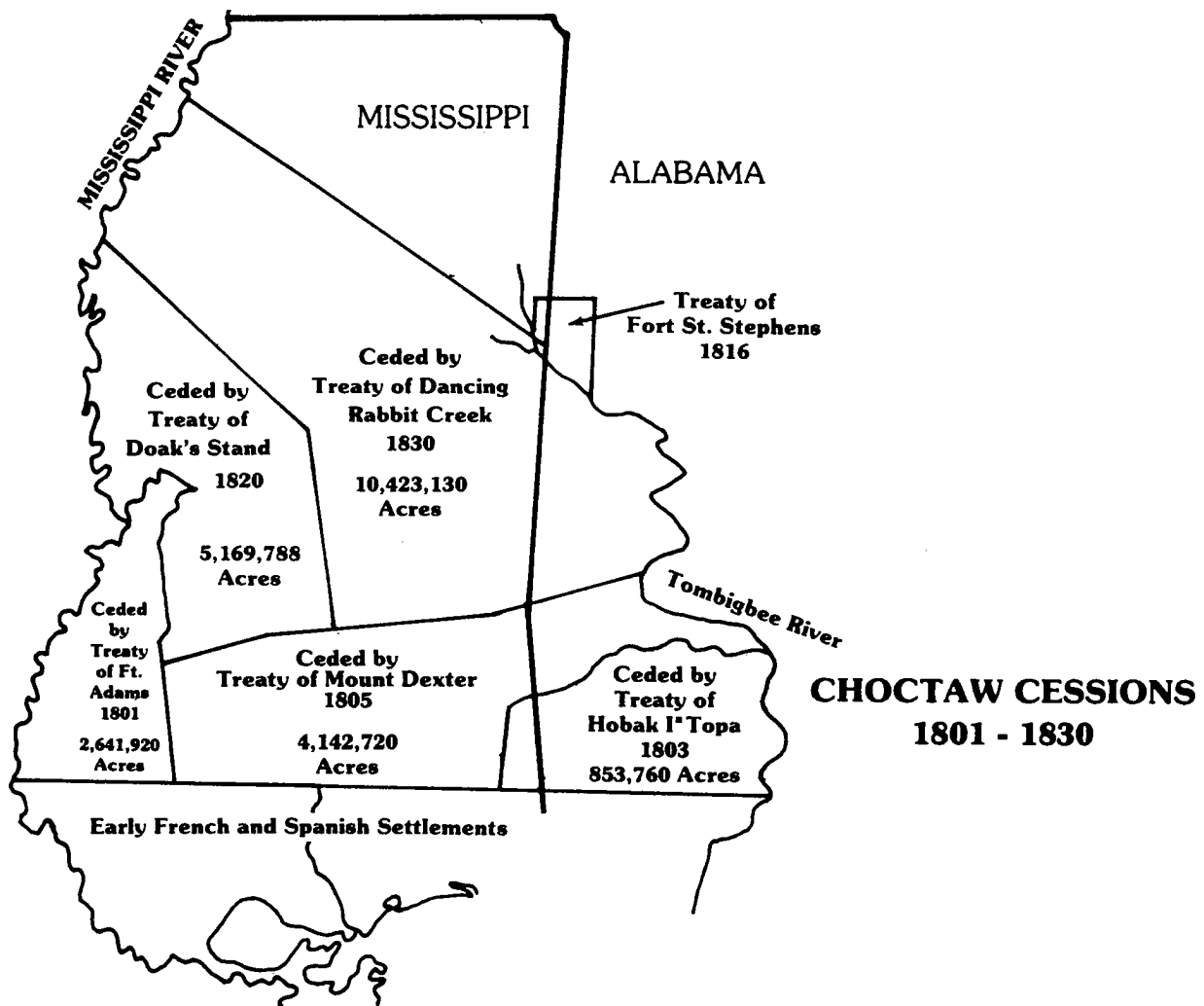
Though life was hard, the bounty of the land helped sustain the farmers, herdsman and hunters, with abundant wildlife such as deer, turkeys, squirrels, rabbits, opossums, and partridges providing meat for the table. Wild grapes, plums, strawberries, blackberries, hickory nuts and walnuts were also plentiful. The settlers learned to rely on the land, teaching their children and grandchildren to do likewise, a lesson they would call upon time and time again for years to come.

Many of the pioneers opted to settle on land previously cleared by the Choctaw, and the first homesteads and towns usually developed on or

near former Indian village sites. The early farmers were "light-plow farmers," who used oxen to produce corn and other crops. Sheep were raised, the production and selling of wool continuing in this area until well after the Civil War. Early settler Sion Coats's last will and testament speaks of his oxen running free on his land, as well as his sheep.

As the pioneer push could not be restrained, neither would the next stage be denied. Throughout the 1830s, the new county followed the frontier-like patterns in other portions of east central Mississippi, government being "rudimen-

tary, violence and chicanery common, and the values of independence, egalitarianism, and pragmatism much admired."<sup>37</sup> Slowly but surely, the primitive conditions and time-consuming task of establishing a home on the wilderness were tackled. Then, during the latter part of the county's first decade and throughout the 1840s, the refugees from the east turned their attention to carving civilization out of an untamed land. Around the log cabins that sprang up on former Indian village sites, the first towns, churches and schools of the county would be born.



# 3 • Carving Out a County

**T**HROUGHOUT the first decades of Lauderdale County's history, the new arrivals who staked their claim to land slowly but surely swelled the population—to 5,348 by 1840 and on up to 8,713 by 1850. The continuing influx of settlers created a new demand for legal, social and religious institutions. Building on the foundations laid by the families who had already established homes among the Choctaw, the arrivals from 1830 to 1850 brought into the area new blood and energy that would tame the new county and assist in the birth of its first villages, schools, churches and industries.

While many of the small, hastily constructed villages have now been erased by time, their importance as early social, political and economic centers earned them a permanent place in the pages of the county's history. The men, women and children who built the early homesteads and villages also deserve recognition; they were the guiding force behind the monumental task of bringing a measure of civilization to the backwoods. Though life remained far from glamorous up to and through the 1840s, it was the era of many of Lauderdale County's most important firsts.

For the most part, settlers continued to arrive from the east, and the county's eastern region naturally developed first. The Choctaw legacy influenced the location of the early settlements as many of their former village sites were natural candidates for development into rural trading centers. Trails originally blazed by Indians, some of which became heavily traveled stagecoach routes in antebellum days, also continued to affect settlement patterns.

The first villages were born when Meridian was nothing more than a forest, as merchants and traders set up shop to cater to farmers, and early schools and churches were established. Two of the earliest villages, Alamucha and Chunkeyville, grew on what had been the Indian village sites. Sageville, in the present-day area of Arundel, developed as a stagecoach stop along a route that led to Paulding, in Jasper County.

Edward J. Rew, a settler who eventually rose to prominence in Sageville, was an early justice of the peace. Involved in many civic affairs, Rew was responsible for organizing the first Grange organization in Lauderdale County. Other settlers in the area included Abram Burwell, William Carson, Gilliam Scott, Benjamin Graham and James Whitehead. By 1848, a post office was open in Sageville, with Martin C. Buxton as postmaster.

Perhaps the most significant of the early villages was Old Marion, which earned its status as the first county seat and its busiest community prior to 1840. Incorporated in 1838, the 'first' Marion was several miles east of present-day Marion. Since Old Marion's death in the 1860s, the exact location of the now-extinct village had been forgotten. But, in 1987, the research of Jack Elliott, Jr., an historical archaeologist with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, solved the mystery. Following clues from the past, Elliott established the site of the former town square on the Marion-to-Russell Road in the northwest quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 36, Township 7 North, Range 16 East, just east of the former U.S. Sugar Crops Experiment Station.<sup>1</sup>

His research indicated that all the land within the original corporation limits had been purchased by John Henderson from the U.S. Government on June 15, 1835. During that decade, Henderson apparently sold a portion of his property to the Lauderdale County Board of Police, the governing body, for the establishment of a county seat. The board subsequently sold town lots to various individuals who helped establish the village.

During the early years, the southeastern corner of the county seemed to be of particular interest to settlers, perhaps because it closely resembled the lands they had left behind in Georgia and the Carolinas. The founders of Alamucha, Hurricane Creek, Whynot, Snell and Ebenezer, the forerunner of Causeyville, stopped here.

The first and largest village to develop in this section was Alamucha, often referred to as Old Town. A now sparsely populated area 20 miles east of Meridian and south of Kewanee, Alamucha thrived into the 1850s as a trading center. The Alamucha post office was established in 1840, with Daniel Cameron as postmaster, and survived until the Civil War.

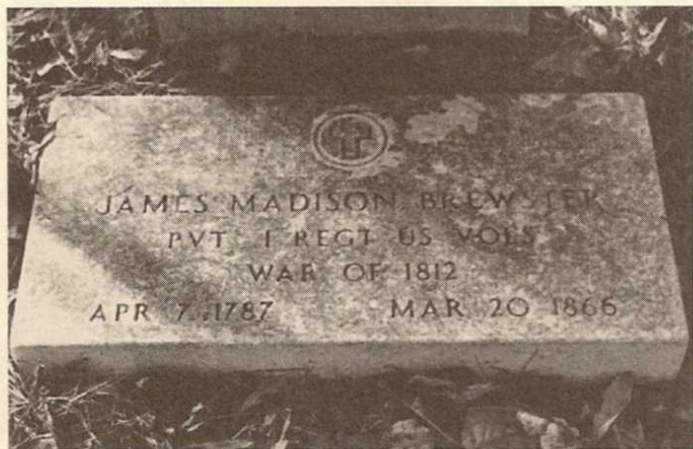
The Hurricane Creek area near the Clarke County line was also settled early in the formative years. By March, 1846, the population was large enough to support a post office, with Benjamin F. Willis as postmaster. Bordering Clarke and Lauderdale counties, Hurricane Creek, like many of the other early villages, shifted from one location to another. Initially, Hurricane Creek was in Clarke County. Later, as boundary lines changed, it shifted into Lauderdale

County and once into Choctaw County, Alabama. Other early settlements, such as Ebenezer, died as pioneers left their rather isolated cabins to move closer to settlements that grew near trading stores and grist mills.

Generally, settlers in the southeastern hills tended to mind their own business and avoid any intruders from the outside. For several decades, tax collectors and census counters were wary when they ventured into the remote hills and valleys of the region. Clyde Stewart, whose ancestors homesteaded hilly land around Snell, pointed out, "People in this area have always been independent. They didn't want anybody bothering them. As children, we were taught not to talk to strangers. The tax collector was scared to come down here."

Two of the most influential pioneers in the southeastern corner were veterans of the War of 1812, James Madison Brewster and Sir Peyton Coker.

Brewster, according to his great-grandson, T. E. Bruister of Meridian, was a colorful character who was cited for bravery as a member of the Mississippi Militia during that war. Family legend holds that this pioneer had "strange powers." For instance, he would supposedly plant old horse switches, which would eventually grow into large trees, wherever he lived. Furthermore, records state that Brewster was buried on the family home place wearing a huge, wooden earring Choctaw Indians had given to him as a specific against rheumatism. T. E. Bruister, one of the pioneer's many descendants in East Mississippi and West Alabama, said his ancestor acquired 1,240 acres in the Whynot-Alamucha



*James Madison Brewster's tombstone, near Whynot*



*Tombstone of Sir Peyton Coker's mother, at Coker's Chapel United Methodist Church in Vimville*

area from the Choctaw and had established a large farm by 1840. Some of his original land was later owned by J. W. Brown and T. A. Means, formerly of Whynot.

Another veteran of the same war, Sir Peyton Coker, also played an important role in the settlement of the region near Vimville. The son of an English knight, Sir Peyton arrived in the area from South Carolina around 1835 and first lived with the Choctaw along Buckatunna Creek. His first recorded land purchase was in 1842. Later, Sir Peyton was instrumental in the founding of both Coker's Chapel Methodist Church, and its forerunner, a log church known as Pleasant Grove.

In western sections of the county, land around Chunkeyville, a village that developed on a former Indian sports field, and the Battlefield area, in the northwestern corner, became significant early settlements. The story of Chunkeyville, a large village that fell victim to the Civil War, illustrates the typical pattern of early settlements. The forerunner of the Newton County town of Chunky, it was established on what had been a former Indian ballfield and named for the popular game of Chunky Chitto, a corruption of *Tuchungkee*. Once one of the most popular sports fields in East Mississippi, it attracted Indians from near and far who came to play or bet on the game played with spears and perfectly round, polished stones.

The Pine Forest Academy and Hospital, an institution operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is situated in the heart of what was once Chunkeyville. The pioneer settlement was thriving even before the 1848 establishment of a post office with John G. Gallaspy as postmaster. This southwestern corner of the county was ideal for early settlers because the old Military Road of 1816 came into the area from Garlandville in Jasper County and crossed with an ancient Indian trail in Chunkeyville, allowing easy access. According to an elderly resident of the area, Mrs. Mattie Turnage, early white settlers built large homes with carefully manicured lawns in the village. Indeed, before the Civil War killed the town, Chunkeyville had ". . . thrived for years as one of the most outstanding business centers in the state."<sup>2</sup>

Battlefield also developed early on as settlers such as W. C. Trussell established self-sufficient

farms. Trussell, who had acquired land there when it was part of the Mississippi Territory, passed his holdings to James Trussell in 1837. The Trussells' homestead, similar to others of the time, was the center of a thriving farm that featured shops, mills and even a cotton gin. Most of the family's needs, including food crops, cotton, and wool for cloth were met by the land.

Other sections—such as Old Daleville and the northeastern corner of the county near Lauderdale—also experienced growth as more and more settlers followed Sam Dale's pathway into the northeastern and central parts of the county. In fact, several of the county's earliest industries were born in the northern corner. In 1836, J. R. Brower built the first sawmill, near Kewanee. This two-room mill operated with power provided by water from Toomsaba Creek. Brower, assisted in his work by four sons and three slaves, employed a shaft turned by the water to run a plain cross-cut saw. The shaft also turned a wheel that made meal from dried corn. Brower, knowingly or not, introduced an industry that would eventually change the face of the county.

Other early industries were located near Lauderdale. By the 1850s, William M. Plummer was operating a store and shop where he manufactured stagecoaches and other items. Another enterprise was a factory erected by Tennessee tobacco growers. Mississippi did not develop as a tobacco state, and this venture eventually died.

Before the settlers could turn their attention to developing the early villages, or focus their energies on such luxuries as schooling or even religion—the backbone of many of the mostly



William Cole's Cabin, ca. 1840,





*stands on Leonard Cooper farm*

Protestant Scotch-Irish immigrants—basic shelter was the first order of business. Although the styles would change slightly over time, the log cabin remained the most common structure in rural Lauderdale County up to and even after the Civil War years. The first cabins, hastily thrown up from logs cut from the abundant forests, were simply built.

Most often, the first homes of pioneer families consisted of “a single room, often measuring no more than 16 feet. In this one-room ‘pen,’ the families would cram their daily lives.”<sup>3</sup> Mary J. Welsh described the cabins typical of this area in the 1830s, writing:

The cabins were roughly built of logs, with stick and mud chimneys and clapboard roof. The cracks of dwelling houses were lined with boards and daubed with mud, or merely chinked and daubed, according to circumstances. The windows, if there were any, were openings about two feet square, closed by a curtain, or at best by a shutter, like the door. Often a crack by the fireplace was enlarged to give the mother a little more light for her sewing.<sup>4</sup>

Describing the construction of a typical Mississippi cabin, Doster and Weaver added:

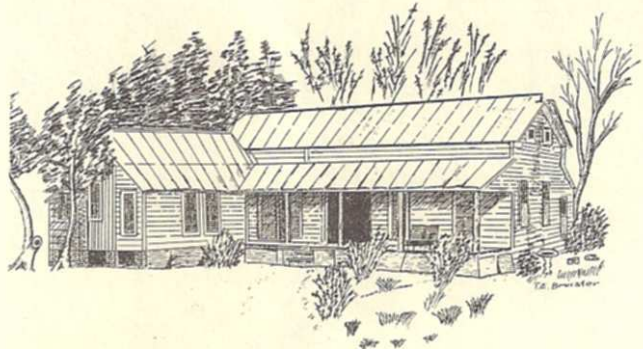
To build the cabin, notched logs were formed into a rectangular crib, with mud used to seal the cracks. After the logs were up, openings for doors, windows and a chimney were cut. Crude wooden shutters with leather hinges covered the windows, in many cases, and the roof consisted of overlapping slabs of wood.<sup>5</sup>

The labor of building a cabin was eased by a tradition that would survive into the twentieth

century—neighbors helping neighbors. Log rollings and house raisings were more than a way to welcome new arrivals. The community efforts were social events, with participants ready and willing to invest a day’s work for the reward of a meal-time spread of fresh vegetables and game. A cabin could be erected in less than three days’ time as communal labor speeded the chore.

A few of the log cabins occupied by the earliest residents of the county have survived. One such structure stands today behind the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Cooper in Lizelia, west of the Meridian Naval Air Station. Built in 1840 by William L. Cole, who came from Kemper County to settle on the thousand acres he purchased from Sam Dale, the cabin is a prime example of the early settlers’ innovations. With its logs connected in a unique interlocking system, the cabin stands today, long after the Coles’ second home, a large farm house, has succumbed to the ravages of time. The wooden pegs driven into holes on both the outside and inside of the Cole cabin are of the kind commonly built into the early log cabins to hold farm implements or furniture, such as bed-frames, in place. Mr. and Mrs. Cooper, who now own the land originally held by county pioneer Dale, have meticulously restored the Cole cabin to ensure that it will remain standing as an example of the shelter so vital in the lives of early pioneers.

Another surviving structure from the early years is the Coker cabin near Vimville. That cabin has been continuously occupied by descendants of Sir Peyton Coker since 1844. According to Hiram Coker, the cabin he is living in and restoring was built for a daughter of Sir Peyton by Darling Coker. The children of the present head



*Coker Cabin, near Vimville*

Sketch by T. E. Bruister



*James Coker, son of early settler Sir Peyton Coker*

of the household represent the sixth generation of Cokers to live in the family home. Although the home has expanded and changed over the decades, the basic two-story log cabin remains intact. It once faced the old Tennessee Trace, an improved Indian trail that connected Tennessee to Mobile.

The fact that the home was covered with an exterior wood shell in the late nineteenth century helped keep the original 18-by-23-foot cabin in good condition over the years. Coker said the historical value of the home is enhanced by a family legend holding that Frank James, the brother of bandit Jesse James, once spent a night there. Whether the legend is fact or fiction, the Coker cabin remains important, reflecting as it does typical homesteading practices. Like many of the first homes, it was first a one-room cabin, with an upstairs loft for the children. As the family's wealth in both children and material possessions grew, the home was expanded, with a breezeway or 'dog trot' added to connect two separate sections.

Though the majority of the first homes in the county were log cabins, there were more elaborate structures. A prime example is Brikalo, an antebellum stagecoach inn that may well be the oldest occupied home in Lauderdale County today. While several stagecoach inns sprang up along the major routes in the county to accommodate travelers, Brikalo, restored in 1973 by owners Chatt and Harriet McGonagill, is the county's only surviving example of this pioneer architectural style. The restored inn, located north of Lauderdale, was built of heart pine and slave-made bricks, and today still features the original hand-planed lumber and glass panes.

The McGonagills say the history of their home reflects the county's stagecoach days. Vincent Delk, an early resident of the county, was commissioned by Joseph P. Warren in the early part of the nineteenth century to build the house. Delk became the owner in 1834, bringing his bride to live in the home. It was expanded in the 1830s, with kitchen and slave quarters added to the main two-story structure. The Delks operated a stagecoach inn, welcoming travelers journeying on the stage route that ran in front of their home, from Gainesville, a thriving river town on the Tombigbee in Alabama, to Decatur, Mississippi.



*Brikalo, ca. 1835, early stagecoach inn north of Lauderdale*

Mrs. Mary Delk died in 1855 and Vincent Delk followed her in 1856. The Delks, and several of their children who inherited the homestead, are buried nearby. The McGonagills, who restored the inn after it had stood vacant for more than 20 years, said the inn has withstood more than the test of time. During the Civil War, Union troops are said to have tried to burn it as they marched by. It was saved from major damage, however, thanks to a bucket brigade formed by women and slaves. Reminders of the fire are visible in the charred timbers that still support the roof. After the war, Dr. William Siliman acquired the home, and practiced medicine there until his death near the end of the nineteenth century.

Stagecoach routes, such as the one that brought Brikalo its guests in antebellum days, were important links between early settlements. Stage drivers would announce their arrival by blowing bugles as they approached a stop.<sup>6</sup> In addition to Brikalo, other stagecoach inns sprang up across the county as hospitable innkeepers cashed in on the ever-increasing flow of traffic. For instance, an antebellum inn once operated near the Hamrick family cemetery near Collinsville and another in Sageville catered to travelers going to and from Paulding.

After their homes were built and their fields plowed, the pioneers found time to focus their attention on other basic needs such as worship, schooling and justice.

The Choctaw could rightfully claim the achievement of having the first educational establishment in the area, with a school operated by Presbyterian missionaries in their Coosa settlement as early as 1824. Tom Goldman's research shows that Pushmataha requested the school after an 1820 meeting of the Six Towns District Council. A missionary named Kingsbury took charge, and the Choctaw promised missionaries appropriate funds for the school. By the time of Pushmataha's death, there were nine schools or mission stations scattered throughout the Choctaw nation.

By 1835, the white settlers began to turn their attention to the intellectual needs of their children, opening "patron" schools in some of the larger settlements. These schools were created when families would band together to provide supplies, a building and funds for a teacher. A

primitive log cabin, or perhaps a log church, would be transformed into a classroom. Parents were responsible for furnishing wood and other bare necessities, such as tables and chairs. By 1840, there were patron schools in or near Marion, Alamucha, Sageville and Lauderdale.

Children of today would probably be tempted by the typical four-month school term their early nineteenth century counterparts enjoyed. However, modern-day teachers would most certainly balk at the pay average of less than \$150 for the four months of work. If suddenly transported to a classroom in the past, however, today's students might well have second thoughts as they encountered what to a modern eye would seem primitive conditions. For instance, the schools were typically sparsely furnished, with rough seats made from split logs. As part of their daily assignments, students had to chop wood for heat and haul drinking water from nearby streams. Furthermore, misbehaving students were soundly thrashed for the slightest infractions.

The schoolhouses, like many of the early churches, were erected near springs or creeks for the water supply. Often the patron schools were named for teachers, as the McDermitt school once located in the Alamucha area was, or for a leading family. Although education remained a scarce commodity, the early schools did help meet a pressing need in a period when less than two percent of the population could read or write.

The Pickney Vaughn School, two miles east of Suqualena, was among the first patron schools established. It was built, owned and operated by Pickney Vaughn, an early settler. He paid a teacher out of his own pocket and invited the children of neighbors to attend, while his own children and grandchildren were educated in the large, frame school building, which also served as a church. It was designed to hold a congregation of landowners and their slaves. The school, founded in the 1840s, continued to operate up to and during the Civil War, closing after the death of Vaughn in the 1870s.

Another now-vanished place of learning founded during the 1840s was River's School, near Bailey. Named for its founder, it attracted students from miles around as its reputation grew. Some students walked up to five miles each day to get to class, while others boarded with

area residents. As many as fifty male and female students attended the school until the Civil War shut its doors.

The need for better and more learning opportunities became pressing, as most of the smaller patron schools offered only the most elementary-level basics of the Three 'R's—reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic. To meet those needs, academies offering wider curricula opened. Marion, followed closely by Alamucha, had such academies by 1840, with the Marion Academy incorporated in 1837. On the board of trustees for that institution were James Ruton, James Murray, Benjamin T. Larke, John R. Leath, Isaac Barr, John F. Chester, Horatio B. Warbington, and Theodore S. Swift.<sup>7</sup> The Alamucha Academy, established in or around 1840 near the present-day site of Salem Baptist Church, failed during that decade but reopened in the 1850s. County records show that the Marion Male and Female Academy was opened by April, 1843, with Abraham Carr, William Carter, Edmund G. Hussey, Richard McLemore, William C. Foster, John F. Chester, Neal McLaurin and Berry Brown as trustees.<sup>8</sup>

The early patron schools and academies helped lay the foundation for a more formal system of education that began to develop after the passage of a state law in 1846, which required the county's governing body, the Board of Police, to appoint a board of school commissioners. The first appointed school commissioners were Charles E. Rushing, William C. Foster, James R. Broke, Charles D. McCall and Daniel Cameron.<sup>9</sup> This five-member board was charged with overseeing common schools, which the Board of Police levied a special tax to support. The education funds were accumulated from license fees for "hawkers, peddlers, keepers of billiard tables, retailers of vinous and spirituous [sic] liquors and brokers" and funds received from leasing 16th Section lands.<sup>10</sup>

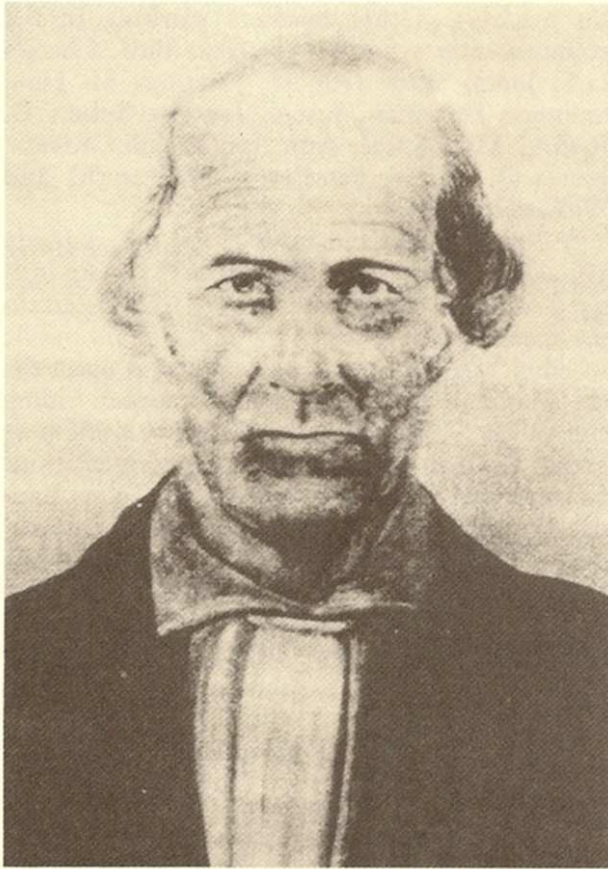
The common schools established afterwards were sited yearly in five county beats. In many cases, the names and locations of the schools changed yearly according to political whims. With the establishment of a county school system well on the way, 1851 Board of Police minutes show, teachers were being paid from the general school fund. That year, Wesley Blackwell was paid \$109, and John Stinson received \$168.75

for teaching. Other teachers working in the county's early schools were Isaac Bird, Charles L. S. Jones, Wade Dubose, Josephus M. Hall, Soloman Dearman, Joseph Lowery, Robert D. Redux, Miss Sarah Ann Smith, John Rivers, James Q. Rigby, Pendleton McDonald and William R. Batt.<sup>11</sup>

Bringing organized religion to the sparsely populated county was difficult as ". . . so scattered were the people and so slow and uncertain the means of travel that, for many years public worship was dependent for leadership upon the irregular and occasional visits of circuit riding evangelists."<sup>12</sup> In fact, it would not be until in or about 1838 that the first formal congregations formed. Early churches included the Salem Baptist Church at Alamucha, the Sageville Methodist Church, Oakey Valley Baptist—the forerunner of Meridian's First Baptist—and Marion's Methodist church. The Friendship Baptist Church in Marion and Hickory Grove Baptist near Lizelia were established around the same time.

These early churches provided a civilizing influence in a still-untamed land, often passing sanctions against individual members who strayed into such 'sinful' areas as dancing, drinking whiskey, allowing their hogs to run free over a neighbor's property and swapping horses on the Sabbath. The church sanctions, which could involve public disgrace and expulsion from the congregation, helped hold the line of 'law and order' until the county's judicial system grew out of its infancy. Once accused of a violation of church rules, a member would be called in front of the congregation during a Saturday meeting. If the church members accepted the accused's 'defense,' he would be forgiven and pardoned by the church. If not, the violator could face public disgrace and expulsion from the congregation.

The early churches were the center of life in many communities, such as Ebenezer. Today, all that remains to mark this early settlement, once west of Causeyville, are the Ebenezer Baptist Church cemetery and the Anderson family cemetery. Ebenezer Baptist, organized by Brother Ambrose Yarbrough in 1840, was so influential that a church controversy eventually split the community, causing it to shift in the direction of Causeyville. Minutes of the meetings of Ebenezer Baptist reflect the realities of the early days, with

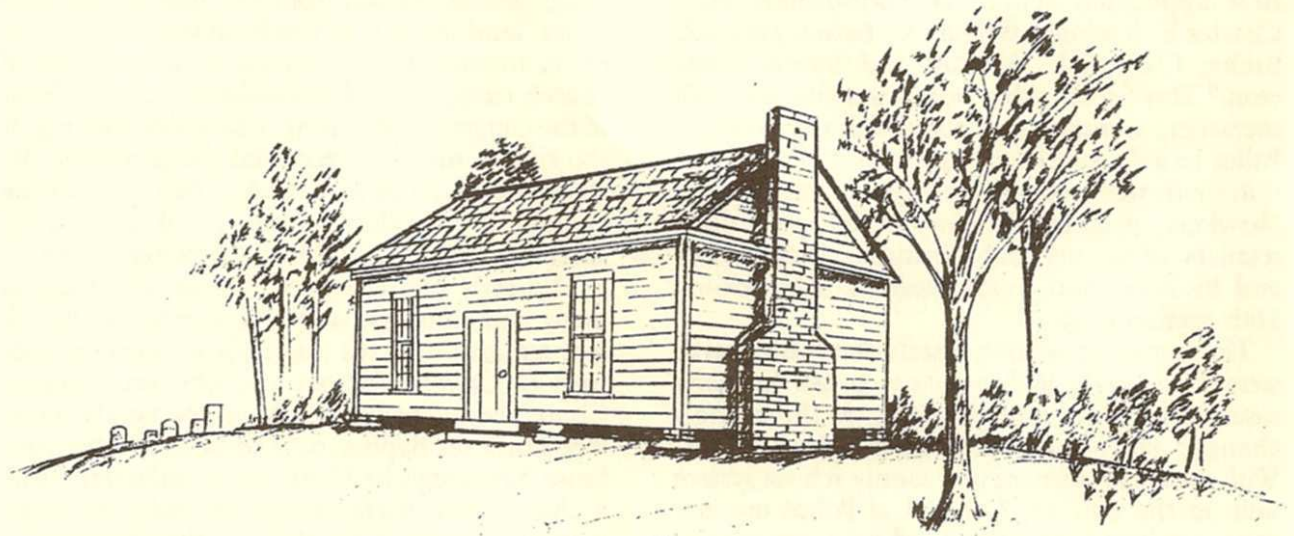


*Ambrose Yarbrough . . . organized Ebenezer Baptist Church*

members often chastised for drinking, playing cards, hunting wild hogs on another person's property, fighting and fiddling.

In the Snell area, the Bucatunnay Baptist Church was constituted in 1839, and the Rev. Matthias Wolf was pastor. The exact location of this log church, which also doubled as a school, is not known today. Early Baptist churches that have survived include two organized in 1838, the Salem Church, three miles south of Kewanee, and Fellowship, in the Center Hill community, which first held services in the home of Benjamin Carpenter. Five other surviving Baptist churches, Liberty, Long Creek, Mount Gilead, Mount Horeb and New Hope, were organized in the 1840s.<sup>13</sup>

Today, nothing but a grove of stately oaks just east of the Bonita Reservoir marks the former site of Oakey Valley Baptist. This church, organized by some of Meridian's earliest settlers including the McLemores, Yarbroughs and Strouds, eventually spawned Oak Grove Baptist in Bonita, Fifteenth Avenue Baptist and First Baptist in Meridian. "Oakey Valley of Lauderdale" was admitted to the Liberty Baptist Association in September, 1839. Later, after 10 years of harmony, a split ascribed to "evil spirits" arose, with dissatisfaction occurring "in regard to the incon-



*Artist's conception of Oakey Valley Baptist Church, once east of Bonita Reservoir*  
Sketch by T. E. Bruister

sistency of members making and retailing ardent spirits."<sup>14</sup> At the time of separation, Richard McLemore was deacon, J. B. Yarbrough, a clerk, and W. P. Carter, minister.

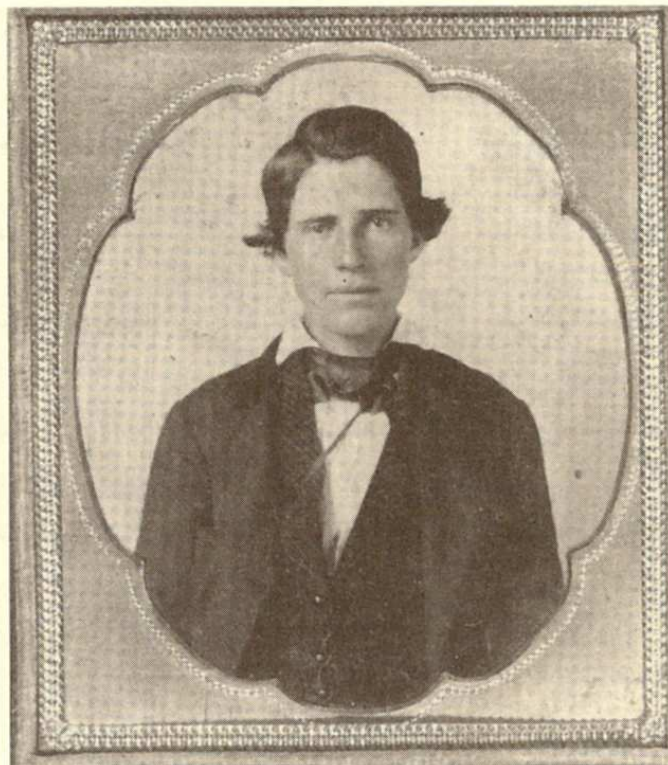
McLemore, who came to be known as "The Father of Meridian," had put down, in 1834, his claim to 700 acres where the city now stands. The Virginia native and his wife, Nancy Perry Hill, built their first home at what is now the corner of Eighteenth Avenue and Eleventh Street out of hewn logs mortised with wooden pegs. Later, the pioneer would build another home at the present site of Fifth Street and Thirty-first Avenue. With his nearest neighbor eight miles away, McLemore began to recruit neighbors, sending back to the east word of the young county's potential and offering "ample lands to many whom he thought would make desirable citizens."<sup>15</sup>

It would be several decades before McLemore's dream would materialize into the village of Meridian. During these years,

In surveying his surroundings, Mr. McLemore in his loneliness recognized that he was, at least, in a hunter's paradise, for he could stand in his front door and kill a deer or wild turkey any morning. The country abounded in game, and the streams were filled with all kinds of the finny tribe and he, therefore, suffered no uneasiness about the high cost of living.<sup>16</sup>

But, McLemore did not sit still to enjoy the bounty of the land. He played an important role in organizing Oakey Valley and later Baptist churches, and in the development of early schools. The McLemores had good reasons to be interested in both; they had two sons, Joshua and Caleb, and seven daughters, Mary, Nancy, Martha, Lavina, Sarah, Charity and Juriah. The birth of one daughter caused a stir when the McLemores acquired for her one of the first "store-bought" cradles ever seen in this part of the country. The 'novelty' arrived via ox cart from Mobile and attracted widespread attention.

Methodism, which came to Mississippi in the Natchez area courtesy of Tobias Gibson in 1799, also exerted an early influence on the practice of religion in the county. The mother of Methodist churches in the county was formally organized in Old Marion around 1838. However, circuit-riding Methodist preachers were at work in the county before then. For instance, the Lauderdale

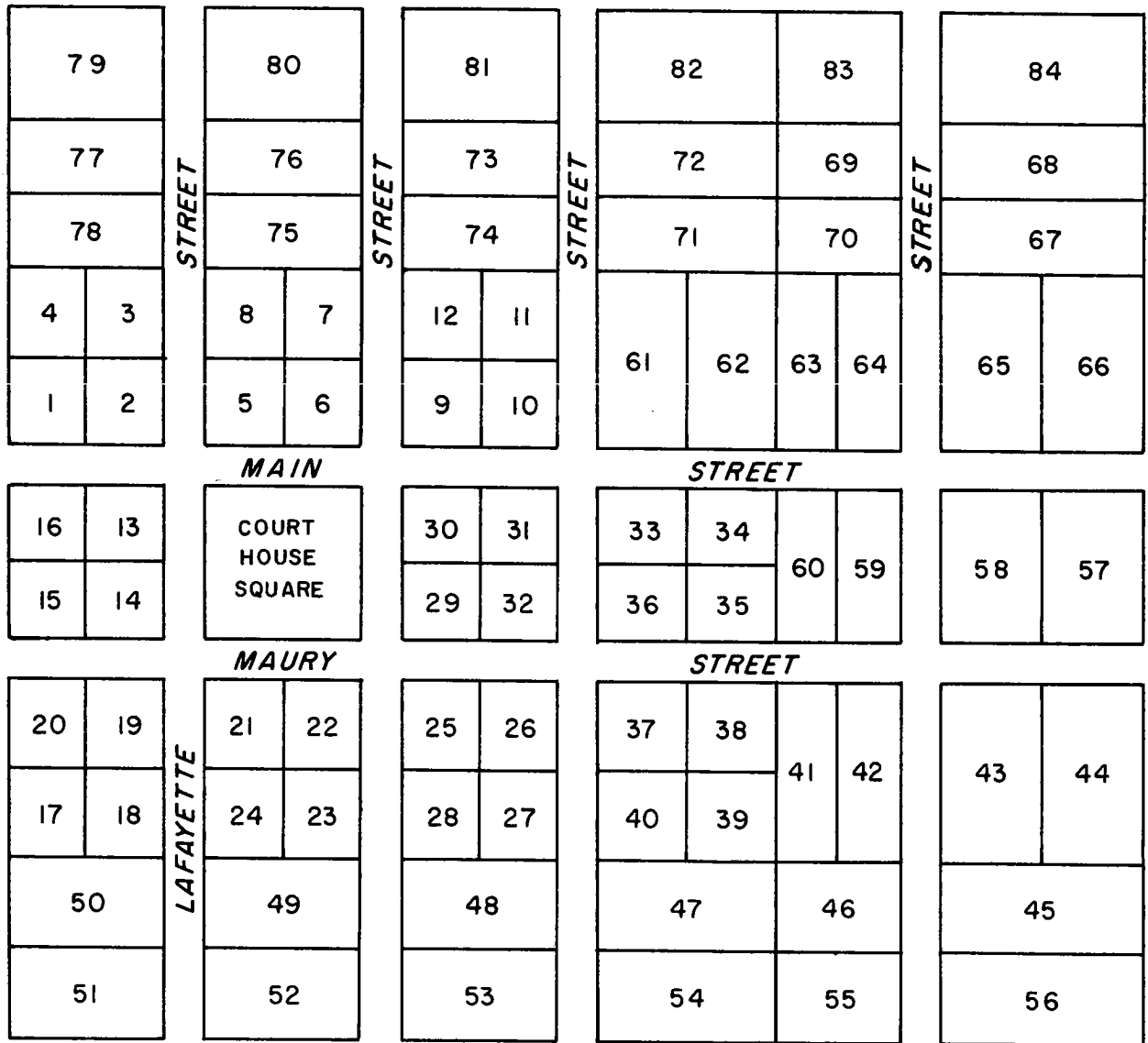


Young Richard McLemore—"The Father of Meridian"

Mission, with William Howie serving, was mentioned in the 1839 Gainesville District as part of the Alabama Conference, which then included portions of the county.<sup>17</sup> Other evidence of an early Methodist influence in the county can be seen in 1840, when a Methodist campground was organized near Bailey after James and Margaret Odom sold to William Chandler, Samuel H. Cochran, Emanuel A. Durr, William Henderson Sr. and Charles Clayton, trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, forty acres for a meeting site.<sup>18</sup>

Presbyterians, whose missionaries had worked with the Choctaw years before the county was established, organized Mount Carmel in 1845, holding their first services in a log school house, and established an early church in the Toomsuba area. Eventually, Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Jews and members of other denominations would organize in Meridian. But, long before the city's birth, Baptists and Methodists were in the majority.

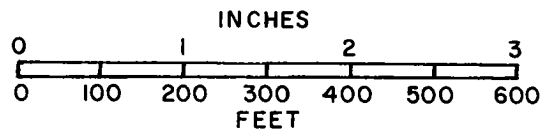
The black slaves in the county often attended the same churches as their white owners. Evidence suggests that blacks also participated in "brush arbor" services held outside in the shade



**1836-1839 MAP OF CITY OF MARION  
LAUDERDALE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI**

PREPARED BY  
LAUDERDALE COUNTY DEPARTMENT  
OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

DRAFTED BY  
GRADY HERRINGTON



NOTE: LOCATION OF MAP IS NW/4 OF NE/4 OF  
SECTION 36-T7N-R16E



Note: The list below gives numbers corresponding to the various land lots according to Jesse Killingsworth Survey of 1839 and shows original landowners around the Courthouse Square in Old Marion. John Henderson was the original owner of this land. More detailed information is available in Deed Book A and Deed Book B of Lauderdale County records.

The old town square is now located along the present Marion - Russell road and is on the property of Mr. and Mrs. Leon Jellenc. Plans are being made to place an historical marker in the center of the Old Marion Courthouse Square.

LOT NO.	DATE	SOLD BY GRANTOR	SOLD TO GRANTEE
1	Feb. 1838	R. B. Harper	R. B. G. Harper
1	Nov. 1838	Board of Police	J. Keeton & N. P. Deen
2	Jan. 1839	Board of Police	William McLemore & Richard McLemore, Jr.
3	Jan. 1839	as above	as above
4	Jan. 1839	as above	as above
5	May 1837	W. Mann	William Keeton
5	unknown	Owen Lee	W. Mann
5	May 1837	W. Mann	John McRae & Henry Calhoun
5	May 1838	H. Calhoun	John McRae
6	Sept. 1838	D. J. Richardson sold by sheriff	Peter Doty
7	(no record of any sales)		
8	Sept. 1838	David Richardson by sheriff	John Ray
8	Nov. 1838	John Ray by sheriff	R. P. McElroy
9-12	(no record of sale)		
13	Sept. 1836	Board of Police	James Keeton
13	Jan. 1838	Thomas Anderson	James Keeton
13	Oct. 1839	J. F. Chester, Trustee for C. M. Marble	James Keeton
13	Nov. 1839	James Keeton	James Ray
14	?	unknown	Austin Keeton & Obadiah Keeton
14	April 1837	Austin Keeton & Obadiah Keeton	Gray & Clinton
14	Dec. 1839	Austin Keeton	Obadiah Keeton
14	Dec. 1839	Obadiah Keeton	Silas Bigelow
14	Dec. 1839	Obadiah Keeton & Austin Keeton	Ransom McElroy
15	Dec. 1839	Austin Keeton	Obadiah Keeton
16	?	unknown	F. G. Hargis & J. B. Collins
16	Sept. 1838	I. F. G. Hargis & B. Collins-sold by sheriff	Gabriel S. Collins
16	Dec. 1838	Gabriel & Collins	James McDugald & Henry Calhoun
16	?	unknown	H. B. Warbington
16	May 1839	H. B. Warbington	Abram Carr
17	(no record of sale)		
18	Oct 1838	E. Weyman	A. Weyman, Sr. & W. S. Thome
19	April 1838	E. R. Brown	J. P. Gray & J. Clinton
20	June 1837	Board of Police	Gray & Clinton
21	June 1838	E. R. Brown	A. Carr & E. A. Durr
21	July 1838	E. R. Brown	A. Carr & E. A. Durr
21	July 1838	E. R. Brown	E. G. Hussey
21	Oct. 1838	E. Weyman	A. Weyman & W. S. Thome
21	Aug. 1838	E. R. Brown	H. B. Wilson
21	Oct. 1839	H. Wilson sold by sheriff	A. Carr & Co.
22	Nov. 1837	G. H. Tutt	T. S. Swift
23	Jan. 1838	Board of Police	Wilson Henderson
23	Mar. 1837	W. Henderson	T. S. Swift
24	Sept. 1839	Board of Police	Abram Carr
25	May 1838	G. H. Tutt	W. Smith & L. Smith
26	Feb. 1839	E. R. Brown	T. S. Swift
27	Sept. 1836	Board of Police	John B. Collins
27	Feb. 1839	E. R. Brown	T. S. Swift
28	May 1838	Board of Police	Lewis Smith
29	Dec. 1836	J. B. Collins	T. S. Swift & J. Murray
29	July 1838	T. S. Swift & J. Murray	Lindsey McCary
29	July 1836	J. B. Collins	Lindsey McCary
29	Feb. 1839	Lindsey McCary	Joshua Smith
30	Jan. 1838	Board of Police	Obahiah Hulet
30	Jan. 1839	Obadiah Hulet	Jesse Ross
31	Jan. 1838	Board of Police	Obadiah Hulet
31	Jan. 1839	Obadiah Hulet	Jesse Ross
32	Sept. 1836	Board of Police	John B. Collins
32	Dec. 1836	J. B. Collins	T. S. Swift & J. Murray
33	Sept. 1836	Board of Police	John B. Collins
33	Dec. 1836	J. B. Collins	T. S. Swift & J. Murray
34	Sept. 1836	Board of Police	John B. Collins
34	Dec. 1836	J. B. Collins	T. S. Swift & J. Murray
35	Sept. 1836	Board of Police	John B. Collins
36	Nov. 1836	Board of Police	T. S. Swift & J. Murray
37-38	(no record of sale)		
39	? 1839	W. B. Warbington	W. B. Smith
40	? 1839	W. B. Warbington	W. B. Smith
41	April 1839	H. B. Warbington	W. B. Smith
42	Jan. 1838	David Russell	H. B. Warbington
43	Jan. 1838	David Russell	H. B. Warbington
43	Nov. 1839	H. B. Warbington sold by sheriff	Jacob Lethco
44	Jan. 1838	David Russell	H. B. Warbington
45	Jan. 1838	David Russell	H. B. Warbington
45	Nov. 1839	H. B. Warbington sold by sheriff	Peter Doty
46	Jan. 1838	David Russell	H. B. Warbington
46	April 1839	H. B. Warbington	W. B. Smith
47	Jan. 1838	Board of Police	William Smith
48-52	(no record of sale)		
53	Jan. 1839	Board of Police	Lewis & Will. Smith
54	Jan. 1838	Board of Police	W. Smith
55	April 1839	H. B. Warbington	W. B. Smith
55-56	(no record of sale)		
57	Sept. 1838	E. R. Brown et al sold by sheriff	A. Carr & E. A. Durr
58	Sept. 1838	E. R. Brown et al sold by sheriff	A. Carr & E. A. Durr
59	Sept. 1837	E. R. Brown et al sold by sheriff	James Ray
59	Nov. 1839	R. B. G. Harper	James Ray
60	Sept. 1838	E. R. Brown et al sold by sheriff	David White
61-62	(no record of sale)		
63	Sept. 1838	E. R. Brown et al sold by sheriff	James Ray
63	Nov. 1839	R. B. G. Harper	James Ray
64	Sept. 1838	E. R. Brown et al sold by sheriff	James Ray
64	Nov. 1839	R. B. G. Harper	James Ray
65	Sept. 1838	E. R. Brown et al sold by sheriff	A. Carr & E. A. Durr
66	Sept. 1838	E. R. Brown et al sold by sheriff	A. Carr & E. A. Durr
67-76	(no record of sale)		
77	Jan 1839	Board of Police	William McLemore & Richard McLemore
78	Jan. 1839	Board of Police	as above
79	Jan. 1839	Board of Police	as above
80-84	(no record of sale)		

cast by vine-covered arbors. Camp meetings conducted by traveling evangelists also attracted large crowds of both blacks and whites throughout the antebellum years.

However, one reason slaves in the antebellum period established no permanent churches of their own was fixed in state laws inspired by fears of slave uprisings. For instance, the Mississippi Code of 1857 prohibited “. . . meetings or assemblies of slaves above the number of five, including such free Negroes or mulattoes, at any place or public resort or any meeting house or houses in the night or at any school for any purpose of teaching them reading and writing either in the day time or at night under whatever pretext. . . .” The law provided another stumbling block for organized religion as Article 84 of the 1857 code stated: “Free Negroes or mulattoes exercising the functions of a minister of the gospel on conviction may be punished by any number of lashes not exceeding 39 on whipping.”<sup>19</sup> It seems whites during the antebellum years preferred sharing their church homes with the slaves then in the county. Consequently, the development of black churches and schools was blocked until after the Civil War.

A form of frontier justice began to develop, helping the church congregations hold the law-and-order line. An isolated spot in the northwestern section of the county known as Courthouse Hill bears the distinction of being the site of the first formal court sessions. Several terms of the earliest justice court sessions were held in a log cabin atop the hill on the Lauderdale-to-Oxford, Alabama, road where Biscuit and Rooster creeks intersect. The cabin courthouse probably also served as an early trading post.

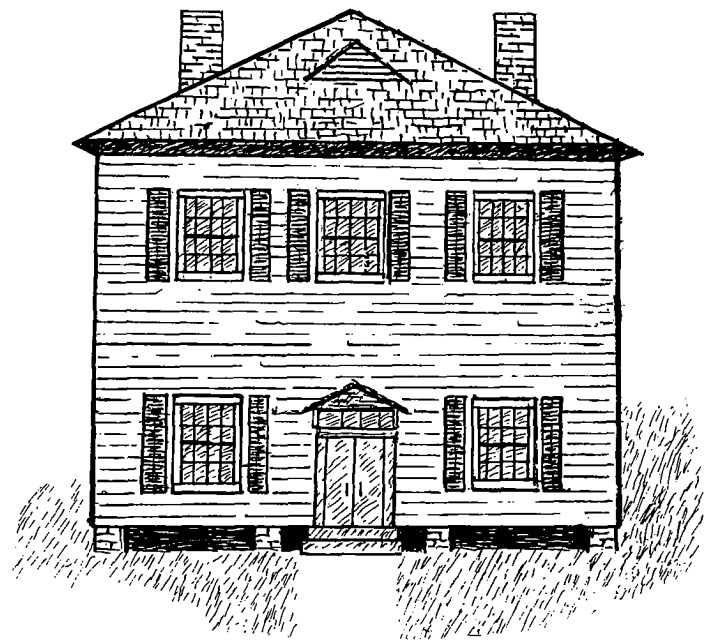
While only a few sessions of justice court were held atop Courthouse Hill prior to the installation of a full slate of county and circuit judges and the establishment of the county seat at Old Marion, the site in the northeastern hills remains a reminder of the beginning of the end of rampant lawlessness.

Another site significant in early justice can be found in the community of Magnolia, a settlement once located on the Topton-to-Russell Road about three miles from Old Marion. It was here, according to H. L. “Red” Davis, that the county’s first capital punishment occurred. Davis, who owns the property where the “trial”

took place, said a criminal was hanged from an oak tree after a guilty verdict was pronounced in a hasty court session held around a wagon.

By 1835, more formal justice was on the way to becoming a reality with the establishment of a courthouse in Marion. The second courthouse was a log structure that burned in November of 1837. Legend holds that some early settlers burned it down because they disliked the presiding judge.

But by that time, Marion was thriving as the county seat, and officials quickly laid out plans for a more substantial edifice. By 1839, work was under way on a two-story frame building built for less than \$3,000. Early officials who laid out plans for the building were James Castles, Allen Russel, Vincent Delk, L. Cram, Elijah White, W. B. Smith and Peter Doty. The courthouse plan, filed by Clerk James Keeton on January 9, 1839, called for a 40-foot-square structure with heart pine shingles for the roof, two flights of stairs, panel windows and shutters. The officials also required “a neat plain judge seat of panel work with the two suitable bars for the attorneys and jury seats, the whole to be built of good materials and the work to be done in a neat and workmanship like manner.”<sup>20</sup> This building, in the



*Old Marion Courthouse, ca. 1840*

Sketch by T. E. Bruister

center of Marion's town square, served as the focal point of the county's political and legal activity, promising a bright future for the village.

One account of life in Old Marion left by a former slave who spent his days in the area, Frank Durr, provides a vivid picture of the bustle around the courthouse square. Durr, in his *Chronicle of Old Marion From 1838 to 1865*, remembered officials involved in courthouse activities including ". . . the judge of the district, Judge Doty; the name of the sheriff was Dale [Joseph or James] . . . The district Attorney being George Wood; Benjamin Clark was Circuit Clerk. The next sheriff was John Cochran, and then William White; then Glen Harper, William Raney, Benjamin Meador and Warren Alford." Attorneys active in Old Marion, according to Durr's information, included lawyers Epps Brown, William Daniels, B. Y. Ramsey and Green Grace, and doctors Wilson and Johnson were also working in Marion prior to 1845.<sup>21</sup>

Durr also left a description of one of the most exciting events to occur in Old Marion during the 1840s—the return of a contingent of local soldiers from the Mexican War. The Lauderdale Volunteers, formed in 1846, had been called to serve in the First Mississippi Regiment, commanded by Colonel Jefferson, in that conflict. The captain of the Lauderdale County soldiers was W. J. Daniels, who lost 18 men on the march from Matamora to Monterey in 1847.<sup>22</sup> Durr, recalled the triumphant return of the soldiers in 1848,

. . . a big feast was spread for them, and there was a grand time. There were no railroads and they had to march through Vicksburg, and the people of the little town went two or three days journey to meet them, mostly on horseback as buggies were scarce. There would come a mounted courier every night to let the people know how far the infantry was behind. The first one of the company to arrive was Captain Daniels. He turned back next day and met his company and marched them into town with them on dress parade. I was about sixteen at the time and that was one of the happiest days of my life.<sup>23</sup>

Up until the end of the 1840s, Lauderdale and its neighboring counties still constituted one of the last frontiers in Mississippi, as the Choctaw presence had delayed the spurt of settlement which had by then transformed other sections of the state. In regions along the Mississippi River, "flush times" had arrived in full force as cotton production soared and success stories attracted more and more land-hungry settlers. While plantation owners in the established counties to the west were beginning to cash in on slave-raised cotton, the farmers occupying the east central section were still struggling to survive as they cleared fields and sought to bring some measure of civilization to the land.

During these years, most Lauderdale Countians had few if any slaves. Vincent Delk of Lauderdale, with eleven, William Hearn, with nine, and Sam Dale's brother, James, with eight, were among the largest of slave owners in 1835. For the most part, farmers "had little time or energy to spare from the grim business of making a living"<sup>24</sup> and usually worked side by side with any slaves they did happen to have.

These farmers provided a sharp contrast with the comparative leisure of planters in western counties who could afford to sit back and watch their riches grow under the cultivation of hundreds of slaves. That fact, ironically, would benefit Lauderdale County, in that it escaped the devastating impact of the Financial Panic of 1837, when the good times for many speculators ended and banks failed abruptly. Although records reflect some speculation in real estate here, "the remoteness from the centers of financial and political activity seem to have minimized the damage."<sup>25</sup>

Though the panic did slow growth in Mississippi, Lauderdale County continued to attract its share of adventurers, dreamers and hill farmers who hoped to find their own version of the American dream. And, indeed, many would, as prosperity, plantations and promises of continued growth arrived during the next decade.

## 4 • The Calm Before the Storm

*Lauderdale County is one of the most densely populated counties of East Mississippi, possessed of a fertile soil, salubrious climate, and every natural advantage of the most favored region of the Earth.*

—LAUDERDALE REPUBLICAN, 1854

By the 1850s, a measure of prosperity, based on the growing fortunes of plantation owners and farmers who had by then carved profitable plots from the virgin timberlands, had arrived in Lauderdale County. With that prosperity came swift changes, which would bring the birth of one town, Meridian, and the death of another, Old Marion. It would be an era of antebellum glory for some, and a time of back-breaking labor for a small but growing slave force that helped make the prosperity possible. For the first time in the county's history, settlers who had successfully tamed the wilderness began to reap the rewards, finding time to engage in hospitality-laced Southern customs and hot political debates.

The county's population, which hit 8,713 in 1850, would witness the arrival of the "Iron Horse," as the Mobile and Ohio tracks pushed their way through the area by the middle of the decade. The trains would begin carrying off the "white gold" of cotton, in addition to other bountiful produce grown on the county's plantations. The rich harvest would also pay off for merchants, lawyers and craftsmen, especially in the county seat of the "first" Marion, which grew by leaps and bounds as the political, economic and social center of the day.

Through the decade, many of the proud residents could see no reason to envision an end to the good life they were just beginning to enjoy. The arrival of another turning point—the Civil War—and the devastation it would bring to the slave-based economy were eventualities Lauderdale Countians could not then imagine.

For it was during this decade that a new level of diversity and self-sufficiency was sweeping the state, with the value of farmlands increasing by 176 percent and farm acreage itself growing by 50 percent. By the end of the 1850s, Mississippi plantations could not produce enough cotton to meet the—highly profitable—demand. For instance, in 1859, twenty-nine million bushels of corn were produced in the state, and Mississippi led all the other states in the value of orchard produce, and trailed only Texas, Alabama and Georgia in livestock production.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of the 1850s, a description printed in *Harper's Gazetteer of the World* reflected the agricultural bounty in Lauderdale County, with livestock valued at \$3,335 and the production of 324,459 bushels of Indian corn, 111,444 bushels of sweet potatoes, 102,203 pounds of rice and 4,195 bales of cotton recorded in 1855. That bounty had a direct effect on business and industry in the county, the *Gazetteer* reporting "nine flouring and grist mills; nine saw mills, and four tanneries with nine employed" that year. Capital employed in manufactured articles amounted to \$82,243. Furthermore, the report reflected that the civilizing influence of churches and schools, which had begun in the late 1830s, continued in the county with 28 churches, 22 schools and 521 scholars counted the same year.<sup>2</sup>

The year before, in 1854, Con (Constantine) Rea of Marion was writing in one of the county's earliest newspapers, *The Lauderdale Republican*, that "land which three years ago could not be sold for any price whatever, will now bring ten dollars per acre, and good lands near the rail-

roads now sell for twenty dollars per acre” as he proclaimed the “march of improvement has commenced.” Editor Rea, who also gained prominence as a lawyer and state representative during the antebellum years, predicted the county would eventually become “. . . a continuous field, interspersed with villages, towns, churches, academies and residencies.”<sup>3</sup>

Such optimism had its roots in the prosperity then being enjoyed on farms and plantations around the county. Although there were relatively few slaves in Lauderdale County, where small-scale farmers remained in the majority, a planter class was emerging and the slave population increased throughout the decade. By 1860, 4,711 slaves were at work. In contrast, the 1848 tax roll records had shown 2,218 slaves working for 369 owners. At the beginning of the 1850s, roughly a third of the white residents owned slaves, the majority holding claim to fewer than five. In 1848, only ten tax-paying residents owned more than twenty-five slaves.

Among the earliest plantation owners in the county were William and Charles Clayton, who had a large spread near the old Coosa Indian

village site and the present site of the Meridian Naval Air Station. Major David Gavin, who traveled through the county in 1843 assessing potential plantation land, visited with the Claytons and other early land owners. The diary of his trip, donated to the Archives by William “Bill” Clayton, records both the hospitality and hardships typical of the antebellum era. In addition to the Claytons, Major Gavin stopped at the farms of Littleberry Brown, Abraham Tucker, William Rhodes, Arthur Tucker, Samuel Reed, and E. Y. Hussey while in Lauderdale County. He described Marion as “a neat village with a respectable wooden courthouse” and Old Daleville, then near present-day Lizelia, as a “poor village having only a store or two and perhaps a shop or [doggery], with a few private houses or residences.”<sup>4</sup>

Major Gavin observed on July 17, 1843, that lands of Lauderdale County were “cheap and low and are very tempting to emigration, particularly when added to the solicitation of friends and relatives, and I think these swamp lands will last for ages. They are level and rich, and with a little care and attention will produce well for ages.”<sup>5</sup>



*The Mosby Semmes plantation home, ca. 1845, once west of Meridian*

Photo courtesy of J. B. Harvey



*The Peter Bozeman home, ca. 1840s, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Crane*

Indeed, more and more who saw promise in the land arrived during the years after Gavin's trek through the area. One who cashed in on that promise was Peter Bozeman, who established his holdings east of Toomsuba during the 1840s. The Bozeman home, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Crane, is one of the few antebellum plantation homes in the county to have survived the Civil War and its aftermath. Captain Bozeman's home became a social center, with regular picnics, barbecues and parties, during the prosperous years before the war. Lumber for his spacious home was cut by slaves and planed at a mill situated on a nearby creek. Hand-dressed boards, 24 to 26 inches wide, are a prominent feature of the home. A cook house and slave quarters once stood behind the main house.

Another large plantation in the northeastern section was owned by Colonel E. A. Durr, who owned 50 slaves in 1848. By 1858, he had more than 520 acres east of Marion and northeast of Russell. In addition, Durr was a prominent merchant in Marion.

Farther south, Dr. J. P. Welch, a planter and physician, established one of the largest plantations in the county, in the Alamucha-Old Town area. Today, only a vestige of the Welch plantation's former glory can be found, in two chimneys, a bell and a section of the home still standing behind the home of Millie Gunn Butler.

But in its heyday, the Welch home stood in the

midst of 3,000 productive acres. The spacious home, which was the scene of constant social activity such as "croquet, marbles, cards and dancing," was headquarters of a self-sufficient enterprise created by Dr. Welch and operated by his more than sixty slaves, including house servants, cooks, nurses, coachman, and fieldhands. The enterprise featured its own blacksmith shop and smokehouse. Cotton, which covered hundreds of acres, was ginned on the place in a horse-powered gin. The gin was operated by two circling mules or horses hitched to either end of a long beam.

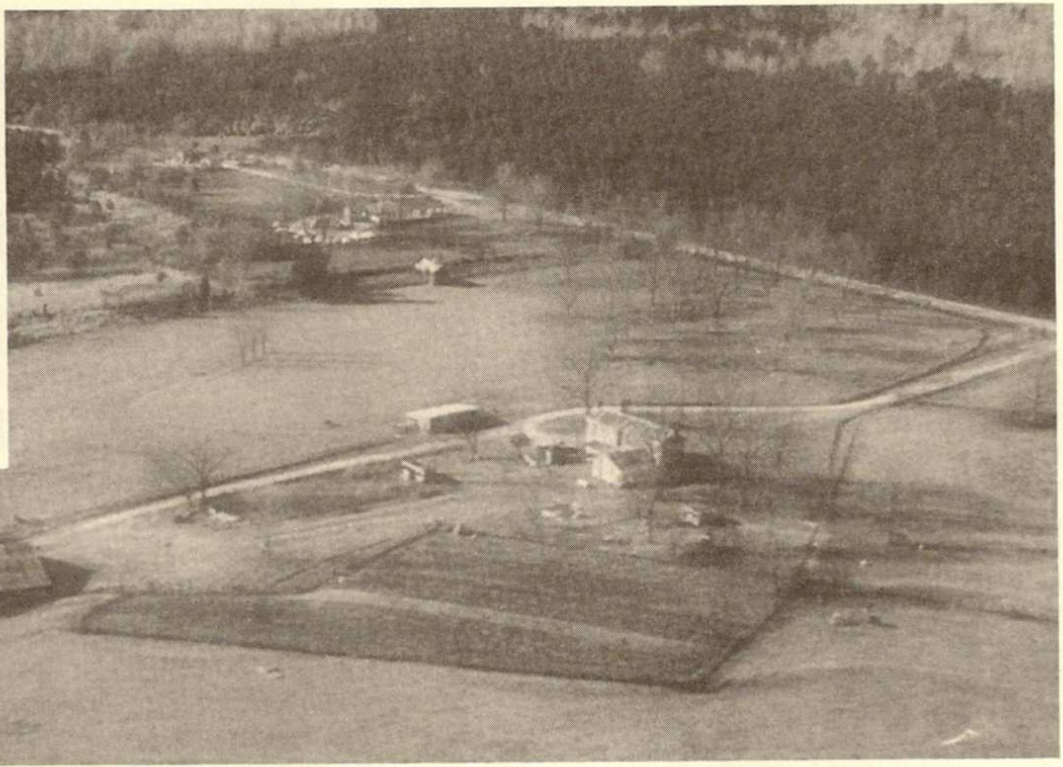
The Welch home, patterned after the Colonial style typical of the day, had wide verandas with narrow columns reaching the upper porches. The kitchen was separated from the main house by a covered walkway. Upstairs, Dr. Welch used the large attic as a study and medical dispensary.

One legacy left behind by the physician-plantation owner—his detailed autobiography—provides a glimpse into the antebellum past. The unpublished work is now held by Dr. Welch's great-grandson, Jarvis Welch of Toomsuba. On



*Albert A. and Martha Welch Bishop on their wedding day, July 27, 1852*

Photo courtesy of J. B. Harvey



*Aerial view shows Welch Plantation site, near Alamucha. Insert shows Welch Plantation bell . . . sole survivor of antebellum glory days*

how the Welch family traveled from the East to their new home in Lauderdale County, Dr. Welch noted in his journal that they “. . . took a boat from Mobile, thence up the Bigbee to Tompkinsville and out 31 miles to Alamutcha, Miss., by private conveyance and reached my future home of that place on the 21st day of February, A.D., 1851.”<sup>6</sup>

Other interesting insights recorded by Dr. Welch included the information that tomatoes were then called “love apples” and were grown as decorative plants only, because the general belief then was that the fruit was poisonous. Not until after the tomato was found to be not only safe but tasty did it earn a place of prominence on Southern tables.

Transportation, the Welch record shows, remained slow and hazardous, even for the wealthy, Dr. Welch wrote that he would join other area plantation owners to make annual wagon caravan trips to Mobile for trading. The round trip usually took several weeks.

In the mid-section of the county, B. F. “Bart” Moore was operating an even larger 3,500-acre plantation in the Sageville-Arundel area by the late 1850s. Moore was sent by his father, a North Carolina governor, to carve out his Mississippi

plantation with a wagonload of provisions and 100 slaves. A record of daily plantation life, written by the overseer, H. Blackwood, reflects the hardships of the antebellum years, when endless struggles with nature made existence one far removed from the idealized images of Old South plantation life.

For instance, the Blackwood journal shows from 15 to 25 percent of the slaves working on the Moore spread were sick at any given time. Blackwood made particular note of sickness, death and weather conditions, writing in one cold month that “Amey, Milton’s wife, died of pneumonia this evening about 12 o’clock.” It also reflects that female slaves faced a dual workload, as they helped cut logs, prepare land for crops, build homes, plant and harvest, while also performing domestic duties.

A typical entry, recorded on January 15, 1859, shows the extensive labor involved in operating a plantation with:

Three hands cutting logs, three ditching, two at work on their houses. Blake and 20 cleaning up as yesterday, Jef hauling, Jim still making collars, two gone to help Mager Fortner roll logs, two sick with colds. Melton making rope works and plowstocks.

By the height of the spring planting season, the hectic pace picked up with:

Four plows planting cotton seed, two sowing cotton seed, two dropping corn, two toting cotton seed, eleven plows bedding cotton land. Blake and his gang trenching cotton land. Alfred and Harry fixing fence. Jef gone after a load of cotton seed.<sup>7</sup>

The Blackwood diary also points out the arrival of a new wave of settlers in the county, the Irish. Throughout the 1850s, the Irish families flocked to the American South as the Potato Famine in their native land forced many to seek a new home. Several entries reflect the employment of Irishmen on the Moore plantation, including Blackwood's March 22, 1859, note: "The three Irish ditched all day today for B. F. Moore." Some of the Irish immigrants worked alongside slaves on plantations, while others worked with blacks on crews then beginning to lay rails into Lauderdale County.

The Moore Plantation, unlike some in the county, weathered the Civil War. In 1884, Moore turned over his property to Captain Jack Hyde and went to Paris, France. He died in 1888 and left \$300 in "new silver dollars" to each of his former slaves who remained on his plantation after the war.

Other large plantations in the county during the antebellum years included those of W. E. Prince and George W. Chandler, who owned land in the Pine Springs area. Mrs. Edna Hooks, the great-granddaughter of Methodist circuit rider Aaron Jones, said Chandler owned one of the largest plantations and 117 slaves. She added that Chandler's wealth survived the Civil War because ". . . he was smart and got everything in gold before the war. He wrapped up his gold and jewelry in cowhides and lowered it into the well. He managed to keep it safe through the war."

Access to medical care during the antebellum years was a problem for both slaves and their white owners. Former slaves interviewed in a Works Progress Administration program during the 1930s, said home remedies were common on the plantations. Ned Chaney, for instance, told an interviewer his midwife mother cared for both blacks and whites, using black-root tea to cure fevers and potions made from Samson snake-root, which was "powerful bitter by itself so they put it in whiskey."<sup>8</sup> Lula Coleman added, "Where there were so many hands, there was

bound to be some sick right along. For dysentery, you make tea out of sweetgum buds . . . For pneumonia, you make hog-hoof tea. But you use sage tea for fever." Mrs. Coleman said folk remedies continued to be used after slavery days ended as ". . . folks get sick now the same as they did then, and it heals 'em the same way."<sup>9</sup>

A concern for health, and a growing amount of leisure afforded by the pre-war prosperity, helped spark the popularity of Lauderdale Springs, where a resort and health spa attracted crowds from near and far. As early as 1843, Major David Gavin noted that Lauderdale Springs, sometimes referred to as White Sulphur Springs, had become a popular gathering spot. Visiting Abraham Carr in February of 1843, Gavin stayed in Fisher's Hotel, then owned by Gen. W. S. Patton, whom he described as "gentlemanly and pleasant in his manner." However, at this point, Gavin wrote, ". . . unfortunately some visit the springs more from the love of strong drink and frolicking than for the benefit of the mineral waters."<sup>10</sup>

Even before the establishment of an inn, tales of the "healing powers" of the Springs had made the spot a magnet for Indians and early settlers. The springs were, and remain, unique in that each of the several spouts flowing near each other produces a different type of water. The White Sulphur Springs produced water supposedly good for stomach trouble, while the nearby Spout Springs poured out table-quality water rumored to heal kidney problems. Others, which still flow on the wooded land of Mrs. Emogene



*Water still flows at Lauderdale Springs*



Baumgardner east of present-day Lauderdale, were known as the "Black Medicine Water Springs," deemed a laxative and curative for disorders of the skin, and the Colebiate Springs, a set of four springs laden with "iron, magnesia and alum."

By the early 1850s, Lauderdale Springs' wilder side had been tamed as it grew into a favorite resort for the polite society of the day. The refuge from summer's heat by then was offering more sophisticated amusement, as W. B. Allison pointed out, "Square dances were of frequent occurrence, with occasional tournaments, wherein unarmored knights jostled on horseback at suspended rings for the privilege of naming the queen of Love and Beauty."<sup>11</sup>

Developers promoted the curative powers of the mineral waters and built a two-story hotel on the property. As the area grew in popularity, a spur rail line was built leading from "Springs Depot," as Lauderdale was then known, to the resort grounds.

In addition to the main hotel, the resort complex featured cottages, a large dance pavilion and bath houses. The hotel and cottages were booked throughout the summer, and some guests stayed year-round. In addition to honeymooners, the resort attracted those who came believing the waters could cure ailments ranging from kidney trouble to arthritis. And, it offered additional benefits, as an April 1854 edition of *The Lauderdale Republican* pointed out, ". . . lovers of summer can here pass through the sultry months without scarce perceiving the rapid flight of time." B. B. Smith, advertising that the resort would open under his management, said he would offer ". . . a first-rate line of stages to meet guests arriving at Moscow landing to convey guests to and from the Springs."<sup>12</sup> Another promotional tract boasted of the area's twelve different kinds of mineral waters. Eventually, the water was bottled and sold throughout Mississippi and in other states. Later, the good times at the springs would change drastically as the Civil War transformed the haven into a hospital.

As a result of growing agricultural prosperity during the 1850s, merchants located in villages thrived. By 1853, communities on the rounds of tax collector R. B. G. Harper were White's Store, Old Town, Lauderdale Springs, Daleville, Sageville, Chunkeyville and Sookalena (Su-

qualena).<sup>13</sup> Other settlements were born as villages sprang up around general merchandise stores, which often served as both post offices and voting precincts. Others emerged like Bailey, the settlement that sprang up around the gins of Colonel S. M. Bailey in 1858.<sup>14</sup> The early-settled southeastern corner continued to grow, with Whynot's first post office opening in 1852. The village grew as settlers from Choctaw County, Alabama, and Clarke County moved into the area. While farming was the chief occupation, carpenters, blacksmiths and general store owners found opportunities for profit in Whynot.

In the southwestern corner, Clarke County's thriving riverport town of Enterprise attracted much trade. Along the Chunky River, Irish immigrant John Dunn channeled the energy of the stream to create Dunn's Falls in 1854, and he used the water power the falls furnished. By 1860, he had constructed a three-story frame building for a cotton mill. During the coming Civil War, Dunn would manufacture blankets, hats and other clothing for the Confederacy and expand his operation to include a distillery and blacksmith shop. While Dunn's enterprise faded in the post-war years, the sixty-five foot waterfall he created continues to attract visitors to one of the county's most inviting spots.

But perhaps the clearest example of the spirit of enterprise that marked the antebellum period could be seen in Old Marion. Con Rea wrote in the May 16, 1854 edition of *The Republican*:

Never since its first settlement has Marion presented a more flourishing condition than it does at this time. Several new buildings are being put up, and others intended to be commenced shortly. At present there are in Marion six dry good stores, one provision store, two tan-yards and connected with each of them is a shoe and boot camp. There are two shops in which are manufactured saddles, harnesses, and three taverns, two blacksmith shops, one carriage and wagon shop, one Male and Female Academy. . . .

Rea further extolled the benefits of life in Marion saying he saw no reason why the village was not destined to be ". . . one of the most important towns in East Mississippi."<sup>15</sup> As shops situated around the courthouse square catered to the growing demands of increasingly prosperous plantation owners and farmers, the boom times were noticed by a staff member of the Paulding

Clarion newspaper when he visited the village for court day in 1854 and was “. . . gratified to observe many substantial evidences of improvement” and he commented, too, on skyrocketing real estate values.

Cultural events in Marion included cotillion parties held at the Mansion House, a popular entertainment stop, and concerts, such as the one presented by flutist Madame Siminski in February of 1855. Listed as managers of one such cotillion party in 1854 were: Col. E. Holden, Captain W. J. Daniel, Dr. D. U. Ford, Hon. S. Evans, W. M. Hancock, Hon. G. C. Chandler, Con Rea and Col. W. P. Lasley.<sup>16</sup>

In the 1850s, the two-story Banes (Bains) Hotel was a popular inn, which featured “Meals of venison or pork, rice, sweet potatoes, corn-bread and sweet potato beer. Each room had a coal oil lamp and a box of matches on the table.” Another inn at Old Marion was the less elaborate Preston House, where visitors could stay for eighty-eight cents a night and have three meals for \$1.25. Although accommodations were available, the Preston House might not be considered up to today’s standards—as the newspaper pointed out, a “. . . mixture of hot water and red pepper had been used to kill vermin on the beds.”

Businesses on the square included the Harper and Banes store, which offered “clothing, shoes, hardware, sugar and salt.” The D. and I. Rosenbaum store was on the south side of the square. The Ragland and Company drug store featured a stock of “. . . fine French brandy in gallon jugs and quart bottles,” which was advertised as medicine. Other popular cures advertised included Jacob’s Cordial, a “sure cure for most ailments,” and Azor’s Turkish Balm, which was “guaranteed to grow hair on a bald head.” Goods sold in the apothecary ranged from “one case of superior violins” to morphine, Holland gin, Madeira, Martin’s whiskey and Spanish cigars.<sup>17</sup>

Taverns rivaled other businesses for attention. The Republican pointed out one fall day in 1855, “The local taverns were packed. At the billiard parlor, they shot pool and bet their skill between sips of whiskey and sugar. The card tables were full where hard-earned money was gambled on a turn of the cards in lively games of Seven Up and Jack of Diamonds.” Another favorite pastime were the horse races held on a track near the village. Following the races and other excite-

ments of the day, evening square dances were held in a big gray barn west of the square. Slaves visiting Marion with their white owners would also make the most of the occasion at dances nearby.

One of the county’s leading men before the war was Charles E. Rushing. The 1850 Census lists his worth at \$1,100. In the course of the decade, Rushing multiplied his riches and eventually became a millionaire, with general stores scattered across the county and immense land holdings. But, like other prosperous gentlemen of the day, Rushing lost his fortune in the Civil War. During the war, he moved to Tennessee, but he later returned to Lauderdale County, where he rebuilt his fortune. Frank Durr’s chronicle calls the Rushings, Charles and his wife, Mary, and their children: Clara, Eddie, Charlie, Horace and Crawford, “the first family of Marion.”<sup>18</sup>

An abstract from the 1850 Census of Old Marion’s residents shows Rushing was far from the only merchant in the county seat to prosper dur-



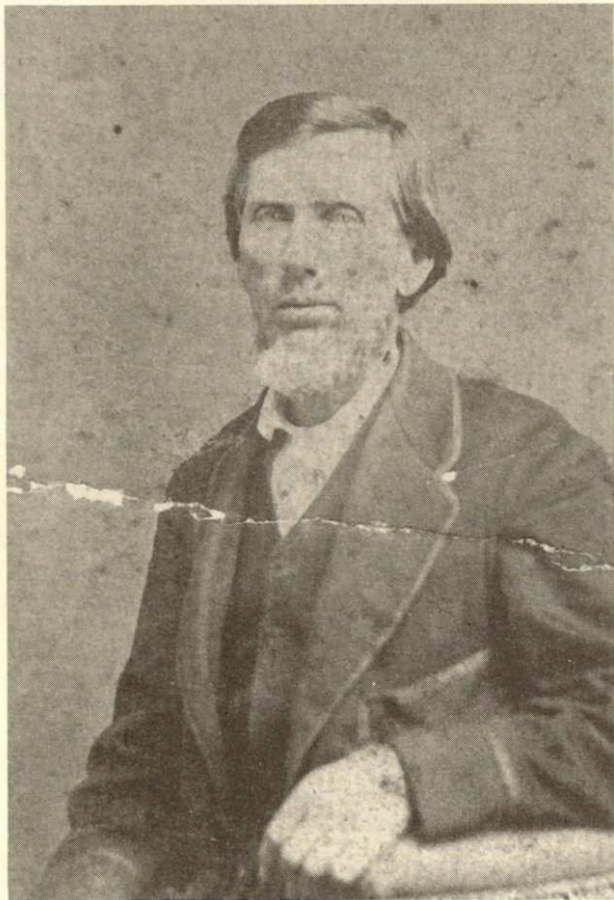
*Charles E. Rushing tombstone in Marion*

ing the antebellum years. Other merchants operating in the county seat included William Cheers, James Ray, David and T. Rosenbaum, Jonathan Lowenstein, Thomas F. Sheldon, Samuel Simmons, W. C. Simmons and Oliver F. Brinner. Marion lawyers named on the 1850 Census were William M. Hancock, William J. Daniel, Sylvanus Evans and Greene C. Chandler. B. F. Parker was listed as clerk of the Circuit and Probate Courts, along with R. B. G. Harper, sheriff, and William P. Lasley, deputy sheriff. Other professionals named were druggist J. B. Hancock, Dr. H. R. Wilson, Dr. D. U. Ford, teachers Joseph Lowry and James Hughes, and printers John G. Bartel, Stephen H. Ford, James P. Demment, James Buckler and John C. C. Bayne.

Craftsmen further reflected the diversity of business opportunity then abounding in Old Marion. Working as shoemakers, harness makers, leather tanners, clerks, carpenters, millers, tailors or blacksmiths were: L. B. Bains, Noah Lewis, Benjamin Meador, James M.

Pigott, B. H. Bailey, William A. Smith, Canada McLane, P. H. Partin, Willis Dickeson, Elias Taft, David Clutts, John Calhoun, John W. Bailey and Osbourne Stone. Farmers named in the 1850 Census were: John and Granville Henderson, Simon Lindley, Charles Hughes, Pinckney Vaughn, John W. Parker, Joel W. Parker, Joel W. Hughes, W. C. and T. D. Dobbs, Robert N. Burris, Southy Fisher, Martha Joyner, William T. Fisher, A. White and William J. Wilkerson.

Industries thriving during the years 1854 to 1856 included the wagon and cart-making concern of R. B. G. Harper and L. B. Banes; R. M. McElroy's steam-powered grist mill, and Lamb and Turner's saddle and harness manufacturing operation. Businesses mentioned in the newspaper those years included drugstores owned or operated by H. D. Boutwell, Dr. J. M. White, J. B. Hancock, C. E. Rushing and W. S. Ragland; James A. Radcliff's Eagle Tin Shop; Benjamin F. Parke's auction and commission house, and W. C. Calhoun's Ten Pin Alley and Confectionary.



*Benjamin Meador, sheriff, 1845–1865, and president of the county's Board of Police, 1860–1865, with wife, Elizabeth Collins Meador*

Photo courtesy of J. B. Harvey

Marion, as the county seat, hosted many political rallies, which rivaled religious revivals as diversions during the antebellum years. Political rallies could instantly triple the population, the orators' rhetoric drawing crowds from across the county, and beyond.

On one such occasion in October of 1855, the future vice president of the Confederate States, Alexander Hamilton Stephens, joined Gov. John McRae, U.S. Rep. William Barksdale, Sen. C. G. Miller, Rep. Con Rea, Probate Judge William B. White and Sheriff W. F. Alford on the political stump in Marion for the Great Democratic Rally.

Elections were only a few weeks away in a showdown that promised to be the most emotional election held in Mississippi up to that time. In addition, the festivities were marked by ripples that would eventually swell into riptides—hints of the approaching war and the arrival of the "Iron Horse." Those factors, combined with a slate of prominent candidates, drew a crowd of nearly 5,000 for the barbecue and rally. Stephens, of Georgia, told the hundreds gathered around Courthouse Square that he hoped, ". . . the approaching crisis between the North and South . . . could be resolved without an armed conflict" while other politicians vied for votes.<sup>19</sup>

An account of the event shows Dr. J. P. Welch, Dave Rosenbaum and Richard McLemore were in charge of barbecue, and the crowds may well have been drawn to the county seat that day by more than civic interests, as the event also featured a feast, horse-racing, whiskey drinking and socializing.

Hewitt Clarke pointed out in his description of the affair:

A gaping trench in the ground 100 feet long, four feet wide and two feet deep had been dug several days before to cook the meat. The previous night, a fire of green hickory was started in the pit. . . . Venison, mutton, pork and a few sides of beef were hung over the fire pit by a frame of green sticks.

Several hundred loaves of homemade bread, pots of corn, and sweet potatoes rounded out the menu.

Whiskey flowed freely as Old Marion began to fill up with revelers from far and wide. In one Marion shop ". . . jolly men stood around whiskey barrels making faces after quaffing straight whiskey from tin cups while huddled in a corner

smoking clay pipes and complaining about their various ailments and discussing their children." The more refined, including the well-to-do planters, arrived in elaborate carriages dressed in their finest. Most of the men, with pistols strapped to their hips, had "their hair and moustaches slicked down with grease and wore cravats, vests, and their best suits."<sup>20</sup>

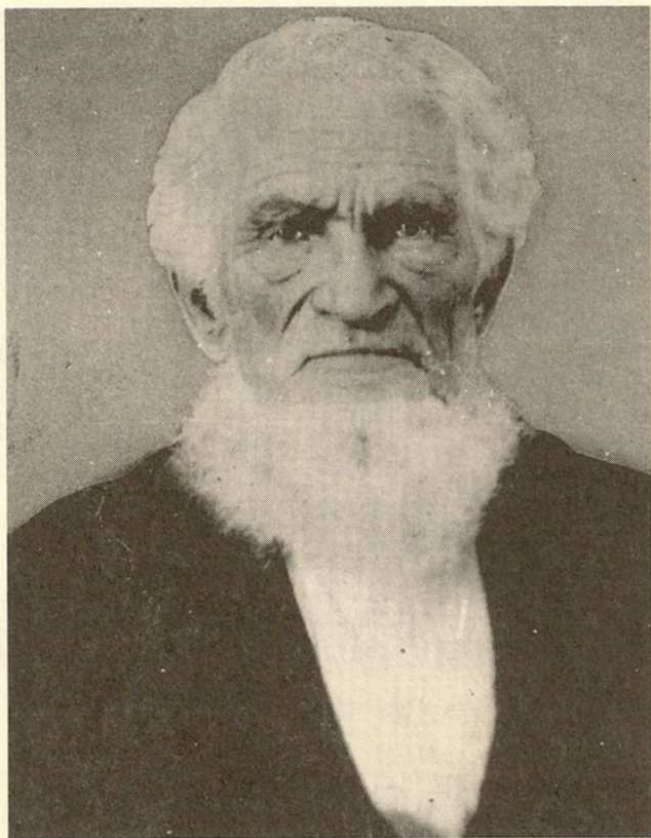
Though primitive conditions were being eased by prosperity, conditions remained frontier-like, as revelers left the picnic that day "over narrow trails that were especially rough after dark. Meridian was only four miles away, but it would take almost two hours to get there. Some were too drunk to travel and were left at Marion by their disgusted wives."<sup>21</sup>

But a new day was dawning. As politicians in Marion that day voiced hints of the impending split between the North and the South, the "Iron Horse" puffed into Marion Station, a few miles to the west. Some of the political rally guests, in fact, arrived via the train, disembarking in Marion Station, where the Mobile and Ohio tracks had reached only two weeks before. The event caused a commotion because not many of the locals had ever seen a train, much less ridden on one.

Yet, the crowds had eagerly anticipated the arrival of the Mobile and Ohio tracks as they pushed northward from Mobile. Men such as editor Rea had predicted a year before that Marion would be the primary beneficiary of the progress rails would bring. Throughout 1854, Rea had optimistically looked forward to the time ". . . when we can avail ourselves of the great advantages extended to us by this enterprise, as not being far distant, when we can reach the city of Mobile by railroad, and be no longer skinned by swindling steamboats." By April of that year, the Mobile and Ohio tracks were within ten miles of the Mississippi line "with sixty men laying tracks at a rate of a mile per day." He proclaimed:

Our little town feels the impetus. MARION is becoming a city! Will you believe it or will you remain obstinately blind to the conviction until the truth burst upon your benighted vision with all its glorious churches; splendid architecture, crowded streets and other appendages of a great city.<sup>22</sup>

Area pioneer Richard McLemore must have heeded such encouraging signs that the M&O

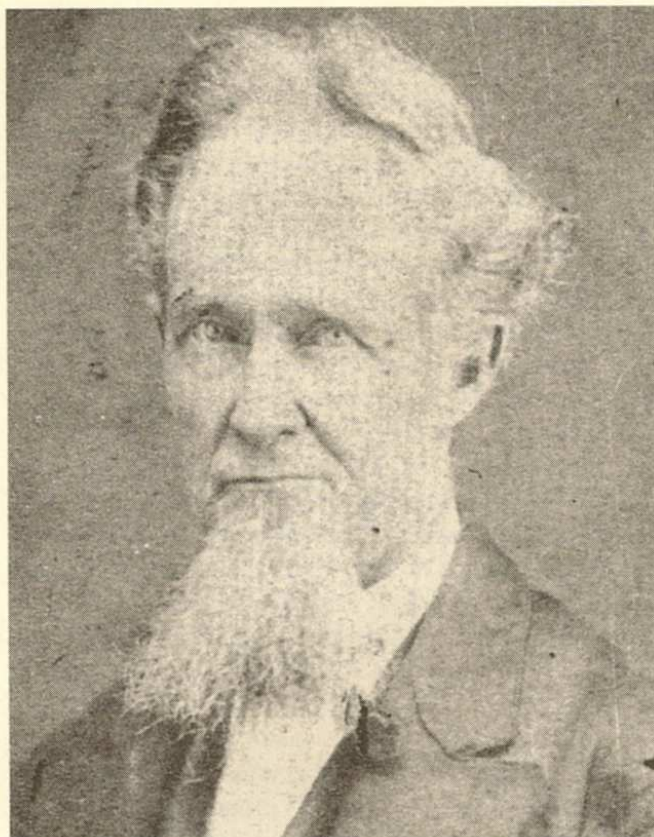


*Richard McLemore witnessed sweeping changes*

would bring boom times to Marion. He sold the remainder of his land in the present Meridian area to Lewis A. Ragsdale, a lawyer from Alabama, and John T. Ball, a Kemper County merchant, and moved his family to the Marion area.

Contrary to the predictions of most in the county, Ball and Ragsdale envisioned that the then-forested holdings they acquired from McLemore would soar in value as the rails pushed their way through. Ironically, the winds of change did blow more favorably on Ball's and Ragsdale's dream than on the village of Old Marion, despite Rea's rosy prognostications. Indeed, when the tracks bypassed the county seat by just a few miles, residents and businesses slowly but steadily began an exodus west to Marion Station, eventually bringing doom to Old Marion.

As Marion Station began to boom, Ball and Ragsdale fervently promoted their holdings to the south. The Mobile and Ohio tracks had reached the present site of Meridian in 1855. By Oct. 3, 1855, the trains were in operation to Sowashee Station, as the flag stop Ball built at his own expense was dubbed. From the start, Ball



*John T. Ball*

and Ragsdale engaged in a bitter rivalry, "fighting over everything from street patterns to land sales to the name of the community."<sup>23</sup> Each set about laying out the town he was sure would grow alongside the tracks, leaving a jigsaw-like pattern for streets that survives to this day.<sup>24</sup>

Ball opened a log store, while Ragsdale ran a tavern in McLemore's first home. As the competition grew, another dispute raged over whether to call the village "Sowashee," "Ragsdale City" or "Meridian." Ball, though not the first to purchase part of the McLemore tract, became the first to establish himself when he opened the first store built and operated in the village. Alfred Beck helped Ball run his store while W. F. Brown operated a store of his own, which housed the earliest post office, the Mobile and Ohio ticket office, a drug store and "saloon," with a liquor barrel and tin cup. Dave Rosenbaum also brought his business from Old Marion when the Mobile and Ohio tracks arrived.

But the Ball and Ragsdale dreams of a city would not truly materialize until the Vicksburg, Jackson and Brandon railroad (Alabama and

Vicksburg) lines started heading across the state from the west in 1859. It was a close call, however, that brought the plum to the two men's village. The line was originally headed to Enterprise, the then-booming town in Clarke County. But, Enterprise citizens, fearing it would bring dirt and commercialism to their prosperous settlement, rejected the overtures of railroad officials who hoped to connect with the M&O there. A. W. Malone noted in his history of Meridian that Enterprise, then the largest town on the M&O, with 60 money-making merchants "... was fully able to come to the relief of the road, but her refusal to do so brought about her ruin."<sup>25</sup> As the steamboat era passed with the arrival of the tracks, Enterprise also faded while the infant village of Meridian reaped the rewards of the foresight of Ball and Ragsdale.

As soon as Ragsdale heard of Enterprise's refusal to deal with the A&V officials, he jumped in to lay out the red carpet from Meridian, "promising them all the land they wanted for railroad purposes and otherwise assisting them to the best of his ability."<sup>26</sup> Consequently, a deal was cut in less than forty-eight hours. As soon as it was settled that the line was indeed headed to the village, Ball and Ragsdale began an all-out, although still competitive, effort to promote their home, complete with huge posters announcing the sale of lots and a barbecue dinner. Despite the promotions, rumblings of war were growing and, besides, "... the people did not believe a city could be built there."<sup>27</sup>

The village, prior to that time, had made little progress as "everybody outside the town seemed to be against it." That opposition was heightened by L. J. Fleming, an M&O official who "left no stone unturned to ruin the city" by such maneuvers as discriminating in freight rates. Meanwhile, a dispute raged between those promoting the rails and farmers who disliked the idea of their fields being disturbed. The split could also be seen in the fight over the village's name. Though Ball had gotten a post office in the name of Meridian in 1854, signs for Sowashee, Ragsdale City and Meridian continued to be put up and taken down by opposing factions. Finally, the debate was settled when the village was chartered as Meridian on February 10, 1860, by the Mississippi Legislature.

At the time, the small area encompassed by



*John Ball's son, Augustine, with wife, Mrs. Ida Walker Ball*

the charter was composed of the original Ragsdale, Ball and M&O surveys, a little more than one square mile, which extended from what is now Thirty-first Avenue on the west, along the present Fourteenth Street on the north, to Tenth Avenue on the east, and along the line of Tenth Avenue and the railroad spur to where it crossed what would become B Street around Seventeenth Avenue. The original limits then went along St. Andrews Street, on the south behind present-day Thirty-first Avenue.<sup>28</sup>

Initially, Rea, writing in *The Republican* in December of 1855, had scoffed at the concept that Marion Station, much less Meridian, would benefit more than Old Marion from the arrival of the "Iron Horse." He wrote then:

This growing little village continues to go up and everything seems to be in a prosperous condition about the place. Some are already prophesying that the courthouse will one day be removed thither and that the glory of our little town will soon forever set, and that everything will pass over to Marion Depot ... good GRACIOUS!!!<sup>29</sup>

Yet that day was not far off for Old Marion, despite Rea's exhortations and pleas for residents to stay put in the village, efforts that even included circulating rumors that the area around the station was ripe for a yellow fever epidemic. It

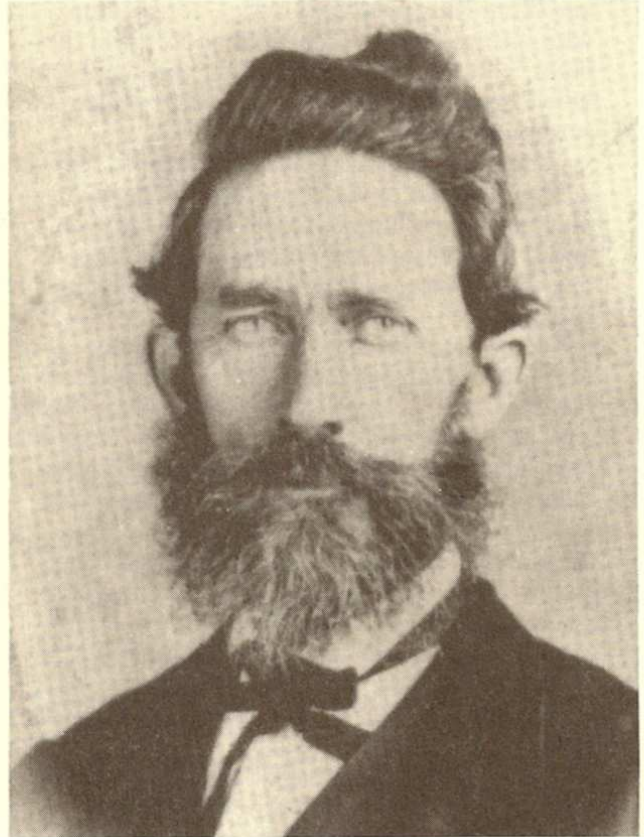
seems the "Iron Horse" was a stubborn beast, determined to push the county into a new era.

By May of 1860, the new rail line (now the Illinois Central) had progressed as far as Tunnel Hill, nine miles west of Meridian. The line running from Brandon to Meridian was on its way to completion. After the Confederate government took charge of the line, it was extended to Jackson and Vicksburg, with the job finished by May of 1861.

But the intersection of the new line with the Mobile and Ohio did bring the Ball and Ragsdale predictions to fruition, eventually transforming the plain flag stop Ball had built into the most important railroad center in the eastern part of the state.

However, on the eve of the Civil War, Meridian was still a mere village, with only three or four small stores, the gin and saw and grist mills of early industrialist I.S.O.G. Greer, two churches, and an academy presided over by Professors Emerson, Anderson and Gould, in addition to Ragsdale's inn.

Just when Meridian was growing out of her infancy, the winds of change blew into a storm as the Civil War years arrived.



*Early Meridian industrialist I.S.O.G. Greer*

---

## DUELS AND DANGER

Despite the best efforts of lawmen and preachers, duels and danger were commonplace during the early nineteenth century. Tradition and honor were often at stake on the dueling grounds, while travel to and from markets was hampered by treacherous bandits who operated along the county's byways. Legend holds that members of the infamous Dalton Gang, and the brother of bandit Jesse James, Frank, operated in the county prior to the Civil War. Because of the nature of their deeds, the criminals' disrepute has grown over the years as one generation passed the tales on to the next. Seemingly rooted in both fact and fantasy, these tales do reflect a frontier-like danger that existed within the county lines.

While many duels were fought in the antebellum years, "Aunt Muggie" Warbington's battle in Old Marion must have been one of the wildest. "Aunt Muggie" met her match in an

1846 shoot-out, but not before taking a few into the next life with her. The tale of Aunt Muggie's pistol-packing ways was left by Frank Durr, who recalled the duel resulted when a man "became involved in a difficulty with a man named Shoemek and his wife, widely known as Aunt Muggie."

According to Durr's account, the argument was eventually settled in the Shoemek brickyard with "three men of the Fisher family on one side, against Aunt Muggie and her husband on the other." He described the shoot-out saying, "Old Aunt Muggie had two guns and her husband had one. They all walked out, picked the flints and fired when the word was given. Aunt Muggie cut down old man Fisher at the first fire and the other two shot and missed her. She dropped her empty gun, picked up the other and cut down William Fisher."

Events took an ironic twist as Shoemek ran

and Aunt Muggie turned and “. . . shot him with his own gun, which he abandoned in the flight.” The lone surviving Fisher then shot and killed Aunt Muggie while she was disarmed and surrounded by her victims.

Yet another action-packed event witnessed by Durr pitted two of the county’s most prominent men against each other. In this duel, Bill Evans and lawyer-editor Con Rea were forced to conduct their matter of honor across the state line at Ross’s Ridge in Alabama, the Mississippi Legislature having moved by 1857 to ban duels. Durr noted that “both black and white” watched as the duelists “. . . stepped off sixty yards and laid a plank across the road to show the distance, the men then turned their backs toward each other, the count was one, two, three . . . then wheel and fire.”

As the crowd watched, “Mr. Con Rea did not miss Mr. Bill Evans either shot; but did not cut him down. At the third shot, Mr. Evans hit Mr. Rea in the knee.” This particular battle had a happier ending than the Aunt Muggie saga, as both parties survived and “. . . made friends that day on the grounds.”

Duels, though sometimes deadly, seemed comparatively “civilized” in comparison to other dangers of the day. For instance, legend holds one notorious Dalton Gang member known as Stucky murdered and robbed countless victims in the southwestern corner of the county during the first half of the nineteenth century. The infamous Stucky left a name behind for Stucky’s Bridge, which spans the Chunky River near Meehan. The bridge, designated a Mississippi Landmark in 1987, is the oldest bridge in the county, the Board of Police having let a contract for the first bridge in 1847.

During the height of his criminal activity, Stucky apparently decided the isolated crossing on what was then a major east-west route across

the county would be an ideal spot for his villainy. Old-timers claim the “river rat” would detain travelers, kill them and dispose of their bodies in the Chunky. Today, rumor holds that Stucky’s ghost haunts the bridge that bears his name, a landmark in the county’s transportation history and a reminder of the lawlessness that often went unchecked during the early years.

Though the nineteenth century gangsters eventually died out, tales of their terrorizing ways have survived the passage of time, and over the years, rumors of their buried booty have sparked treasure hunts near their old haunts.

Civilized citizens did their best to bring law and order to the land during the antebellum years. Such efforts were personified by men such as Jubal Hancock, Old Marion’s mayor and marshal who “. . . never carried a gun, but his weapons consisted of an umbrella and a rattan stick.” According to Frank Durr’s account of life in Old Marion, Hancock “. . . would threaten to hit a prisoner with his stick if he offered any resistance.” Perhaps one secret to his popularity was explained by Durr, who recalled, “There was a large vineyard owned by Uncle Jube Hancock; it was quite amusing for the young people to go over there; there was no sale for the wine, everyone drank free of charge.”

The criminal activities and land speculation paid off for one segment of the population—lawyers—as their profession became one of the most profitable in the antebellum period. Early attorneys who had their hands full from 1838 to 1841 included: George Wood, Ransom M. McElroy, Theodore S. Swift, Joseph Heyfron, Peter Doty, Shields L. Hussey, Henry Calhoun, J. A. Marshall, M. M. Mann, S. M. Wilson, James McDugal, Benjamin C. Oppelt, John Allen, William B. Trotter, John M. Baldwin, and J. J. Johnston.



## 5 • Trial by Fire: The Civil War Years

*... our statesmen held out the hope that it would last but a short time—but oh what folly and disappointment!*

—DR. J. P. WELCH



*General William T. Sherman*

As elsewhere in the South, the ripple of differences between the North and South over the issue of slavery grew into a riptide by 1861, bringing on civil war. The war years would spell an end to the prosperity and optimism that had marked the previous decade. The death and destruction the conflict brought to Lauderdale County would take decades to overcome. It would cut the bonds of slavery, but bring the chains of a new kind of poverty. From 1861 to 1865, Lauderdale Countians, both black and white, would see their worlds turned upside down.

The railroads that had promised prosperity instead put Meridian on a different kind of map, making the village an important center for the Confederacy during the early years of the conflict and eventually bringing an unwelcome visitor—General William T. Sherman. Because of its railroads, Sherman realized the village was an important link between the South and East . . . one he vowed to break. In fact, by 1864, Meridian's rails made it strategically as important as Atlanta or Chattanooga, with two of the South's few remaining long-line railroads converging in the village.<sup>1</sup> That year, Sherman would bring the fighting close to home for the first time, as he arrived determined to destroy the railroad connection. More than a century after the arrival of Federal troops that fateful February, tales of the "Yankee invasion" of the hills and ridges of Suqualena to Marion and beyond are prominent in local history. As Meridian attorney and student

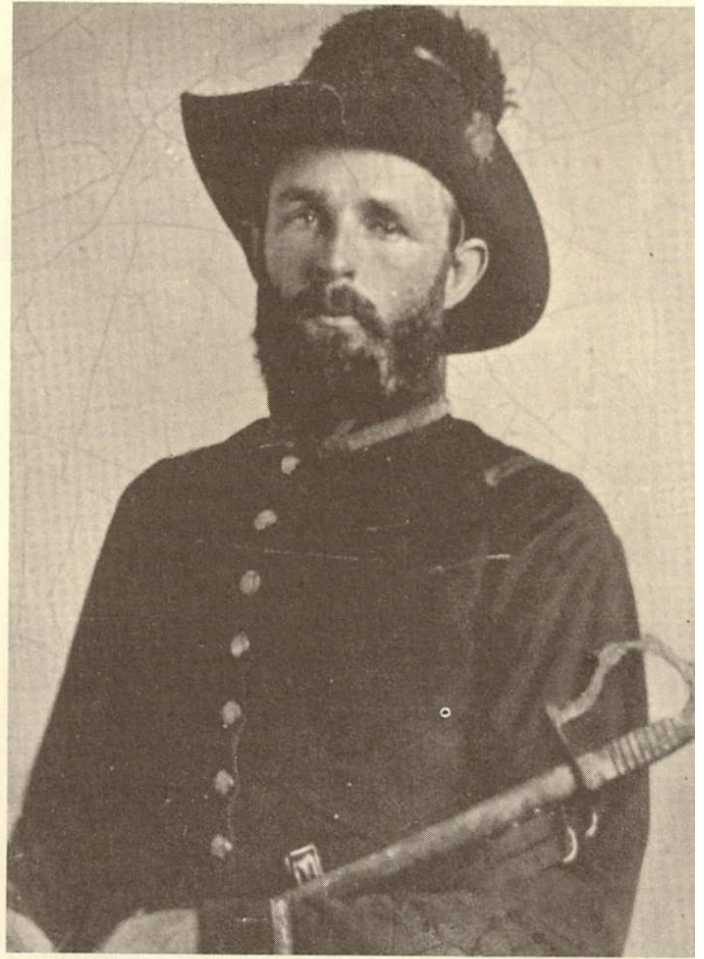
of Sherman's "Meridian Campaign," Greg Snowden, pointed out:

For decades after the Civil War, as the citizens of Vicksburg refused to celebrate July 4 because it was the date of the fall of their town to Grant, the citizens of Meridian likewise found it difficult to look upon St. Valentine's Day in terms of "hearts and flowers." February 14 would long be remembered in terms of Sherman's arrival in town on an errand of destruction.<sup>2</sup>

But Sherman's Valentine's Day visit of 1864 would have been impossible for the local Confederates to imagine during the early years of the conflict. At first, young men were more than anxious to don their new uniforms of gray, volunteering in droves at mustering points around the county as the president of the newly formed Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, issued his first call for troops in March of 1861. That spring, several units of volunteer banded together, including the Lauderdale Zouaves, Kennon McElroy, captain; Alamutcha Infantry, Peter H. Bozeman, captain; Pettus Guards, S. J. Randall, captain; Defenders, W. H. Hardy, captain; Lauderdale Springs Grays, B. B. Smith, captain; Walthall's Brigade, T. C. Carter, captain; and the Lauderdale Rifles, Con Rea, captain. These units served in the 13th Mississippi Regiment, CSA.<sup>3</sup>

Another group of eager volunteers signed up at Chunky Station. A group of Chunky residents formed a unit known as the "Chunky Heroes." Records reveal that eighty-one of the Chunky soldiers helped guard the Mississippi Coast against a possible Union invasion in 1861. Chunky history buff C. L. Cahoon noted that the "Heroes" also fought with distinction in the Battle of Atlanta. Groups of fighters were also organized at Enterprise as Company D, 3rd Regiment, Mississippi Volunteer Infantry.

Records of activities around the Peter Bozeman plantation near Toomsuba seem to indicate that optimistic Rebels at first viewed the war as an adventure. Captain Bozeman helped organize a volunteer company in 1861. That spring, the Confederate captain's plantation served as a mustering point for the local regiment, with stirring speeches delivered from the front porch before the men left for Civil War battlefields. In May of 1861, the company assembled at the home to bid farewell to relatives, sweethearts and friends. Plantation owner Dr. J. P. Welch, describing a

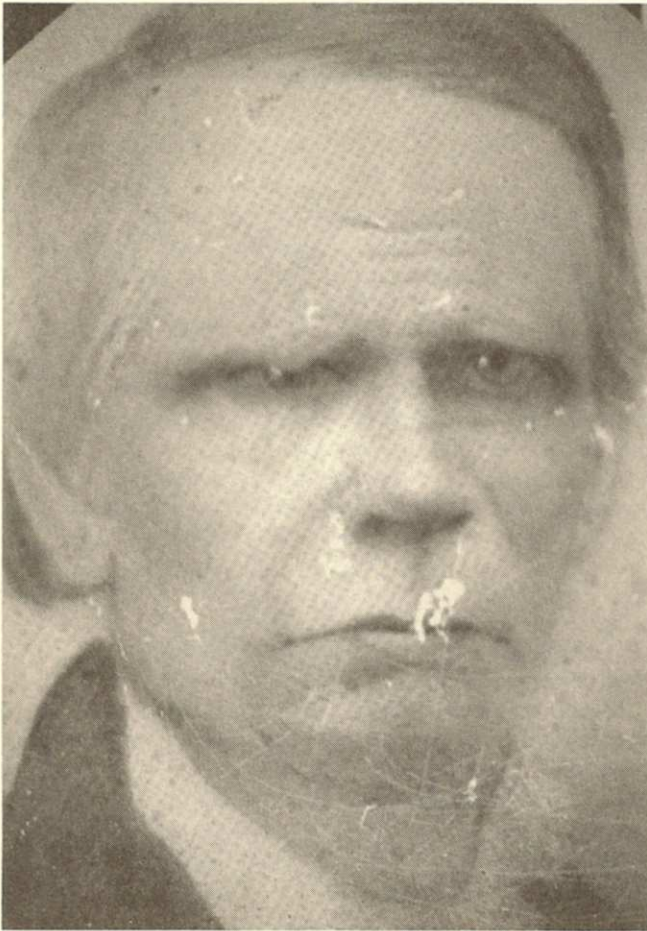


*W. L. Spinks, editor and Confederate*

scene that was probably similar to other such ceremonies across the county, wrote:

At the formation of the company, Mrs. Martha T. Welch was requested to address the company. She therefore composed and delivered a very patriotic and cheering speech to them. Miss Sophronia McElroy presented them with an appropriate flag. Mr. Benjamin Portis and myself also made remarks.<sup>4</sup>

After that ceremony, Captain Bozeman and his men traveled west to the Lockhart station where they boarded a train for Corinth. Bozeman's company joined the 13th Regiment of Mississippi Volunteers, CSA, which fought in many engagements, including the Battle of Bull Run. While Captain Bozeman's men had agreed on that spring day in 1861 to serve the Confederacy for one year, most would answer a call to re-volunteer in 1862. Captain Bozeman and T. S. Pigford, however, returned to Lauderdale County, with the command going to Hugh D.



*Nathaniel Kittrell*

Cameron. Later, Pigford and others who came home were called back, some joining General Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry. Others of the original volunteers in Bozeman's company of 100 men were T. D. Pigford, John Page, John Brown, Isaac Brown, Herrin Satcher, Wesley Satcher, Andrew Satcher, Bill Sims, Henry Sims, Wallace McElroy and Bruce McElroy. The Pettus Guards banded together in Marion, with some of those volunteers including Rick Harvey, Alac Harvey, Travis Russell, Joe Barnett, Manual (E.A.) Durr and Jim Hobgood.

Another group, the "Meridian Invincibles" formed on May 1, 1861, after a stirring public meeting at a barbecue. In fact, just as she was born, Meridian lost much of her youthful spirit to the war. One of her sons lost to the war was the first lieutenant of the "Meridian Invincibles," W. L. Spinks, who had established the village's first newspaper, *The Meridian*, in 1858. He joined Company H of the 14th Mississippi Regi-

ment, fighting under Johnson's command in Atlanta, before being killed in action in August, 1864.<sup>5</sup>

At first the volunteer companies, formed of 100 men between the ages of 18 and 40, quickly joined the ranks of the defenders of the Confederacy. And the county's records show that many young boys below the legal age sneaked off to join the Rebel effort, sometimes without telling their parents. Several court cases show parents of some such lads sought to have them released from duty. But, at times, a company would leave the area with the boys, some of whom never saw home again. Such was the case with Ross Kittrell, the young son of Nathaniel Kittrell who lived in the neighborhood of Hickory Grove Church.

The optimistic view of the war began to fade after several major losses and death began to take its toll. The volunteer ranks thinned as men were torn between taking care of their families' needs and service to the Confederacy. By 1862, the CSA set up a conscription law requiring men ages 18 to 35 to serve and froze the volunteers in service for the duration. In addition, the changing tides of the war could be seen in the order requiring all those over 40 who had been released back to service.

After the CSA began drafting soldiers, the Meridian divisional headquarters established in 1863 was used to process draftees from several Mississippi and Alabama counties. The draftees were examined in Meridian before being sent to various camps. Dr. J. F. Moore was one of the physicians who conducted the examinations. After being cleared for service, the men were sent to training camps, such as the one situated in Enterprise under the charge of Major M. F. Berry.

Some of the draftees were granted exemptions for medical or other reasons. As the ranks thinned, exemptions became harder to come by. Because of this, and the fact that many Lauderdale Countians owned no slaves and had no strong feelings about the ideological reasons behind the conflict, legend holds that the ridges and hollows of the county often served as hiding places for Rebel deserters.

During the first years of the conflict, Meridian's rail connections brought strategic entities, such as an armory, to the village. When Jackson was threatened by Union forces in June of 1863,

## DUE RESPECT

The Confederate soldiers who died in the Chunky River rail disaster now "sleep in nameless graves." As no records were kept, the location of the mass burial site was lost sight of. Now, more than 100 years after the accident, the site may have been found once again.

Apparently, some time during the 1930s, Meridianite H. R. Court obtained a federal marker for the site with the assistance of Sen. Pat Harrison. However, for some reason, the marker was never erected and information on the exact location of the graves was lost.

But, in late 1985, the LCDAH's Jim Dawson received a call that inspired a new interest in finding the site. Lloyd King of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, whose great-great-uncle Robert Slaughter had died in the train wreck, called, starting a search that resulted in pinpointing the location of the lost graves.

In the effort, Dawson teamed up with two 'detectives' from the Chunky area, Gary 'Beetle' Huffmaster and Maxey Baucum. The team tied together clues found in land titles and other records to tentatively identify the burial site. Baucum and Huffmaster, both avid woodsmen,

spent hours checking railroad bridges on the line. Records had revealed the victims were "buried at the scene of the crash." Huffmaster and Baucum pointed out that the nearest spot suitable for burying the victims was less than a mile up the tracks to the west towards Chunky.

The men now believe they have found the mass grave for the passengers who were "no doubt buried without even the benefit of a pine box." They identified a small ridge that rises above swampy river bottom land as the unmarked and nearly forgotten burial site. Baucum noted that the ridge makes it "... look as if the victims were buried head to toe facing east. We're positive we are in the right place because of several clues, such as the fact that Confederate buttons were found here in the 1940s."

Efforts are now under way to obtain a marker that will stand as a monument for the site along the Illinois Central tracks. According to Dawson, "Those who lost their lives in this horrible wreck will at last be recognized as they continue their eternal sleep along the side of a lonely country railroad track."



*Gary Huffmaster, Jim Dawson and Maxey Baucum search for clues*

the pressure moved civil authorities to bring all records to Meridian, making the village a temporary state capital.<sup>6</sup> The records, however, made only a temporary stop here before being moved once again, to Macon in Noxubee County.

Despite the bustle of official activity the area escaped actual battle, but other gruesome reminders of the realities of war—Confederate hospitals—were present in the county. Signifying the blow the war brought to antebellum-era good times, the resort at Lauderdale Springs was transformed into a hospital, the trains that had brought in caravans of tourists in the 1850s bringing wounded soldiers to the converted inn instead. At the hospital, the abundant mineral waters now were used to treat soldiers as they had been used by Indians years before.

The two-story hospital was usually crowded with sick and wounded Confederates brought from battlefields to the north via the Mobile and Ohio tracks. Next to the hospital was the dreaded “death house,” where soldiers beyond medical help lived out their last moments. Up a hill from the “death house” a cemetery was established for the hundreds who died at Lauderdale Springs. The cemetery, now owned by the Winnie Davis Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Chapter 24, became the final resting place for more than 1,020 Confederate soldiers and 80 men who wore Union blue. Most of the men buried in the Lauderdale County Confederate and Union Cemetery under tombstones marked “Unknown Confederate Soldier” or “Unknown Union Soldier” fought in battles at Shiloh, Corinth, Iuka, Jackson, Baker’s Creek, Vicksburg, Forest and other north Mississippi battlefields.

Another Confederate hospital was established near Marion Station. J. D. Caldwell, according to Circuit Court records, was the surgeon in charge. The majority of patients treated here were from the Army of Arkansas and Tennessee. Today, the Confederate Cemetery in Marion stands as a permanent memorial to the war victims, who died in the hospital far from their homes and families. Yet another memorial to Civil War victims, known as Confederate Circle, is in Meridian’s Rose Hill Cemetery. A Confederate cemetery, once where the Senior Citizens’ building now stands, was moved to the spot when the town expanded. A memorial shaft on the mound

was placed in honor of soldiers who died in Meridian during the war and includes mention of a Union soldier who shares the grave. The Rose Hill Cemetery is also the final resting place of Confederate naval hero Charles Read.

In addition to deaths in the area hospitals, Civil War casualties in Lauderdale County included the victims of an accident—the Chunky River Railroad Disaster of 1863. In this tragedy, sixty Confederate soldiers lost their lives as a train carrying approximately 100 passengers, most of them headed for service in Vicksburg, plunged into the flooded Chunky River. A railroad bridge on the Alabama and Vicksburg line was weakened by the unusually high waters in February that year. Although one train had cautiously crossed the bridge the day before the disaster, the next train traveling west from Meridian was not so fortunate. The west bridge of the Potachile Creek—a tributary of the Chunky—collapsed, throwing passengers to a tragic end.

Apparently, the train’s engineer failed to heed, or had not heard, warnings about the condition of the bridge. An article printed in *The Daily Southern Crisis*, an *Enterprise* newspaper, on February 26, 1863, carried full details of the disaster. It quoted a witness who said the flooding waters had reached within inches of the track the day before the accident. The station master had been told to warn the next train not to cross. However, for some reason, the warning apparently never reached the engineer, who attempted the crossing at dawn the next day.

In one account of the Chunky River Railroad Disaster, Major S. G. Spann, who apparently assisted in rescue efforts, wrote that the train split as it attempted to crawl across the suspect bridge, throwing 96 passengers into the raging river. A Captain M. Walsh and his men, stationed nearby with the 35th Regiment, were called in to “take charge of the bodies and baggage that might be rescued.” Five seriously injured passengers were taken to area homes for treatment. Many bodies, however, were pulled from the river and “crudely interred upon the railroad right of way, where they now lie in full view of the passing trains.”

According to a man involved in rescue attempts:

The wreck presented a frightful appearance. The engine is out of sight in deep water with the box cars, crushed to pieces, lying directly upon it,

portions of which are now above water, while three more, laden with barrels, boxes, etc., in the stream, are piled up in "confusion confounded."<sup>7</sup>

Like the veterans who lost their lives in the Chunky River flood of 1863, another group of Confederate soldiers has yet to take its proper place on the scroll of Civil War events. Those soldiers—Choctaw Indians—served in the Confederacy with distinction and played a role in rescuing victims of the Chunky train crash.

Major Spann, commander of a Confederate Veterans group known as the Dabney H. Maury Camp, served with the Choctaw during the war. The task of recognizing the Indian role during the War Between the States, Major Spann wrote in *The Confederate Veteran* has "over the years been nearly ignored." During the war, Major J. W. Pearce of Hazelhurst organized a battalion of Choctaw under the authority of the War Department, with Indians from Kemper, DeKalb, Neshoba, Jasper, Scott and Newton counties forming the "First Battalion of Choctaw Indians, Confederate Army." Major Pearce established two camps—a recruiting camp in Newton County and a drill camp in Tangipahoa, Louisiana, in 1862. Later, the battalion of Choctaw was transferred to Major Spann's Battalion of Mounted Scouts, then being formed under General Dabney H. Maury, commander of the Department of the Gulf for the Confederacy. Meanwhile, the Newton County camp was maintained under Lt. Thomas Gresham and Lt. Ben Duckworth.

Major Spann was personally served by a Choctaw with local roots, Jack Amos. A grandnephew of Choctaw Chief Pushmataha, Amos worked as Spann's interpreter. Described as "an intelligent-looking young brave," he was to play an important role after the Chunky River train accident. When the wreck occurred, Amos and other Choctaw soldiers stationed at their Newton County camp were among the first to hear the cries for help. Major Spann wrote of the incident saying, ". . . in less time than I can tell the story, every Indian was at the scene." Amos and another local Choctaw, Elder Williams, led the band in the effort to rescue the victims. Major Spann wrote, "Led by these two dauntless braves, every Indian present stripped and plunged into the raging river to the rescue of the drowning soldiers." The Choctaw did, in fact,

rescue more than a dozen of the injured, and helped bury those they could not save.

The Indians showed such bravery in that effort and other service that major Spann's Confederate veterans' organization at one time planned to erect a memorial to the Choctaw near Chunky to ". . . perpetuate the testimonial of the patriotic devotion exhibited by the Choctaw Indian braves whose prowess and fidelity to the Confederate cause entitle them to the respect of our Confederate soldiery everywhere." He noted that the Choctaw were exemplary soldiers for several reasons, pointing out that the Indian was "at his best in the skirmish and sharpshooter service." As scouts, he added, the Choctaw served as ". . . pilots through pathless swamps and jungles, and over boundless prairies."

After the war, Jack Amos lived out his life in his beloved Newton County, often attending reunions of Confederate veterans ". . . where he was feasted by the ladies and lauded by the press and honored by the Confederate veterans every day."<sup>8</sup>

Ironically, the role of many blacks who served the Confederacy has also often been overlooked. Many slaves from area plantations accompanied whites to Civil War battlefields, according to pension applications and other records. Two former slaves who applied for Confederate pensions in Lauderdale County were Abraham Bell, who went to the war as a servant to John W. Bell for two years, and Isaac Pringle, who was with F. M. Pringle in Civil War battles from 1862 until the close of the war.

Furthermore, Works Progress Administration interviews, conducted more than fifty years after the war brought an end to slavery, also show how some slaves marched to the front lines with their white masters, either out of loyalty or on orders of plantation owners. Sam Broach, a slave who grew up on a plantation owned by William P. Broach in Marion, told how he ended up on distant battlefields:

Marse John—he was my young master—he was quick in temper, like a young man would be, you know, but I was a year older than him and I had to look after him. That's how come Old Miss sent me to the War with him and Marse Willie—he was a year older than me. But they was Old Miss's baby children. Their big brother had gone to the War too, three years before.



*Choctaw Confederate Jack Amos*

Photo courtesy of Miss Annie Rose Mabry

Broach's account notes that the three set out from Marion with two other whites and another slave. He added, "A heap of the young slaves went with their young masters like I did." He said the group he was with escaped injury in several engagements. Describing conditions in the war from a firsthand perspective, Broach recalled, ". . . we had plenty to eat. I was young and spry and I could get out and get us something to eat. The cold weather was kind of bad. I slept across Marse John and Marse Willie's feet, but somehow or another, if it was a cold night, when we'd wake up in the morning, I'd be right up betwixt them."<sup>9</sup>

While Broach returned to Lauderdale County

to live out his life a free man, other slaves weren't so lucky. For instance, Charity Jones told her WPA interviewer:

Old Marster didn't go to the war, but sent his two boys, and Old Missus she just cried and cried when they left to join the regiment. Now, long after they was gone they got news that young Marse Leonard was shot, and right away they sent my uncle to that army to nurse young Marster. But Marster died and before my uncle could leave the battlefield, a bullet done hit him in the side of the head, and killed him, and he never came home.<sup>10</sup>

As the war progressed, more and more Lauderdale Countians lost their lives on distant fields, taking a further toll on the already hard-pressed citizenry left behind to defend the homefront. Meridian with its rail junction and divisional headquarters, was becoming increasingly significant to the Confederacy—and consequently to the Yankee forces. The Confederates had established an arsenal, warehouses, a prisoner-of-war camp and an unfinished hospital in the town prior to 1864. Until then, the Union forces concentrated on Vicksburg and the important Mississippi River. By the time Vicksburg fell under Union control, the juncture of the Mobile and Ohio with the Alabama and Vicksburg railroads in Meridian had made the village a base of operations for the entire South, with Rebel supplies and soldiers constantly passing through the area. After securing the Mississippi, Union forces targeted the next most vital link in the Confederacy—its railroads.

By then, the Confederate forces were spread thin, Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk being charged with defending not only Meridian but the vital port of Mobile as well. Polk, who before the war broke out had been a bishop of the Episcopal Church, was forced to try to second-guess General William T. Sherman as he began to head east across the state. While he suspected Sherman's massive forces were indeed headed to Meridian on a mission of destruction. Polk feared that his true target might be Mobile. Headquartered in Meridian with the Confederate Department of Alabama, Mississippi and East Louisiana, Polk was left with little choice but to evacuate the village. Realizing his small army would be overpowered by Sherman's thousands, Polk was forced to retreat towards

Demopolis, Alabama, leaving town on the morning of February 14th.

The Confederates did not leave town empty-handed. Under the direction of Major George Whitfield, considerable property and stores were saved for the Confederacy. As early as February 8th, Whitfield had acted on his suspicion that Meridian was in danger, ordering railroad officials to "bring every available engine and car to Meridian for the evacuation of stores." His action, completed by February 13th, successfully removed twelve million dollars' worth of Confederate property and valuable railroad equipment out of Sherman's path.<sup>11</sup>

Soon after Polk's exit, the Union troops arrived in full force, determined to destroy the village and its rails. Polk had left behind a deserted railroad yard, all its rolling stock safely removed to Mobile or Selma. A hint of the approaching devastation was witnessed as the Yankees destroyed homes, track and warehouses at Chunky Station and burned Chunkeyville down. There, Northern troops destroyed several hundred yards of railroad and burned a warehouse filled with 100 bales of cotton.<sup>12</sup>

Though few remained behind to defend the



*Union General James B. McPherson*

area, several skirmishes distracted the massive Union forces. One such exchange occurred when Rebels in one of S. D. Lee's Cavalry brigades, under the command of Brigadier General Samuel W. Ferguson, took on soldiers under Colonel Edward F. Winslow. This action took place along "Missouri Ridge," generally believed to be the high ground on the southern edge of present-day Highland Park. Tales of this brief but futile encounter have become a part of local Civil War folklore.<sup>13</sup>

Sherman and his men, after occupying the town with little resistance, became unwelcomed guests in the homes they found in the village. Sherman himself stayed in a house on what is now the southeast corner of Seventh Street and Twenty-seventh Avenue. Union officers also occupied what had been Polk's headquarters, the back cottage section of antebellum Merrehope, which was one of less than a handful of buildings left standing after Sherman left town.

One eyewitness account of Sherman's arrival in Meridian was left by Nettie Henry, a household slave for the John C. Higgins family prior to and during the war. As a child growing up in the Higgins household, she had observed much of Meridian's early years. But the most memorable event the former slave could recall, when interviewed at the age of 82, was Sherman's destruction of the village. She remembered:

When the word came that they was coming, it sounded like a moanin' wind in the quarter: everybody was saying 'The Yankees are coming, the Yankees are coming.' Us children was scared but it was like Sunday, too, nobody doing nothing—and we marched around the room and sorter sang 'Deh Yankees are coming.'

She noted further, "Well, they came. And they burned up seventy houses and the stores and tore up the railroad tracks, and toted off everything they couldn't eat. I don't understand nothing 'bout how they acted like that. We ain't done nothing to them."

Throughout the area, defenseless citizens scrambled to protect their worldly goods from the invading troops . . . with little success. For instance, Ms. Henry told her interviewer, one of Meridian's leading men, I.S.O.G. Greer, attempted to hide his silver in a duck pond and his livestock in a cane-brake along the Sowashee Creek. However, she added,



. . . it didn't do no good. Sherman done caught on by that time where to find things. They got everything and burned Mr. Greer's barn, but they left the house and didn't bother the family 'cause they call theyselves company, but the good Lord know Mr. Greer didn't invite them.<sup>14</sup>

Another perspective on the events of that February can be found in the records of Dr. J. P. Welch, who observed the action from his Alamucha plantation. As the Confederates pulled out of Meridian, the plantation served as a stopping point for the retreating troops. Describing the Rebel stay, Dr. Welch wrote:

Our army was nearly as bad, in seizing upon anything wanted, as was the enemy, with the exception of burning up houses, etc. They took nearly all the provisions of corn and meat, stock, oats, potatoes, in fact everything they could find for supplies.

Dr. Welch, left behind on his plantation as the Confederates moved on, apparently had reason to fear Sherman would pay a visit. He wrote:

. . . we looked for Sherman's approach every hour, and expected to be burned out, as I had, in the early outset of our troubles written some sarcastic comments relating to the prowess of the northern red mouth Yankee, which got into some of the New York papers, which Sherman had read, and General Loring had found that Sherman in consequence, had resolved to burn me out if he reached here.<sup>15</sup>

Sherman, however, never did reach the Welch place, instead turning back to Vicksburg after completing his mission in Meridian. Others were not so lucky. While accounts differ on just how much property Sherman and his men destroyed in Meridian and surrounding villages, most indicate he used his torch unsparingly. According to the 1882 Business Directory, Sherman

. . . amused himself here, as everywhere else, with his torch. At dark every evening his soldiers would commence setting fire to the town until finally every house in town except the Jones House, Mr. Ball's residence, the Gary House and maybe one or two others remained. The house which sheltered him was not spared but it too fell a victim to the torch as he took his departure."<sup>16</sup>

While the destruction of the town and its rails was under way, the general sent other units to spread the devastation to surrounding communities, such as Marion. Defiant Rebel stragglers were involved in minor skirmishes with the

Yankees through February 16th, but the massive forces overwhelmed any opposition they encountered. Across the county, Union troops left evidence of their visit—warped and bent rail known as “Jeff Davis neckties” or “Sherman hairpins” and burnt-out homesteads. Colonel James H. Howe and his troops, for example, ranged as far north as Lockhart Station, where they destroyed the depot building and other nearby structures while chewing up nine miles of the M&O between there and Marion Station.<sup>17</sup>

The story of Marion Station, situated on the strategic M&O and home of a Confederate Hospital, was perhaps the most dramatic of the long years of the war. Two firsthand accounts of Marion's role were left by Frank Durr, a slave who was freed as a result of the war, and by Elizabeth Mahan Sims, a woman born in a plantation home while it was occupied by Sherman's troops. The accounts provide two different views of the war years in Lauderdale County and shed light on the hard times brought by those traumatic years.

When Sherman's soldiers arrived in Marion, homes, businesses and rails were destroyed as they were in Meridian. However, one home was spared the torch because of the birth of a child. Telling of how her birth saved the family home, Mrs. Sims said:

My father, Hiram D. Mahan, had built a big colonial home in Marion Station. . . . Our home was situated on the highest point in town, and when the word came that the Yankees were coming, all the neighbors flocked in, upon the porches and in the windows to see them march in.

After being fired upon by a Confederate straggler, Union soldiers shelled around the Mahan home. However, the family learned the Yankees had intentionally spared it a direct hit because a Commander James Veatch, in charge of the destruction of Marion, wanted it as his headquarters. Mrs. Sims noted that the Union troops “. . . moved in and took possession of everything.” Mrs. Sims's mother, who was in the last stages of pregnancy at the time, asked for and was granted permission to deliver her child at the occupied home. Apparently, General Veatch was touched by the plight of the expectant mother whose husband was away because of the war. “To make a long story short,” Mrs. Sims said, “I arrived in the world that day, February 18, 1864, assisted



*Elizabeth Mahan Sims . . . born in occupied home and her father, Hiram D. Mahan . . . who objected to daughter's Yankee name*

Photos courtesy of J. B. Harvey

by an old black midwife. The General had insisted on mother having his physician with her, but she refused. As they had taken possession of everything, they were lovely to mother and the children," and spared the house when they left.

Acting on the general's request, Mrs. Sims's grateful mother named her new daughter Veatch after the officer in charge. "The general insisted that I be named for him, and I was called Veach [Veatch] until I was two or three years old—very much against my father's wishes."

Like many others, the Mahan family had buried silver and gold to hide it from the Northern troops. Mrs. Sims, in a speech delivered in 1937, recalled how her family's treasure was saved by a twist of fate:

Grandfather and father had a good deal of gold money, as father was a planter as well as a merchant who owned a good many slaves. They buried their money in a sack by an old stump in the orchard; the Yankees had a tent over it. On the other side they dug up every foot of the vineyard, knowing the money was buried somewhere on the place.

Because the Union soldiers were actually camped over the buried treasure, the family's valuables were safe. But, as Mrs. Sims pointed out, "Of course, they feared for its safety all the time, as the Yankees lived over it for days."<sup>18</sup>

Another equally informative account of Marion during the war was left by Frank Durr, who was asked to use his skills as a blacksmith for both Confederate and Union troops. Of his service to the Rebels, the former slave wrote, "In '63 the quartermaster ordered me to make all the wagons I could for the Confederates; I did, so he gave me a check for every one that they carried off." Durr also used his skills to make coffins for those who died in Marion's hospital, and to shoe horses for the Rebel cavalry. But his service to the Confederates ended when Sherman's troops came to town in 1864. He explained:

In '64, Sherman raided the little town. I had two wagons marked C.S.; the Federal Army seized them and General Smith told me if I had been a free man he would have paid me for them. I also shod horses for the Union soldiers during their stay here. They wanted me to go with them, as they said I was doing

more harm to the Federal government than ten men with guns. They wanted to press me into service, but I begged them not to take me from my wife, who was ill, so they let me be.<sup>19</sup>

By this time, Sherman's success marked a turning point in a war that had already extended well beyond the adventure young Confederates envisioned when the call to arms was first heard in 1861. While accounts differ on just how much damage Sherman wrought, the general himself reported at the end of the campaign:

For five days 10,000 men worked hard and with a will in that work of destruction, with axes, crowbars, sledges, clawbars, and with fire, and I have no hesitation in pronouncing the work as well done. Meridian with its depots, store-houses, arsenal, hospitals, offices, hotels, and cantonments no longer exists.<sup>20</sup>

Another Union soldier noted, "Sherman's army left fire and famine in its track. The county was one lurid blaze of fire; burning cotton gins and deserted buildings were seen on every hand. I regret to say it but oft times habitations were burned down over the heads of occupants, but not by order."<sup>21</sup> The destruction of railroads—Sherman's chief objective—was deemed a mission accomplished by the general as he reported on March 7 that ". . . the railroad is destroyed all the way from Jackson to Meridian, 100 miles; from Meridian to and including the large bridge over the Chickasawha [sic] below Quitman, north to and including a bridge at Lauderdale Springs, and east about 20 miles."<sup>22</sup>

The war brought other material hardships to the county. Durr shed light on some of those troubles stating:

At that time there was nothing in the county to buy; the army destroyed everything. There was no salt anywhere; people had to dig dirt out of the smoke-house and let it drip like lye. I don't think there was a pound of coffee in Lauderdale County; people parched peanuts, ground them and made coffee that way; some would use rye. There was no sugar. . . .<sup>23</sup>

Mississippi historian Dunbar Rowland agreed that the Yankee visit to Lauderdale county left hunger in its wake, as he noted, "All the grist mills were destroyed, and after the Federal troops departed, women and children were without food for several days. . . ."<sup>24</sup>

But perhaps the saddest aspect of the after-

math of Sherman's tromp across Mississippi was that it

. . . underscored the true condition of the Confederacy, which was now but a shell of what it had been, and it gave Southerners a glimpse of what would very soon be an all too familiar scene. The fate of the South was sealed, and the only thing remaining was the terrible work of people like Sherman and Grant to complete the prostration of the Confederacy.<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, the collapse of the Confederacy in April of 1865 was just over a year away. The war's conclusion did bring freedom for slaves, but in its wake, poverty and devastation were left for future generations to contend with. A way of life established during the pre-war period had been turned upside down. Both whites and blacks faced new challenges as they struggled to cope. Many former slave owners, such as A. D. Hunter and George Chandler, strapped themselves in the general poverty left by the war, indicated they were relieved to be free of the responsibility of feeding and clothing their former hands. For most, finding enough food to feed their immediate families was a challenge in the post-war years. Former slaves, set free but still shackled by poverty, would join whites as the focus of all effort once again became survival. The proud optimism of Rebels who once eagerly supported the war had been obliterated. The final years of the war had been long for Lauderdale Countians, and brought realizations such as those voiced by Dr. Welch, who had seen his prosperity and lifestyle destroyed by the conflict. He observed:

Instead of a brief and successful contest, it lasted four long years with the loss of our slaves and nearly everything else that we formerly had in abundance with ruinous taxes and heavy tithes—having myself to pay a tax during the war, in one year, of \$1,280 and 1,200 bushels of corn besides able servant hands to work on forts, railroads and government works, besides other provisions such as food, clothing, mules, horses, etc.

Instead of a grand holiday frolic, Dr. Welch wrote, ". . . it turned out to be an awful four years of carnage, for there were over two million lives sacrificed in the contest."<sup>26</sup> Those "awful four years," which left poverty and confusion in their wake in Lauderdale County and across the South, also left a test of will to come—the years of Reconstruction and Recovery.

## COURTHOUSE HEROINE

An unsung heroine of local Civil War history, Margaret Rea, saved the courthouse in Old Marion from Sherman's destruction. Sherman's troops sealed the doom of Old Marion by burning all the businesses and, after using the ground floor of the courthouse for a stable to protect their horses, set fire to the courthouse as well.

According to an account by her son, Richard N. Rea, Mrs. Rea and her two daughters "... succeeded in putting out the fire after a hard fight, and this saved the fine old building and the public records of the county." Many years after, Rea noted that his mother had received no recognition for her daring act.

She was the wife of Con Rea, lawyer, politician and editor of *The Lauderdale Republican*. At the time of Sherman's arrival in the area, Lieutenant Colonel Rea and their two sons were fighting with the Confederates in Georgia. He died from wounds received in the Georgia campaign. Both Rea and his brave wife are buried in the Old Marion Cemetery.

Her success in saving the courthouse is one of the most interesting footnotes in the history of county courthouses. But, other colorful tales surround the controversy sparked by the dispute between Old Marion, Marion Station and Meridian over the location of the county seat. The three villages entered a competitive tug-of-war, with elections called to settle the matter on July 4th, 1859.

A full account of the courthouse fight, which appeared in *The Meridian* newspaper on July 28, 1859, points out that Meridian was apparently eliminated in the first vote, leaving Marion and "the station" to slug it out in an October election. Meanwhile, the upstart Meridian was

crying foul over campaign tactics used to knock it out of the race.

A "spirited" meeting was held on July 23rd, with representatives from Marion and Marion Station trying to win Meridian's support in the next phase of the contest. Lewis Ragsdale and other early Meridian settlers debated contesting the election, contending it was based on "unfair if not illegal" methods. Although Meridian's supporters were convinced the village had been treated unfairly, citizens at the meeting decided not to protest too loudly, being "fearful of the consequences of further agitation."

Marion Station, in addition to wooing many of Old Marion's leading merchants, finally captured the county seat crown in the 1860s. A courthouse built at "The Station," however, was burned by Sherman's troops as they marched through in February of 1864. The county records had apparently been shifted, briefly, back to Old Marion, where Mrs. Rea's efforts saved them from Yankee destruction. By April of 1867, however, a new two-story brick courthouse was open for county business in Marion Station. This courthouse was located on the present site of the Marion Masonic Hall next to the community center.

However, the tug-of-war with its neighbor to the south continued. Finally, the courthouse, on orders issued by the Board of Police, found a permanent home in Meridian in the middle of 1870. The predictions made by Meridian representatives during the contentious 1859 meeting—that "... time will not only expose the unfairness of the late elections but will also place the courthouse where it should be, at Meridian"—eventually had come true.



*Marion Station  
Courthouse  
one of many  
in tug-of-war  
for county seat*

## 6 • Reconstruction and Recovery

**T**HE Civil War left devastation in its wake in Lauderdale County. Returning Confederate veterans found their fields in shambles and freed slaves were, for the most part, more deprived than ever before. Sherman had declared Meridian dead when he pulled his troops out of town in 1864. But the coming years of Reconstruction would pose even greater challenges to the citizenry than Sherman's torch had. For, in the years immediately following the war, the upheaval caused by the freeing of slaves and subsequent Carpetbagger rule would impede recovery and eventually lead to the "bloodiest day Meridian ever saw," as the Riot of 1871 is sometimes described. Another later riot, the Marion riot of 1881, also marked the voting rights issue that dominated the fight for political control during the post-war years.

Fires, economic troubles and a deadly Yellow Fever epidemic would be added to the Reconstruction woes, making the period after the War Between the States up to the early 1880s one of the darkest in the county's history. Surviving these tests would forge the strength and determination that would bring recovery, but that recovery would come at a high price, with riots, murders and other horrors to pass before it would be possible. In Lauderdale County and across the South, "Reconstruction proved to be a far longer and more painful period than the war."<sup>1</sup>

With the social and economic order established in the antebellum years erased by the Civil

War, both blacks and whites struggled to adjust. Poverty was far from uncommon. The Board of Police from 1865-1866, for instance, reflect that a relief system was established to help destitute families of Confederate soldiers. In Meridian, many of the leading families ". . . had lost their all during the closing years of the war, which rendered them unable to contribute anything toward the development of the town."<sup>2</sup> Many of the county's plantations, including the Clayton plantation, were broken up into smaller farms in the aftermath of the war. The railroads, too, were in sad shape, with Mobile and Ohio officials reporting, ". . . from a full supply of rolling stock of the finest quality, we were reduced to one fourth of what was necessary and that was in bad condition."<sup>3</sup>

Besides the farms and the general economy, the government, too, was in a state of flux, as federal control of the county was instituted. Under the administration of Governor Benjamin G. Humphreys, elected in 1865, military rule was enforced by Northern troops and black soldiers. Reconstruction brought further strictures for whites to deal with when the Congressional Reconstruction Act placed the county in the Fourth Military District in 1867. By 1868, J. Aaron Moore, a black, was representing the county in the Reconstruction Legislature of 1868, which was composed of many former slaves elected under Republican control. Until 1871—when the first general election for county and local officers since the beginning of the Reconstruction

period was held—many discontented citizens fumed while under the control of strangers appointed by federal officers.<sup>4</sup>

Records show both blacks and whites had a hard time adjusting to post-war poverty and Reconstruction tensions. Eventually, such pressures led to violence. The perspective of freed slaves on the post-war period offers some insight into the confusion that ran rampant after 1865. For instance, Simon Hare, a former slave interviewed by WPA workers in the 1930s, described the war's aftermath:

Come de Surrender, colored folks had a bad time. . . . Didn' have nothing, not even a hat. . . . Some was glad to be free, some was sorry because they was off. Marster just said, 'Yawl is free.' And he didn' do nothing more for us.

Former slave Nettie Henry added, "Most of them was glad just to feel free. . . . They forgot wouldn't be nobody to take care of them."<sup>5</sup>

Today, few would minimize the value of the freedom the Civil War brought blacks. However, some might forget the struggle was far from over with the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. With little or no education or non-farm employment skills, many freed slaves were left without a roof over their heads. Some first moved into Meridian to live in federal barracks located along what is now Eighth Street before establishing homes and finding work in the town. Others were forced into a system of tenantry that survived into the 1930s. With the end of slavery, ". . . the system of share-cropping farm tenantry sprang into existence as a matter of necessity."<sup>6</sup> Blacks had little if any land. Neither blacks nor whites had any money. As a result, many whites kept former slaves as employees, often providing room, board and a portion of the crops as pay instead of wages.

The relationship between freedmen and their former owners may be illustrated by contracts E. A. Durr entered into with several of his former slaves in 1865 and 1866. One such contract was an agreement between Durr and Cephus. That contract employed the freed slave for one year for the compensation of "fifty bushels of corn and fifty dollars in currency." It also required the freedman to "labour faithfully during the year and to be submissive and obedient and obey all orders of said E. A. Durr" and further required



*Meridian merchant  
Levi Hurlbutt*

him ". . . not to entertain or harbour any other freed person on said place without knowledge or consent" of Durr. For his part, Durr agreed to provide board and to "treat the freed one humane and kindly."

While many blacks found the chains of slavery replaced by the ties of tenantry, whites were not immune to post-war hardships. For instance, one of Meridian's leading men, Levi Hurlbutt, wrote to his niece in New York on August 14th, 1867, that "The war and almost two years failure in crops, has brought at least half our population to want. We still have hopes that God will yet bless us as a people." He continued in his letter:

I am living in a miserable house:—expected to have built this summer, but money has been so scarce this year, that I have concluded to postpone building this season. I built a very good house here in Confederate times, but when the Federal Army came here, they burnt my dwelling house, with two fine stores and a warehouse, besides thousands of other property they destroyed for me. This is past and gone, and I wish I could forget it . . .<sup>7</sup>

Another illustration of the war's cost in terms of human suffering and deprivation can be seen in the story of the Confederate Orphans Home once located at Lauderdale Springs. After the war, wounded soldiers were no longer brought into the former resort building near the springs.

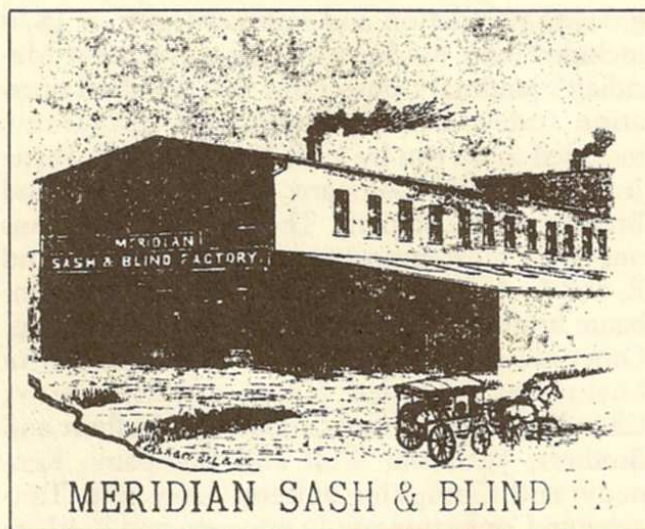
However, other victims of the war—destitute orphans—did find a home there. According to an account by Mary J. Welsh, an orphanage that “differed in many ways from every other home of the kind in Mississippi either before or since the war” was established there by the Mississippi State Baptist Association in 1865.

Initially, the Rev. T. C. Teasdale of Columbus was charged with raising funds for the home, which was designed to shelter children left fatherless by the war. He collected enough funds to transform the former hospital. Congregations across the state and beyond contributed funds to support the facility, which was staffed by a superintendent, teachers, counselors and a physician. As word about the home spread, Miss Welsh wrote, orphans “came and continued to come in such large numbers . . . to prove beyond question the crying need for such an institution.” By the end of 1865, the orphanage was home for fifty children, and that jumped to 200 orphans ages six to sixteen in less than two years’ time.

At the home, school was held five days a week, a former ballroom becoming a chapel where religious services were regularly held. In addition to rigorous schooling, the orphans of the Confederacy also worked under the supervision of employees, many of whom were destitute mothers who “gladly worked for the privilege of being with their children.”

By 1868, the home was firmly established, with Baptist agents traveling across the country to raise funds for its support. The Orphans’ Home Banner, a semi-monthly newspaper, was published at the home before a malaria epidemic brought hard times in 1869. Eventually the home was moved from Lauderdale Springs to an old military post a mile from Lauderdale Station. As the crisis created by the aftermath of war subsided, the need for the home declined as “. . . the condition of the country had improved, mothers and friends of the children became able to provide for them in their own homes.” Finally, the home closed for good in 1878.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the hard times, Meridian began to grow as the rails that gave it birth were repaired and put back into service. By 1866, the town’s population was back to 2,000, and Meridian’s second start was well on the way. Though growth was slow, grist mills and cotton and saw mills sprang up. The post-war industries included the



MERIDIAN SASH & BLIND

### *Meridian Sash and Blind Company*

Pickard grist and saw mill and Richard McLemore mill near the Bonita Reservoir, and the Pioneer Cotton Mill, which manufactured coarse, unbleached domestic.<sup>9</sup> Other industries listed on the 1870 directory of businesses included the Sandford, Williams and Company Sash Factory, Golden and Williams saw mill, Moorehead and Company foundry, and the Coffee, Roberts and Company grain establishment.

By 1870, Meridian had outpaced Marion Station, its population having reached 2,709. That year, the town became the largest community in the county. John T. Ball was one of several merchants operating a dry goods store and L. A. Ragsdale was running a hotel. Other merchants and businessmen operating in the town included: Joseph Baum, H. H. and W. H. Bennett, W. C. Brookshire, W. C. Butlock, J. W. Cusick, E. Dupree, D. C. Durham, Joseph Eakens, Jacob Faber, D. Findley, A. G. Freidreichter, H. C. Fallen, J. G. Flourney, John M. Golden, R. M. Houston, W. W. Jefferson, C. M. Johnson, T. J. Keaton, F. Kling, J. C. Lloyd, A. McMillen, J. W. McMullin, A. J. Murdock, S. P. Neal, E. W. Nix, W. A. Payne, M. Roos, B. T. Rush, A. D. Sadler, E. T. Sanford, James F. Sanford, R. Schenck, Theodore Sturgis, A. Tannebaum, J. M. Taylor, W. W. Thompson, A. Threefoot, W. H. Travis, J. W. Turner, M. N. Voorhies, A. R. Wagoner, H. L. Walker, J. H. Welch, H. S. Wilson, Henry Wilson, G. Williams, S. Williams and C. N. Wilcox.

Saloons, hotels and restaurants catering to the

growing population and railroad traffic in 1870 included Felix Weidman's Restaurant, one of Meridian's landmark businesses that is still in operation today. Other saloons and restaurants included those run by J. W. Draughn, J. B. Payne Jr., Mosley and Company, A. J. Goodloe, and Brantley and Company. The Phoenix Hotel was one of the most imposing structures in town, and E. and L. A. Prewitt also ran an inn. The Rosenbaum brothers' dry goods business was booming. Other merchants listed on the 1870 directory of businesses included Cahn and Company; Chandler, Lockard and Company; Hurlburt and Brothers; Jacobson, Wolf and Company; Kennedy and Company bakers; Levy and Tannebaum Confectionary; Lowenstein and Brothers Grocery; the Warren and Neal General Store; the Watkins and Company dry goods store, and the mercantile establishment of Hart, Wilson and Slaughter.

Newspapers in town included *The Gazette*, run by J. J. Shannon and W. R. Grace, *A. G. Horn's Mercury* and J. R. Smith's *Meridian Chronicle*. Banking establishments were also in operation by then, with the Meridian Savings Institution listed on the 1870 directory and Garey and Shearer identified as bankers.<sup>10</sup>

Most of the town's growth and business activity were direct results of Meridian's status as a rail center. The growth helped bring the county seat from Marion Station to Meridian in 1870. That year, the courthouse was moved into Con Sheehan Hall, which served as the center of county government until the late 1870s. In its heyday, Con Sheehan Hall, which stands idle today at the corner of Fifth Street and Twenty-fifth Avenue, also housed the city's post office and served as city hall at one point.

Meridian's growth attracted more than business, industry and the county seat. Underscoring the fact that Reconstruction upheaval was far from over, the town also attracted its share of Carpetbaggers and rabble-rousers who hoped to capitalize on the continuing post-war trauma. Meridian, as a rail center "... naturally became a political center for the rabble of adventurers who were coming to Mississippi and Alabama in great hordes seeking to share the spoils of radical reconstruction."<sup>11</sup>

According to former slave Nettie Henry and other records of the period, Northern Carpetbag-



*Theodore Sturgis*

gers often gained control over freed blacks by use of unscrupulous means. Describing the trouble, Mrs. Henry said:

... it was the Yankees that done it. They promised to give every one of them (freed blacks) forty acres and a mule, and they did what the Yankees told 'em. Well, they didn't give 'em nothing, not even a rooster. Didn't give them nothing but trouble."<sup>12</sup>

Under Republican control, Northern "strangers" and blacks did achieve a measure of power, with a Connecticut-born mayor, William Sturgis, in office in 1871. But, white Democrats refused to accept drastic changes. As tensions mounted, Joseph Williams, a black on the county's board of supervisors, was "called out of his house and killed" and another black supervisor was ambushed. Several Republican officers took their complaints about the actions of disgruntled whites to Governor Adelbert Ames, and on their return, black legislators Warren Tyler and William Clopton, and preacher J. Aaron Moore, spoke at a rally. As events unfolded, the store owned by the mayor's brother, Theodore Sturgis, was set on fire, the blaze spreading until "... two-thirds of the business houses of Meridian had been destroyed."<sup>13</sup> Tyler, Clopton and Moore were charged with inciting the uproar. On the following Monday, resolutions condemned the speeches made by the three men and a committee was appointed to request the removal of Mayor Sturgis from office.



Shortly after that meeting, the Con Sheehan Hall became the staging ground for what became known as “the bloodiest day Meridian ever saw.” That event, the Meridian Riot of 1871, helped mark the beginning of the end of Reconstruction. The riot began when the three black men accused of giving “inflammatory speeches” were brought before Judge E. L. Bramlette on charges stemming from the rally.

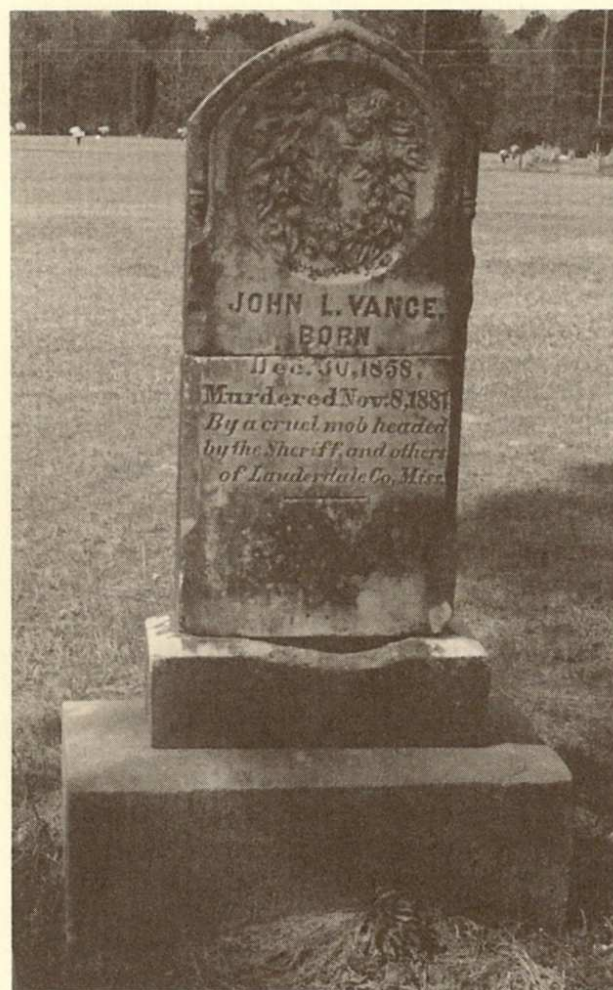
That trial and its bloody aftermath eventually became the subject of a full congressional investigation with almost 100 witnesses called to testify before a subcommittee. Testimony during the hearing stated that Judge Bramlette was shot from the bench by Tyler, who was aiming at a witness on the stand. Shooting then erupted throughout the tense courtroom.

With the first shot, “. . . the riot was on: with white men and negroes running in every direction, the white men to get their arms and negroes in mortal terror to seek a hiding-place.”<sup>14</sup> A black policeman was killed, Clopton was wounded and Tyler leaped from the second-story veranda to the street below. A frenzied white crowd caught up with Tyler two blocks away and killed him before returning to the hall to throw Clopton from the upstairs window. Although he survived the fall, later in the afternoon his throat was cut, according to testimony. As angry whites spread out in a vindictive mob, one source recalled, “. . . it sounded like Judgement Day.”<sup>15</sup>

Aaron Moore escaped, but others were killed, with the death toll climbing to between twenty-five and thirty before the commotion was over. Mayor Sturgis, the target of much of the scorn of Carpetbaggers that sparked the violence, fled town under the cloak of night, barely escaping the mob’s wrath.

O. C. French, testifying about the riot in 1872, said most of the agitation leading to the Meridian Riot was created by Alabamians and other outsiders who came to town “. . . with the intent to stir up strife between Negroes and whites in Meridian.”<sup>16</sup>

While the Meridian Riot and subsequent actions of white Democrats determined to take back political power from Republicans and blacks marked the beginning of the end of Reconstruction, it was the Marion Riot of 1881 that marked the end of the era’s struggle over voting rights. The event was significant in that it



*Vance tombstone . . . one legacy of Marion Riot*

was probably the last Reconstruction riot in Mississippi. Furthermore “. . . it was the only riot in the state in which the whites got the worst of it,” with more whites killed in the Marion riot than in any other in Mississippi.<sup>17</sup> One monument that stands today in Forest Lawn Memory Gardens Cemetery as a reminder of this violent event is the tombstone of John L. Vance, which reads: “Murdered November 8, 1881/By a cruel mob headed by the Sheriff, and others, of Lauderdale County, Miss.”

The Marion Riot was sparked by an election considered crucial in the ongoing struggle between white Democrats and Republicans and blacks. This election represented “. . . the last serious challenge by the Republicans.”<sup>18</sup> When Republican Ed Vance led a group of blacks to vote at Marion Station, a bloody confrontation

occurred. One account printed in the Jackson Weekly Clarion stated:

At Marion Station, five miles north of Meridian, this morning soon after the polls opened, some negroes provoked a difficulty with some white men, then shot and killed four of them. . . . The white men were unarmed.<sup>19</sup>

While the actual point of provocation is debated, what happened in Marion Station that day “. . . followed the pattern of what had been going on in numerous polling places since 1875: Negroes came to vote—perhaps more resolute than customarily; some white Democrats came prepared to use any means to discourage them from voting.”<sup>20</sup> As the group led by Vance approached the polls, an older man was “insulted by Vance and his followers” and shot. Four unarmed men who rushed to give assistance were also killed, including Joseph Barnett, Alex T. Harvey, tax assessor and candidate for re-election as a Democrat, and Jeff and Vincent Segars. Levi Moore and James Harvey were wounded.

Fleeing the polling place, Vance and his followers gathered at the Vance homeplace two miles from Marion Station and prepared to defend themselves. Eventually, Sheriff R. L. Henderson arrived with a posse of 100 deputized men. At first repulsed, the posse called for reinforcements. After the house was surrounded, Vance’s wife came out and Sheriff Henderson promised to protect her husband if he surrendered. As members of the posse approached the home, Ed Vance’s son John shot and killed A. G. Warren. The sheriff’s men returned the fire, killing John and wounding his brother Will. Sheriff Henderson was also wounded.<sup>21</sup>

Though the whites got the worst of it in the Marion Riot, the event settled the matter of political control. As the Democrats regained it, the bloody days of Reconstruction violence were over.

While this violence was one of the darkest aspects of the post-war period, other events dealt equally devastating blows to the county. For instance, Meridian was hit by the national financial panic of 1873, which seriously hampered its growth, and a large downtown fire, which resulted in “. . . a drastic drop in property values and a decline in population from 7,000 to 3,000.”<sup>22</sup>

The 1870s were also marked by other devastat-

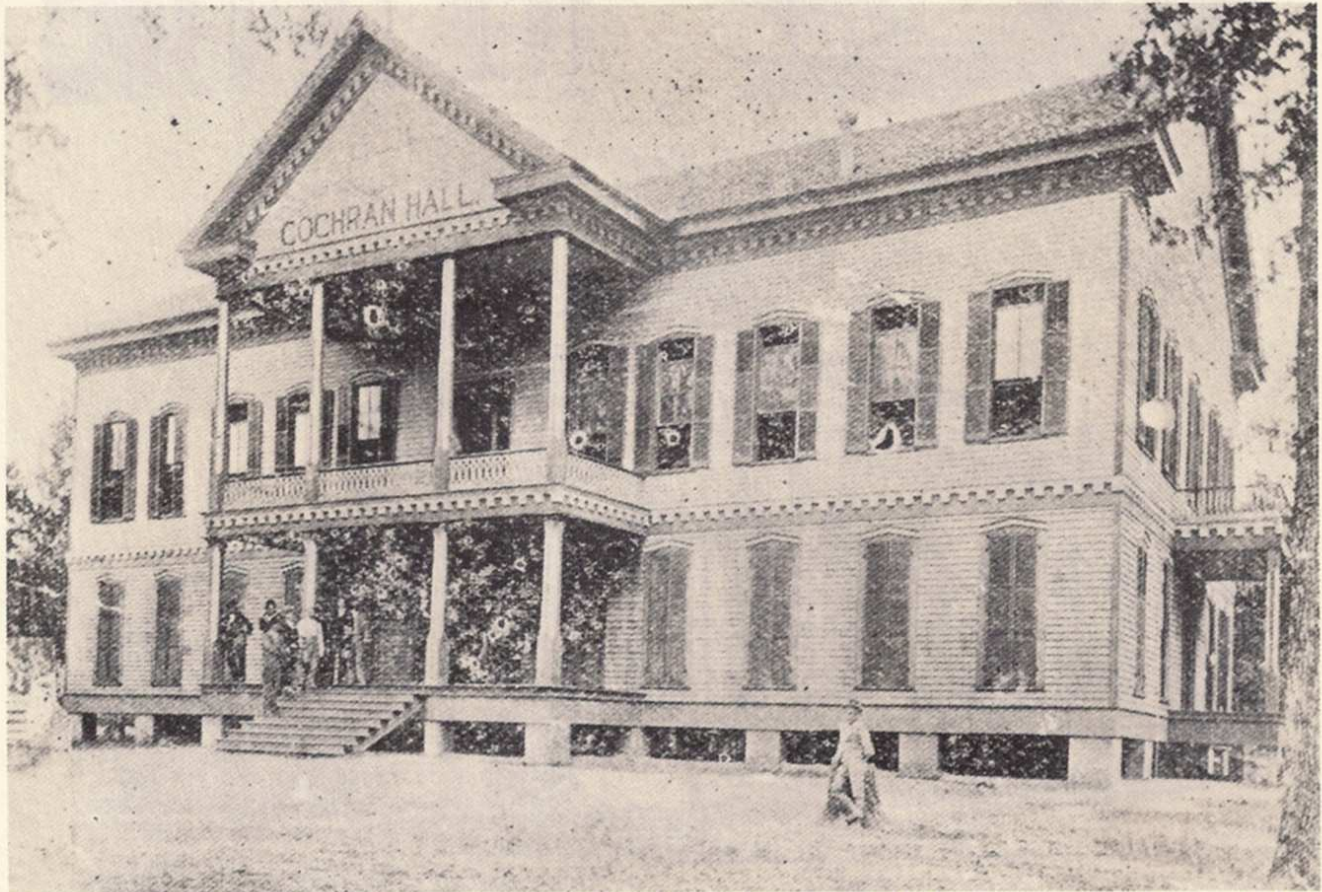
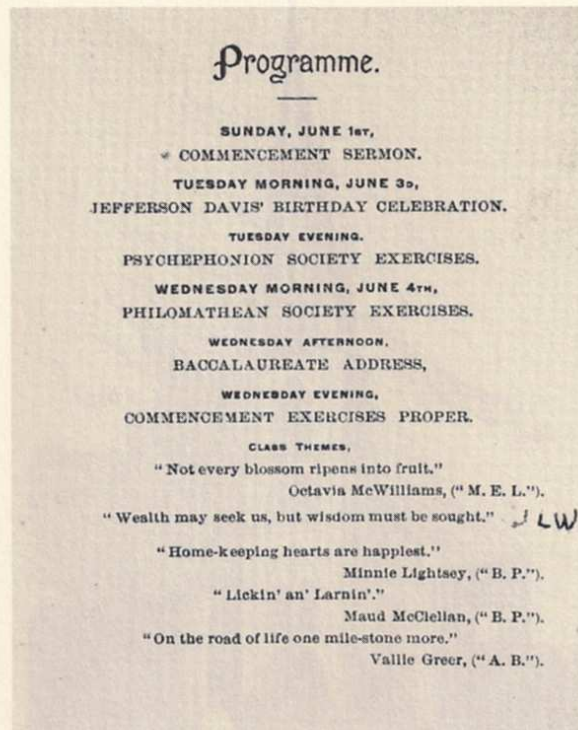
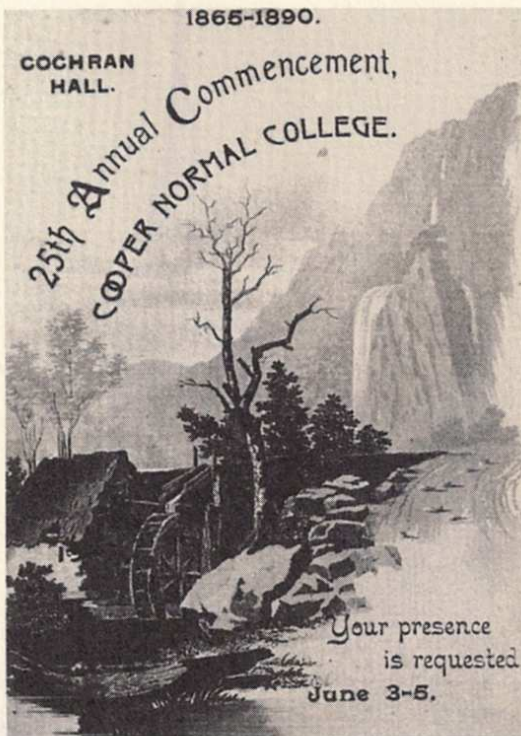
ing fires, making the town’s comeback even more difficult. After fires in 1871 and 1873, one in 1875 hit the downtown area, destroying the large Phoenix Hotel and several other businesses. Yet another setback caused by fire came in 1882, when the Presbyterian Church, which had been built in 1867 (where the Meridian Museum of Art now stands), was destroyed.

Despite the setbacks, all was not dark. The county’s population was 13,462 in 1870 and educational and cultural opportunities were expanding along with slow but steady industrial and commercial growth. Prior to that time, the Meridian Female College had opened its doors in 1865, followed by a school for blacks, the Meridian Freedman School, which was in operation in 1866. Deed Book L of county records shows the Freedman School and a church for blacks were built on a lot donated by L. A. Ragsdale.

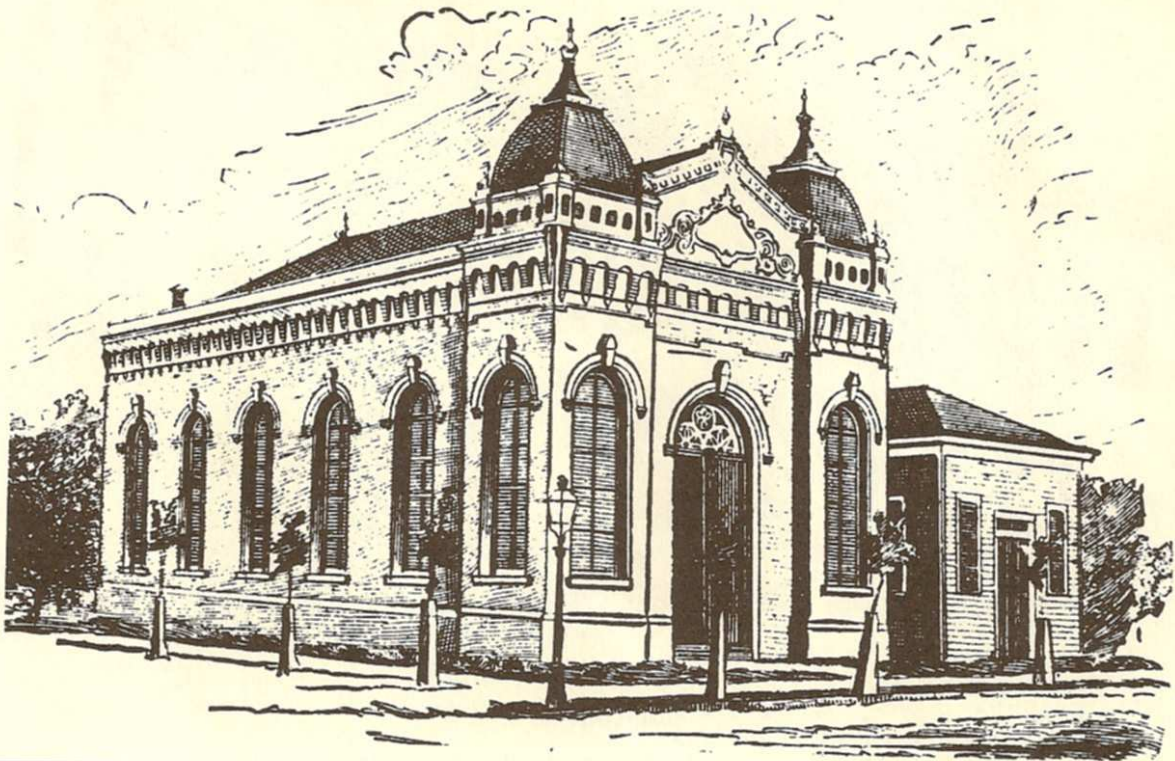
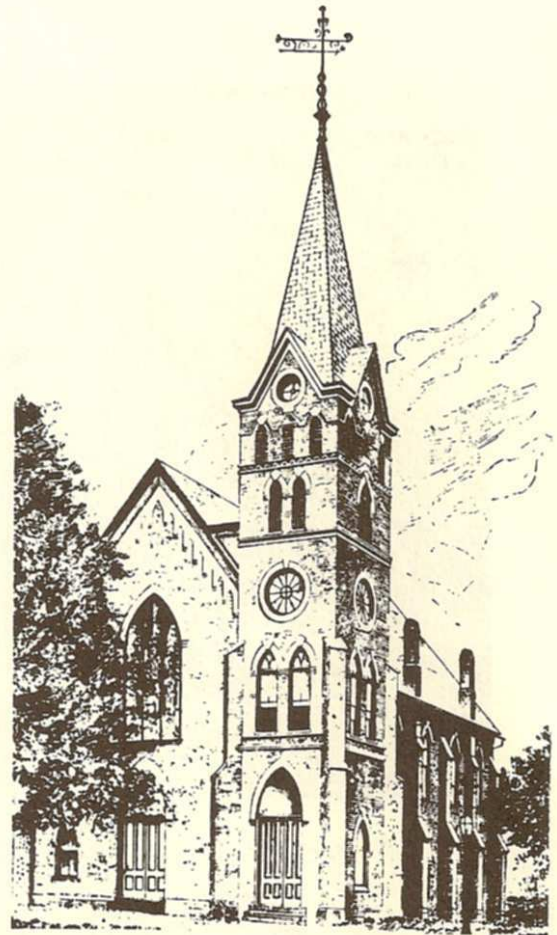
Another significant school of higher learning was the East Mississippi Female College, which dates to a meeting held under the auspices of the Mississippi Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South in 1871. The first name given to the Methodist school was College Home. S. T. Rice was the first president of the school, which was housed in the old Central Methodist Church building. Total matriculation the first year was 44 students.<sup>23</sup> By 1882, the school had an enrollment of 120 and was growing under the leadership of president J. W. Adkisson and professor Ransom J. Jones.<sup>24</sup>

The Legislature, on July 4th, 1870, had established a system of free public schools throughout the state. Records show the first meeting of the Lauderdale County School Board was held on January 28th, 1871. Baylor Palmer, general superintendent and president of the board of directors, was in charge. The county supervisors appointed the first slate of school directors that year, including Isaac Radford and James Moore, J. W. Brown, Robert Snowden, S. N. Jackson and Y. C. Gathright. At first, the county school system only provided teacher salaries, with patrons still furnishing the school houses and supplies.

By 1876, the county superintendent reported there were 26 female teachers employed in the school system. The teachers received typical monthly salaries of \$41.50. By 1877, 576 males and 460 females were enrolled in county



Cooper College's Cochran Hall once stood where Daleville United Methodist stands today, with 25th annual commencement program, above, from school's later years



Early Meridian Church Buildings: Jewish Synagogue; First Baptist, top right, and St. Patrick's Catholic Church

schools.<sup>25</sup> Until 1885, the schools in Meridian were included in the county system. In 1879, the Stephenson School for whites and an unnamed school for blacks were in the city's sub-district. Teachers at Stevenson on contract in 1879 were Mrs. M. E. Higgins, L. Leachman, Lister M. Scholastica, J. W. Atkinson, and C. M. Gordon. Teachers at the black school were Paul D. Jones and Mrs. M. V. Keever. Trustees for these two schools were city councilmen Dr. W. H. Bennett, Dr. E. E. Spinks, W. G. Grace and W. A. Brown.

Educational opportunities for girls and boys were improving across the county. On April 1, 1871, the county schools' board of directors declared the Meridian Female Institution a free public school open to all females between the ages of five and twenty-one. In fact, one of the most significant changes seen in the post-war years was the expanding opportunities for females. The catalogue of the Meridian Female College in 1868-1869 exemplified the impetus behind this shift, noting:

For our daughters it is far more pressing than before the recent revolution of our social system. If uneducated, they will in too many cases be compelled to occupy the place of menials to a degree unknown hitherto in the South. Ignorance, now more than ever, will make woman the slave of man, but education will make her his equal; and this alone will continue her in that exalted, sacred, honored position she has so long held in Southern society.

In addition to schools, churches were also multiplying, other denominations joining the Methodist and Baptist churches then in Meridian. The newcomers included the Presbyterian, 1867; Catholic, 1868; Jewish temple, 1871; and an Episcopal Church, 1873.<sup>26</sup> The city's oldest black churches, St. Paul's Methodist and New Hope Baptist, were also established in the post-war period.

Indeed, in addition to many firsts in business and industry, the recovery and expansion of educational opportunities represents one of the few bright spots of the Reconstruction period. One of the most significant of the schools that opened just after the Civil War ended was the Cooper Institute in Daleville. Today all that remains of one of the county's first schools of higher learning is a dormitory for girls on the property of Bill Wright across from the Daleville United Methodist Church.

The school was in the heart of Daleville, two miles from the Kemper-Lauderdale County line. In its heyday, the Cooper Institute was an innovative educational establishment, which its founder, Leonard Cooper, believed would break new ground in the education of rural Mississippians. The namesake and nephew of the school's founder, Leonard Cooper of Lizelia, said his uncle established the school after passing through the area on his way home from the Civil War and finding a spot "ideal for his dream."

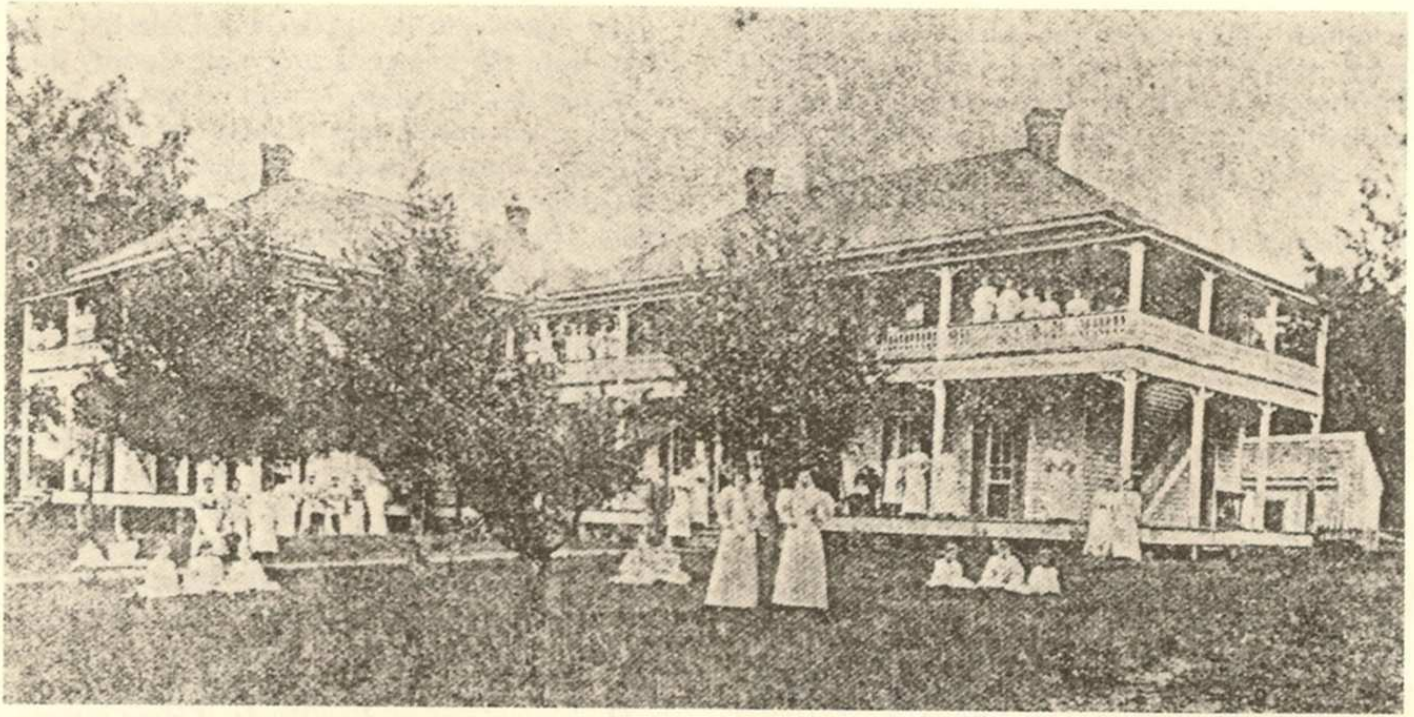
By 1865, the Cooper Institute accepted its first students and soon became "an important school with many students." Twenty years later, the college catalogue shows students from Lauderdale, Kemper, Neshoba, and Winston counties, in addition to others from Louisiana, Texas, Alabama and Florida, were attending. That catalogue boasted that the Cooper method of education was better than "long, plodding routine textbook curriculums and methods of slow instruction in other schools." Subjects offered ranged from Greek and Latin to penmanship and debating.

While the normal school may have been progressive for its time, the institution was a sharp contrast to higher education today. In 1886, the college offered "boarding and lodging, with washing included, for \$10 a month." Promotional material promised concerned parents that the school offered quiet seclusion far from ". . . the exciting scenes of city life, so detrimental to close and steady application, and ten thousand temptations to vice and dissipation."

Another contrast to modern co-ed schooling can be seen in the fact that the male dormitory building, which once stood just north of the statue of Sam Dale, was intentionally placed "way across the hollow" from the female housing facility. The school catalogue explained:

We consider it very abnormal to throw no restrictions over the sexes associated in the same school. Allow them full freedom of speech, and in a short time the consequent 'love sick affairs' will distract their mind from study, waste their time and harm the school. We allow none of this. The sexes are not permitted to desk together, visit or receive visits during the week.

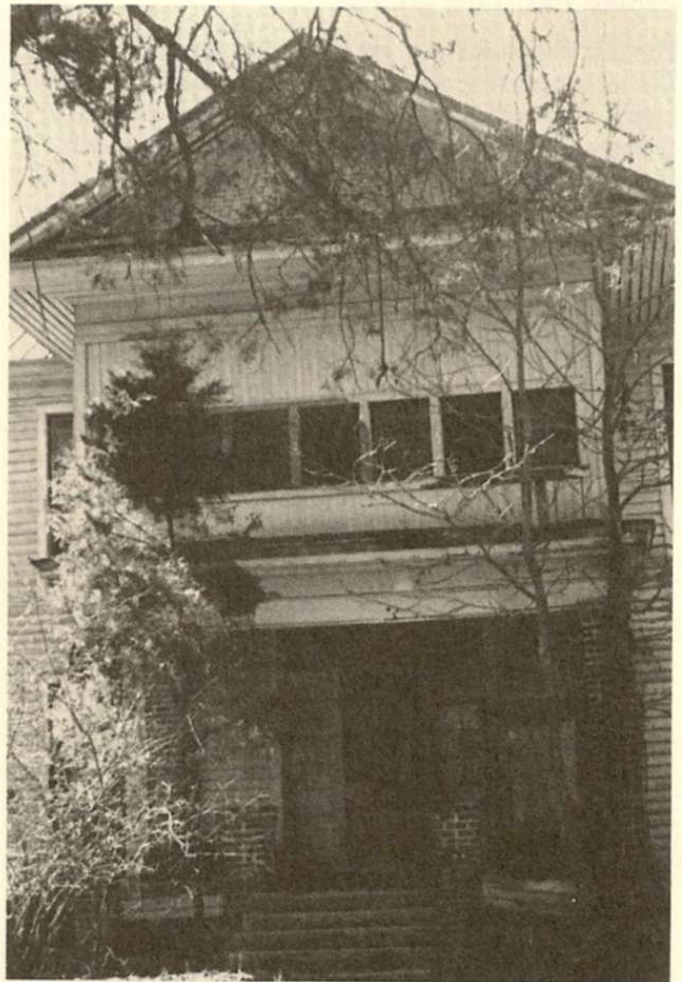
The task of enforcing such policies fell to Mr. and Mrs. Abner Cooper, parents of the second Leonard Cooper.



*The Almira Frances Cottage, female dormitory, on grounds of Cooper College near Daleville*

After several successful decades, the Cooper Institute closed in 1890. Sometime after 1900, the upper story of the main college building burned. With damage repaired, the building was then employed as a school in the Lauderdale County School System. After the school closed, the old girls' dormitory served as a boarding house for many years. Wright, the current property owner, said he hopes to restore the unique building at some point in the future.

One factor that caused Cooper to situate his school in Daleville is an ever-flowing spring situated behind the old girls' dormitory building. When the school was born, Daleville was known as Spring Hill, as many living in the area travelled there to partake of the fresh, flowing water. State water treatment officials who have since tested the water have declared it may be "the best water in Mississippi." This fresh water supply helped spur the growth and development of the area. In fact, the spring and the Cooper Institute caused a whole community to shift. Residents in the Old Daleville area where Sam Dale initially settled (now known as Lizelia) moved their families to Spring Hill in the mid-1800s, bringing the name Daleville with them. The spring water not only



*... all that remains today*



*Gully Smolshof . . . played role in fighting epidemic of 1878*

attracted new residents but was also promoted by Cooper Institute officials, who advertised:

The location is high and sandy with an ample supply of pure well and spring water; removed from any local cause of sickness, and far enough from town and rail road to be free from their contaminating influences.

Another school that opened during these years was the Catholic St. Aloysius Academy. The Rev. Father Louis Vally of St. Patrick's Church was the force behind the school. In September of 1877, he welcomed four Sisters of Mercy—Sister M. Vincent Brown, superior; Sister M. Camillus Callis; Sister M. Germaine Martin, and Sister M. Bernard McGuire—to carry forward his efforts in education.

The priest and nuns had barely settled in when they were forced to turn from the pleasant task of teaching to heroic roles in fighting yet another disaster—the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1878. Other brave Meridianites, inspired by Father Vally and the nuns' courage, would put their lives on the line nursing the sick and comforting grief-stricken families as members of the Meridian Aid

Society. Due to his efforts, Father Vally earned a lasting status as one of the city's heroes. After his death, the city granted special permission for him to be buried in the church yard of St. Patrick's Church, and named a nearby street in his honor.

Despite heroic efforts to fight the disease, 382 cases brought 86 deaths in Meridian alone between September and November of 1878. Many families fled the city as a quarantine kept others from entering. The fever also affected outlying communities. It raged near Okatibbee, where many of its victims were buried on the Mobile and Ohio right-of-way. Later, the railroad company built several section houses over the graves.<sup>27</sup>

During all the dark days of Reconstruction, fire and disease, Lauderdale Countians hung onto a belief in better times ahead. Throughout all of the disasters and disruptions of the period, Meridianites and others in outlying villages and towns displayed a brand of stubbornness passed on by the pioneers who had first settled the county. This iron will, and the iron rails that gave birth to Meridian, Marion Station and many other communities in the county, eventually turned the tide from the problems of Reconstruction to progress that would not be seriously threatened again until the 1930s. The shift is witnessed in a report from *The Meridian Avalanche* newspaper printed in the late 1870s, which noted:

Meridian is the most rapidly growing town in the state of Mississippi, and its future still brighter. Sherman burned it up in 1864, but it now has a population greater than any town in the state except Vicksburg.<sup>28</sup>

Indeed, a bright future was ahead, with Meridian soon to become the "Queen City" of Mississippi. With its rails and ever-important local industries based on Lauderdale County's natural resources in cottonland and timber, the village started by Ball and Ragsdale boomed after 1880, leaving the hard times of Reconstruction behind. By the turn of the century, the village had grown into one of the most progressive and populous cities in the state. Recovery from the Civil War and Reconstruction began in earnest, building on the triple bonus of rails, cotton and timber that carried the county into the twentieth century.

## 7 • Riding the Rails to Progress

As the Industrial Revolution began to sweep across the nation, Lauderdale County embarked on a hectic harvest of the fuel needed to feed it—namely timber and cotton. That harvest would bring rich rewards to both Meridian and surrounding communities. By the turn of the century, population was soaring, villages were mushrooming and King Cotton had regained its throne in local agriculture.

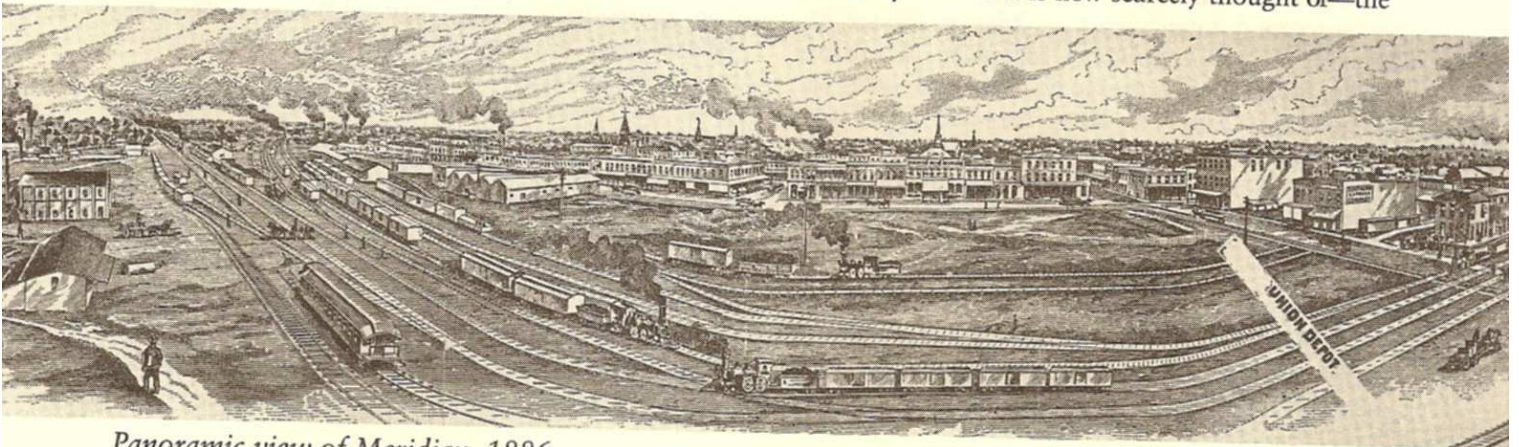
The key to such expansion was the very link that gave birth to Meridian—rail lines. As more and more lines criss-crossed the county, it was connected to markets across the nation, and Meridian became firmly established as one of the most important rail centers of the South. The railroads provided access to, and an outlet for, the county's huge reserves of virgin timber, a resource that had previously been viewed as a mere obstacle in the path of field-clearing farmers. But, from the 1870s through to the Great Depression, timber and its byproducts became

the county's greatest wealth-producer, spawning mill towns and providing new sources of income. Between 1870 and 1890, Meridian's population nearly quadrupled, making Lauderdale County one of the most populous counties in the state. By 1907, the city was known as the largest yellow pine and hardwood market in Mississippi, with thirteen lumber companies operating in Meridian by 1912.

More than five decades before, J. F. H. Claiborne had recognized the value of the untapped natural resources of the Piney Woods. He predicted in the 1840s, after a trip through the area, that "The time must arrive when this vast forest will become a source of value. The smoke of the steam mill will arise from a thousand hills."

In an amazingly accurate forecast, Claiborne had surmised that:

... the great source of wealth in this country must ultimately be—for it is now scarcely thought of—the



*Panoramic view of Meridian, 1886*



lumber trade. The whole east is thickly planted with an almost unvaried forest of yellow pine. Finer, straighter, loftier trees the world does not produce. For twenty miles at a stretch in places you ride through these ancient trees and see them as they have stood for countless years, untouched by the hand of man and only scratched by the lightning or the flying tempest.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, Claiborne's vision materialized throughout the Piney Woods during the 1870s, bringing boom times to Lauderdale County and her neighbors.

By the 1880s, tracks destroyed during the war had been repaired, but more important, dreamers like William Harris Hardy and Sam Neville had even bigger plans for Lauderdale County. These railroad pioneers were among the dozens who capitalized on their own visions and consequently put Meridian on the map as an important Southern rail center.

By the turn of the century, Captain Hardy's dream of connecting New Orleans and Meridian had been realized. Hardy, a lawyer and railroad pioneer, had conceived of linking Meridian with New Orleans as early as 1871, ignoring the barrier Lake Pontchartrain presented. Scoffed at by many, Hardy, with trains running on his line from Meridian to Hattiesburg by August of 1883 and his so-called "Moonshine Bridge" across Lake Pontchartrain almost complete, proved the skeptics wrong. Hardy proudly rode the first passenger train over the span at the end of that October, when the track was finished. As Meridian became a key point on the rail route from Cincinnati to New Orleans, boom times arrived that would not cease for decades to come.

The New Orleans and Northeastern, which became a part of the Southern line in 1916, seemed "to put magic in the county" as it spurred growth in both industry and population. By 1895, Progress Machine Works, Meridian Oil Mills and Manufacturing Company, and the Stanford and Sons' Iron Works were among the dozens of industrial concerns shipping their products out of the county on the rail lines.<sup>2</sup> As F. M. Runnels noted in the 1907 *Illustrated Handbook of Meridian*:

The completion of the New Orleans and Northeastern road was the event that permanently fixed the destiny of the city. That event marked the departure from the status of a country town towards the urban

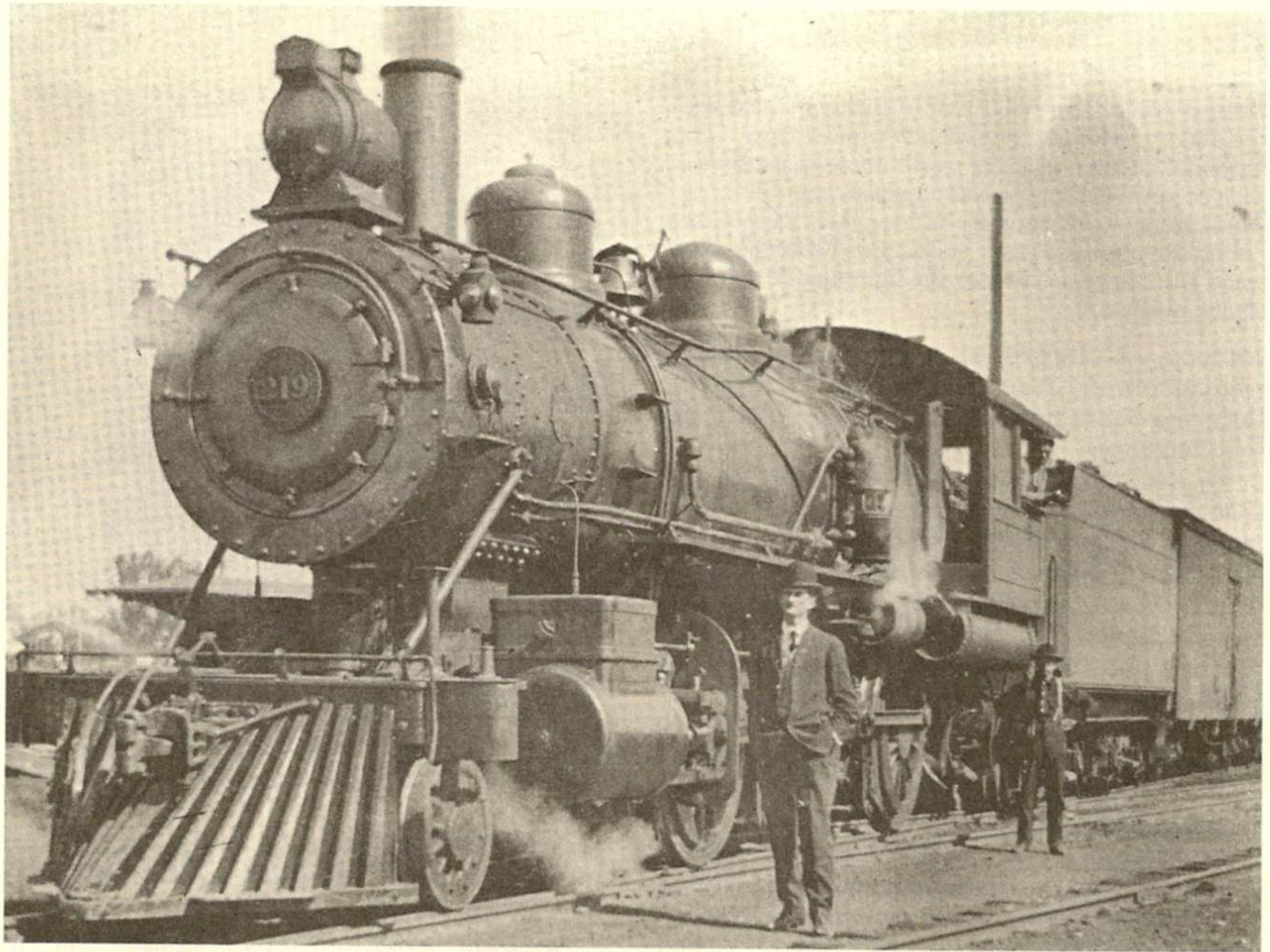


Col. E. L. Russell, president of Mobile & Ohio Railroad, 1899

dignity that had been measurably achieved, and to the stature of which new cubits are added with the rising of every sun.<sup>3</sup>

Another Meridian railroad pioneer, Sam Neville, understood that the only way to reach the untapped timber of the western sections of the county economically was with a rail line. Consequently, he developed the Meridian and Memphis (M & M) railway, which was incorporated in 1911 and completed to Union, a point on the N.O.M.&C. line, by December of 1913. As the line pushed through forests and muddy swamps, it became known as "Mud and Misery" to those who helped lay the track. The thirty-three mile line had two locomotives, two passenger coaches, one hundred freight and forty-five service cars. In 1929, the M&M was merged completely with the GM&N, which had built into Jackson, Tennessee.<sup>4</sup>

Other railroads continued to expand, improve and merge during the period, as the demands of the county's timber and cotton trade seemed boundless. The Mobile and Ohio Railroad, perhaps the most significant railroad in the county's history, consolidated with the Gulf, Mobile and Northern Company to form the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio in the 1900s. Prior to that time, the



*L. L. Brasfield with steam engine, 1905*

Southern Railroad, the Northeast and Southeast Alabama, and Wills Vally Railroad Company had reorganized to form the Alabama and Great Southern Railroad Company.<sup>5</sup> The AGS line connected Meridian to Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Such explosive growth of the county's transportation system had drastically changed the small flag stop originated by Ball and Ragsdale. By 1886, The Meridian Daily News was proclaiming:

Meridian, is already, next to Atlanta, the greatest railroad center in the South. Its increase in population is unprecedented in the state, and with the single exception of Birmingham, Alabama, unprecedented in the South, or indeed in any part of the United States.<sup>6</sup>

As a result, employment and trade opportunities expanded rapidly in the city and throughout the county. The Queen & Crescent system, which owned the New Orleans and Northeastern, the A&V and the Vicksburg,

Shreveport and Pacific roads, opened large shops in Meridian. The A&V and the N.O.&N.E. shops served as headquarters for repairs, and considerable amounts of railroad equipment and cars were constructed by local workers there. By 1885, up to 5,000 workers were employed in the shops, which had an annual payroll of \$850,000.

Meanwhile, the county's premier line, the Mobile and Ohio, maintained its largest and costliest freight depot in Meridian and was bringing numerous passenger cars through the city. The M&O provided work for more than a thousand Lauderdale Countians at its shops during the turn-of-the century boom. The Alabama Great Southern line also had its southern terminal in Meridian, and the Southern Railway linked the city to Selma, Alabama.

By 1907, forty passenger trains were passing through Meridian each day. Perhaps more importantly, the rails linked the county to the rest of the nation in a profitable trade relationship, and

local terminals afforded passengers connections to cities across the land. For instance, the A & V, operating between Meridian and Vicksburg, hauled in almost 5,000 cars and hauled out over 6,000 loads, while the N.E.&.N.O. line carried in more than 3,000 loads and moved out more than 6,000 cars of locally produced products in 1907.<sup>7</sup>

Timber moguls had by then realized the potential of the yellow pine. Eventually, the long-leaf pines were tapped for all they were worth as nationwide demand for products grew and timbermen discovered there was nothing valueless about the towering trees. One guide explained the worth of the pine and its byproducts noting:

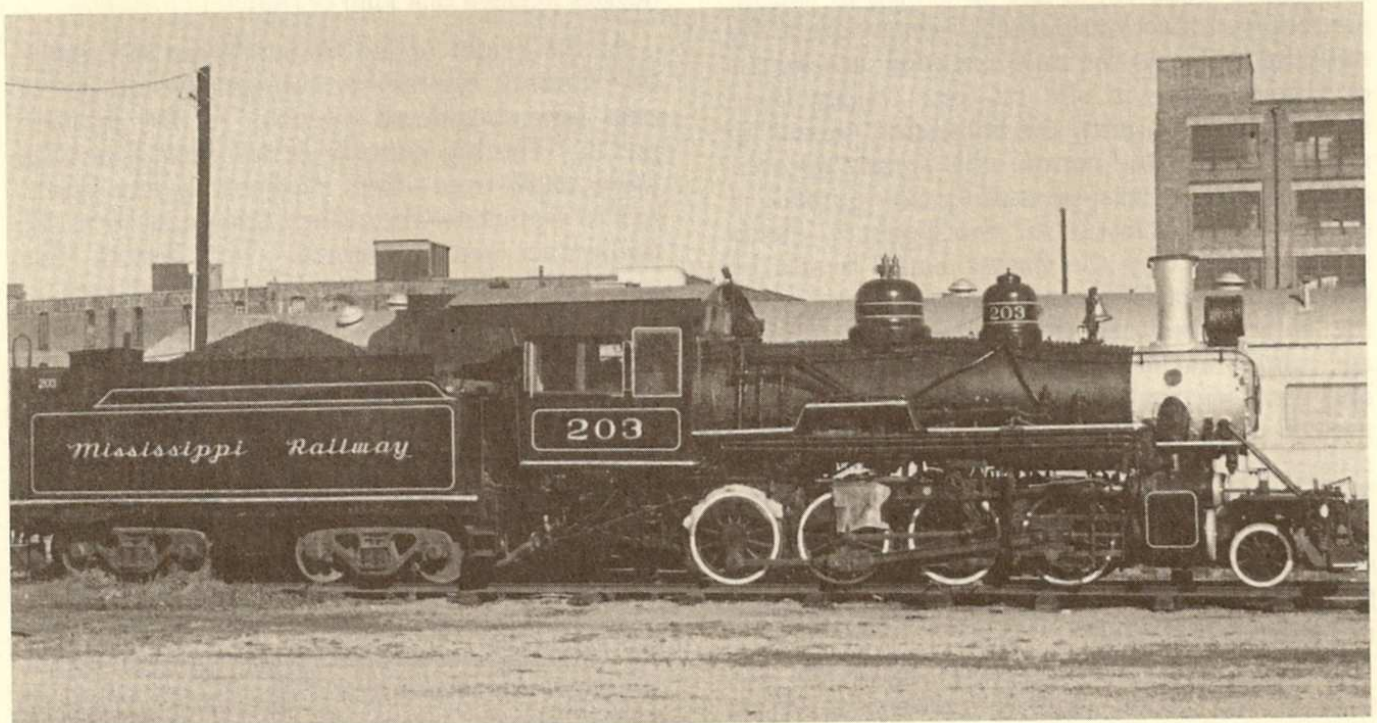
Before cutting it is subject to the bleeding of the turpentine. Once felled the main stem is cut into material for bridges, car-sills, and lumber for export, for the finest interior finish as well as the rougher surfacing of houses and business blocks. From the saw dust is being manufactured all kinds of tar products, fuel, turpentine, rosin for ship caulking, and even the branches and leaves of the tree prove profitable when treated under new processes for any of the above products.<sup>8</sup>

Across the county, turpentine mills, factories producing goods from the lumber, and sawmills were established as the rails brought a means of cashing in on the timber. One of the timber men

who realized the potential of the resource was the namesake of Meehan, who established the Cotton States Lumber Company twelve miles west of Meridian during the boom years. Meehan located his company at the junction of the Alabama and Vicksburg Railroad and the Tallahatta Railway, which ran north towards Battlefield. Cotton States extended its reach to timber reserves throughout the western section of the county and beyond into neighboring counties, and established Meehan as a mill town. Later, much of the business activity that sprang up around the mill died with the company.

As the railroads provided access to the extensive pine region extending to the south and west of the city, Meridian became a lumber industry center. By the first decade of the twentieth century, 10,000 railroad cars of manufactured lumber were handled annually, representing a minimum of more than one hundred million feet.<sup>9</sup>

One of the leading timber barons in the city was M. R. Grant, who established the Meridian Lumber Company. According to Meridian historian Jack Shank, that company became one of the largest in the South, producing 50 million feet of lumber annually by 1907. The Grant company also manufactured doors, sashes,



*The Lady . . . a steam engine typical of Golden Age of Rails*

blinds and other products from local timber and from resources shipped into the city from all parts of Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana.<sup>10</sup>

Others found fortunes in the wood-processing industries. T. J. Bostick, for example, built a thriving business based on turpentine extracted from trees in the southeastern corner of the county near Causeyville. He, along with Jim Smith, built the Causeyville General Store in the late nineteenth century. By 1907, his son, Eugene, was operating a planing mill in Meridian that boasted it could produce "a door a minute." The Bostick firm, one of the largest plants of its kind in the nation, produced furniture, doors, and other building materials that would eventually be used in housing construction across the country. The manufacturing operation covered nine square blocks, with offices at A Street and Twenty-second Avenue. Nephews of T. J. Bostick, John Bunion "Bun" Usher and his brother, Sam, were also among the many Meridianites who built thriving timber businesses in Meridian.<sup>11</sup> The link between the timber harvest and industries could be seen on almost every corner of town as businesses such as the Meridian Wagon Works, which manufactured heavy eight-wheel wagons for sawmill workers and other products, prospered.<sup>12</sup>

The impetus of the economic boost based on the timber trade could not be denied in Meridian, but its impact was perhaps even greater in the outlying areas. As the rails extended into forests of virgin timber in still relatively undeveloped sections of the county, the harvesting picked up steam. Lumber and cotton mills sprang up overnight along the rails, prompting development of churches and schools for the workers. Fields rapidly cleared by the timber hands would be taken over by farmers, and for a number of years, the balance between the lumber industry and agriculture was favorable.<sup>13</sup> The timber payrolls and the agricultural trade spurred the birth or growth of numerous towns and villages, built around general stores, post offices and depots. The timber push was particularly felt in western sections of the county, one of the last areas to be settled. During these years, many immigrants found work in the mills, establishing their roots in Lauderdale County.

Profiles of several communities reflect the impact of the boom days. For instance, Pine

Springs, which derives its name in part from the pines that once covered the area, grew as residents plied the timber trade to supplement farm incomes. Like so many other villages, Pine Springs enjoyed more prosperity than ever before—or since—as both small and large lumber concerns operated in the vicinity.

Until the Great Depression and the depletion of trees that had taken centuries to grow, the area was "sawmill country," according to the community's history expert, Mrs. Mary Ellen White. Today, one sign of Pine Springs' involvement in the timber trade is buried beneath the waters of Okatibbee Lake's Pine Springs Park swimming area. Mrs. White explained that the park was once the site of a spoke mill that operated up until World War II, producing wooden spokes from white oaks.

One veteran of the timber harvest is Dr. Ruben Johnson, whose father Fred headed cutting crews for the spoke mill. He recalled, "My daddy had us working and hauling timber. My brothers and I hauled spokes, as did several others who lived around here [Pine Springs]," and added:

There were so many things that were happening in the lumber business. That was one of the areas that most of the people got some of their income . . . selling lumber and selling timber for spokes. Spokes were the big deal besides lumber. All the wagons and buggies required that kind of stuff.

At the height of the timber boom in Lauderdale County, big lumber concerns would ignore trees now considered valuable. As Dr. Johnson put it, "The big companies wouldn't fool with these small trees—trees probably a foot and a half in diameter—they were nothing, as far as the timbermen were concerned." Mrs. Evelyn "Ebbie" Smith, born in the Pine Springs area in 1904, said most of the farmers depended on their timber work to supplement farming income. Of the connection between the fields and forest, she said, "As soon as we laid a crop by, papa would get out in the woods and work. Little sawmills were all around here then."<sup>14</sup>

The "cotton connection" was also alive and well in Pine Springs around the turn of the century. In addition to the Pine Springs School, which once stood on what is now the site of the Pine Springs Southern Methodist Church, a general store and farm-related businesses stood in the heart of the community during its heyday.



*Pine Springs School students, about 1911*

Suqualena, to the west, also reaped the rewards of the timber boom, which brought sawmills, rail lines and other settlers into the community. According to community historian Katherine Gaddis, Suqualena thrived just after the turn of the century, with a cotton gin operated by Marshall Jones, a molasses mill run by Andrew Blackman, and Sam Warren's sawmill and planer operation running at full steam. And, long-time Suqualena resident William Blanks said a mill that produced spokes for wagons and buggies was once located on his grandfather's property in the community, eight miles north of Meridian on Mississippi highway 494.

In addition to the general store run by Blanks' grandfather, the center of activity in Suqualena during the boom days was The Grove, established on land donated by the Blanks, Shields and Jolly families. The Suqualena United Methodist Church, established in 1870, and Masonic Lodge were built there. Even the community's

two-teacher school was situated in The Grove—where the Masonic Lodge now stands—until it moved into a two-story wooden school built across the road.

Though the timber and cotton demanded much in the way of labor, Suqualena's Fourth of July picnics, one highlight of the community's social life, illustrated that time was set aside for recreation. Each year, barrels of lemonade, politicians and "plenty of free grub" made the picnic an event that still shines in the memories of many. Suqualena resident Leon Jones recalled that the annual event provided an incentive for work in the fields and forests—"Folks farmed around here, and they'd tell the kids they could go to the picnic if they got the cotton chopped out."

Politics and fried chicken were a natural combination in The Grove, Mrs. Gaddis said. Her great-grandfather, William Rice Denton, was perhaps the most colorful politician ever to hold the picnic spotlight in Suqualena. Representative



*Rep. William Rice Denton, right with hat, stands near wagonload of county grown cotton*

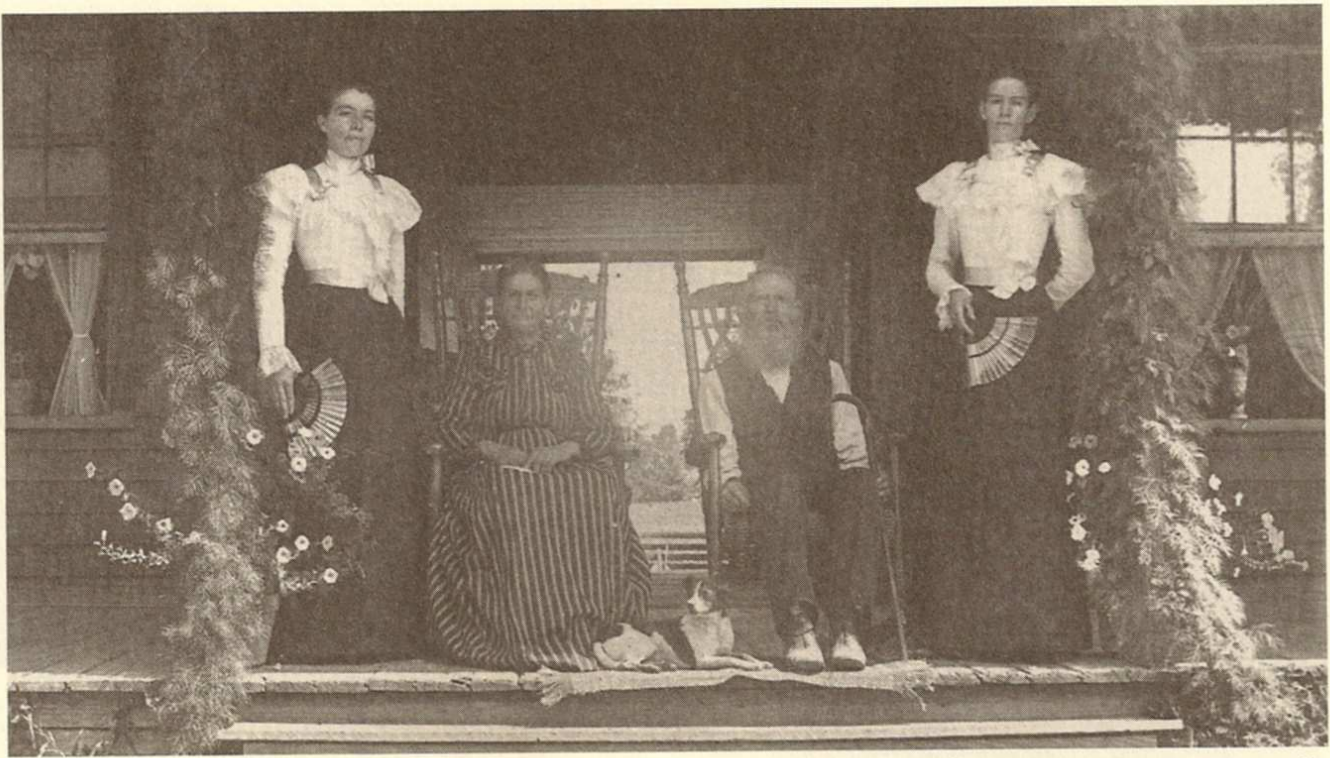
Denton, who was a member of the Mississippi Legislature from 1890 to 1912, rounded up votes in a unique way. Mrs. Gaddis explained, "He was an artist at using the bullwhip. He would perform to attract attention . . . and votes. Everybody remembers him because of that bullwhip." While no event today could match the spectacular picnics of the past, The Grove still hosts community events, such as the annual Suqualena Homecoming hosted by the area Masonic and Eastern Star organizations.<sup>15</sup>

One community largely populated by blacks also enjoyed good times based on cotton, timber and rails. That settlement, known as Wilsondale, lies between Suqualena and Collinsville. The hamlet reached its top population around 1900 with about 100 residents. According to records, Wilsondale was named for a black educator, Professor Wilson, who helped the Meridian and Memphis railroad secure a right of way through the area. A depot for the M & M track stood across from the 650-acre section owned by Wilson, who came into the area from Neshoba County and became one of the largest black landowners in the county.

The community, in the early 1900s, boasted the only black owned-and-operated horse-racing track in the county. WPA records say the race-track was patronized by Wilsondale's citizens and their white neighbors from surrounding communities. By the turn of the century, the settlement had a sawmill, general store and school, according to Professor F. P. Posey, a veteran educator and long-time resident of the area. But, promises of prosperity were shattered when the boll weevil destroyed local farmers' cotton crops not long after the turn of the century. Later, the Great Depression dealt another blow to the community.<sup>16</sup>

Collinsville, farther to the north, also grew rapidly around the turn of the century. The community was born around the store built by early settler Nathaniel Monroe "Dinks" Collins. He donated land for the settlement's first school during the nineteenth century. One of the community founder's descendants was Rosser A. Collins, an influential politician who would serve as a state attorney general and, later, as a U. S. congressman.

During the timber boom years, Collinsville



*Rural homestead of, left to right, Lillie Kittrell, Martha Ann Weatherford, John Washington Kittrell and Minnie Kittrell, 1899*

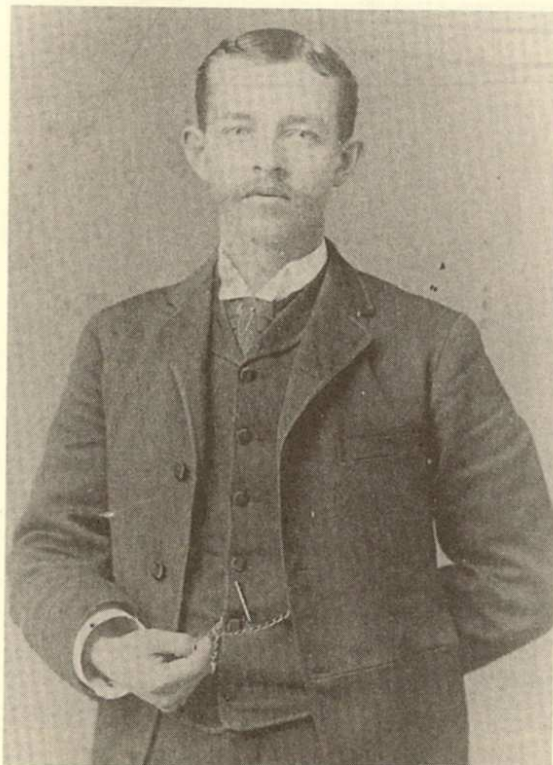
boasted a sawmill and turpentine still, which thrived from the late 1800s until the early 1900s. Rail lines extended from the Cotton States Lumber Company in Meehan up through the area. Dummy lines, as the short lines built from the main track into heavily wooded timber reserves were called, ran throughout the surrounding hills. Many Irish workers and other immigrants were hired by the railroads to construct the dummy lines.

In the southeastern section of the county, communities such as Whynot and Causeyville also entered the twentieth century enjoying the benefits of the harvest of area resources, particularly timber. Community promoter and owner of the historic Causeyville General Store, Leslie Haggwood, said the area "owed a great deal to the timber harvest." Dummy lines extended into the southeastern corner from the Long Bell Lumber Company in Clarke County and other lumber mills.

In addition to specifically timber-related development, Causeyville enjoyed civic improvements as it entered the twentieth century. Many descendants of the county's earliest settlers had

by then established themselves as hard-working citizens. Dr. William Jackson Anderson stands out in the memories of many as one of the prime examples of Causeyville's contributions to the ranks of the county's prominent citizens. "Dr. Billy," as he was fondly called, delivered hundreds of babies . . . often for the price of a few chickens. The country doctor was the son of Joseph "Tobe" Tillman Anderson and his wife, Elmina, hardy pioneers who had traveled into the area by oxcart in the 1840s.

In addition to bringing much-needed medical care to the rural area, Dr. Anderson, in a long career in Causeyville, served stints as a gin and sawmill operator and as a postmaster. Mrs. Lessie Culpepper, a second cousin of Dr. Anderson and life-long resident of Causeyville, said the doctor was ". . . just like a daddy to everyone because he delivered just about every baby born in this community." Born in 1863, Dr. Anderson first started making his rounds on horseback around the turn of the century. Later, he would make house calls in a buggy, before he moved up to a Model T Ford. He was first cousin to Dr. Jeff (William Jefferson) Anderson, who established



*Dr. William Jackson Anderson*

Meridian's Jeff Anderson Regional Medical Center. Two of his grandsons, Dr. Neville Harrington and Dr. William L. Carter, also entered the medical field.<sup>17</sup>

In the southwestern corner of the county, Chunky Station survived General Sherman's raid to reap the rewards the rails brought. In the early 1900s, lumbering moved into town, bringing several large sawmills and the McDonald and Company turpentine distillery. Cotton gins and other businesses in town also thrived, according to C. L. Cahoon, Chunky's history expert. One enterprise, a barrel factory, produced molasses barrels, much in demand, from cypress and hickory trees cut near the Chunky River. Among the town's early merchants cashing in on the boom were John Dyess and John Warren. Cahoon, whose father ran one of Chunky's several general stores, recalled, "Every Wednesday, people who worked in the Meehan mill [Cotton States] would ride the train into town for mill day. They would spend the day shopping and visiting, and leave late in the evening."<sup>18</sup>

Though Chunky survives today, not even the vestiges of two settlements once near the Newton

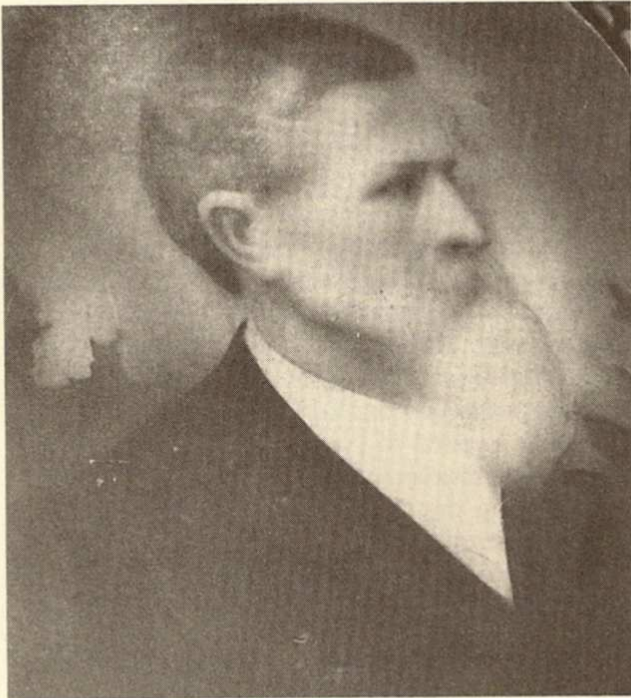


*Family of Thomas Moody and Mary Winnie Pack Sims at log home in Alamucha*

County town can now be found. One of the now-extinct settlements, known as Old Dutchtown or Cologne, was the site of one of the more unique ventures undertaken in the area. The community was founded by an ambitious band of German and Dutch settlers around 1874. According to a descendant of one of the immigrants, William "Bill" Schoenrock, they planned to produce silk from silkworms grown along the banks of the Chunky River. Schoenrock said his grandfather, John Schanrock (name changed later), was among the band who brought their dreams to the county in the 1870s. Today, Schoenrock and his family are one of the few reminders that the settlement ever existed.

The immigrants named the settlement once near the Point Bridge south of Chunky after their German hometown, Cologne. The settlers dug ditches and built structures especially for the production of silkworms as soon as they arrived. However, the immigrants' dreams of fortune were never realized. The low-lying territory of Old Dutchtown, or Cologne, was often flooded and illness was rampant. The yellow fever epidemic of 1878 erased all such hopes, killing many of the settlers in the process. Schoenrock said his grandparents told him only two of their fourteen children survived the experiment. While most of





*Immigrant John Schanrock*

Photo by Sharon Jean White

the immigrants moved northward after it failed, Schoenrock's grandfather and father remained in Lauderdale County, establishing a dairy farm and truck farm south of Meridian.

Yet another ghost town, once near Chunky, was My, which had a short life, with the postmaster naming the town in 1889 and closing the office six years later, in 1905. Members of the Wells, Hopson and Armstrong families were among the early residents.

Towns and villages located near the bustle of the rails fared better. They not only provided an impetus for the timber harvest, but brought new business and life to depot towns such as Lauderdale and Lockhart around the turn of the century. Flag stops along the rail lines also spawned villages, such as Melwyn, once six miles east of Meridian. From this point, J. A. Pigford and H. E. Pigford shipped up to three cars of locally grown strawberries daily. But, by 1920, Melwyn, named in honor of a railroad official's daughter, had died.<sup>19</sup>

While many communities such as Causeyville and Chunky survived the demise of the timber boom, others were not so fortunate. From the 1880s through the early twentieth century, many of the small settlements that had sprung up

around sawmill operations died as quickly as the local timber supply was depleted.

Those now-extinct villages included Coonville, once twenty-two miles northeast of Meridian. This settlement was named for Coon Clay after its birth in 1893. Coonville, which died in 1905, was centered around a sawmill operated by Colonel William Nunnery. Often a post office and general store would be established near the mills, as in the now-extinct village of Celie, once near the Clarke County line eighteen miles southeast of Meridian. Will McRaye operated a sawmill and commissary in Celie, which, from 1904 to 1914, boasted a post office named Celie in honor of the daughter of store operator D. J. Reynolds.

In the southeastern corner, Bullards was another short-lived mill town formed about 1900 on a spur of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad. The population of mill workers grew to 75 before the settlement disbanded in 1925. A more successful mill town was Graham, once nine miles west of Meridian and a mile from Meehan. This village sprang up in 1880 around the timber businesses of W. J. Graham. A successful pine products dealer, Graham operated a sawmill and turpentine still. His enterprise also shipped out thousands of cross-ties cut from area timbers up into the early 1930s.<sup>20</sup>

The timber connection had a direct impact on culture in rural areas of the county. During the great harvest, log rollings became social events. As Clyde Stewart, of the Snell area, recalled, "The men would roll the logs with special sticks. That's where you proved your manhood." In addition to timber and agricultural enterprises, an illicit activity—whiskey making—provided yet another means of diversion for moonshiners who found the county's ridges and hollows excellent hiding places for their stills.

The new-found prosperity brought by cotton and timber created demands for recreational outlets, reviving the resort at Lauderdale Springs and providing plenty of customers for a large resort built near the Arundel Lithia Springs around the turn of the century. Arundel, with a freight station, grew up around its hotel, which cashed in on a nearby spring whose waters contained many minerals. The water was bottled for sale in 1898, and profits soared into the early years of the new century.

Equally as significant as the timber explosions,



*R. F. Denton and Ursula Meadors enjoy Lauderdale Springs resort, 1905*

Photo courtesy of J. B. Harvey

was the reemergence of cotton as a cash crop in Lauderdale County. By 1900, there were 3,564 farms in the county, with both large and small-scale growers placing their bets on "white gold." The rails that provided the timber interests access to northeastern markets were as vital to cotton merchants and entrepreneurs who helped make Meridian a center for compressing and shipping cotton. Thirteen cotton-growing counties surrounded Meridian, with the entire production of eight of those counties purchased by buyers in town and cotton from the other five often brought to the city for compressing and shipping.

According to Jack Shank, Meridian truly began to see the dividends of cotton during the late 1870s. John H. Gary and L. P. Brown took over John T. Ball's cotton compress in 1875. These two entrepreneurs played an important role, working to expand the market and obtaining favorable freight rates from Meridian to Eastern cities. Consequently, a flood of brokers arrived, all intent on making Meridian a cotton center of the South. Two such brokers were Nicholson and Chafin, who shipped the first compressed bale from Meridian to the East on the Alabama and Chattanooga Railroad in the fall of 1875. As that shipment headed to New York markets, the city and county entered a new era of prosperity.<sup>21</sup>

Bolstering the city in its role as a major center of cotton trade and manufacturing was the Meridian Cotton Exchange and Board of Trade, the forerunner of Meridian's Chamber of Commerce, organized in 1873. All twenty-five firms making up the original Meridian Board of Trade and Cotton Exchange were cotton dealers. Such city leaders as Tom Lyle, H. Threefoot, T. C. Carter, Levi Rothenberg, F. W. Williams and M. Winner served on the board.<sup>22</sup>

The Pioneer Manufacturing Cotton Mill, the first of many cotton-related industries to come, was established in Meridian in 1863. Burned by Sherman's troops, it was rebuilt by 1867. By 1880, dozens of manufacturers, packers, compressors, dealers and buyers were finding employment in cotton-related enterprises. By then, city father Lewis Ragsdale had erected his Planters' Press and Warehouse, which had a storage capacity of 12,000 bales. Two years later, records show, more than 50,000 bales were shipped out of Meridian. By 1888, no less than fifty firms were engaged in cotton storage.

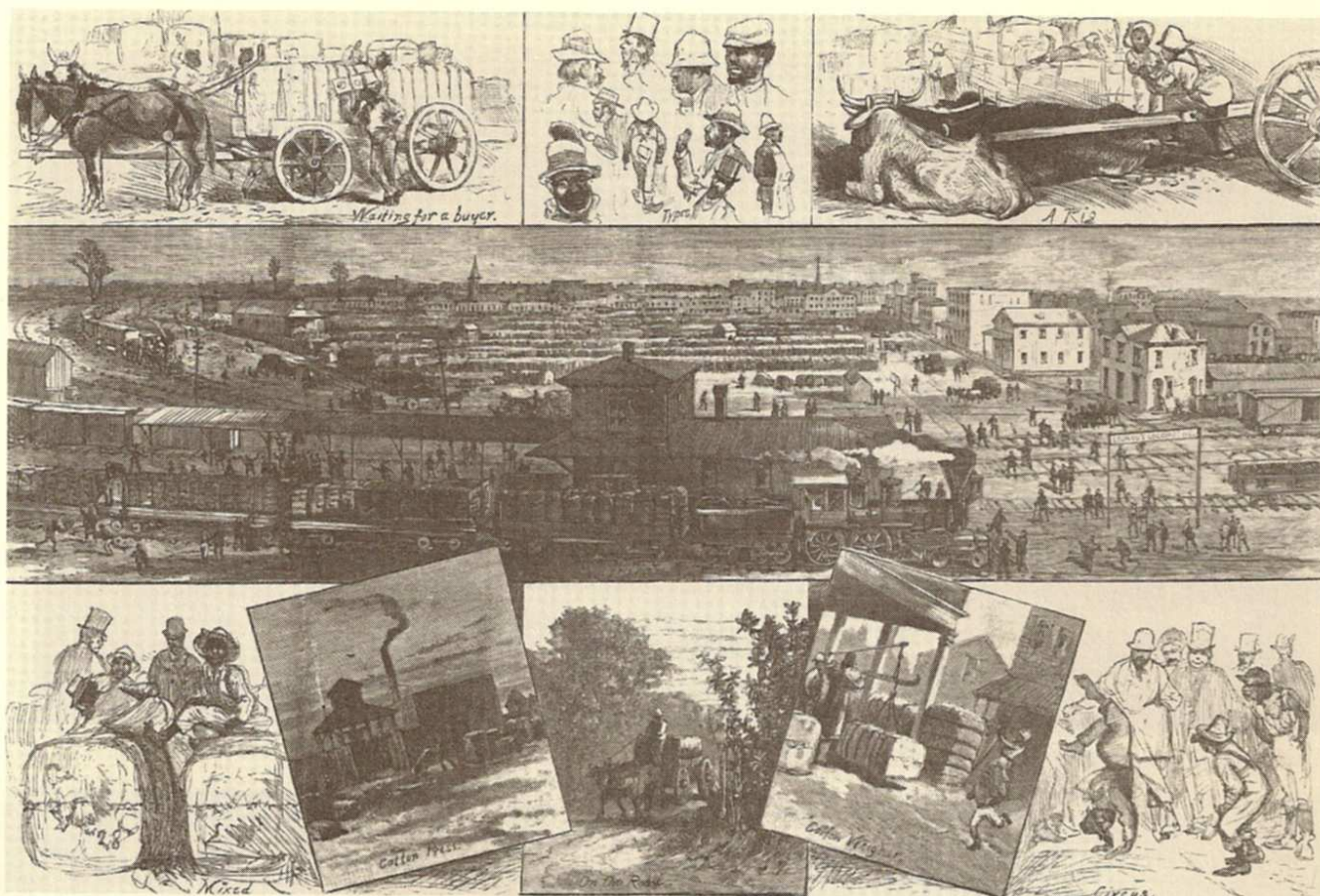
One view of the impact cotton had in Meridian was set forth in 1880 by a correspondent for *Harper's Weekly*. That reporter, remarking on the city's amazing rebound from the devastation of the yellow fever epidemic of 1878, wrote of the astonishing "revival of prosperity and business activity" in Meridian, which then had a population of about 4,000. Telling of a cotton blockade, the correspondent wrote, "Thousands upon thousands of cotton bales accumulate there, and often it happens that the railroads can not furnish sufficient facilities for their transportation." Sketches accompanying the article depict the re-



*Original Threefoot building in downtown Meridian*



*Tom Lyle's cotton buying establishment stood on Front Street in the early 1900s*



Sketch depicts cotton blockade at Meridian

sult—"traffic jams" of hundreds of wagons piled up to two stories high with locally produced cotton. During the height of the fall harvest, the *Harper's* reporter said of Meridian, "Money is plentiful, and gayety [sic] pervades all classes of people."<sup>23</sup>

The cotton that was not shipped to Eastern markets was put to work at a variety of factories, including the East Mississippi Cotton Mill, which manufactured yarn, batting, rope and twine, among other items. More than 150 people were employed at the plant, owned by J. S. Solomon. Its products were shipped to St. Louis and other points via the railroads that converged in Meridian. An even larger employer was the Lauderdale Cotton Mill. That company, with more than 250 employees, consumed 300 bales of cotton a month in the manufacture of textiles shipped to such distant markets as Australia and New Zealand.<sup>24</sup>

By 1907, Meridian was producing more cottonseed products than the combined output of

any other four cities in the state, and one hundred thousand bales of cotton were being handled in the county seat.<sup>25</sup> By that time,

... the volume of freight shipped from and received at this point is greatly in excess of the business done at any other city in the State and the value of manufactures exclusive of lumber is more than double that claimed by any of Meridian's rivals in the field of industrial development.<sup>26</sup>

The impact of its economic tripod—based on timber, cotton and rails—would eventually make Meridian the largest city in the state. As it blossomed economically, socially and culturally, Meridian and surrounding towns and villages entered the Golden Age, a glowing era of growth and development that would see little disruption until the Great Depression. As progress became the watchword, Lauderdale County entered one of the most colorful chapters in its history with a strong foundation based on agriculture, timber and related industries.

## 8 • The Golden Age

*"Progress became the watchword in Meridian in 1890, and the little town on Sowashee Creek finally began to cast aside its pioneer-day rags and rise to riches."*

—THE MERIDIAN STAR, MAY 6, 1960

As timber, cotton and the rails that they were transported on brought good times to Lauderdale County, Meridian entered its most progressive era, known as the Golden Age. The period lasted from 1890 through the first decades of the new century, and transformed the relatively young city into one of the most populous and progressive communities in Mississippi. While timber towns continued to spring up overnight across the county, Meridian, as a rail center, was the center of the explosive growth. Fires and other disasters, such as the destructive tornado of 1906, would not be enough to stem the progress that could only be derailed by a force as devastating as the Great Depression of the 1930s.

As the county and its crown jewel, Meridian, entered the twentieth century, nothing but prosperity seemed to be on the horizon. It was during the Golden Age that Meridian would make the transition from a town into a full-fledged city, complete with all the trappings of improved civic, educational and cultural opportunities. Busy cotton buyers, rugged railroaders, factory workers, bricklayers, merchants and professionals flocked in to make the city, according to one 1891 account, "... a great and growing wonder."<sup>1</sup>

That year, Meridian was described thus:

Scarce a quarter of a century back an even one hundred people were the population of her limits. Today about eleven thousand have their daily existence within her confines, while twice that number are interested in the rise and progress of this busy inland market.<sup>2</sup>

From 1890 to the turn of the century, Lauderdale

County welcomed 8,489 newcomers, bringing the total population to 38,150—19,190 whites and 18,960 blacks—by 1900. Meridian's population swelled to 14,050, with 119 industries making her first among manufacturing cities of the state and second only to Vicksburg in population, according to the 1900 Census.

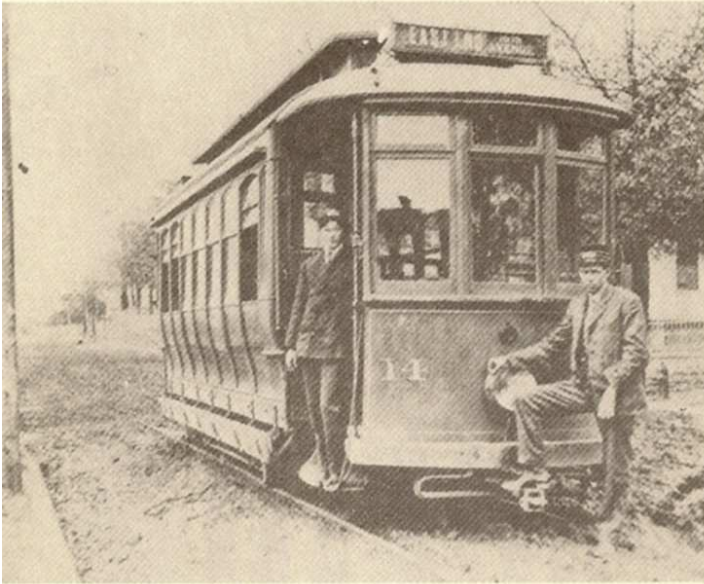
By 1907, Meridian was claiming the status of largest city in the state, as her population surpassed that of Vicksburg.<sup>3</sup> With a county population of 46,919 by 1910, Meridian remained the state's largest municipality until 1930, when Jackson took over the first place spot.<sup>4</sup> The city's rail traffic and the trade opportunities that sprang from it served as magnets for industry, with employment opportunities attracting European immigrants and others in search of work. Another attraction was land, which was selling for ten to twenty dollars an acre near Meridian.

Historian Dunbar Rowland described attributes of the city during its Golden Age, saying, "Electric car lines, electric lights, improvements of streets and sidewalks, the installation of up-to-date systems of sewage disposal and numerous other advances along modern lines, have made Meridian one of the most progressive cities of Mississippi, if not the South."<sup>5</sup>

Between 1890 and 1900, the miracle of electricity modernized Meridian's mule-drawn streetcars and gas lights. By the turn of the century, the streetcars were running on electric lines, which served to expand the residential areas in all directions. Under Mayor E. H. Dial, a \$100,000 sewer system was put into place and



*Street car lines were one sign of Meridian's Golden Age*



*Street cars helped expand city limits*

massive street and sidewalk paving projects were initiated. Mayor Dial, who served for eight years, was credited for much of Meridian's progressive spirit. He prepared the Code of Laws for the city, which was adopted by the Board of Councilmen and Aldermen and approved in 1902.<sup>6</sup>

As early as 1890, Meridian industries included a soap factory, three planing mills, two broom factories, three brick works, a knitting mill and a furniture factory. Other signs of boom times were numerous banks, seven printing offices, four building and loan associations, two cottonseed oil mills, and seven newspapers, including four dailies and three weeklies. Some of the industries in town prior to the turn of the century were the Sash and Blind Factory, the Southern Standard Press Company, the Progress Machine Works, the Williams and Briggs Machine Shops, Covert's Meridian Furniture Factory, the East Mississippi Cotton Mills, Love and Company, Stevenson's Grist Mills, Hoffer's Phoenix Iron Works, the Meridian Carriage and Pump Manufacturing Company, Robinson and Company's Terra Cotta and Brick Works, the Woodward Liver Regulator Company, the Meridian Phosphate Company, Meridian Planing Mills, the O'Neil Marble Works, and other enterprises that produced products ranging from cigars to fertilizer.<sup>7</sup>

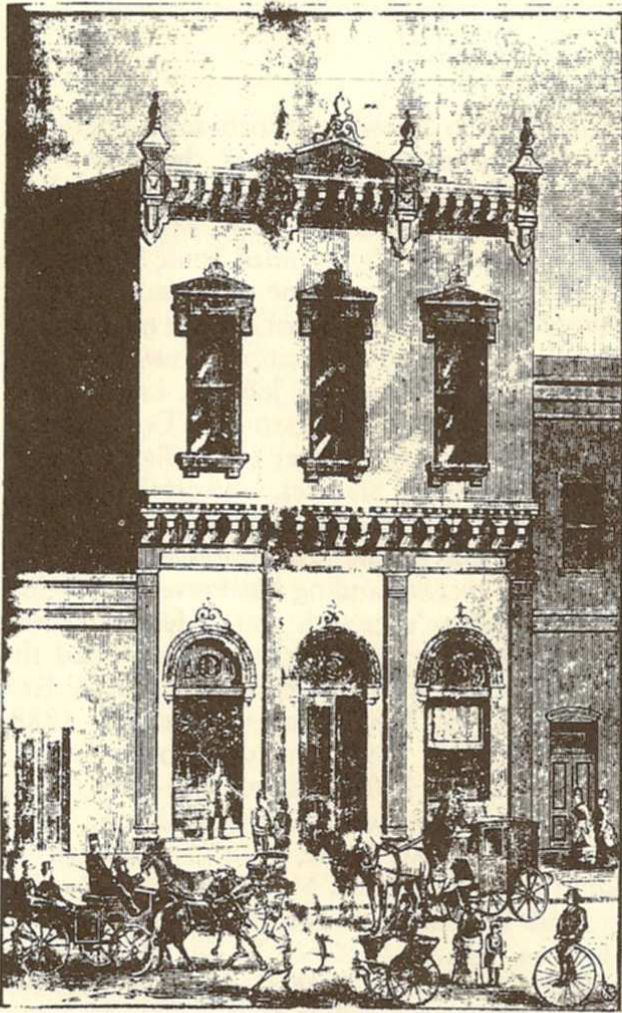
The prominent businessmen who helped put Meridian on the map as one of the leading indus-

trial centers in Mississippi included Captain W. F. Brown, who had established the town's first brick mercantile establishment and operated the first cotton compress; J. H. Gary, a cotton dealer; and G. W. Soulé, who founded Soulé Steam Feed Works, the oldest machine shop in Meridian. Others included J. H. Miner, whose manufacturing company produced circular saws for mill operators in many states; John A. Lewis, president of the Mississippi Cotton Oil Company; E. Cahn, president and owner of the Eagle Cotton Oil Mill; and J. W. Sanders, who established one of the city's largest cotton mills.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the transportation improvements and ever-expanding businesses and industries, Meridian's growth was aided by strong banking institutions. Early ones included the Meridian National Bank, established 1884; First National Bank, 1883; Citizens National, 1888; Southern Bank, 1898; and the Peoples Savings Bank, 1902. A 1900 business directory names bank officials, including George W. Meyer, W. A. Brown and H. M. Street, with Citizens Savings Bank; J. H. Wright, K. McRaven and E. L. Carter, with the Meridian National Bank; Frank C. McGhee, George McGhee Jr. and B. J. Carter, Southern Bank; and W. W. Georges, Ed McMories, John Kamper and H. L. Bardwell, First National Bank. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the city's banking capital topped the one million dollar mark.<sup>9</sup>

With trains and horse-drawn buggies and wagons bringing in customers from all directions, merchants also enjoyed the turn-of-the-century prosperity. Marks, Rothenberg & Company, founded in 1870, boasted by 1904 that the department store was "the oldest and largest mercantile establishment in the city."<sup>10</sup> Other stores prominent during the city's glory days included the Meyer and Schamber Jewelry Company, the Winner-Klein and Company department store, A. Gressett's Music House, F. A. Hulett and Sons' furniture store and A. J. Lyon and Company, a wholesale grocery store, and D. Rosenbaum's mercantile establishment, once on the corner of Fourth Street and Twenty-fifth Avenue.<sup>11</sup>

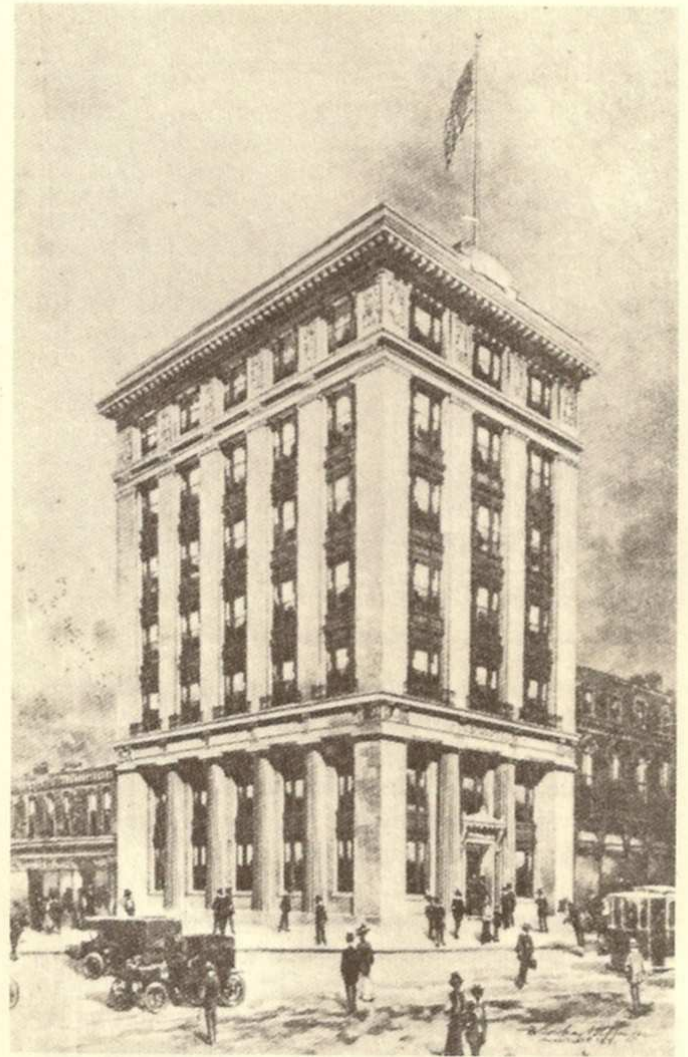
During the Golden Age, the downtown area grew both outward and upward, the Miazza and Woods representing the first attempt at an imposing office building. The six-story flat-iron build-



*Turn-of-the-century banks included Meridian National Bank and Board of Trade building, 1894 and Citizens National Bank building, 1919*

ing was built in 1905 by a stock company organized by J. F. Miazza and Henry J. Woods. Later, the fifteen-story Threefoot Building would be undertaken by Louie, L. M. and Sam Threefoot, the third generation of the family to do business in Meridian. Their grandfather, A. Threefoot, had organized the Threefoot Wholesale grocery and cotton firm, and H. Marshall and Kutcher Threefoot took the family business into the next generation.<sup>12</sup>

As the county grew, its courthouse moved from the Con Sheehan Hall into a large, two-story building situated on the current courthouse site. Occupied in 1880, this courthouse was destroyed by fire in 1903. Before the fire, the building had been the grandest courthouse yet built in the county. The building fronted on Fifth Street and featured large stairs leading from the ground



floor to the first-floor level. Courthouse visitors entered across a large veranda. The offices for the sheriff, circuit clerk and other officials were on the ground floor. An expansive courtroom, used by circuit and chancery judges, was upstairs. An impressive clock tower topped off the structure.

After the building burned, courthouse activities were once again conducted from the Con Sheehan Hall on Twenty-fifth Avenue. Lauderdale County's jump from one courthouse to another finally ended when contractor C. M. Rubush built the present courthouse building in 1904 or 1905 at an estimated cost of \$150,000. Since its completion, the building has undergone extensive remodeling; the county jail was added to the building in 1939. Another center of government activity was Meridian's City Hall, built by architect P. J. Krouse and consultant C. L.





*Businesses enjoying prosperity of the day included Marks, Rothenberg and Company, 1895, and the Meyer & Schamber Jewelry Emporium, once on the corner of Twenty-third Avenue and Fourth Street*



Hutchinson in 1914-1915. It was considered an architectural marvel and outstanding municipal headquarters for a city of Meridian's size.

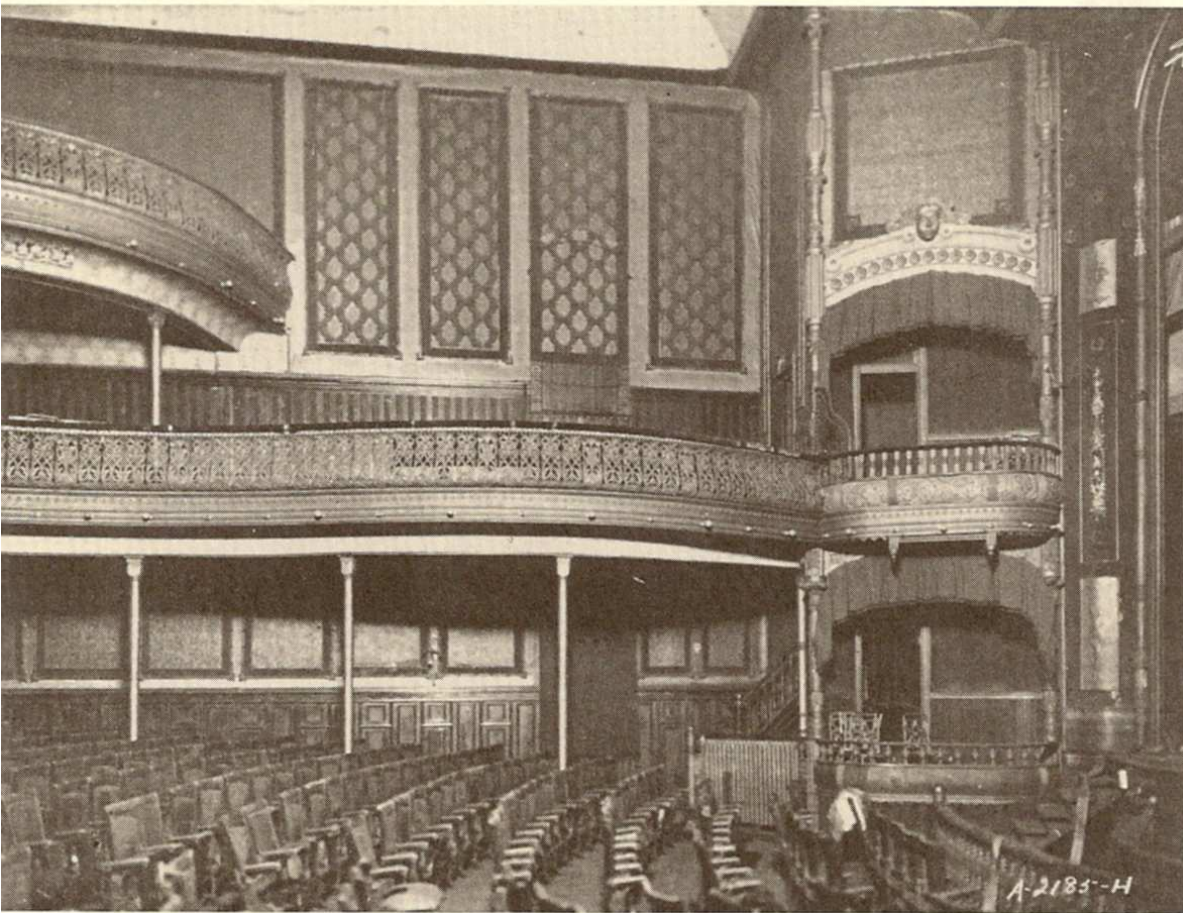
Other civic improvements highlighting Meridian's rapid transformation into the largest city in the state included such milestones as the establishment of a fire department, first composed of three stations—Company No. Five in the East End; Finch Fire Company No. Three in the West End, and the Number One Company in the Central District. Frank Zehler was chief of the department. Later, under Chief C. C. Massey, the department was placed under control of the city government, and two companies were added in 1907.<sup>13</sup>

The first hospital in Meridian, Matty Hersee, came into being through the efforts of Mrs. J. H. Wright, and was housed in a frame building on Poplar Springs Drive when it opened in the first decade of the century. Several years later, the Turner Hospital opened under Dr. R. B. Turner and Matty Hersee became a charity institution, moving to new headquarters furnished by state appropriations in 1924. The East Mississippi State Hospital, which still operates in the city today, dates to 1882, when Thomas H. Woods and Hugh D. Cameron worked to persuade their fellow legislators to found and fund it. The facil-

ity opened in 1885, under the supervision of Dr. C. A. Rice and Dr. James M. Buchanan.<sup>14</sup>

One of the tangible symbols of Meridian's cultural growth was The Grand Opera House. Built around 1890 near the Marks-Rothenberg Company and active as a cultural center through the 1920s, the elaborate structure was host to vaudeville and minstrel shows, operas and other performances by such stars as Sara Bernhardt, Lon Chaney and Helen Hayes. The Opera House, now the focus of renovation plans, featured an elegant interior decorated in cream, blue, gold and red, with two balconies surrounded by intricately worked brass rails and four special boxes with velvet hangings and gold chairs.

Another popular entertainment spot was Highland Park. The park opened when a street car line was extended to what was then, at the turn of the century, a remote part of town. The effort was inspired by a group of Meridian merchants, including I. A. Marks, who served as president of the City Park Association. Opened in 1909, Highland still reflects its origin as a pleasure park in the European tradition. A prominent feature, listed on the National Register of Historic Sites, is the Dentzel Carousel, purchased by the city in 1909. The carousel, one of only



Meridian's Grand Old Opera House was cultural center

two extant two-animal-abreast Dentzels, features twenty-eight hand-carved animals secured to brass poles.

Signs of Meridian's Golden Age can be seen today in several districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places, with over one thousand buildings and structures deemed historically significant inside the city limits. The city's Urban Center Historic District represents Meridian's status when it was the largest city in the state and features a large range of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architectural styles. The Depot District, east of the Urban Center District, is composed of a four-block area that testifies to the role railroads played in the development of business and industry.

Indications of early twentieth-century prosperity and growth can also be found in five other areas listed on the National Register. For instance, the Mid-Town Historic District, bounded by Twenty-third Avenue, Fifteenth Street, Twenty-

eighth Avenue and Twenty-second Street, includes homes associated with Meridian's growth as the center of the state's railroad economy and shows the impact of the city's streetcar lines. Another neighborhood, the East End Historic District, lies between Eleventh Street and the railroads. The district's many cottages built just prior to and after the turn of the century mark the city's growth eastward along the railroad lines near textile and lumbering interests. Sixty percent of the buildings were built between 1890 and 1910.

Many structures by C. M. Rubush, who constructed many of the commercial and residential buildings in Meridian between 1890 and 1910, can be found in the Highlands Historic District, while the Poplar Springs Historic District is significant as a large collection of early twentieth-century homes representative of the bounty many found in the years prior to the Great Depression. This district developed around Poplar Springs

**TO-NIGHT!**

**OPERA-HOUSE,**  
Meridian, Miss.

✦ SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT! ✦

The greatest living actress,  
**JANAUSCHEK!**  
In her absolutely brilliant success,  
"MY LIFE,"  
AN ORIGINAL DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS.

Supported by a powerful company under the personal management of  
**MR. H. J. SARGENT,**  
The cast especially arranged.

The play—England.

Mrs. called Loken (life) Blind Lady of Moorlands.	<b>JANAUSCHEK</b>
Sir Lionel Eywood, Master of Moorlands.	Mr. Alex H. Stuart
Florence Dunbar.	Miss Helen Rand
John Fortune, Esq., An English gentleman.	Mr. F. Clements
Silvia Fortane, his daughter.	Miss Emma Hooper
Frederick Boston, an American.	Mr. Geo. D. Chaplin
Arthur Bruce, of London.	Mr. Henry Bygones
Lambert.	Mr. Geo. Connor
Henry Duant, Alias Cooker.	Mr. Oplen Stevens
Miss Moore.	Miss Virginia Johnson

Scenes in the Drama.

Act I. Conservatory of Rivewoods Castle.  
Act II. Salon of Circe Enclave.  
Acts III and IV. Moorlands Castle.

Mr. Geo. D. Chaplin, Stage Manager.  
Mr. J. H. Laine.



*Federal Building, once on the northeast corner of Twenty-second Avenue and Eighth Street, was used into the 1930s as a post office*

Road, a winding country byway that led out of the city to the north. Yet another district on the National Register, the West End Historic District, shows the rise of Meridian from Civil War ruins to its status as "The Queen of the East." Two of the oldest homes in the city are there, at 2721 Seventh Street and 2907 Seventh Street.<sup>15</sup>

The prosperity of the day had a strong impact on the city's black community, with economic and social opportunities expanding rapidly around the turn of the century. According to a directory of black-owned businesses covering the years from 1896 to 1900, Meridian blacks were taking full advantage of new-found opportunities



*Meridian scene as the twentieth century approached*

in the professions and business enterprises as they left the hard times of slavery and Reconstruction behind. The heart of the black commercial retail district was between Fifth and Fourth streets.

The directory, which described the city's black population as industrious, frugal and prosperous, noted that more than fifty business establishments were owned and operated by blacks in 1900. Among them were drug stores, undertaking establishments, real estate corporations, tailoring and millinery stores, hotels, cafes, groceries and a variety of other enterprises. That same year, the black-owned Queen City Savings Bank was to open. The directory pointed out, "Doctors Howard, Sherrod and Young are a credit to the community. Fully as much can be said for John W. Harris, Strayhorn & Berry, S. A. Rivers, D. P. Early, E. H. Gaston, J. M. Nimocks, J. W. Smith, B. F. Sims, L. Coleman, J. A. Winston, Emmet Evans, S. I. Curlen, T. J.

Wilson, H. H. Hollie and many others as businessmen."<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps the most obvious sign of the explosive growth of the city and county in the era can be seen in the tremendous expansion of educational and religious establishments.

There were dozens of schools across the county by 1880, and more on the way. White schools included the Marion School, Oak Grove, Cooks Academy, Knox's, Curtis Chapel School, Bethel, Bonds, Hawkins, Lauderdale Station, the Sanderford School, Mt. Carmel, Harrington, Tuckers, Rocky Ridge, Oak Grove, Salem, Spring Hill, Pleasant Valley, Sageville, Coates, Antioch, Hughes, Toomsaba, Coker's Chapel, Eaves and others. Black schools in 1880 were Redford, Marion, Zion Hill, Elizabeth, Lauderdale Springs, Hickory Grove, Pleasant Ridge, Jennings, Rushing Store, Poplar Springs, Wanita, Okatebbaha, Green Hill, New Hope and Pringles.<sup>17</sup>



*Central High School building, 1901*

School records show that the earliest public educational institution in the Meridian sub-district was on the site of the Stevenson School, at Tenth Street and Twenty-fifth Avenue, with teachers listed as L. Leachman, Mrs. M. E. Higgins, Lister M. Scholastica, J. W. Atkinson and C. M. Gordon. With Meridian's rapid growth as a railroad and industrial center, other schools were soon necessary. Bond issues paid for construction of three elementary schools, which—along with Stevenson or "Little Central"—sent students to the high school known as "Big Central," on Fourteenth Street between Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Avenues.

Paul D. Jones and Mrs. M. V. Keever were educators working in the school for blacks in Meridian. City schools were included in the county system until 1885. Legend holds that the German-born Rabbi Jacob Wechsler help push for better educational facilities for blacks. In 1887, his efforts paid off. A bond issue passed, and the city purchased a plot on Fifteenth Street between Thirtieth and Thirty-first Avenues. The school, named in honor of Rabbi Wechsler, was the first brick building erected in Mississippi for black students out of proceeds of a bond issue approved by whites.

By 1891, there were 1,400 white children and 650 black children enrolled in city schools, with seven public school buildings within the city by 1907, when Meridian had almost double the number of school children of any other city in Mississippi. H. J. Frye was the first superintendent of education in the city system.<sup>18</sup>

Other black public schools mentioned in a 1900 directory included East End and the Valley Street School. Teachers, in addition to Professor W. M. Hopkins, were H. H. Waters, S. C. Ivey, M. C. Williamson, M. A. Rayford, A. B. Richardson, M. G. Walker, S. C. Hutchinson, M. S. Payne, C. L. Young, M. A. Smith, Temple J. Wilson, Miss Emma Ivey and G. C. Jones, M. E. Johnson and Miss Maggie Mason. Private schools, such as the Lincoln School, under principal Mrs. H. I. Miller; the Meridian Academy, under J. Beverly F. Shaw; and the Girls' Industrial Home School, under headmaster E. H. Triplett, were also established for blacks during the progressive era.<sup>19</sup>

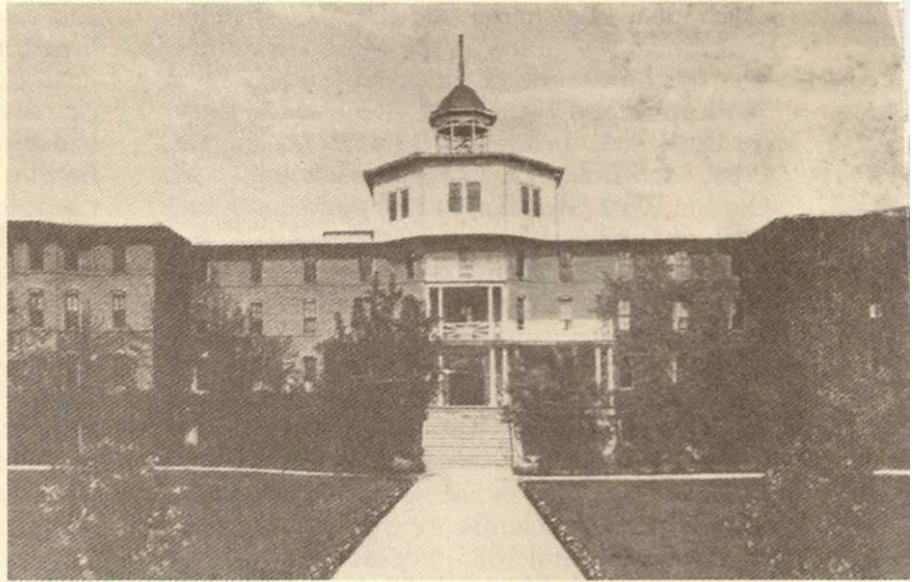
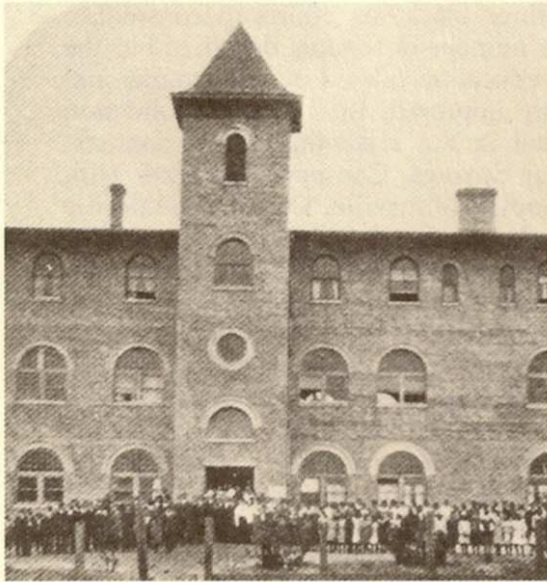
By 1900, the number of schools in the county had increased to 119, seventy-three of them white

and forty-three black. As efforts to consolidate began, the number of schools dropped, but the quality of education offered in both county and city steadily improved. By 1920, consolidation had resulted in the following school districts: Bonita, Bay Springs, Causeyville, Center Hill, Cook School, Collinsville, Concord, Daleville Line School, Dry Creek School, Harper's, Kennedy, Kewanee-Alamucha, Long Creek, Lockhart, Liberty, Leeville, Lauderdale, Marion, Martin, Meehan, Obadiah, Oakland Heights Separate School, Poplar Springs Separate School, Ponta, Pine Springs, Rocky Ridge, Russell, Sageville, Schamberville, Suqualena, Toomsaba Valley, Vimville and Whynot. The 1950s brought more consolidation and, by 1961, the county's school districts were merged into four: Southeast, Northeast, West Lauderdale and Clarkdale.<sup>20</sup>

Several institutions of higher learning, including the Meridian Female College, the Mississippi Medical College, the Moffitt-McLaurin Institute for Girls, and the Negro Normal College were in operation as the city entered the twentieth century.

The East Mississippi Female College, which had been established by Methodists in 1869, had 380 students by 1900. The college building, at the corner of Twenty-third and Eleventh Street, burned several years later, and the school moved to an area subsequently known as College Heights in the northwestern section of town. Under J. W. and M. A. Beeson, the school became the Meridian Male and Female College, and boasted a combined enrollment of 855 students in 1907. Spread over 200 acres, the campus became known as one of the largest music schools in the South. From 1910 to 1919, the college became the co-educational Meridian College, or "Beeson's."

The Haven Institute, an historically significant black institution of higher education, took over the Beesons' school in 1921. Haven's roots dated to 1865, when Miss L. V. Keever opened a private school in connection with the St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church, which ran it until 1872. Initially, the school was located at Thirteenth Street and Twenty-seventh Avenue. After Miss Keever, principals and presidents included Robert A. Adams, John H. Brooks, Griffin G. Logan, Sidney D. Redmond, John L. Wilson, William W.



*Negro Normal College and Haven Institute served black students*

Lucas, J. Beverly F. Shaw, Matthew Savage, J. B. Randolph and Robert N. Brooks.

After taking over the Beeson facilities, Haven featured the “most elaborate musical equipment of all the schools in the South” and a chapel with a spacious auditorium with a seating capacity of 1,500. The forty-five-member Haven Symphony Orchestra, and a pipe organ, furnished music daily for chapel services. The curriculum offered a two-year teacher education program and a wide variety of other classes to students from twenty-six states. After the school’s property was transferred to Rust College in North Mississippi, Haven closed in 1928–29.<sup>21</sup>

Wechsler continued to expand, and its first twelfth-grade class graduated in 1922. But long before Wechsler was offering the high school diploma, the Meridian Baptist Seminary was doing so. One of the earliest secondary educational institutions for blacks in eastern Mississippi, the Seminary was established in 1896, with classes first held in the basement of New Hope Baptist Church. The school eventually moved into a two-story frame building at Sixteenth Street and Thirty-first Avenue.

George M. Reese, the driving force behind the school, was elected president in 1889 and served until his death in 1939. Maggie Brooks, born in 1898, was one of the hundreds of Meridianites to complete the twelfth grade at the school. Accord-

ing to Mrs. Brooks, who graduated from the school in 1917, Professor Reese dreamed of having a brick school building and encouraged seminary students to bring any and all loose and discarded bricks they could find to school. Eventually, Professor Reese’s dream came true, and a brick building, which still stands today, was erected.<sup>22</sup> Now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Seminary became the largest school of its kind in the region, and remained opened until 1972.<sup>23</sup> Seminary classes are still conducted today under the auspices of the East Mississippi Baptist Association.

Other noteworthy schools in local history included the state’s oldest nursing school, the Matty Hersee Hospital School of Nursing, established in 1892, one of the most important in the state until the Legislature closed it nearly one hundred years later, in the 1980s. Catholic schools in the city included the St. Aloysius Academy, which served children in St. Patrick’s Parish, and a school for blacks, St. Joseph’s Institute, which opened on Eighteenth Avenue in 1910, and had more than one hundred children attending before the end of the year. Initially, the Catholic schools were included in the county school system. When the Meridian Separate School District was established in 1885, the Catholic schools’ ties to the county system were also cut. The Moffitt-McLaurin Institute, once at



*Last class of Mississippi Medical College*

Tenth Street and Twenty-third Avenue, was a prominent girls' school of its day, and the Meridian School of Music was founded by Mrs. E. H. Hart in 1909.<sup>24</sup>

Meanwhile, churches of all faiths were experiencing growth and expansion during the early years of the century. By 1902, the county's Baptists had organized the Lauderdale County Baptist Association, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church was built in 1901 on Twenty-third Avenue. By 1909, Meridian had seven white and seven black Baptist churches, five white and four black Methodist churches, three Presbyterian, one black Congregational, two Episcopal churches, a Catholic church, and the Jewish Temple Beth Israel, while dozens of houses of worship flourished throughout the remainder of the county.<sup>25</sup>

Black churches listed in a turn-of-the-century directory included St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, the First Congregational Church, St. James AME Church, the Union Baptist Church,

Haven's Chapel, Pilgrim Progress Baptist Church, El Bethel Baptist, Mount Zion Baptist, New Hope Baptist, and Calvary Baptist.<sup>26</sup>

As they had since the beginning of Meridian's story, the railroads remained pivotal to the growth and development of the city. By 1900, five different railroads belonging to three different systems were centered in Meridian. By 1907, local transportation facilities were being described as the best in the state, one writer suggesting that the city's shops, depots, and passenger station would "count largely for the city's future growth and commercial and industrial progress." The jewel in the railroading crown in Meridian was, no doubt, the Union Passenger Station, built at a cost of \$250,000. The station, which had a frontage of three city blocks, was built in the Old Spanish Mission architectural style. Three train sheds next to the depot accommodated dozens of passenger trains each day.<sup>27</sup>



Hammond  
PHOTO

*Union Passenger Station depot*

With its future riding on the rails, local culture could not escape the impact of the rail lines and the hundreds of anonymous railroaders who crowded into the city during the Golden Age. Many railroaders found more than employment in their work, some of them earning a permanent place in the annals of county folklore through their daring deeds and adventures.

Master mechanic C. Phillips, for instance, made a two-thousand-pound working model of a steam engine while working in the railroad shops from 1899 to 1915. His efforts resulted in two inventions that were patented and put to work on trains. Another local engineer, R. G. Mytton, developed a “flying machine” while working for a railroad company. That machine, tested three years before Kitty Hawk, represented a brilliant, although unsuccessful, attempt to conquer the air.<sup>28</sup>

Among the railroading heroes was Milton Jones, a Meridian black who worked as a fire-

man on a train. According to WPA records, Jones earned the Carnegie Medal for heroic action in 1911. One fall night that year, two trains collided between Meridian and New Orleans. Bill Pryor, who was the brakeman on one of the wrecked trains, was left behind with red lights to warn any approaching trains, while the rest of the crew ran off to call a wrecker from Meridian. As the long night went on, Pryor nodded off, falling asleep on the tracks.

Meanwhile, Jones was stoking the fire on a northbound train headed for disaster. As he looked out from the fireman’s box, he noticed the red light and the sleeping Pryor. Realizing the train could not be stopped in time to prevent a tragedy, Jones made a leaping dive from the running board ahead of the fast-moving passenger train, grabbed Pryor, and they both tumbled to safety as the train passed by overhead. As the WPA account notes: “For sheer audacity, quick thinking, nerve and heroism, there had never



been, in the annals of American railroading, anything quite like the act of Milton Jones. And for it he received the Carnegie Medal, given to those who, by exceptional acts of heroism, have saved the life of a fellow being." Both Jones and Pryor spent the rest of their lives working on the rails.<sup>29</sup>

Other adventures stemming from Meridian's past as a rail center include two exciting races against the clock. A famous match between the L & N and the Queen and Crescent line in competition for a government mail contract occurred in 1883. Both had to go from Cincinnati to New Orleans. The Queen and Crescent made a four-minute stop in Meridian to pick up a fresh engine and engineer, and left behind the name "Queen City" for the town that helped it win the race by four hours and ten minutes. A race of a different sort came a few years later, when a fast-moving train carrying a Meridian physician sped to an emergency in Lumberton, covering the 112 miles in 112 minutes.<sup>30</sup>

Yet another "hero" in local railroad folklore was known as Shadow. Rescued from the life of a boxcar bum, Shadow was a small dog adopted by employees of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, who went on to become one of the company's most valued employees.

Local railroad history buff and retired railroader Oscar Kent told Shadow's tale—"Somebody had put him in a box car to get rid

of him. When the men rescued him, he was hungry and thirsty. From then on, they took care of him and bought him food in their lunch boxes." The 'orphan' dog went on to repay the railroad men who befriended him with years of faithful, perhaps life-saving service—all for the salary of dog meat and other handouts.

Shadow, as he was dubbed by the workers, would eventually become known as "... the best car inspector in the United States," WPA records state. The dog, who was on duty day and night, used his sensitive ears to detect leaks in brake lines. Describing Shadow's typical work day, Kent said,

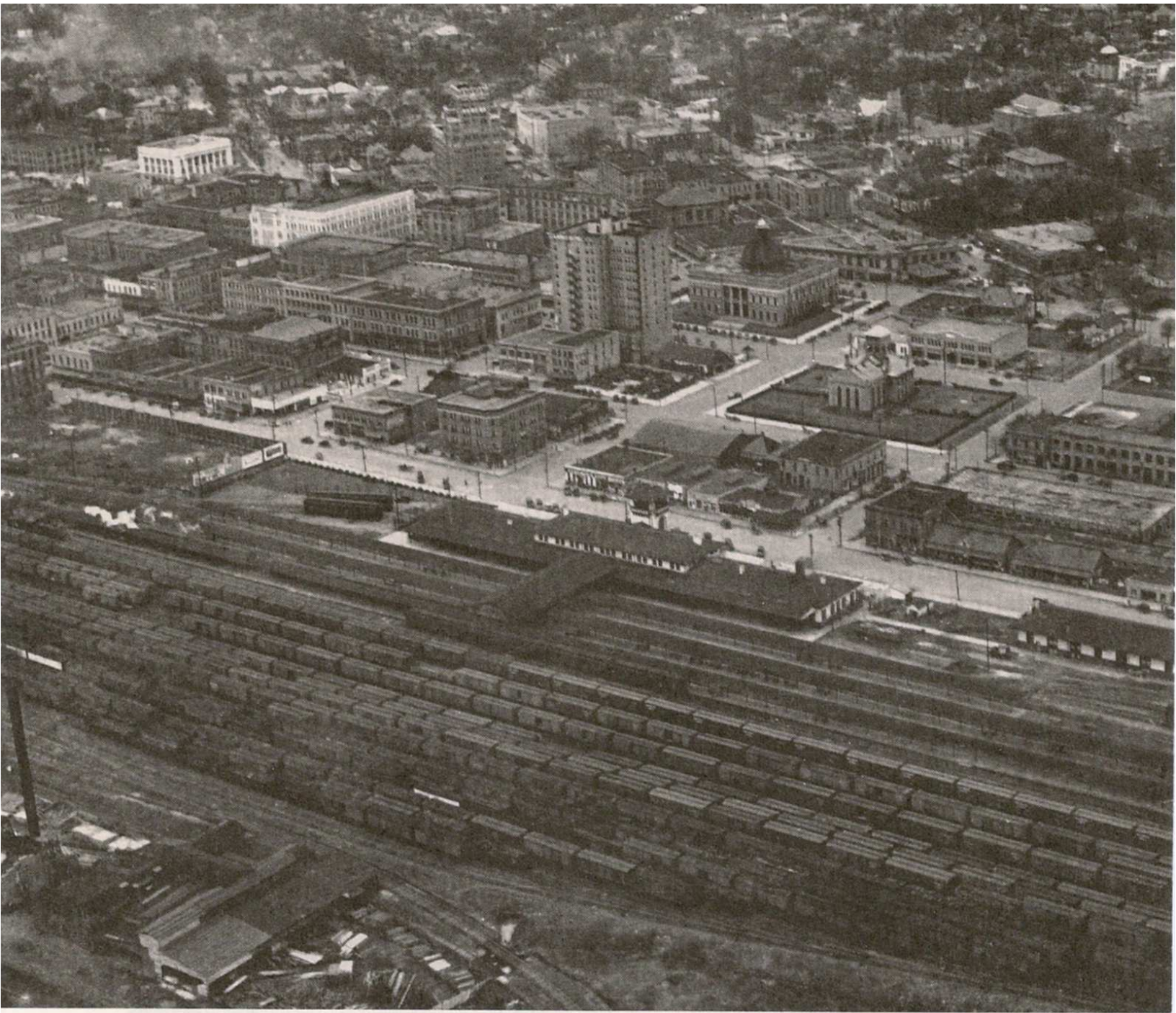
He could hear a train coming in when it was miles away. He would wake up and get ready to inspect the train. That little dog would go with the car inspector. Because his hearing was so much better, he could detect a leak in a line three or four cars ahead.

If Shadow detected a leak, he would run ahead, sit by the suspect line and bark till notice was taken. Kent noted that the dog's work was vital as pressure in the brake lines was what stopped the trains. Once the dog called attention to a leak, workers would replace a leaking gasket or repair holes in the line.

Shadow's home was a shanty house that served as railroad workers' headquarters during the day. The shanty walls were decorated with a framed



*Meridian firemen,  
left to right,  
George Thrash,  
Jack Thompson,  
C. E. Hughes and  
Eddie Massey,  
in the early years  
of twentieth century*



*Aerial view of busy Meridian train yard, 1920*

picture of Shadow and a bill that read, "Received of the men of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad: Sixteen Dollars . . . hospital bill for Shadow, Dr. Jenkins." Quoting W. E. Horton, who served as a conductor on the M & O during Shadow's tenure, the WPA account pointed out that the bill resulted from an occupational hazard. "How this bill happened to be made was that one day Shadow was taking a snooze where he felt most at home, close to the tracks, with his tail comfortably stretched out over the rail. A switch engine suddenly whizzed by and removed some inches of Shadow's fly-brush. But, he was back on the job just as soon as he could get out of the hospital. And he didn't sue the railroad either."<sup>31</sup>

Shadow remained on the job until 1938, and eventually lost more than his tail to the rails he served so well. As he aged, Shadow began to lose his acute hearing and vision, and met a tragic end when a train ran over him. Kent recalled, "They held a funeral and more than a few tears were shed. There was a whole lot of talk about how much they would miss Shadow."<sup>32</sup>

The loyal railroaders who had helped transform Meridian into the state's largest city would eventually shed more tears as the power and glory of the railway system, so vital to Meridian's birth, growth and development, began to fade with the advent of the automobile and improved highways.

Still, into the 1920s, Meridian's hold on the prosperity of the Golden Age seemed firm, with more than 2,000 employed in approximately 54 industries. Lauderdale County had seen its population soar in the new century, and its farm property was valued at over eight million dollars by 1920.<sup>33</sup>

The good times, however, ended shockingly with the arrival of the Great Depression. As Jackson took away Meridian's status as the largest city in 1930, the Depression took away many of the county's jobs, and the sun set forever on Meridian's Golden Age. Once again, Lauderdale County's residents would be forced to rely on the stubborn spirit characteristic of their ancestors. The next chapter would be yet another test of the will that had carried Lauderdale Countians through war, fire, storms, disease and countless other challenges.

### Name That Street

Prior to the arrival of the new century, Meridian's streets and avenues carried the names selected by the town's founders. During the early years, street names were colorful to the point of being "flowery," with tags such as Rose, Hyacinth, Violet, Oleander and Verbina. Ball Street was named after city founder John T. Ball and another was called Augustine in honor of Ball's son. At some point in late 1886 or early 1887, the street names were 'modernized.' Front Street is one of the few street names that did not change with the times. The following list, based on a study of old maps and city directories, shows both the 1886 and the modern names.

#### STREETS

1886	Present
Commerce	Fourth
Sidney	Fifth
High	Sixth
Church	Seventh
Garland	Eighth
Smedes	Ninth
Fleming	Tenth
Central	Eleventh
Sanford	Twelfth
Barnes	Thirteenth
Taylor	Fourteenth

#### AVENUES

Sherrod	Fifteenth
Alabama	Sixteenth
Kennor	Eighteenth
Emmanuel	Twenty-first
Hale	Twenty-second
Pacific (North)	Twenty-fifth (North)
Johnson (South)	Twenty-fifth (South)
Mississippi (N.)	Twenty-sixth (N.)
Lee (S.)	Twenty-sixth (S.)
Meridian (N.)	Twenty-seventh (N.)
Washington (S.)	Twenty-seventh (S.)
Orleans (N.)	Twenty-eighth (N.)
Cooper (S.)	Twenty-eighth (S.)
Quitman	Twenty-ninth

## Storm Brews Trouble

One scar on Meridian's Golden Age was the not-yet-forgotten March day of 1906 when "a black funnel cloud of death swept in from the southwest without warning." That storm, the Tornado of 1906, destroyed much of the business district along Front Street, killed or injured up to fifty residents, and left approximately \$400,000 worth of damage in its wake.

On March 2, the storm blew into town, destroying every building between Twenty-second and Twenty-fourth avenues, including the New Orleans and Northeastern Freight depot. In addition to railroad buildings and two to three blocks of stores, the Meridian Fertilizer Factory, five city churches and many homes were leveled.

As the ruins caught fire, two Meridian residents burned to death. Seventeen others huddling within the Empire Hotel's dining room died when the roof collapsed. The funnel cloud lifted before touching down once again in Bonita, destroying homes and businesses there.

One newspaper report commented on the devastation: "It was as if a bludgeon had been laid across the city's face, slashing and mangling her features in a long, frightful wound—three miles of debris, three miles of despair." After the storm passed, martial law was declared in the city, and soldiers stood guard along Front Street from Twenty-sixth to Nineteenth Street. A train carrying Gov. James K. Vardaman, Attorney General William Williams, forty senators and representatives, and dozens of convicts from a Rankin County penal facility arrived to help Meridian begin to pick up the pieces.

Though the storm was disastrous, the damaged businesses and industries rebuilt quickly amid the prosperity of the first decade of the twentieth century that continued to spark the city's faith in the future. The Tornado of 1906 would slow, but not stop, the stampede swelling the city's population.

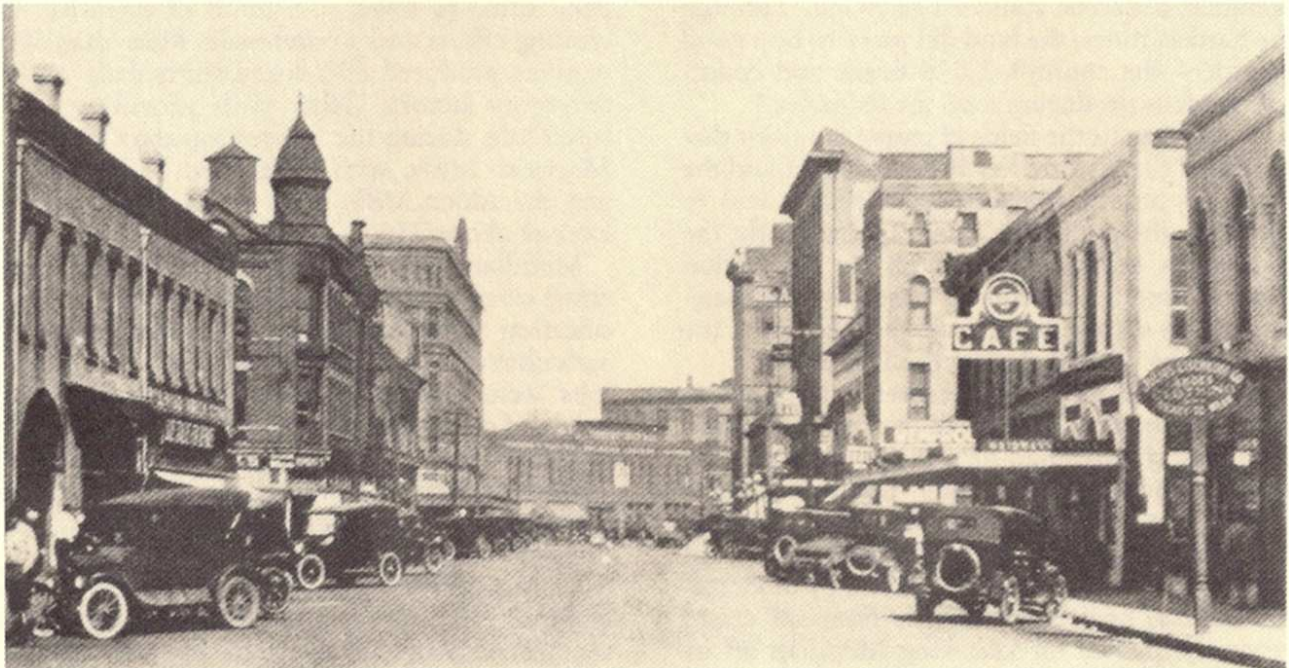


## 9 • Hard Times and Heroes: The Depression Years

**J**UST as the city and county had outlasted war, disease and other destructive forces to achieve prominence in both industry and agriculture, the Great Depression arrived. The Crash of '29 put an abrupt end to boom times, bringing yet another test of Lauderdale Countians' stubborn resolve. From that test, heroes and heroines would emerge. The hard times molded characters such as Fred and Al Key, aviation pioneers who set a world record while providing an adventure for local citizens and the rest of the nation. The county's connection to the outside world—its railroads—had by then influenced the “Singing

Brakeman,” Jimmie Rodgers, who fashioned tunes reflecting the character and spirit of East Mississippi's railroaders into a force that would give birth to something new in American life, country music.

The hills and hollows of Lauderdale County, from the earliest days, had reverberated with the sounds of fiddles and toe-tapping dancers on Saturday nights. Though times were hard, the music did not cease during the Great Depression. But, many jobs did end as the nation faced its greatest economic disaster. Across America, hundreds of thousands were pushed into poverty by



*Twenty-second Avenue looking north in 1920*



*Women of Depression era found needed jobs in Meridian's WPA canning factory*

the Depression, and the county could not escape the impact. For the most part, however, Lauderdale Countians did not go hungry. Borrowing on the lessons of their ancestors and the iron will they had inherited, the rural folk simply looked to the land for salvation while city residents who managed to hold onto their jobs were able to maintain a decent standard of living. Through the hardest times, the land did prove to be a good provider—the county's 3,076 farms and countless gardens producing food for its tables.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the fields of crops, the spirit that produced the historic Key Brothers' flight and the music of Jimmie Rodgers provided the will to overcome the odds once again. Inadvertently, the joblessness and hard times of the Depression allowed time for dreams . . . dreams that materialized on such a grand scale that they took the edge off the darkest days of the 1930s.

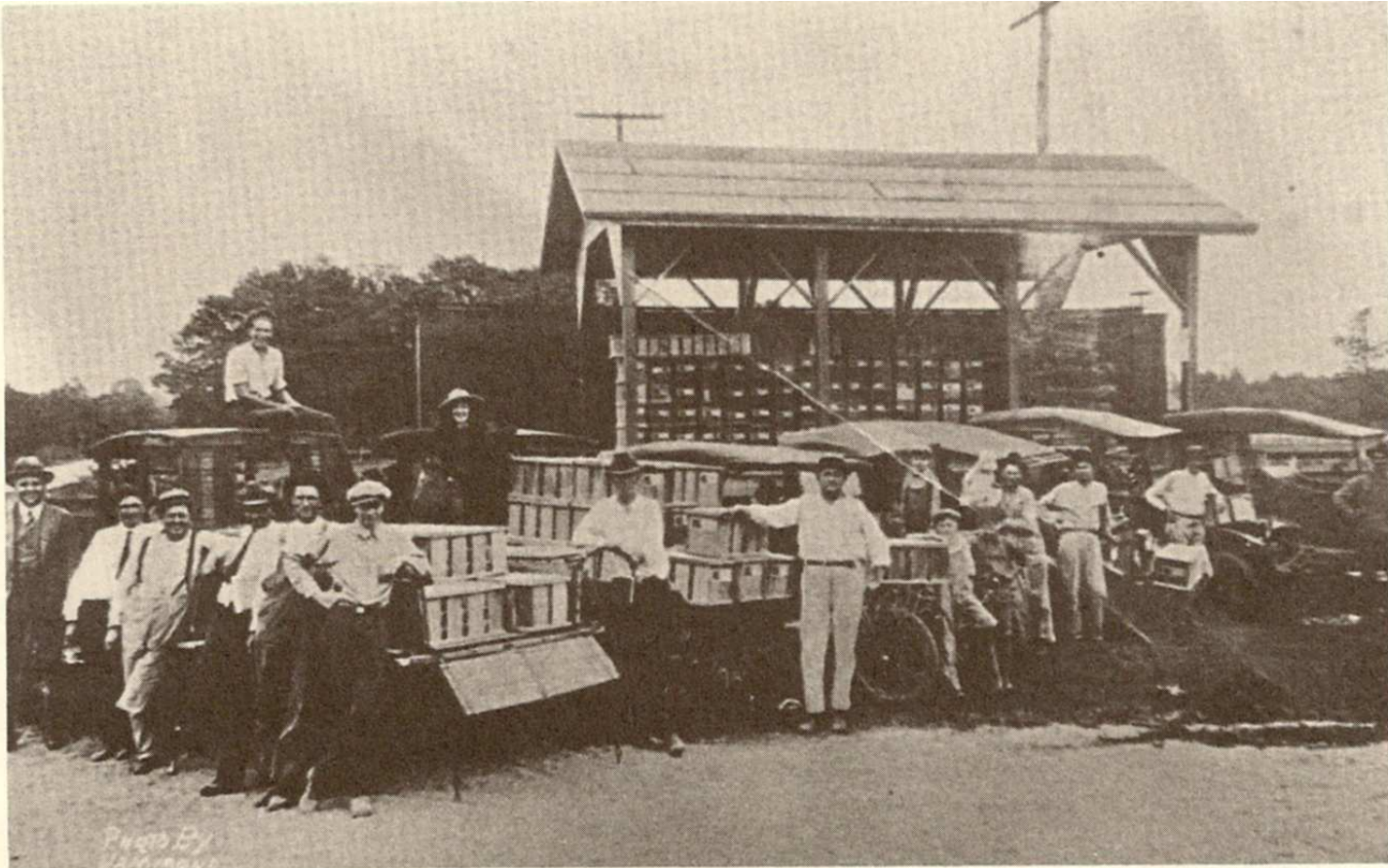
Lauderdale Countians entered the poverty-racked Depression years with the knowledge that economic changes had forever put an end to the golden boom times. Many fields had been farmed out, the timber harvest had virtually stripped the county of its towering trees, and railroaders saw their jobs threatened by modernization. The final blow was the financial crash, generally blamed for knocking Meridian off its

pedestal as the largest city in the state.

But Lauderdale Countians fought back bravely throughout the Depression years, initiating their own relief projects before the arrival of massive federal aid and working hard to recruit new industries. Such efforts helped Meridian capture a true jewel in 1934, when the Phillip-Jones Company came to town as a result of extensive recruiting efforts and a bond issue. More than 500 workers produced 800 dozen shirts daily at the two-story factory. Other mills providing treasured jobs during the Depression days were the Meywebb Mills, with more than 150 workers, and the Alden Mills, with an average working force of about 750.<sup>2</sup>

Meridian, indeed, probably fared better than other cities of her size because of earlier diversification of the county's economy with a mix of agricultural and industrial enterprises. Though jobs were scarce and low-paying during the height of the Depression, they could be had at the industries built along the county's railroad lines. Though the Depression did hit Meridian hard, she remained Mississippi's industrial center through the 1930s.

Census statistics show that more than 50 large manufacturing concerns, in addition to dozens of smaller industries across the county, were operat-

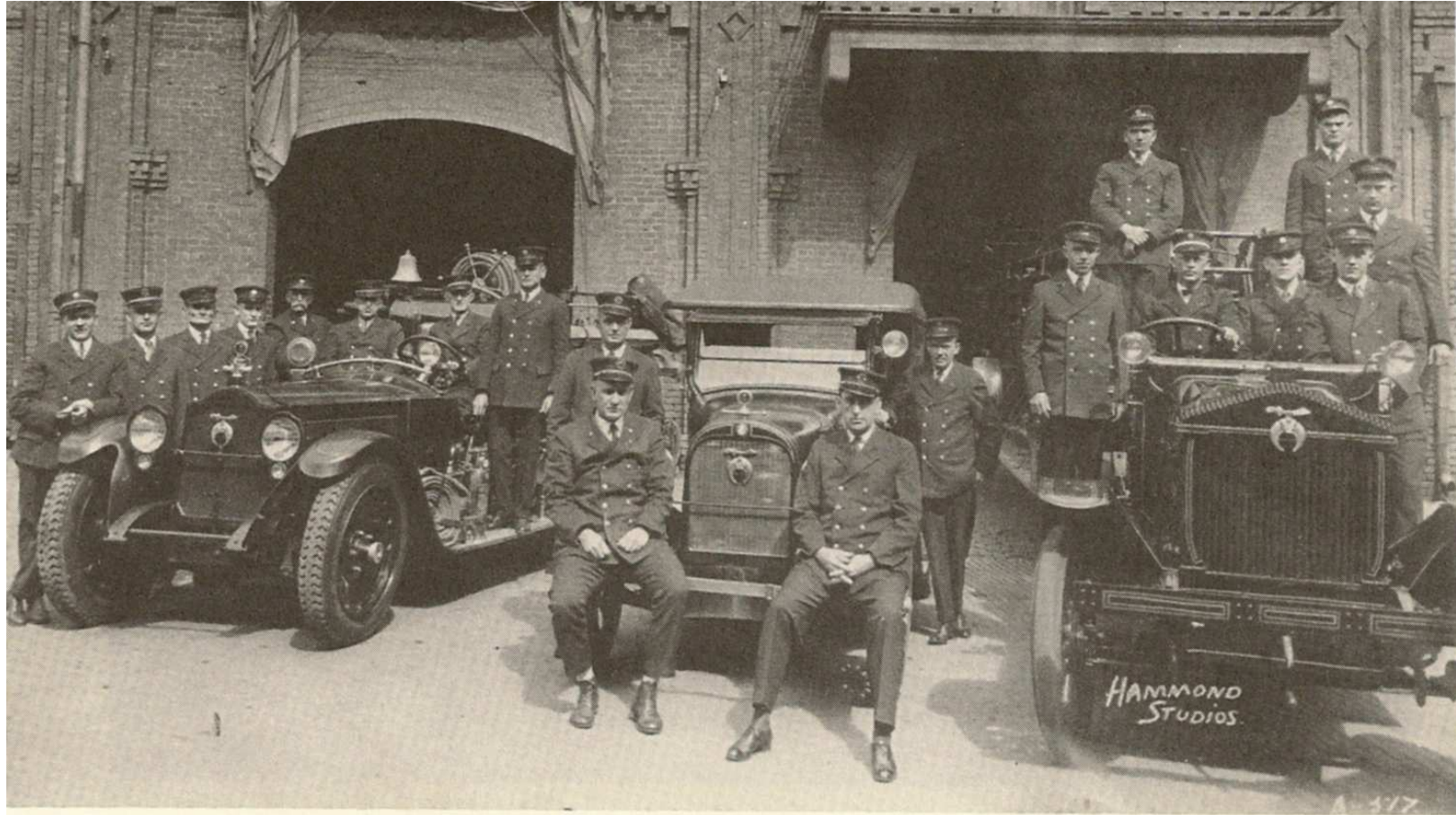


ing in 1936, producing a range of products from fertilizer to brooms. Among the manufacturers in town was Alvin Lowry, a Meridianite who produced and sold an “anti-snoring” device. More conventional entrepreneurs set up shop, and industrial expansion continued despite the odds. Beverage plants, including bottling works for Coca-Cola, Dr. Pepper, Nehis and Nu-Grape, provided jobs. Also, several operations managed to take advantage of Lauderdale County’s position in the state’s timber belt, including Acme Building and Supply, Hamm Lumber Company, Hardwood Manufacturing Company, Harris-Brooks Lumber Company, Meridian Planing Mills, Prime Lumber Company, Rex Planing Mills, and J. A. Smith’s sawmill, which was near Vimville.<sup>3</sup>

The area’s railroad connections served several grain businesses, such as the Sturges Company. During the 1930s, R. W. Sturges served as president of the company, which produced feed, flour and other grain products for sale across the South. The Meridian Grain & Elevator Com-



*Marion strawberry business boomed into the 1920s*



*Captain W. B. Welch, driver; Assistant Chief Bob Banes, and W. R. Birdsong, back seat, served fire department in the 1920s. Photo, above right, shows fire department had traded in horses for engines as modernization continued*





pany also sold its products—animal feed, hominy, grits, and meal—throughout the South. Its grain elevators, imprinted with the slogan “The Home of NunBetter Corn Meal,” rose over the plant at A Street on the southern side of the railroads. The factory had the capacity to mill up to 300 bushels of corn per hour.<sup>4</sup>

Other concerns, with roots in Meridian’s Golden Age, managed to grow during the Depression years, including the Gower Printing Office, which was established by H. A. Gower in 1912. Another company had grown out of the small coffee shop established by A. H. Niolon in 1883 on Twenty-fifth Avenue. During the 1930s, his son, Adolph Niolon, took over a greatly expanded operation that sold coffees, teas, spices and peanuts throughout the Meridian trade area. Hardin’s Bakery, established by Phil Hardin in 1928, also managed to grow. Sam and Joe Meyers headed the Meridian Brick Company, organized in 1924. During the 1930s, it produced over three million bricks annually, in giant kilns covering 23 acres. Another successful manufacturing operation was the Emmons Brothers, whose mattress factory took advantage of locally grown cotton to produce their product. An average of 20 workers produced up to 50 mattresses daily at the company, on B Street at Twenty-fifth Avenue.<sup>5</sup>

Rail service, although hurt by the Depression, continued, with freight and passenger lines active and railroad shops still providing jobs for many. As highway systems improved, some industries shifted from the rails to the roads, and wholesale groceries and trucking lines began to operate out of Meridian. Still, in 1936, five railroads continued to serve the city: the Mobile and Ohio; Yazoo and Mississippi Valley; the Southern; Gulf, Mobile and Northern, and the Meridian and Bigbee.<sup>6</sup> One operation taking advantage of the tracks was the Meridian Union Stockyard. The largest in the state, the stockyard opened in 1935 on a 14-acre plot near the rails. Horses, mules, cattle, hogs and sheep were handled at the yards before being shipped across the nation.<sup>7</sup>

Despite some Depression-era victories, Lauderdale County could not escape the sweeping impact of hard times; hundreds faced lay-offs and money became increasingly scarce. Massive federal aid would not ease the growing economic woes until 1933. In the meantime, city residents

and others across the county pitched in to help those hardest hit by the Depression. The Meridian Junior Chamber of Commerce, for instance, sparked an effort in 1931 through which lucky job-holders shared a portion of their earnings with the unemployed. Participating in the program were employees of Marks-Rothenberg, Alex Loeb’s, the First and Citizens national banks, and the Southern Railroad shops. The emergency program raised enough funds to employ the two crews of ten men, who were paid \$1.50 each per day to paint buildings, clean streets and to undertake other civic improvement projects. Other benefits were staged to raise funds for those hit hardest.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, as conditions worsened, more and more Lauderdale Countians were unable to provide for themselves. By 1933, more than 12,000 families in the county were on relief, more than 8,000 within Meridian alone receiving some form of assistance. It would be up to Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s federal relief projects to ease the desperate plight of many. Funds and jobs became available through the Works Progress Administration, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps and a host of other programs designed to help the nation survive. Locally, a canning plant that provided much-needed jobs was built by the WPA on what is now the site of the Village Fair shopping mall. The Civilian Conservation Corps gave many young workers an opportunity to make money, and many white-collar workers became involved with such projects as the WPA Mississippi Writers’ project during the darkest days of the Depression.<sup>9</sup>

Recovery projects designed to pull the nation out of the grips of the economic hard times helped Lauderdale County in more ways than one. As a result of federal assistance projects, a new post office and courthouse were constructed and relief funds were used for street improvements and other projects. As late as 1937, streets in the city’s business district were brick. In the course of the next few years, the brick streets were paved over, and approximately twenty miles of dirt streets and avenues were graveled in the same period. Street improvements were to continue at a hectic pace during the 1940s, as did expansion of the city’s sewer and water systems. During the 1930s, some homes were built



*Tenant family at work on Lauderdale County farm during the Depression*

Special collection photo from Mississippi Department of Archives and History

through low-interest loans from the Homeowners Loan Corporation, which helped keep residential growth alive in Meridian.<sup>10</sup>

Civic, cultural and educational improvements kept pace. The Meridian Municipal Junior College, a dream city leaders had envisioned as early as the 1920s, opened its doors in 1937. Dr. H. M. Ivy, superintendent of the city school system in 1928, had observed that economics prohibited many of the area's high school graduates from continuing their education and set out to do something about it. By 1929, Dr. Ivy was serving on a committee seeking a solution—a junior college—with J. A. Riddell, Thomas L. Bailey and Mayor W. H. Owen.<sup>11</sup>

Just as the momentum was growing, the Great Depression began, stalling the college project and others. However, the dream did not die, and construction of the Meridian Municipal Junior College began at Twenty-fourth Avenue and Thirty-sixth Street. During the 1930s, Meridian High School was built, and Wechsler was offering the high school diploma to blacks. Improvements

in the county schools also continued during the decade, despite the obstacles.

While Meridianites who held onto precious jobs managed to maintain their standard of living, rural residents relied on the land. Mortimer Johnson, who lived on a Suqualena area farm while working as a teacher and administrator in the community's school, explained, "We produced most of the necessities of life. Everybody produced their own meat, corn meal, sweet potatoes . . . you name it."<sup>12</sup> During the summer months, food produced in gardens and fields was carefully squirreled away for the lean winter months. Sweet potatoes were stored in banks of soil, vegetables were canned, peas were dried and sacked, and fruits were preserved. Items now taken for granted, like a piece of store-bought bread, were considered luxuries, and nothing was wasted. Some turned to raising rabbits, referred to as "Hoover Hogs," to put meat on the table.

Many farmers continued to earn outside income working at sawmills, often earning as little as fifty cents per day. Most used meager earnings

of between two and three dollars a week to buy flour, salt, coffee and other "luxuries." Among the many innovations of the 1930s were Depression dresses, as the clothing sewn from fabric from bleached commodity flour sacks was known. The sacks, after they were emptied of commodity staples, were transformed by proud seamstresses who added their own decorative touches. Mattresses were made of corn shucks and cotton. Many other household items were produced by those who relied on the lessons of their pioneer ancestors to cope. Christmas celebrations were a far cry from the commercialized modern observances. Store-bought gifts were rarely found beneath Christmas trees, which were decorated with popcorn strings and strips of bright cloth, usually from flour sacks. With money scarce, rural doctors and ministers continued to serve communities for the price of a few chickens or other farm-raised produce.

Basic foods, like potatoes, were served up in a variety of imaginative guises to fight hunger pangs. One favored concoction known as 'koose' was a fried mixture of flour, corn meal and chopped onions. Irish potato patties and crowder pea patties, fried with a dash of flour in ham grease, also made frequent appearances. Pine

Springs resident Mrs. Evelyn "Ebbie" Smith, one of many Depression survivors in Lauderdale County, recalled the rural self-sufficiency of the day, saying:

The Depression was nothing but hard times. We never went on welfare . . . but we did go into sweet potatoes. We put in three acres of sweet potatoes. After we harvested them, we'd put 'em in the potato house and dry them. We sold them for 25 cents a bushel or fed them to the cows.

An avid gardener in her eighties, Mrs. Smith hasn't been able to forget the value of a sweet potato. She says, "I thought I'd never want another sweet potato, but now I can't rest until I get a few potatoes planted."<sup>13</sup>

Another Lauderdale County woman who lived through the 1930s near Causeyville, Mrs. Sadie Johnson, commented, "'Depression' was the right word for it. Young people of today couldn't believe what we went through." Mrs. Johnson, agreeing that hard work had been the key to surviving the hard times, recalled, "We spent all our time preserving food. We canned meat, and we'd dry peaches out on the roof. We didn't waste a thing. We had plenty to eat, but not any fancy stuff. We didn't know what iced tea was."<sup>14</sup>



*Mrs. Sadie Johnson of Causeyville remembers 1930s as hard but happy years*



*Temple Theatre still hosts entertainment events*

The neighborly kindness of the more fortunate often helped eased the plight of rural Lauderdale Countians. Passing strangers down on their luck would be welcomed to share what simple fare their hosts could afford. Others extended credit. For instance, Joseph and Emma Grantham, who ran the Causeyville General Store during the Depression years, “. . . floated a lot of folks through the hard times,” according to present-day store owner Leslie Hagwood.

Though times were hard, not all memories of the Depression years are bleak. For instance, Mrs. Johnson said she believes some traditions of that era need to be revived today. The hard times didn't put an end to the good times, Mrs. Johnson pointed out, “We'd ride horses, go bare-foot, dance on Saturday night and go fishing. We had a lot of fun. You could do a lot of things . . . then of course you had to work. But we didn't mind. We didn't know any better 'cause we were just raised to it.” She added, “We used to have a houseful of company every Sunday. We'd always have a crowd drop by for a big meal. You just don't see that nowadays because people just don't have enough time.”

Good times closer to Meridian were provided

by the annual Mississippi-Alabama State Fair, circuses and other entertainment extravaganzas. Traveling vaudeville acts performed in Meridian's Temple Theatre, a landmark built in 1924 by the Hamasa Shriners. In 1927, the unfinished building was leased by the Saenger Theatre chain, which completed the lavish interior with plush carpeting, magnificent draperies and huge chandeliers. By 1928, the Saenger Temple opened with a gala described as the day of all days in the entire history of the motion picture industry in Mississippi. Ticket prices of fifty cents, lower floor, thirty-five cents balcony, and ten cents for children, admitted viewers to see the silent movie greats of the era. Today, the Temple, which reverted to the Hamasa Shriners in 1971, continues to offer concerts, traveling shows, local theatrical performances, pageants and other events in the setting of a landmark.

In the rural areas, square dances, baseball duels, hay rides, banjo picking and moonshinemaking were among the cures Lauderdale Countians used to fight the Depression blues. Among the home-grown baseball teams was “White's Special.” The Pine Springs team, composed of the sons and son-in-law of farmer John

White—Ernest, J. L., Leo, Claude, Humpy, Algie, Perry and Billy White, and Stacy Snowden—played on fields from Ducktown to Topton, transforming pastures into diamonds. Post-game square dances would follow, with backwoods fiddlers providing the music.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout the early years of the century and on through the 1930s, home-spun entertainment of the simple kind rewarded the hard-working Lauderdale Countians for their labors in the fields and forests. The music that highlighted house-shaking square dances was preserved in a federal project conducted by the WPA during the 1930s. The work of several area fiddlers was recorded by folklorists as a result of that project and now appears on an album, *Great Big Yam Potatoes*, produced by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History with funding from the Mississippi Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The album features songs by Stephen Benjamin Tucker, who was born near Collinsville in 1859. WPA workers recorded nine of his songs, including “Throw the Soapsuds in the Corner of



*Stephen Benjamin Tucker recorded songs for WPA project*

the Fence” and “Joke on the Puppy,” at Meridian Junior College in 1939. Tucker raised eight children on his farm in the northwestern corner of the county, playing his fiddle all the while. Three other Meridian musicians featured on the album are Hardy C. Sharp, Douglas Williams and Horace D. Kinard. The music of these fiddlers and guitar pickers, according to folklorists, is a distinctive rural creation reflecting a unique blend of German, English, Irish and Afro-American influences.<sup>16</sup>

One of Lauderdale County’s famous sons, Jimmie Rodgers, would grow up listening to the fiddling and picking of musicians like Tucker. His soulful melodies, with roots deep in his rural heritage, helped him earn fame as “The Singing Brakeman.” Although he died in 1933 as the Depression was reaching its height, Rodgers’ short career was to provide an eternal tribute to the hard-working men and women of his native county.

Born on September 8, 1897, in the Pine Springs community, James Charles Rodgers was the youngest child of Aaron Woodberry and Eliza Bozeman Rodgers. His mother died when he was a youngster, and while their father earned a living as a roving railroader, Jimmie and his brothers, Walter and Talmedge, were shifted from one relative to another. One aunt, Dora Bozeman, exerted a strong influence on the boys. After Rodgers’ father remarried, Aunt Dora took charge of Jimmie, introducing him to what would become a lasting love—the music of Lauderdale County’s red clay hills.

In 1911, the youngster won a local amateur talent contest, capturing the spotlight for the first of many times to come. The fire of Rodgers’ dream was lit, and he subsequently left town with a traveling medicine show. But his father retrieved him and put him to work as a railroad section hand on the Mobile and Ohio Railroad. Working at various railroad jobs around the state until 1916, he was employed as a brakeman by the New Orleans and Northeastern Railroad on passenger runs between New Orleans and Meridian by 1918. Other jobs followed, but Rodgers’ dream of becoming an entertainer stayed alive as he roamed the South and West working on the railroads.

Beside railroading, Rodgers’ life was also shaped by two other important factors, his mar-

riage to Carrie Williamson, a young Meridian woman who became the inspiration of many of his songs, and the diagnosis that he carried a dread disease, tuberculosis. The disease eventually forced Rodgers to give up the railroad, and by the time his daughter Anita was born in 1921, he had decided to follow his dreams. The family would live out of suitcases as he played the tent show circuit and at any other performance he could land.

As Rodgers' health worsened he returned to Meridian for treatment at a local hospital. But his will overcame the illness temporarily, and he checked himself out. Teaming up with his sister-in-law, Elsie McWilliams, who wrote many of his tunes, Rodgers once again hit the show circuit.

After a long, hard haul, Rodgers' big break came in 1927 when Ralph Peer of the Victor Company recorded two of his songs on a portable recording unit set up in a Tennessee warehouse. After that recording session, Rodgers was on his way to achieving fame and fortune. The two songs Peer taped, "The Soldier's Sweetheart" and "Sleep, Baby, Sleep," were the first of a long string of hits Rodgers would record on the Victor label. After signing with the company, the Lauderdale Countian produced more top-selling records than about any other recording artist of the day.

Through the late 1920s and early 1930s, his vocal and guitar style helped shape a "new" style of music. Songs of the poor man's South, influenced by the sharecroppers and railroaders Rodgers had grown up with, gave him a distinctive niche in the music world. His renditions of songs such as "Mule Skinner Blues" and "Frankie and Johnny" were accompanied by plaintive strains from a mandolin or guitar. Many of Rodgers' songs featured his trademark yodel, a combination of black blues and hillbilly.

As Rodgers' fame spread, he became a Depression-era folk hero. He, along with a famous humorist of the day, Will Rogers, entertained Americans in a time when laughter and song were desperately needed. Rodgers' stay at the top of the entertainment world would be brief, ending May 26, 1933, in a New York City hotel suite when he could fight off his tuberculosis no more. His body would be sent home to Lauderdale County, for burial in the Oak Grove cemetery in Meridian.

Though his life was over, his legacy lives on. One tribute to Rodgers' brief sojourn at the top, which spanned only six years, was the testament: ". . . it was said most families would do without their Depression warranted daily ration of bread rather than have to pass by a new Jimmie Rodgers' recording." With his trademark "Blues Yodels," he earned the title of "Father of Country Music" by popularizing a down-home sound millions of rural Americans could identify with. The first entrant named to the Country Music Hall of Fame, Rodgers is also honored in the Bluegrass Hall of Fame and the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame. Today, Lauderdale Countians honor the famed musician yearly with the Jimmie Rodgers Memorial Festival, held during the week in May that includes the 26th, the anniversary of his death. The festival is a week-long series of events, which attracts Rodgers' fans from around the world and features top country music stars.<sup>17</sup>

Jimmie Rodgers' death seemed to coincide with the diminishing of the role of the railroads he helped memorialize in song. By the time the 1930s dawned, Meridian's eyes had shifted from the railroad tracks to the runways. Such daring adventurers as Charles A. Lindbergh had captured the headlines. Lindbergh attracted local interest when he landed at the foot of Mount Barton while on a barnstorming tour across the nation. Earlier, the flying antics of aviators performing at the old Mississippi-Alabama Fairgrounds had caught the fancy of young and old alike.

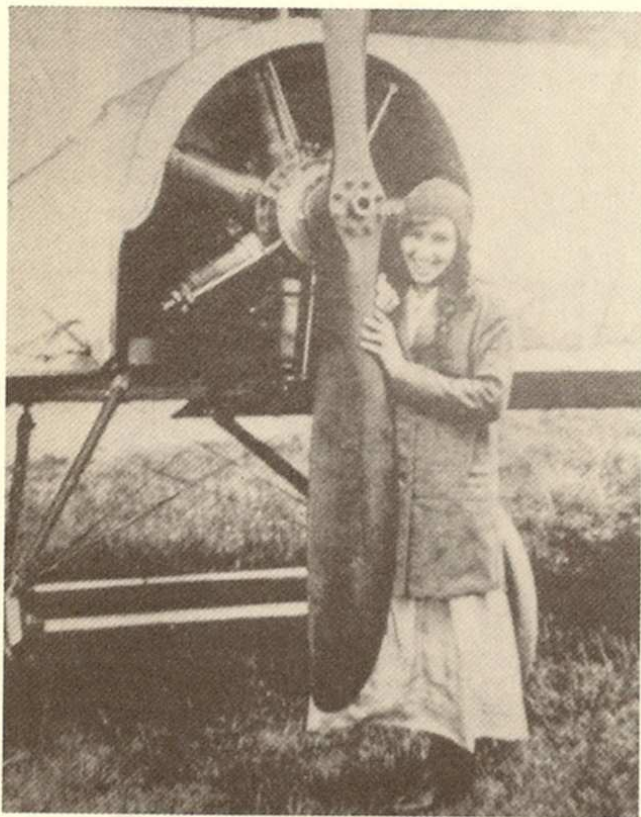
By 1928, on a motion by Meridian Star publisher James H. Skewes, the Chamber of Commerce caught the fever and began to study the feasibility of building an airfield. Fearing that Meridian "would be left out of all aviation programs," Skewes championed the cause. Less than three months later, Lindbergh, by then famous for his flight across the Atlantic, touched down at the Bonita air strip, prompting more support.<sup>18</sup>

The civic leaders' push paid off and, despite the Depression, the new Meridian Municipal Airport opened with great hoopla in a ceremony attended by dozens of state and local dignitaries. No one could then imagine that the new airport would become the stage for an heroic and historic adventure that captured the world's attention—the record-setting flight of Al and Fred Key.

The brothers were the sons of Dr. and Mrs.



*Jimmie Rodgers rode railroad songs to fame*



*Famous woman aviator Katherine Stinson gave flying exhibitions in Meridian*

Elmore Benjamin Key. Born on a Kemper County farm in 1903, Al, after growing to manhood, married Evelyn Rogers and both settled down working at Meridian's Gresset Music House. However, Al's dream of flying kept him restless and, in 1926, he took off for the Nicholas Beazley Flying School in Marshall, Missouri, where his love affair with aviation truly began.

Meanwhile, his younger brother Fred graduated from Meridian High School and followed him to Missouri. Eventually, the two brothers opened a flying school of their own, in competition with their former instructor. After several daring adventures, the Key brothers came home to open a flight school at the old Bonita air strip. Eking out a living by barnstorming and selling Sunday rides, the Keys found most Lauderdale Countians a bit wary of airplanes in an age when many were just growing comfortable with automobiles. After Fred married Mary Louise Evans in 1929, the brothers became managers of the city's new airport.

As the economic woes of the 1930s deepened,

the airport suffered. The Depression, though hard on the brothers, their families and the airport, gave the Keys time to dream as they pondered ways to promote the landing strip. Their scheme to bring a bit of publicity to the airport with an endurance flight was on the way to becoming a reality by the summer of 1932. Still, few realized history was in the making as the brothers developed their plans. During the next two years, Lauderdale Countians did take notice as the Keys busily put their grand plan into action, gathering equipment and the technical data needed to make the flight a success.

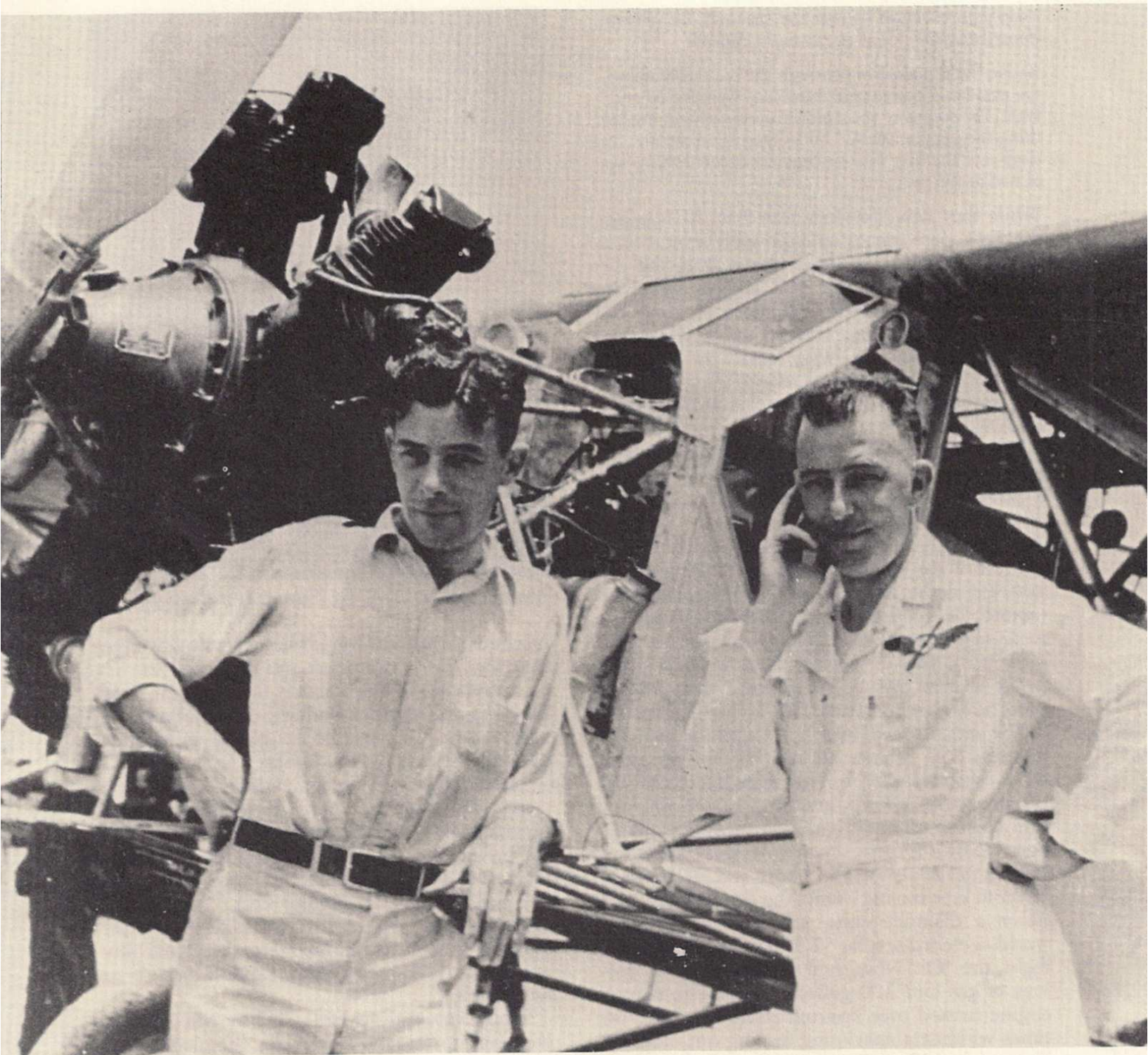
Their daring adventure began to take shape, with W. H. Ward, Jr., lending his Curtis Robbin plane to the brothers and James Keeton signing on to pilot the refueling plane. Ward's little plane, dubbed "Ole Miss," began to take on an odd appearance as a catwalk was added to allow Fred, the smaller of the brothers, to make mid-air repairs. Ben Woodruff, a local radio buff, put in a two-way radio, and an extra gasoline tank was installed. By the time the transformation was complete, the plane was carrying 1,681 pounds, about 700 pounds over the usual capacity.

Though many doubted the "Ole Miss" would ever make it off the ground, the big day finally arrived. More than 10,000 Lauderdale Countians watched as Mayor Clint Vinson declared June 21, 1934, Aviation Day. Miss Genevieve Lynn, a Key brothers' student who was one of the first women of Mississippi to fly, christened the odd-looking "Ole Miss" just before the Keys took off on their first attempt at the world record.

That first effort ended five days later due to engine trouble. Undaunted, the Keys lifted their heavy airplane, complete with a new engine, on a second try one month later. Growing optimism that the "Flying Keys" would make it faded when storms forced an end to that flight after 169 hours in the air.

Still, the brothers refused to give up. The Junior Chamber of Commerce and other organizations offered support. Yet, it would be another year before the Keys made their third attempt. Only a few dozen turned out to watch the brothers begin their flight into history. But, optimism returned as the hum of the "Ole Miss" continued overhead, and the Key Brothers' latest try became the focus of world-wide attention as newspapers





*Fred, left, and Al Key with the plane they flew into history books, the "Ole Miss"*

everywhere began to run the story. A. G. Weems, describing the local excitement, wrote:

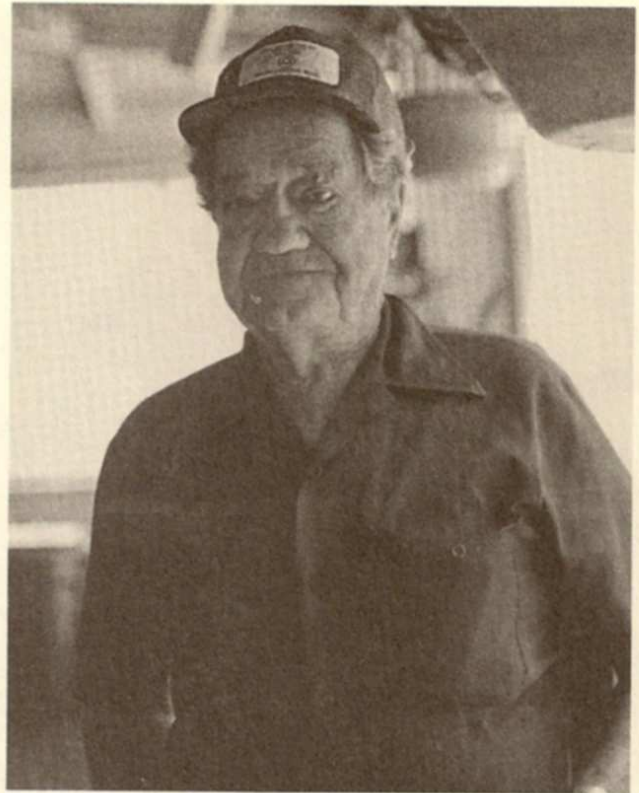
As the flight passed on through the days and nights, the prayers of everyone in Meridian were for Al and Fred. The sound of their motor overhead was the last thing the people listened for as they lay down to sleep and the first they listened for before rolling out of bed in the morning.

While they flew the skies over East Mississippi, the Keys were forced to cope with several near-disasters. Fred was almost blown from the catwalk on one occasion, and Al was forced to contend with a terrible toothache. A close call came when an electrical short under the instrument panel set the "Ole Miss" on fire. Fortunately, the brothers were able to put out the fire and survive other challenges that marked their historic flight.

The previous endurance record, established by the Hunters, two Chicago brothers who had kept a plane aloft for 23 days, was shattered at 13 minutes and 30 seconds after 3 p.m. on Thursday, June 27, 1935. Lauderdale Countians and the rest of the world cheered, and a huge crowd gathered at the air field—renamed Key Field the minute the brothers set the world mark. The Keys kept the oil-splattered Ole Miss up until 6:06 p.m., July 1, wearily landing their plane before a cheering crowd of more than 30,000 spectators after more than 27 days in the air.

The crowds had reason to applaud, for the brothers had broken all records for sustained flight using a daring mid-air refueling technique, capturing the world's attention in the process. The aviation pioneers had kept their little plane, powered by a 175-horsepower Wright Whirlwind engine, in the air for 653 hours and 34 minutes. Without ever leaving home, the Key brothers had flown a distance equal to twice around the world, a record-setting 52,320 miles. During the flight, the "Old Miss" had consumed 6,000 gallons of gas and 300 gallons of oil. The plane's engine turned over approximately 61,271,700 times without a sparkplug fouling out, and the Keys made 438 perfect contacts with the refueling plane. Her place in history assured, the "Ole Miss" made her last flight to the Washington National Airport on July 2, 1955, where she was accepted as a permanent exhibit for the Smithsonian Institution.<sup>19</sup>

Another "key" player in the historic flight was

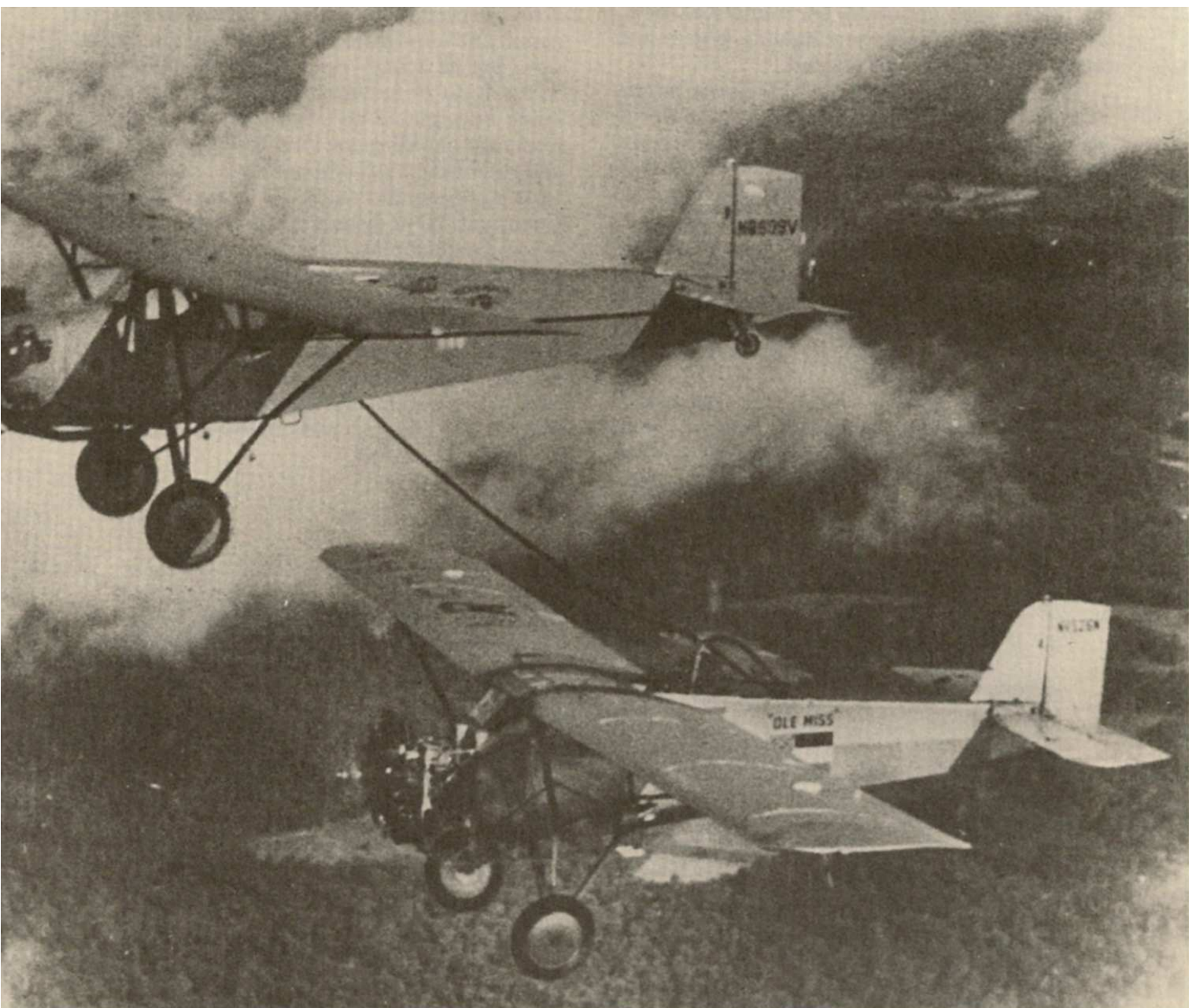


*Mechanical whiz A. D. Hunter recalls flight*

machinist Anthony Davis Hunter, who has been described as "a rare mechanical genius" for his contributions to the success of the flight. The Meridianite, who has outlived the Key Brothers, today cherishes the role he played in helping them fly into the history books.

Mr. Hunter, now in his eighties, was a vital cog in the team that made the flight possible, inventing an automatic cut-off valve that is still in use on modern aircraft. Recalling the glory days when the brothers broke the world flight endurance record, Mr. Hunter said, "I loved mechanics and Al loved flying. I liked to make stuff and, for that flight, Al let me make things any way I wanted to make them. I didn't have to go by the rules."

Several innovations conceived by Mr. Hunter, including a draining system for the plane's gasoline tanks, helped make the flight feasible. The mechanic explained, "The outstanding thing was when we drained the gas tanks with a quick drain. Before that, you had stop the engines when you drained the tanks. It was a big job. Now, all the tanks have quick drains to make sure the water gets out."



*Daring mid-air refueling technique helped Key Brothers break record*

Remembering the historic flight, Mr. Hunter says, "As far as I know more people were involved in it than any other project that was ever in Meridian. So many people were connected with it." Few people, he says, initially realized how far-sighted the Key brothers were, adding that Al was the visionary behind the flight, while Fred's vibrant personality came into play smoothing over the rough moments. Today, Mr. Hunter has

no regrets about the fact that he received nothing but \$50 for his contributions to the Keys' flight. For him, participation in the adventure was a reward in itself.<sup>20</sup>

After the record-setting flight, the "Flying Keys" were much in demand at air shows across the nation through 1939. Meanwhile, Fred assumed a new post as supervisor of federal airport projects. Under his leadership, airports across

the South were improved, including Key Field, where a paved runway, new lighting system and other improvements were added.

The Keys' dream of further air-borne adventures, such as a non-stop flight around the world, were aborted by World War II. Like many Lauderdale Countians, the brothers served with distinction. Fred, who left the service after V-J Day, returned to Meridian to resume operation of the Key Brothers Flying Service and oversee operations at Key Field. He continued to operate the flying service until his death in 1971. Al remained in the service, attaining the rank of full colonel in 1946 before retiring from the Air Force in 1960. He died in 1977.

Others who grew up during the Depression years in Lauderdale County also became heroes during the long years of World War II. The impact of modernization and renewed economic

activity spurred by the war helped pulled the nation and Lauderdale County out of the Depression, but at a high cost. As many of her sons shipped out to foreign battlefields, those on the home front played an important role, with railroad men guarding the vital transportation lines and rural farmers and housewives bravely coping with war-time shortages. As many Lauderdale Countians fell in distant battle zones, the county became a quiet place of widows who stubbornly held onto their land, saving it for the next generation. During the next decades in Lauderdale County's history, those women and others passed on their land . . . and its rich lessons. That legacy helped shape the Lauderdale County of today and, as the twenty-first century approaches, her citizens are charged with carrying that inheritance into the future.



*Field hands work Lauderdale County farm*  
MDAH special collection photo

# 10 • The Way We Were

*The young people of Mississippi must learn to remember who they are, and where they came from. They must be encouraged to remember: there is a message to be carried.*

—WILLIE MORRIS

To “learn to remember” certain aspects of Lauderdale Countians’ own unique heritage, sixth- and seventh-grade students in Meridian Public Schools’ Talented and Gifted Program traveled the roads of the county in search of the past. For several months in 1988, the TAG students embarked on a journey of discovery, finding “the way we were” as they participated in a special project for the Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History.

Evidence of the county’s particular brand of folk culture, they found, is being kept alive by the self-sufficient spirit that has been characteristic of Lauderdale Countians since the county’s earliest days. The students found active practitioners of now-vanishing arts—such as syrup- and soap-making. The TAG explorers learned as they observed basket-weavers, quilters and other folk artists at work. They listened to tales of hog-killing and other activities that were once necessities of daily life in rural areas.

As a result of the project, the students compiled articles and photographs to document their experiences. The product of their search for local culture, according to instructors Susan Hester and Tommi Crenshaw, is only one example of the multi-faceted programs TAG students participate in to broaden their horizons. The following section of *Paths to the Past* provides an outlet for the gifted students’ work, which reflects their ability to conduct, preserve and present constructive research. By sharing their discoveries, the TAG explorers hope to help preserve diverse aspects of rural Southern culture and enable fu-

ture generations to “remember who they are.” The gifted students describe broom-making, folk medicine, and many other aspects of local culture that are fast becoming the endangered species of our common past.

TAG students who worked on the project—under the supervision of Ms. Hester and Mrs. Crenshaw—were Jeff Baker, Rosanne Burleson, Mason Greene, Ashley Grissett, Tracy Johnson, Patti King, Kristen Mathis, Heather Moody, Jeremy Norman, Nicole Powell, Amanda Shaw, Tammy Stewart, Cindy Sullivan, Frannie Thatch, Brian Williams and Scott Williamson.

In addition to the TAG discoveries, “The Way We Were” also takes a look at some signs, sayings and superstitions from the past.

## FAMILY LIFE

*By Jeremy Norman, Tracy Johnson  
and Scott Williamson*

Back in the old days, when most Southern families still lived on the farm, life was very different from today. Families spent most of their time together. Children worked alongside their parents in the fields and at home. Community life centered around church and school.

The only way that most people had to travel was by mule-drawn wagons. When a family went to visit other family members or friends, their trips would often be long and tiring as they traveled over rough country roads. Therefore, the



*Sixth- and seventh-graders in Meridian Public Schools' Talented and Gifted program tracked county folklore and rural traditions. Participating students were: front row, left to right, Rosanne Burleson, Ashley Grissett, Tammy Stewart, Nicole Powell, Jeremy Norman, Patti King; back row, left to right, Jeff Baker, Cindy Sullivan, Scott Williamson, Mason Greene, Amanda Shaw, Heather Moody, Tracy Johnson, Frannie Thatch and Brian Williams*

visit would usually last several days. Children would be bedded down on pallets made on the floor, while the adults would talk until late at night.

Sickness and death were also handled by the people in the community. When babies were born, they were delivered at home with the help of the women of the community. Sometimes, the country doctor would come, riding on his horse and carrying his familiar black bag. Life would often begin and end in the same house.

When someone died, the neighbors would

come and prepare the body for burial. They would sit up all night with the corpse, so the family could get some rest. Sometimes the body was taken to a small country church for burial in the adjoining cemetery. Others would have their family members buried at home in their family cemetery.

Families and communities were brought closer as they faced the common enemies of crop failures, sickness and death. They shared the joys and sorrows of rural Southern life.

## FOLK MEDICINE

By Nicole Powell, Brian Williams  
and Tracy Johnson

Many years ago people had to travel long distances to seek medical attention from a doctor. Therefore, home remedies were used to treat many illnesses. These remedies were made from herbs, plants, and trees.

Common rules for medicine-making included drying the plants used for medicine in the shade—never in the sun. When making a brew from the plants, the rule was to simmer the water—never boil. The root of an herb, plant or tree always produced the strongest medicine.

Examples of home-made medicine used in Lauderdale County and other rural sections of the South included:

*Red Velvet Sumac:* Used for pyorrhea of the gums, eye infections, and strep throat. While the red velvet sumac roots or berries were used to make an herbal tea for drinking, gargling or as an eye-wash, the folk medicine-makers avoided the poisonous purple sumac. To make the medicinal tea, the red sumac was put in water and simmered over heat for thirty minutes.

*Willow Bark:* This all-purpose remedy from nature was used for pain, boils, dandruff, impetigo, gallstones or kidney stones. Willow Bark contains the main ingredient found in aspirin. To prepare willow bark remedies, medicine-makers of the past would strip the bark from a willow tree limb. The bark, to be effective, could only be gathered in months that did not contain the letter "r" in their spelling (May, June, July, and August). To prepare the medicine, the bark was simmered in two cups of water for thirty minutes, with the resulting brew good for drinking or bathing.

Other common folk remedies were brewing the roots of wild strawberries to treat kidney stones or gallstones; eating garlic to cure aches and pains in the joints; eating artichokes for gallbladder trouble, and sniffing golden seal or gypsum for allergy problems.

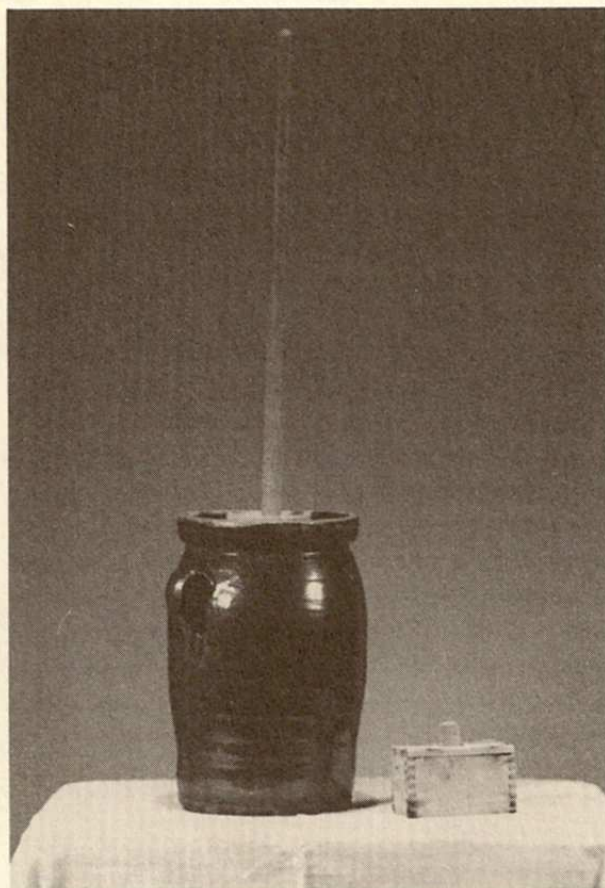
## BUTTER-MAKING

By Nicole Powell

Butter-making was a commonplace activity in bygone days. To make butter the old-fashioned way, the cows would have to be milked first. Then, a portion of the strained milk was placed in the family well to keep it cool and prevent spoilage. (The family would drink this milk stored in the well.) The rest of the strained milk was placed into a butter churn, where it was allowed to sit in a warm place until the cream rose to the top.

Once the milk clabbered, it was ready to be churned into butter. A dasher was moved up and down inside the churn until the butter rose to the top. The butter was then collected and rinsed in water, and salt was added. Finally, the butter could be pressed into a mold, some of which had interesting designs carved into them.

The fresh, homemade butter was spread on biscuits the cook of the house would make each morning for the hungry family. The milk that remained in the churn was buttermilk, which was also stored in the well for drinking.



*Old-fashioned butter churn*  
Photo by Brian Williams

## HOG KILLING

*By Frannie Thatch and Tammy Stewart*

In the days before refrigeration, preserving meats was not as easy as it is today. Each fall, farmers would kill and preserve pork for their family to eat during the winter months.

The hogs were raised on a diet of corn and slop (leftovers from the kitchen) until they became fat enough to be slaughtered. It was very important to shoot the pig right between the eyes in just the right spot, or the pig would just go "hog-wild." The slaughtered hog was then hung by its feet with bear grass until all the blood had dripped out.

In the meantime, the farmer would build a roaring fire around a big black pot. The slaughtered pig was then dipped into the water so that its bristly hide hair could be removed. The pig was then butchered, and the meat was placed in the salt box. The meat was layered with salt and stayed in the box for fourteen days. This process preserved the meat for later use. For added flavor, the meat was put in the smokehouse, where it was smoked over a fire fueled by hickory chips

for three weeks. Sand was placed on the floor to absorb the grease. The fatty part of the pig was cooked in a large black pot to separate the meat from the lard. The lard was used by the family for cooking and making soap. In fact, the family made use of every part of the pig for food or other household needs.

## SYRUP-MAKING

*By Amanda Shaw, Ashley Grissett  
and Tammy Stewart*

Jeff Roberson of Whynot is keeping a family tradition alive. He represents the third generation of his family to operate a syrup mill in the same location. As you approach Roberson in the midst of the syrup-making process, the air smells like honey being squeezed out of a honey-comb.

Just as in the old days, Roberson's mill was powered by mules. The mules rotated a wheel, which extracted juice from sugar cane. When the juice was squeezed from the cane, it ran down a tube into a large bucket to be strained and prepared for cooking. The syrup was cooked in a



*Cotton gin of days gone by* MDAH photo



large vat over a fire built from wood of nearby trees and contained in a large brick pit.

Roberson points out that cooking syrup requires a lot of knowledge. When cooking the juice, you have to be careful, for if it is cooked too long, it will burn, and if it is not cooked long enough, the resulting syrup will spoil. Another necessary process in syrup-making is to skim the white foam from the top of the cooking liquid. The cooked syrup is weighed in a bucket to determine if it has reached the proper consistency. If it passes the test, it is then poured into syrup buckets, and is ready to be sold.

For generations, the syrup-making process conducted at the Roberson mill and at others across the county has fascinated the young and old. People of all ages would gather to wonder if the current batch would be as good as last year's. The sugar cane syrup-making process is becoming a lost art, and old-timers say that store-bought syrup can never equal the taste of the home-grown variety. So, the next time you use syrup on your toast, pancakes, or biscuits, pause to remember the syrup mills of bygone days.

## SOAP-MAKING

*By Jeremy Norman, Cindy Sullivan  
and Scott Williamson*

Long ago, people did not go to the store to buy bars of soap. They made their own, using lard. The soap-making process started with a wooden barrel. The barrel was cut in half, a spout being placed on one of the half-barrels. The half-barrel with spout was placed on a stand above the other, so that the spout run-off could drip into the lower half-barrel.

Once the barrels were in place, it was time to begin making soap. The top barrel was filled with ashes, preferably oak wood ashes. Water was poured on top of the ashes. As the water drained through the ashes, it became lye, which eventually dripped out of the spout into the lower half-barrel.

The lye from this process was put in a wash pot and mixed with equal parts of lard. The lard used would come from hogs killed during the winter months. A wooden paddle was used to stir the lye and lard together. Next, a fire was built under the wash-pot, and the mixture was

boiled. After boiling, the lard and lye mixture cooled. The finished product was cut into bars of soap.

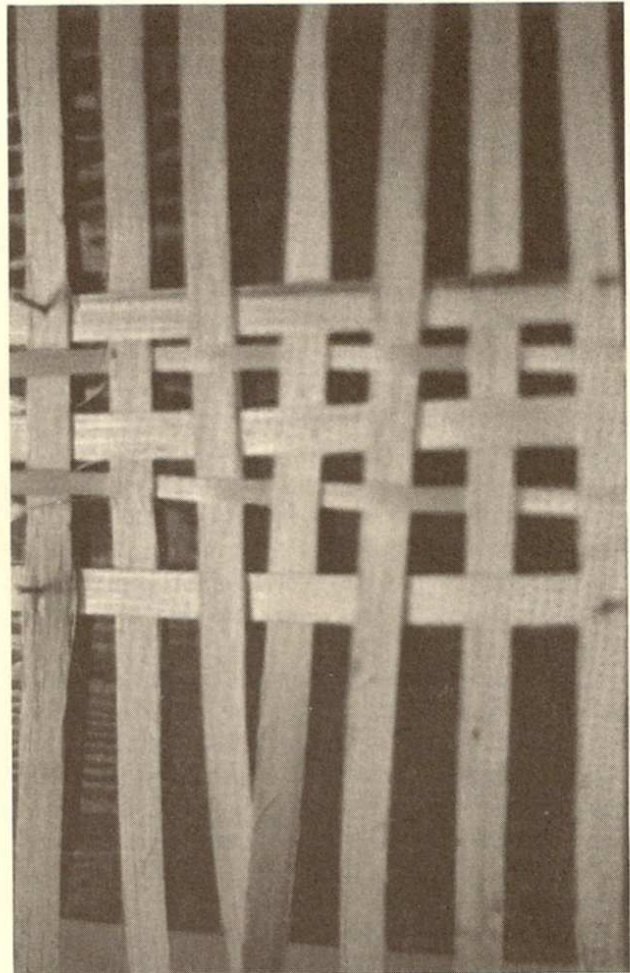
For scented soap, spearmint or other herbs with pleasant scents were added. Red velvet sumac was added to the mixture to make a medicated soap that could be used for bathing.

## BASKET-WEAVING

*By Patti King and Rosanne Burleson*

Basket-weaving is rapidly becoming a lost art. However, Mrs. Gracie Gordon of the Dalewood area still practices the vanishing craft. Mrs. Gordon learned the art of basket-weaving as a child. She produces two types of baskets: split-oak and pine-needle.

The old-time basket weavers would begin by



*Basket weaving was commonplace activity*

going out into the woods and finding just the right size white oak tree. The tree would then be carefully split to produce thin splints suitable for their use. The splints were soaked in water so that they would become flexible enough to be woven.

To weave a split-oak basket, weavers first decide on the approximate size and shape they want. The bottom of the basket is woven first, using an over-under technique until it reaches the appropriate size. The splints are then curved upward, and additional pieces are woven in until the basket reaches the desired height. Mrs. Gordon, following the old-fashioned method, uses clothespins to help control the different splints and keep them in place during weaving.

When the basket reaches the desired height, the remaining splint ends are tucked inside. The center splints are then used to make the handle. The handle consists of very thin strips of the split-oak splints. To complete the basket, a decorative edge can be added by wrapping the top with thin splint strips. The strips are wrapped completely around the rim in one direction and back in the opposite direction to form an "X" along the top edge, providing an attractive and durable finish.

For pine-needle baskets, long-leaved pine needles, either green or dried, are collected. If the needles are collected green, they must be allowed to dry for six to eight weeks. Once ready for weaving, the needles are washed in warm soapy water. Once they are clean, they are soaked in clear water until they are pliable and easy to work with. The basket-weaving process begins by wrapping approximately eight pine needles one inch from the bottom with raffia. The needles are then ready to be coiled to form the center of the basket. Additional pine needles are added as needed.

The coiling continues until the base of the basket reaches the desired shape and size. Additional coils are added and attached with raffia by using a needle. The coils are added so until the basket assumes the desired shape and size. Handles may be attached as desired. The finished baskets are durable and useful; they can last hundreds of years.

In the early years, both types of baskets served strictly useful purposes. Now, they are prized as objects of art to be enjoyed for generations.

## CLOTHES

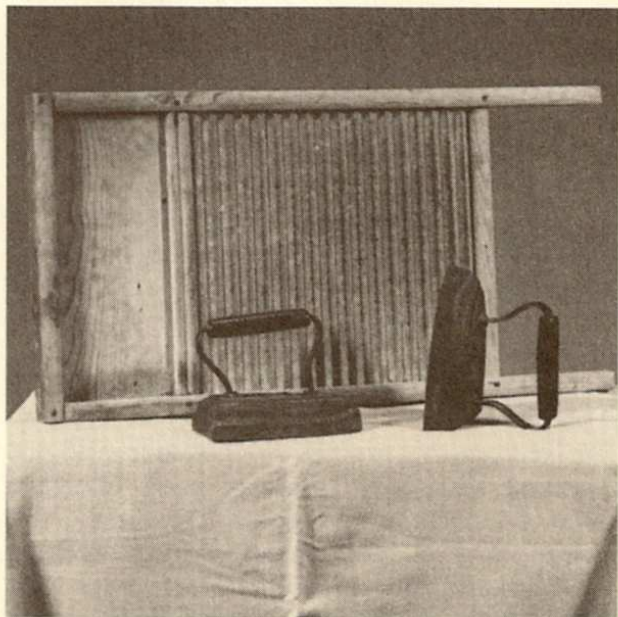
*By Brian Williams, Jeff Baker  
and Cindy Sullivan*

Before there were malls and department stores, Lauderdale Countians made their own clothes. They would buy some fabric they liked and look in a catalogue for a dress or shirt they admired. Once a style was chosen, the pattern for the clothing was drawn on an old newspaper. The newspaper pattern was cut out and altered for an exact fit. Finally, it was time to cut and sew the fabric into a new piece of clothing.

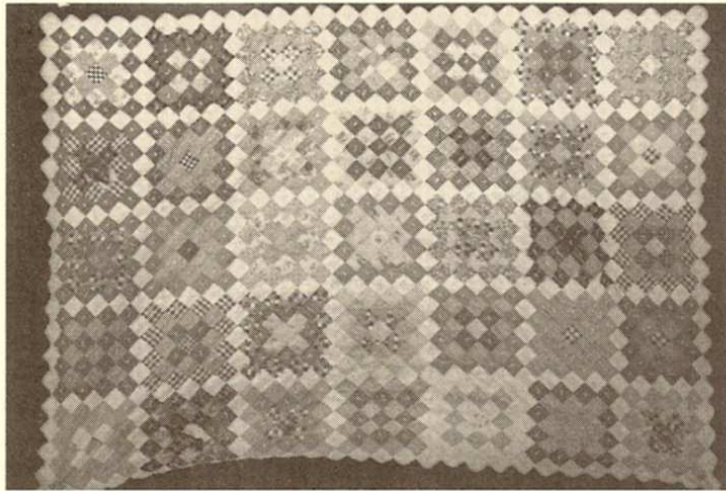
If a family was not able to afford store-bought cloth for new clothing, they would use flour or feed sacks. These sacks could be sewn into pillowcases, towels, or even dresses. Once these flour-sack creations were decorated with tatted collars or edgings, they were very pretty creations indeed!

Dealing with wrinkles before the invention of the electric iron was not an easy task. In order to press clothing, irons of different weights would be heated on a cookstove or in front of the fireplace. The job was easier if more than one iron was available for heating, so they could be alternated when one became too cool for ironing. Irons warmed by fire required caution, and scorching the clothes was a common occurrence!

It seems getting clothes to wear for work or play was not an easy proposition.



*Ironing was heavy work*  
Photo by Brian Williamson



## QUILTING

*By Cindy Sullivan*

Quilts used to be, and still are, one of the best guards against a cold night: Many quilts are considered family heirlooms today. The art of sewing memories as well as material scraps is alive and well in Lauderdale County.

The first step in making a quilt is to begin with a solid piece of fabric to use as a backing or lining. It is stretched out straight and placed on a quilting frame. The frame, with rollers attached to the ends, is used to keep the material straight while the quilt is being made. It also allows the area that has been quilted to be rolled up, so that the middle of the quilt can be completed. Quilts are always sewn from the outer edges first, and the middle completed last.

After the lining is in place, the batting must be prepared. Long ago, batting was not bought in rolls at a store. Rather, it was made from unseeded cotton. The unseeded cotton was placed on "cards," rectangular brushes that have stiff bristles. The cards containing the cotton were rubbed together in a back-and-forth motion to remove all the hard pieces found in the cotton. Once the cotton was carded, it was soft, smooth and ready to be used as quilt batting.

The batting was then laid on top of the lining and covered the entire area that was to be quilted. The quilt top, which was made from scrap material sewn into patterns, was placed on top of the batting. Now considered folk art treasures, quilts are also still valued as guards against cold winter weather.

## BROOM-MAKING

*By Nicole Powell*

People used to make most of the things they needed in their daily lives, including brooms. To make a broom, broom straw is collected. The straw is cut three to four inches above the ground and then gathered together. Next, a string is wrapped around the straw and tied tightly to hold it in place. Once the straw is tied together, a handy broom is ready for sweeping. For sweeping the yard, a common practice in days gone by, dogwood sprouts were often cut and tied together.

## CORNERSTONES OF RURAL LIFE: COUNTRY STORES

*By Amanda Shaw and Tammy Stewart*

Back in the early 1900s, farmers would shop at country stores, which sold everything from lace and ribbons to harnesses and caskets. The old country store served as a gathering place for the entire community. Most stores featured a long bench worn down from the many who gathered to trade tall tales and share concerns about the weather. While many of these centers of community activity have disappeared from the rural landscape, some survive today in Lauderdale County.

For instance, one old-fashioned store in the county remains a monument to days gone by. The store's busy days have long since ended, as shoppers rush by on the way to modern shopping centers. But, those who take the time to stop at the country store will find a delightful experience. The balcony where shoes were once sold encircles three sides of the interior of the structure. The balcony, featuring wood with beautifully carved posts, reaches up to the ceiling. An old, pot-bellied stove sits in the middle of the store, surrounded by well-worn chairs. An ornate cash register occupies a prominent spot close to the old-fashioned cheese cutter. The glass-enclosed display cases once featured lace and ribbons, candy and other temptations.

Another interesting store in the county operated in the old-fashioned way is Leslie Hagwood's General Store at Causeyville. The store



*Causeyville General Store preserves the past*  
TAG photo

has been restored to its original condition so authentically that it has been placed on the National Register of Historical Sites. Inside, visitors can find an extensive collection of player pianos and a working grist mill. A barber's chair sits in the corner of the store, while a hand-operated water pump and vintage gasoline pump can be found outside. The store features a large porch with benches and rocking chairs for those who just want to sit a spell.

Walking through the doors of the few surviving general stores of Lauderdale County can be like walking through a door to the past.

## THE COTTON GIN

*By Kristen Mathis, Rosanne Bursleson,  
Mason Greene and Heather Moody*

From antebellum days through the first decades of the twentieth century, cotton was a major re-

source in Lauderdale County and across the South. Cotton sales often affected how a family could live, sometimes determining if a child would get new clothes or hand-me-downs for the new school year. Cotton was a primary money crop for the family, and it was important to get as much money as possible from each bale.

To cash in on cotton, farmers needed cotton gins, where seeds were removed from the crop. During cotton's heyday, many communities in Lauderdale County featured cotton gins. One such gin was the one built by J. D. Gunn in 1937. The Gunn gin, in Topton off U. S. highway 45 North, was active from 1937 until 1973, when it was no longer profitable to operate a small cotton farm. The gin typically operated seventy-five days a year. The peak period was usually in the fall, when the crop whitened in the fields. Early in the mornings, wagons or trucks would arrive heaped with cotton.

A crowd would gather to watch the ginning



*Barney Gunn Cotton Gin stands idle today*



Nicki Soulé, TAG photo

process, which began with the cotton being weighed and then sucked up with a huge vacuum device. Next, the cotton went through an impact cleaner, a dryer and then a heating process. After this step, it was cleaned again, and the cotton and seed separated. The seed went into a trough, which carried it to a storehouse. The seed would then be returned to the farmer, or later sold for livestock feed. The cotton went into the lint flue, where it was cleaned once again, dried and pressed into bales.

Today, there are not many operating cotton gins in Mississippi, and the crunch of wagon wheels burdened by heavy loads of cotton lingers only in memories.

## FOLKLORE AND SUPERSTITIONS

One of the most interesting components of Lauderdale County's history is the folklore passed from one generation to the next. In an age of modern skepticism, many of the signs, sayings and superstitions associated with the past may seem silly today. But, from the early years of the county on into the twentieth century, mothers, farmers and others depended on folk cures and 'signs' for guidance, putting great faith in the often mysterious customs that were faithfully passed on.

In Lauderdale County, many of the superstitions, signs and sayings forming the heart of local folklore were recorded during the 1930s in a Works Progress Administration effort.<sup>1</sup> Now on file at the Meridian Public Library, these records contain a treasure chest of folklore that reflects area culture and its rural roots.

Signs of both good and bad luck were significant to early residents of the county. According to WPA records, signs of good luck included the following:

- \*A stray cat brings good luck if he comes to your home.
- \*Eat cow peas on New Year's Day and you will have plenty all the year.

Portents of bad luck included buttoning the top button on a shirt first, sewing on Sundays, and letting anyone "take a fish off your hook" or carrying an ax or hoe through the house. Other signs could have dual meanings. For instance, if a rabbit ran in front of you to the left, bad luck would follow. But, if it ran to the right, good luck was ahead. Likewise, it meant good luck to stub your right toe, but bad luck if it was the left.

Signs, rooted in superstition, were closely observed. Many believed they could foretell a wide variety of events, ranging from death to marriage. Some of these signs included:

- \*If two hens fight in the fowl yard, it is a sign that two ladies are coming to spend the day.
- \*If a cat washes herself in the usual way, it indicates fair weather; but if she licks her fur the wrong way or washes above her ears, or sits with her tail toward the fire, the weather is sure to be bad.
- \*Plant onions in the dark of the moon if you want them to be large. Plant beans, peas and carrots in the full of the moon if you want them to be large.

Another facet of local folklore included popular sayings, often rooted in observed fact. Two sayings recorded in the WPA collection include: "A pretty man usually has a hollow head," and "Never start anything on Friday, unless you can complete it the same day."

Superstitions covered a wide range of topics, ranging from farming practices to housekeeping. One colorful bit of folklore advised, "To keep a dog at home, cut off the tip of its tail and put it under the doorstep." Yet another suggested, "Rub a snakeskin on your hands, and you will drop no dishes."

And finally a superstition that might come in handy in hectic, modern times suggested: "If company is not wanted, turn the broom upside down to keep them away."

Some of the most intriguing tales rooted in local culture relate to folk remedies and cures, sometimes prescribed by 'witch doctors' schooled in 'voodoo' or other mystical practices. According to WPA records, such 'health care' was commonplace. Even though most of the 'cures' seem bizarre from today's point of view, they were often the only means of care available in bygone days. Whether the cures worked is a matter of speculation, but those who followed the methods apparently put great faith in the unusual remedies.

The most vocal proponents of the 'magical' cures included self-proclaimed "witch doctors and voodoo practitioners," some of whom lived in the Meridian area. They would cast spells, drive 'evil spirits' away, and promise to cure a wide variety of ailments. The WPA account notes that witch doctors could purportedly remove spells and reunite separated couples. One 'recipe' a voodoo priestess used to reunite a separated husband and wife, according to WPA records, was:

First, get a large toad and scorpion. Place it in a covered vessel over a fire; let remain until burned into a fine ash. When cool, sprinkle on persons you wish to reunite. This is very effective.

Local practitioners would determine if a person was afflicted with a spell cast by an evil person by putting ". . . a new dime under the tongue of the suspected victim. If the dime turns copper-colored, that is proof of a visitation." One "respected lady" was said to have had the power to "talk the fire out of you," or in other words,

cure burns. According to the WPA report, she did so by "spittin' on the afflicted part and muttering a certain passage of scripture."

A Meridian resident, one Jerry Crawford, earned quite a reputation for his supposed power to "bring about any desired thing for himself and for others especially." The WPA account suggested Crawford's powers stemmed from a "secret voodoo charm book." This book allowed Crawford to find lost items for individuals and to "answer questions, financial or otherwise," regarding the future. But, his greatest gift was the ability to ". . . attract lovers to one another or to bring separated and divorced couples back together."

In his practice, Crawford would instruct a patron to write his wish on a piece of paper, fold it and place the folded paper in a hole cut into a lemon. The wish-maker would then put the lemon in a hiding place and repeat the wish near the lemon several times a day. According to the record, the charm would work only if Crawford applied his powers, which he would gladly do for a \$5 charge.

In addition to the 'magic' of witch doctors, more commonly practiced folk remedies during the early years included:

\*To cure an earache, take a beetle, remove its head, split it in two, squeeze the fluid in the ear and put cotton in the ear to keep the fluid from running out.

\*To prevent a baby's having colic, roll the baby over on the floor several times, then sweep some dust over it.

\*To prevent headaches, wear a match in your hair.

\*To cure anyone of fever, put him on a bed of leaves that were pulled from a nearby branch.

Other folk cures prescribed holding an overcoat button in your mouth to cure an earache; wearing a small new potato in your sock for rheumatism, and applying a fresh, split chicken to a snake bite. Infants, the WPA file noted, could be safeguarded from bouts of whooping cough if they wore amber beads around their necks. Teething pain could be eased by ". . . stringing mole's feet on small briar roots around their necks."

The 'miracles' of modern technology and the availability of up-to-date medical treatment may have diminished the need for old-timey folk remedies, superstitions and signs. As the hustle and bustle of life on the move in a modern age puts an end to the days of front-porch storytelling, the value of the folk remedies, superstitions and signs once so carefully passed from one generation to the next is fading. Yet, the charm of these endangered species deserves a place on the scroll of history worth remembering. Both the young and old can find reflections of rural culture in the folklore, folk art, and places of the past clearly worth carrying into the future.

# 11 • Famous Folks and Local Legends

**L**AUDERDALE County's finest product may well be the countless citizens who have achieved fame and recognition for their civic, cultural, economic and scientific accomplishments. From local to international levels, prominent characters with connections to the county have made outstanding contributions in all fields of endeavor. Among the ranks of her most valued assets are an astronaut, opera stars, writers, business leaders, political achievers, educators and other professionals who have left their mark on the world while reflecting the spirit of all Lauderdale Countians.

Profiles of only a few of her outstanding personalities are featured here, as volumes would be required to cover adequately all whose achievements deserve notice. The brief sketches of a few of the county's best and brightest stand as shining examples of diverse accomplishments worthy of the pride and praise of all. From the arts to the sciences, Lauderdale Countians have earned acclaim both close to home and across the nation. While some achieved international recognition, others stayed closed to their roots, devoting their careers to the betterment of the county, region and state. Although not all of the prominent persons are profiled, these few citizens, in addition to others mentioned elsewhere in *Paths to the Past*, have been, or are, some of the area's best ambassadors.

## ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

**John Alexander:** The Metropolitan Opera's John Alexander is a native Lauderdale Countian recognized as the first American-born tenor to es-

tablish an international reputation for his interpretations of the nineteenth-century bel canto roles hitherto associated almost exclusively with Italian artists.

The 1985-86 season marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of his debut with the Metropolitan Opera. He is featured on many recordings and his performances have been televised internationally. His first performance with the New York City Opera came in 1957, and Alexander has since been described as "one of the finest tenors in the history of the Metropolitan Opera." He has won acclaim in the opera centers as a favorite leading man of the world's greatest divas, including Beverly Sills and Joan Sutherland. Alexander established that reputation as he appeared in sixty different leading tenor roles spanning the Italian, French, German and contemporary repertoires.

Educated in Meridian's public schools, Alexander did not get his first taste of performance until he had completed three years of pre-medical studies at Duke University and joined the U.S. Air Force. After his discharge, he gave up the idea of a medical career and enrolled in the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. In 1952, he made his professional debut with the Cincinnati Zoo Opera. Two decades later, the tenor had the honor of opening that city's remodeled Music Hall. In the fall of 1974, he was appointed Distinguished Professor of Voice and Opera at his alma mater and, in 1985, was inducted into the Hall of Fame for Great American Opera Singers in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, by the Academy of Vocal Arts.



**Wyatt Cooper:** This Mississippi writer and actor kept his connections to East Mississippi, particularly Clarke and Lauderdale counties, alive through his writings, which often emphasized family ties. His *Families: A Memoir and a Celebration*, published by Harper and Row in 1976, was an account of Cooper's Mississippi connections that highlighted his views on American family life.

Born on a farm near Quitman, he established a link to Meridian when he was a young man working for radio station WMOX and attending Meridian Junior College. He went on to study

theatre arts at the University of California, at both Berkeley and Los Angeles. Cooper was later involved with dramatic television shows in New York City. He wrote the screenplay for *The Chapman Report*, and collaborated with Truman Capote on *The Glass House*.<sup>1</sup>

In 1963, Cooper married socialite and artist Gloria Vanderbilt, and lived with her and later their two sons, Carter and Anderson, in New York City until his death in 1978. The Mississippi writer has been described as "a virtual full-time emissary of the state in cultural and social circles of the world."



Wyatt Cooper, with wife Gloria Vanderbilt and sons Carter and Anderson

**Edwin Granberry:** In addition to literary achievements, Edwin Granberry, born in Meridian in 1897, wrote the comic strip "Buz Sawyer" for more than thirty years. He moved to Florida at the age of ten. After serving with the U.S. Marine Corps in World War I, he received an A.B. degree from Columbia University in 1920. From 1922 to 1924, he attended Harvard University.

Granberry is the author of four novels: *The Ancient Hunger*, 1927; *Strangers and Lovers*, 1928; *The Erl King*, 1930; and *A Trip to Czar-dis*, 1966. He also wrote short stories, winning an O. Henry Prize award for one of the best of them, published in 1932. He spent most of his career in Florida, where he served as writer-in-residence at Rollins College until his retirement in 1971.<sup>2</sup>

**Barry Hannah:** Born in Meridian in 1942, award-winning author Barry Hannah grew up in Forest and Pascagoula. A graduate of Mississippi College and the University of Arkansas, Hannah produced a first novel, *Geronimo Rex* (1972), that won a William Faulkner Prize. His subsequent works included *Nightwatchman* (1973) and *Airships* (1978), a collection of short stories that won the Arnold Gingrich Short Fiction Award. Other works that won international acclaim include *Ray* (1980) and *The Tennis Hand-some* (1983). His fifth novel, *Captain Maximus*, was published in 1985.

Hannah's honors include recognition from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Currently writer-in-residence at the University of Mississippi, Hannah lives in Oxford.<sup>3</sup>

**Thomas Waldrop Moore Sr.:** Born in Lauderdale County in 1918 to Thomas M. and Anita S. Moore, Thomas W. Moore achieved prominence in entertainment circles as the originator and promoter of sports on television and as the guiding force behind powerful documentaries, which promoted such causes as health information, conservation, and improved race relations. He is recognized nationally as a positive force in the development of the Public Broadcasting Corporation, of which he was a director for twelve years.

During his youth, Moore, as a member of Troup Nine, Choctaw Council of Boy Scouts of



Thomas W. Moore, Sr.

America, was the youngest Eagle Scout in America at the time, 1933. A member of the Meridian High School Class of 1934, Moore continued his education, graduating from the University of Missouri in 1939. He then came home, to work for *The Meridian Star* from 1939 to 1941. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1941 to 1946.

Moore's impact on broadcasting began at CBS Television, where he worked until 1956, leaving that network to become vice president of network sales for ABC-TV, from 1956 to 1962. He worked his way to the top, serving as president of ABC from 1961 to 1969. Moore started *Wide World of Sports*, and *The American Sportsman*, and earned a reputation for his efforts to make television a positive influence. After leaving ABC, he branched out on his own, establishing Tick-etron and serving as chairman of that company until 1972, when he founded Tomorrow Entertainment Inc., in partnership with General Elec-

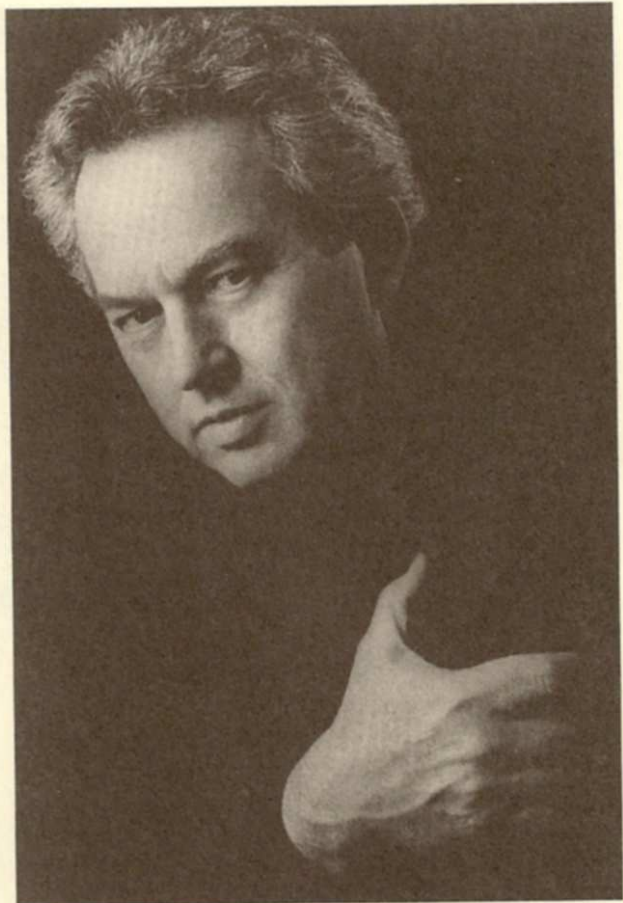
tric. That company, under Moore's leadership, produced award-winning documentaries and films on health. His films, which included *Judge Horton and the Scottsboro Boys* and *The Body Human*, earned many prestigious awards, including six Emmys.

Moore has received many personal honors, including an honorary doctorate from the University of Alabama in 1965 and the Silver Gavel Award from the American Bar Association. He served the nation in several roles: as a member of the American Bicentennial Commission, 1970-1975; on President Lyndon Johnson's Commission on Poverty, 1958-1964; and as a member of the board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 1970-1979.

Now living in California, he continues to serve as a member of the board of trustees of the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation Inc. As president of the original Naval Aviation Museum Association, from 1962-1970, he helped raise six million dollars to construct the museum, in Pensacola, Florida. Moore's two sisters, Helen Moore Dawson and Jerry Moore Baier, live in Meridian.

**Julian Patrick:** A distinguished and versatile opera singer, baritone Julian Patrick was born in Meridian in 1927. His Metropolitan Opera debut came in January of 1988. After graduating from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, Patrick began his path to a career as a noted operatic singer in New York City, where his first performances were in television productions and on Broadway.

Patrick's European operatic debut came in the early 1970s at the Strasbourg Opera. Other engagements, recording sessions and television performances followed. In 1973, conductor-composer Leonard Bernstein chose Patrick to record Sam in *Trouble in Tahiti*, and to videotape that opera for London Weekend Television. The many companies with which Patrick has performed include the Chicago Lyric Opera, Dallas Opera, Vienna Volksoper, Houston Opera, New York City Opera, Welsh National Opera and the Seattle Opera. The season of his Metropolitan Opera debut, also marked his New York Philharmonic debut. He has recently enjoyed success as Alberich in the Seattle Opera's production of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelungen*.

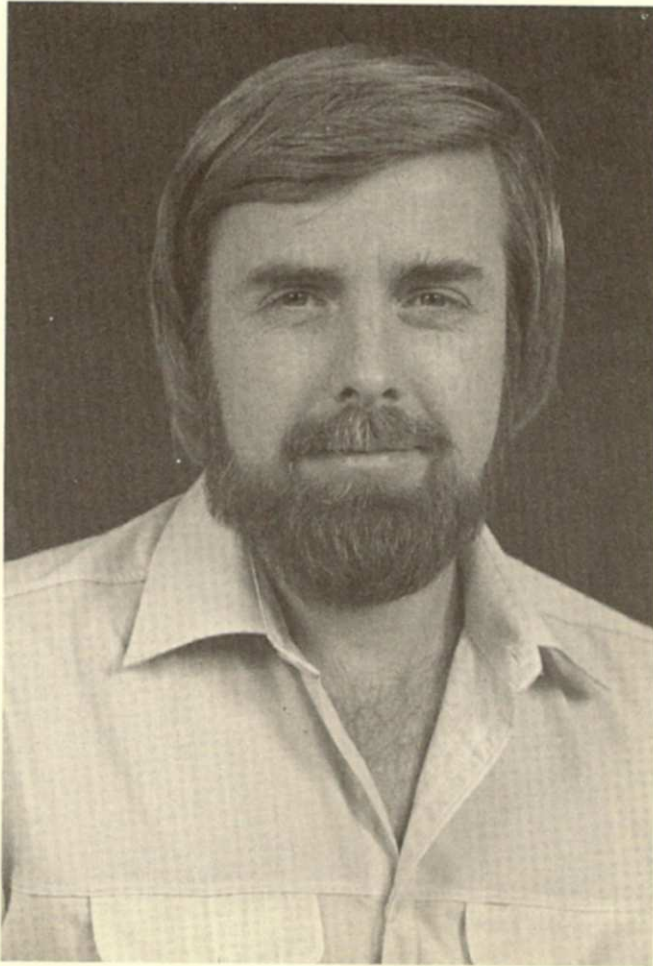


Julian Patrick

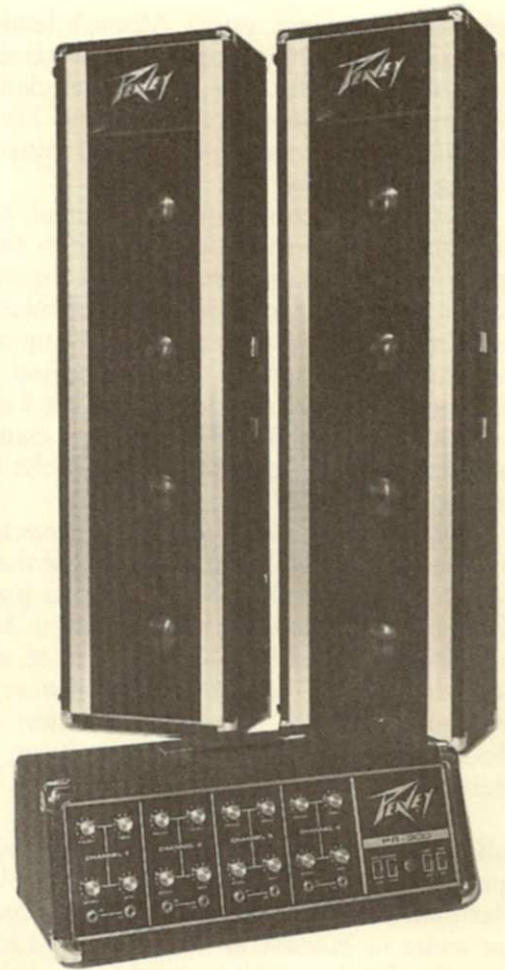
## BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

**Hartley Peavey:** Founder of a music industry legend, Hartley Peavey may represent Lauderdale County's best American success story. From a modest beginning in 1965, Peavey built a multi-million-dollar manufacturing company. Today, he is president and owner of Peavey Electronics, a corporation that provides work for more than a thousand workers in eight Mississippi plants and one in Corby, England. His company turns out 40,000 pieces of equipment each month for distribution and sale around the world, producing some 300 products including amplifiers, guitars, basses, public address systems, equalizers and other musical hardware.

His climb to the top began when he went to work in his father's music store in downtown Meridian at the age of 14. After catching the rock



Hartley Peavey with his Mississippi-made speakers



'n roll fever just beginning to sweep the country, Peavey designed a home-made amplifier out of television parts. Though the teen didn't realize it then, his life's work was just beginning. After attending Meridian public schools, Peavey studied business at Mississippi State University while continuing to build his amplifiers. After graduating, he began Peavey Electronics in the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J.B. Peavey. By 1968, demand was growing for his amplifiers, and Peavey built his first building. He went on to establish one of Mississippi's most successful industries. Peavey runs his growing corporation with his wife and partner, Melia. He is the father of two sons.

His business accomplishments continue. In 1978, he won the President's "E" Award for Ex-

ports and received an award recognizing Peavey's as the top industry in Mississippi in 1980. Peavey was honored as one of 84 most notable people in the state by *Mississippi Magazine* in 1983, and was selected as Lauderdale County's Man of the Year by *The Meridian Star* in 1984. A member of the Meridian, Decatur and Morton Chamber of Commerce organizations, Peavey earned the Mississippi Export Excellence Award in 1983 and 1986.

Although his name is known around the world, the down-to-earth Peavey plans to keep his plants and jobs close to home. Lauderdale County, he believes, is a natural location for his music-oriented operation, falling within a rich Southern belt that spawned rock and roll, the blues and country music.<sup>4</sup>



Richard H. "Dick" Truly

**Richard H. "Dick" Truly:** A man who took the Key Brothers' tradition of aviation fame to new heights as a pioneer member of the early Space Shuttle crews, Rear Admiral Richard H. "Dick" Truly was named the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Associate Administrator for Space Flight in 1986.

A product of Meridian's schools, Truly is the son of Mrs. Smith Truly, a descendant of Con Sheehan, and Bennett Truly. He began his career with America's space program after graduating as an NROTC midshipman from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1955. After receiving an aeronautical engineering degree, he was commissioned an ensign in the U.S. Navy in 1959. After he was designated a naval aviator in 1960, Truly's initial tour of duty was in Fighter Squadron 33, where he flew F-8 Crusaders, making more than three hundred carrier landings.

From 1963 to 1965, he was first a student and later an instructor at the U.S. Air Force Aerospace Research Pilot School at Edwards Air Force Base, California. In 1965, he was among the first

military astronauts selected for the USAF Manned Orbiting Laboratory Program in Los Angeles. The pilot became an astronaut for NASA in 1969, serving as a member of the astronaut support crew and capsule communicator for all three of the manned Skylab missions (1973) and for the Apollo-Soyuz mission (1972).

After serving as a pilot for one of the two-man crews that flew the 747/Space Shuttle Enterprise approach and landing test flights during 1977, Admiral Truly was assigned as a backup pilot for the first orbital test flight of the Shuttle. His first flight into space came in November, 1981, when he piloted the first manned spacecraft to be re-used in space, the Columbia. His second flight, in 1983, was as commander of the Shuttle Challenger.

Admiral Truly's decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, two Legions of Merit, Navy Distinguished Flying Cross and the Meritorious Service Medal. His NASA awards include the NASA Distinguished Service Medal, two NASA Space Flight medals, and two NASA Exceptional Service Medals.

**E.F. Young, Jr.:** A barber by trade, E.F. Young, Jr. used his background in chemistry and business to formulate and manufacture hair-care products specifically for blacks. He began his company by testing samples in his Meridian barber and beauty shop. By 1933, the E.F. Young, Jr. Manufacturing Company had received its trademark from the U.S. Patent Office. As demand for his products grew, he built a building at 500 Twenty-fifth Avenue, which housed the company and Young's Hotel. A branch office of his business opened later in Chicago. After his death in 1950, his son, Charles L. Young, took over. He serves Lauderdale County as a state representative.

## EDUCATION

**Jennie Ruth Scott Crump Calvert:** Born in Meridian in 1917, Mrs. Calvert devoted her life to educating Meridian's young people, serving as principal of Wechsler School from 1945 until her retirement in 1978. Throughout her career, she followed her philosophy that "...if education can contribute to moral and intellectual revolution, it offers a real meaning everywhere" as she

won recognition across the region and state for her accomplishments.

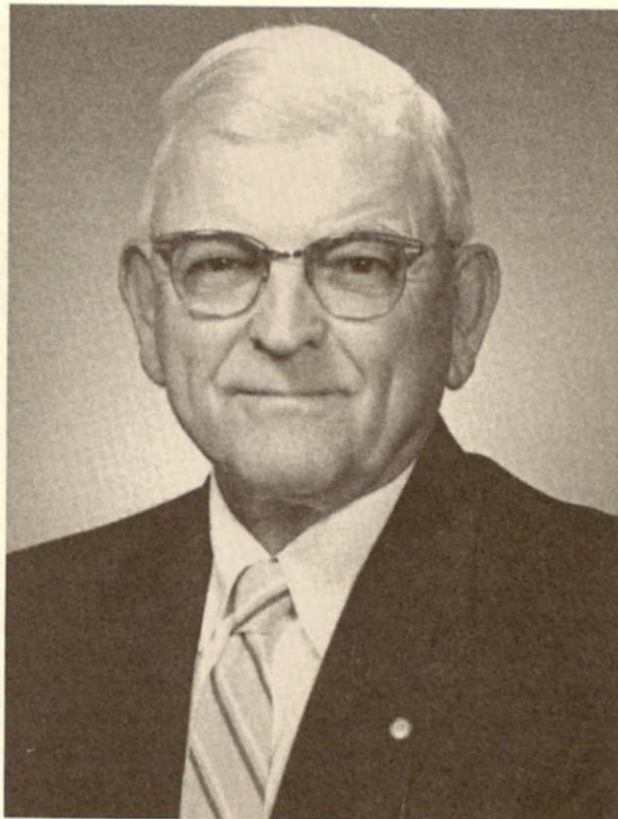
Under her leadership, Wechsler won numerous awards. During her tenure, a new wing, which housed an auditorium, library, cafeteria and physical education activities, was added. She not only stressed the Three R's, but promoted the fine arts, crafts and science as well.

Her own education began at Haven Teachers College and Conservatory, where she attended kindergarten through eleventh grade. She went on to receive her A.B. from Rust College, her master's degree from Denver University, her M.Ed. degree from Tuskegee University, and an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from Rust. She began teaching in 1920 at Wechsler, devoting her career to the school and its students. Now living in Jackson, the retired educator works to keep memories of Wechsler, an institution she describes as a symbol worth preserving, alive. Throughout her life, she has also worked on projects and committees with the United Methodist Church.

A three-time secretary for the Mississippi Teachers Association, Mrs. Calvert was the first black elected to the National Elementary Principals Association. Locally, she organized the first city and county elementary association for teachers. Her efforts helped the Meridian Public School System become a pioneer in kindergarten education. She served as chairman of a legislative committee on a compulsory education law under Governor William Winter, helping push the bill through the Mississippi Legislature. For her efforts in that area, she, along with Governor Winter, was honored in 1979 by the Mississippi Religious Commission for outstanding interracial service to the state.

**Dr. Horace M. Ivy:** From 1923 to 1953, Dr. H.M. Ivy served as superintendent of Meridian's public schools. A building named in his honor on the campus of the Meridian Community College stands as a tribute to his contributions to education on both the state and local level.

The first superintendent in Mississippi to hold a doctoral degree, he served as president of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. He proposed the establishment of a teachers' retirement system, initiated and led a national movement for federal aid to education,



**Dr. H. M. Ivy**

and chaired the committee that chose the site for, and selected the first president of, Mississippi Valley State College.

The founder and director of the Associated Consultants in Education, Dr. Ivy was also a member of the Mississippi Education Association, the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and the National Education Association. He served terms on the board of trustees of Millsaps College, the George Peabody College for Teachers, and the Board of Trustees for Institutions of Higher Learning in Mississippi.

**W.A. Reed, Jr.:** Honored for his devotion to education in Lauderdale County in 1988 when the W.A. Reed, Jr. Vocational-Technical Building was dedicated at Meridian Community College, Reed had been the principal supervisor and director of Harris High School/Junior College for 42 years. A native Mississippian, he earned his bachelor's degree at Jackson State University and his master's in administration and supervision at Atlanta University.



W. A. Reed, Jr.

In 1926, he began his teaching career at T.J. Harris High School, where he was later to be named principal and supervisor. Harris High was the first black school in Mississippi to be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. In 1955, the Meridian Separate School District Board of Trustees, superintendent L.O. Todd, and Professor Reed created a plan to add two years of college at Harris. The result was Harris Junior College, which became an accredited two-year institution the following year. Both the high school and junior college were closed after school integration, and Professor Reed became a vice president at Meridian Junior College. Now in his eighties, the retired educator remains influential in civic and educational circles.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Dr. William Jefferson (Jeff) Anderson, Sr.:** Born in 1872 near Causeyville to Eliza McElroy and Samuel Anderson, Dr. Jeff Anderson took his medical training at Tulane University. He prac-

ticed in Alabama and Texas before coming home to Lauderdale County in 1902. At first, Dr. Anderson was associated with the Meridian Sanatorium. In 1928, the nucleus of the Jeff Anderson Regional Medical Center took form when he purchased the old Turner Hospital. The facility, renovated, was renamed Anderson's Infirmary. Under his leadership, the clinic grew into one of the most modern medical facilities in the South. By the time of his death in 1951, Dr. Anderson's dream of establishing one of the region's best medical institutions was well on the way to reality.

In the course of his long career, Dr. Anderson delivered 10,000 babies and performed 20,000 major surgical procedures. He was a charter member of the American Academy of General Practice and helped form the state chapter of that organization.

**Dr. William Jefferson (Jeff) Anderson, Jr.:** The elder Dr. Anderson's only son was born in 1906. After first making his mark in the music world, he came back to Meridian as a surgeon and physician, following the standards set by his prominent father.

Initially, he had been on the path to a suc-



Dr. W. J. Anderson, Jr.

cessful career in music. His first love began when he studied violin as a young boy. At the age of nine, he was a student of Dr. J.E.W. Lord of London, and later studied under other prominent musicians. By the time he was 16, William was enrolled in the Chicago Music College, making the most of the musical aptitude he inherited from his mother. He generated enthusiastic accolades with his performances both in Chicago and at home.

The Great Depression put a dent in his artistic plans, forcing his return to the South in pursuit of a more lucrative profession. He then enrolled in the University of Alabama's medical school, financing his study with his musical talents. Employed as head of instruction in violin, he organized the university's first symphony orchestra, which he conducted during his student/faculty tenure. In 1938, he received his medical degree from the Chicago School of Medicine. After serving on several U.S. Army post, Dr. Anderson returned to Meridian to join his father in practice in 1942. From then until his death in 1986, Dr. Anderson's career closely paralleled the history and growth of Anderson's Infirmary, which grew into the Jeff Anderson Regional Medical Center. During his years with the hospital, he held almost every staff and administrative post in the family operation. The surgical wing of the Anderson complex, completed in 1977, bears his name.

**Myrtle Estes:** The moving spirit of the Matty Hersee School of Nursing for many years was Myrtle Estes, a Mississippi nursing pioneer who served as director of the school from 1965 until her retirement in 1980. The first nurse in Mississippi to earn a master's degree, she holds a bachelor of science degree from the University of Mississippi, master's degree from the University of Alabama and a post-graduate certificate in midwifery from Johns Hopkins Hospital School of Medicine (Baltimore). Prior to assuming leadership of the Matty Hersee School, she was a consultant for maternal and child health at the University of Mississippi.

During her tenure as director of the nursing school, the number of students enrolled in the program soared. Among her achievements were improvements in the curriculum to bring it to academic distinction and making arrangements



Myrtle Estes



for nursing students to go into private area hospitals for instruction and practical experience. Now retired, Ms. Estes serves as a volunteer at the Meridian Community College Teen Learning Center.

**Dr. Alvin Fielder:** A member of the last graduating class of Haven Institute and Conservatory of Music, Dr. Alvin Fielder credits one of the largest schools for blacks in the area for his career success. While attending Haven, Fielder was em-



**Dr. Alvin Fielder**

ployed at Standard Drug Company, where manager E.L. Summers encouraged his studies. After graduating from Haven in 1930 and working for the drug store for thirteen years, he went on to complete requirements for a pharmacy degree at MeHarry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. He returned home to enjoy a long career as a pharmacist in a downtown establishment.

**Dr. Hobert Kornegay:** Active professionally as a Meridian dentist, Dr. Hobert Kornegay, a native son, also finds time for involvement in civic affairs. Born in 1923, he obtained his bachelor of science degree from Morehouse College in 1945



**Dr. Hobert Kornegay**

and his DDS from Meharry Medical College in 1948, after having graduated from Meridian's Harris Senior High School in 1941. He attended the Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas in 1952 before spending three years (1952-1955) in the U.S. Army Dental Corps in Munich, Germany. Dr. Kornegay also completed postgraduate work with Medical Field Service School (1953) and at the Walter Reed institute of Dental Research (1968-1971).

He has enjoyed a successful practice for several decades in his hometown and is a member of the staff of Riley Memorial Hospital, Matty Hersee Hospital and Meridian Regional Hospital. Dr. Kornegay has served as a consultant on preventive dentistry with the Mississippi Head Start program and is the author of newspaper articles, monograms and scientific papers. He served on the Governor's Committee on the Health Needs of Children (1971-1972) and as chairman of the Choctaw Area Council of Boy Scouts of America (1955-1965). Active in local, state and national professional organizations, Dr. Kornegay has also been involved with the local Selective Service



*Riley Hospital in its early years*

board, the board of St. Francis Homes, the March of Dimes, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Meridian Chamber of Commerce and the 4-H Club Advisory Board. His many honors include being listed in *Who's Who in the South and Southwest*, *The International Register of Profiles* and *Who's Who in Black America*.

The husband of Ernestine Price and father of four children, Dr. Kornegay serves as vice president of the Meridian City Council, and represents Precinct IV. He is a trustee of New Hope Baptist Church, and a member of the Toastmasters Club and the Meridian Central Optimist Club. Additionally, he has served on the Board of Trustees for Eleemosynary Institutions and on a state advisory board of the Mississippi Council on Aging.

**Dr. Franklin Gail Riley:** Mississippi's first pediatrician, Dr. F.G. Riley, throughout his long career, exhibited concern for aspects of health care affecting children in Lauderdale County and throughout the state that touched the lives of many.

Born in Monroe County, Dr. Riley earned his medical degree in 1915 at the University of Tennessee in Memphis. After graduation, he returned to Mississippi, helping to organize the Northeast Mississippi Hospital in Booneville. Even before America entered World War I, Dr. Riley enlisted in the British Army as one of the 1,400 doctors who responded to a plea for physicians to assist the British forces. He was one of only 200 survivors of that number, known in history as the "Lost Legion." Eventually, Dr. Riley was promoted to major, and he remained active in the Army Reserve until 1930.

After returning to Booneville, Dr. Riley, alarmed at high infant and child mortality rates, became increasingly concerned about the medical needs of children. In 1920, he entered the postgraduate medical division of the University of Pennsylvania to specialize in pediatrics, completing his residency at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, in Philadelphia.

By 1922, he had decided to come to Meridian, where he established a clinic in the Pigford Building. As the first pediatrician in the state and one of only a handful of such specialists in the nation

at the time, Dr. Riley brought new methods of diagnosis and treatment to Lauderdale County and the surrounding area. His methods helped revolutionize local medical care for children in an era when thousands of youngsters were suffering from diarrheal disease, nutritional disturbances and other disorders. Dr. Riley was the first physician in Meridian, and probably in the region, to administer fluid and electrolytes intravenously and the first to employ blood transfusions. He was also the first to employ the hemogram as a diagnostic tool.

Dr. Riley pioneered the instruction of parents in proper methods of sterilization for infant feeding and was among the first physicians to use soy meal formulas in gastrointestinal allergy cases. Throughout his career, he remained in the vanguard of developments in pediatrics. He was a charter member of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Mississippi State Pediatric Society, and many other medical associations. In 1962, the University of Tennessee presented him a special award for 50 years of distinguished service.

In 1929, construction began on Riley Hospital, Mississippi's first children's medical institution. It opened in 1930 as a ten-bed children's hospital with associated clinic and office. With a goal of developing it into one of the best in the South, Dr. Riley enlarged the hospital in size and scope over the next decades. The hospital grew to 56 beds, in four additions between 1930 and 1960.

One year after Dr. Riley's death in 1967, the new F.G. Riley Memorial Hospital, built across the street from the original building, was complete. The institution continues to expand and improve its services today. Dr. Riley's two sons followed in his footsteps, with William Gail Riley joining his father and Riley Hospital as a pediatrician and Richard F. Riley returning to Meridian as a surgeon. Both now serve on the hospital's board of directors.<sup>5</sup>

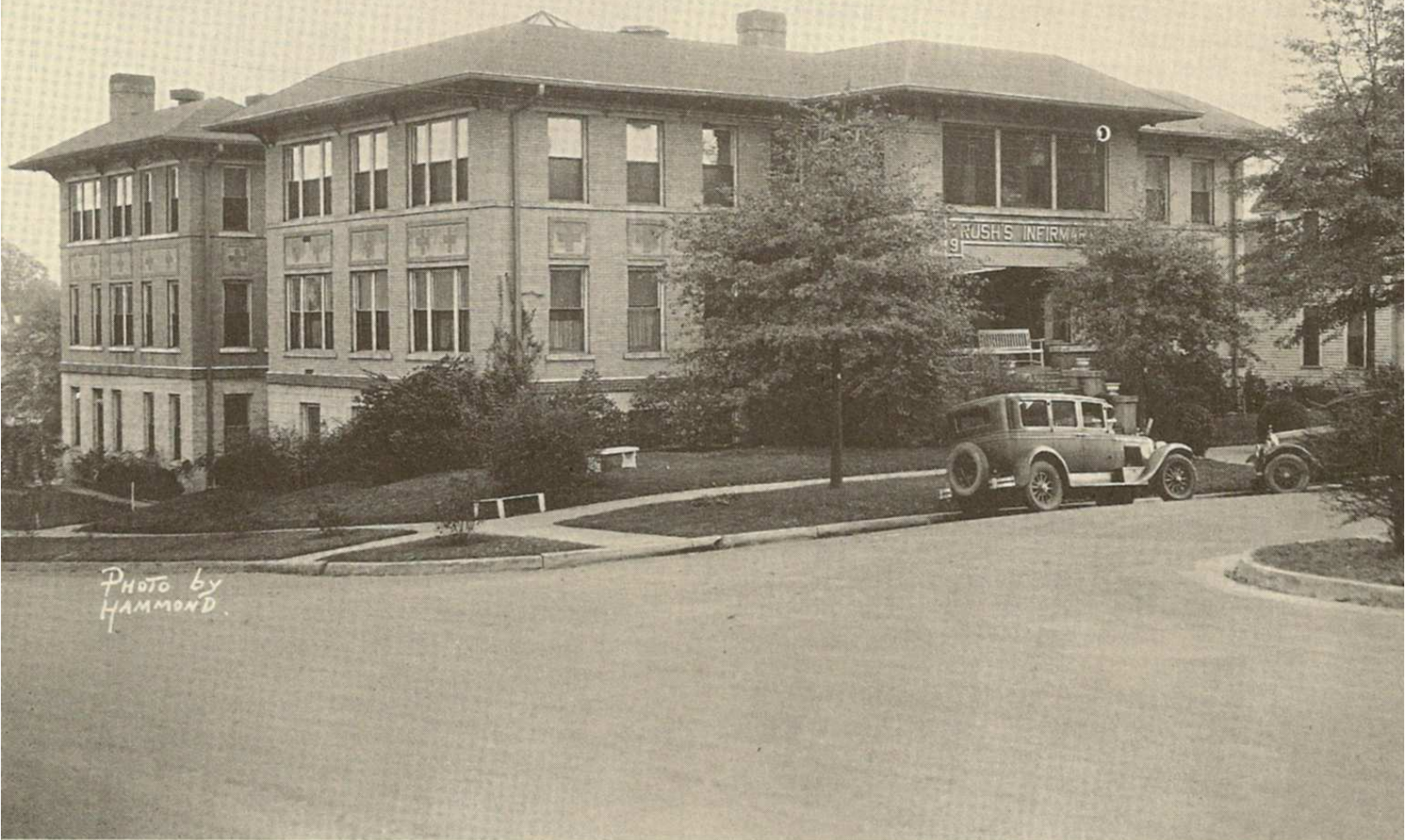
**Dr. Leslie V. Rush, Sr.:** Born in Meridian in 1904, Dr. Leslie V. Rush, Sr. grew up in a medical family as the son of Dr. J.H. Rush, who endowed Rush Hospital. After graduating from medical school himself, "Dr. Leslie" returned to Meridian. Far from the metropolitan medical centers of the nation, he became a pioneer in the use of bone-



**Dr. Leslie V. Rush, Sr.**

pinning, an innovative technique he developed, which contributed in an essential way to the treatment of long-bone fractures. His lasting medical breakthrough came in 1936 when he made Meridian's Rush Foundation Hospital (then Rush Memorial) the scene of the first successful intramedullary bone pinning.

He used a pin to stabilize the crushed elbow of Katie Belle Rembert in the first operation of its kind. His innovative technique led to the evolution of the Rush Pin, now used worldwide in the treatment of fractures. That epochal procedure was followed by twelve years of often tedious research as Dr. Rush perfected his method and developed the type of pins needed to make bonepinning work. The Rush pin of today was perfected in 1948, providing a viable alternative for treatment of fractures that cuts both healing time and medical expenses. Proposed as a nominee for the Nobel Prize for Medicine by Representative G.V. Montgomery in 1985, Dr. Rush was



*Rush Infirmary was endowed by Dr. J. H. Rush*

cited for developing a method relied upon world-wide in the treatment of long-bone fractures.

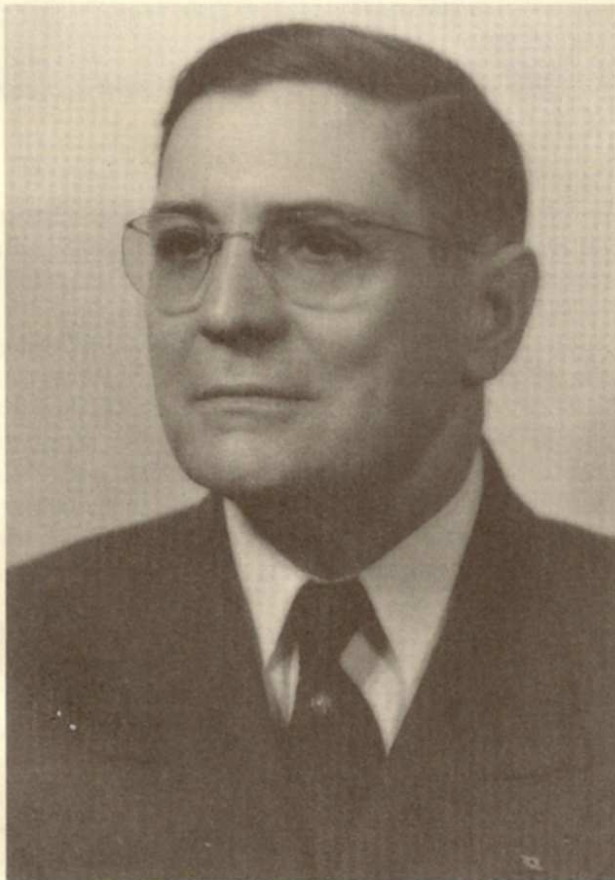
As demands for the pins increased, Dr. Rush formed the Berivon Company to manufacture and market the medical product. The company, which began in the basement of his mother's house, grew into a successful supply firm, now known as Rush/Berivon Company Inc., which produces thousands of pins each year for dis-

tribution around the world. The local company, now run by Dr. Rush's daughter, Beryl Webb, and son, Dr. Vaughn Rush Jr., is also the publisher of the lavishly illustrated *Atlas of Rush Pin Technics*. While many other types of intramedullary pins are in use today, many of them owe their development to the persistence and vision of Dr. Rush, who died in 1987.<sup>6</sup>

## POLITICS AND LAW

**A.B. Amis:** A Meridianite who achieved prominence in legal circles in the course of a long career, A.B. (Alfonso Bobbett) Amis, attended Tulane University in 1885 and the University of Mississippi, from 1886 to 1892, before beginning his Meridian law practice in 1893. Amis served as city attorney from 1912 to 1931. In 1930, he became Chancellor of the Second District, earning distinction for his judicial decisions. Among his many accomplishments are his contributions to domestic relations law in Mississippi. His *Amis on Divorce and Separation* laid the foundation for equity court statutes in the state and remains in use today. He and his wife, Mary S. Langford, were the parents of six children.

**Thomas Lowry Bailey:** The only Lauderdale Countian to serve as Mississippi's governor, Thomas Lowry Bailey held the state's top post



Gov. Thomas L. Bailey

from 1944 until his death in the Governor's Mansion in 1946. As governor, he supported improvements in education, agricultural methods and medical care. Born January 8, 1888, in Webster County, Bailey graduated from Millsaps College in 1909, and worked as a teacher before he entered law school. After establishing his practice in Meridian in 1913, he was elected to the Legislature in 1915 and returned to it in 1919. Appointed chairman of the important Appropriations Committee during the 1922 session, Bailey was re-elected to the House once again in 1923 and was Speaker of the House by 1927.

A Methodist, Bailey was a member of the Masons, the Knights of Pythias, the Junior Order of United American Mechanics and the Praetorians. The Baileys were the parents of two children: a son, Harold Melby Bailey; and a daughter, Nellah, who married Hunter Webb of Meridian in the Governor's Mansion.

**Ross A. Collins:** A career politician, Ross A. Collins was born in Collinsville in 1880. He attended public schools before earning his law degree at the University of Mississippi, at Oxford, in 1901. Collins returned to Meridian to establish his law practice. Elected Attorney General of Mississippi, Collins served in that post until 1920. He made an unsuccessful run for the governor's seat in 1919. But, his political career continued when he was elected to the sixty-seventh and six succeeding Congresses (March 4, 1921 to January 3, 1942). After ending his active involvement in politics, Collins resumed his Meridian law practice. He died in 1968.

**Aubert Culberson Dunn:** Born in Meridian in 1896, Aubert Culberson Dunn was to become a prominent politician and lawyer. After attending the University of Mississippi and the University of Alabama, Dunn took his first job as a reporter on *The Cincinnati Enquirer* in 1917. He saw service in World War I, joining the U.S. Navy the same year. Afterward, Dunn studied law, began his practice in Meridian in 1924, and served as district attorney for the Tenth Judicial district of Mississippi from 1931 to 1934. He was elected as a Democrat to the seventy-fourth Congress (1935-1937). Dunn later served as a consultant for the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance; as an attorney for the Social Security Board; as a spe-

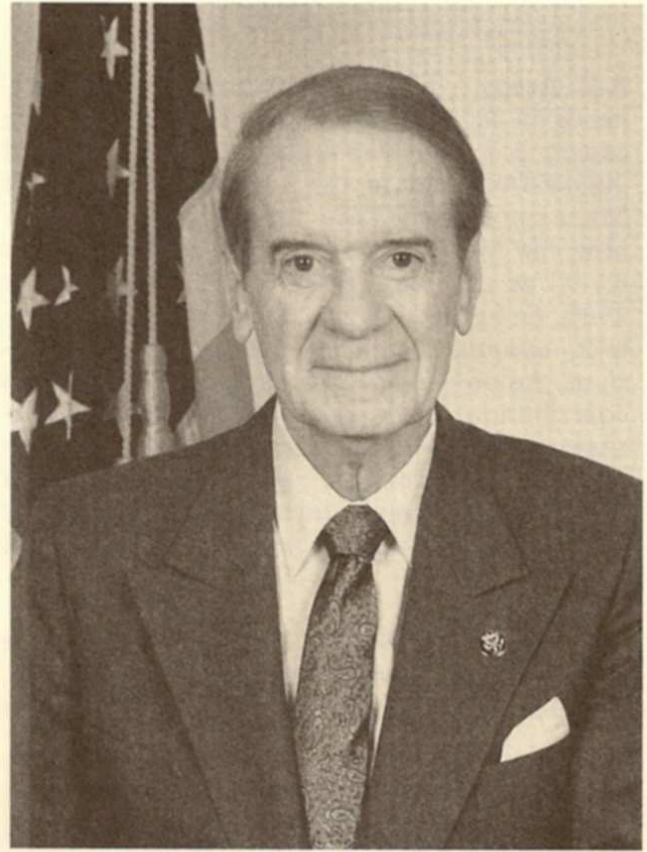


A. C. Dunn

cial trial attorney in the U.S. Attorney General's Office; and as a Circuit Judge in the Tenth Judicial District in Mississippi.

**G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery:** Born and educated in Meridian, Gillespie V. "Sonny" Montgomery is a Mississippi Democrat representing the Third District in the Congress of the United States. A graduate of Mississippi State University, Representative Montgomery owned and operated Montgomery Insurance Agency in Meridian. His political career began in 1956 when he was elected to the Mississippi Senate. After serving in that body for ten years, he was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1966, and won re-election to an eleventh consecutive term in 1986.

Active on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Representative Montgomery is a retired major general of the Mississippi National Guard, with more than 35 years of military experience. His accomplishments include introduction of a



G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery

Peacetime G.I. Education Bill and active efforts on behalf of American servicemen who served in the Vietnam conflict, especially those classified as POW/MIA in Indochina.

The holder of many military awards, including the Bronze Star for Valor and the Meritorious Service Medal, he saw active and reserve duty in World War II and Korea. During his years of public service, he has received the Distinguished Service Citation Award from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Distinguished National Veterans Award and several awards from the National Guard Association for the United States, including its highest honor, the Harry S Truman Award for "constant and outstanding support and counsel on behalf of National Guard personnel." In 1981, the G.V. Montgomery National Guard Complex in Meridian was dedicated in his honor. He is a past president of the Mississippi Heart Association, the Mississippi State University Alumni Association and the Mississippi National Guard Association.

## OTHER LOCAL LEGENDS

**Susan Akin:** Lauderdale County's only Miss America, Susan Akin, achieved a life-long dream when she was crowned in 1986. The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Little and Earl Akin, she was the fourth Mississippian to win the title. A veteran of over 100 pageants, Miss Akin entered and won her first contest at the age of five, taking the crown of Meridian's Miss La Petite. Dozens of titles, including Little Miss Mississippi, Little Miss America, Miss University of Mississippi and Miss Mississippi, followed.

Winning pageants was a way of life for Miss Akin by the time she captured the biggest crown of all at the 1986 Miss America Pageant. The five-foot, eight-inch blonde honed her talents throughout childhood as an active participant in Meridian Little Theatre productions and as a dance student of Mary Alpha Johnson. A senior at the University of Mississippi at the time she was crowned, Miss Akin is busily pursuing career interests while continuing to represent her county and state with the presence and talent that helped her win so many titles.<sup>7</sup>



Susan Akin

**Bryan Culpepper:** One of Lauderdale County's many World War II heroes, Bryan Culpepper was injured in 1945 while serving in the 88th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army. On a cold, February night that year in Italy, Technical Sergeant Culpepper and five of his men were headed for Rome when an enemy shell hit. The only survivor of the strike, the sergeant was severely injured, losing sight in both eyes and his right arm. He would spend the next two years in hospitals before he could come home to Meridian.

Once he did return, the blind veteran operated a concession stand in the Lauderdale County Courthouse, which he operated till 1988. Despite his handicaps, Culpepper won the respect and admiration of the thousands he came in contact with over the years. Married to Marie Williamson in 1958, Culpepper is a life member of all veterans' organizations and an active member of Meridian's First Baptist Church. Besides the Purple Heart, Culpepper earned the European Theater ribbon with three battle stars, the Croix deGuerre, a Combat Infantry Badge, a Presidential Unit Citation, and a good conduct ribbon.

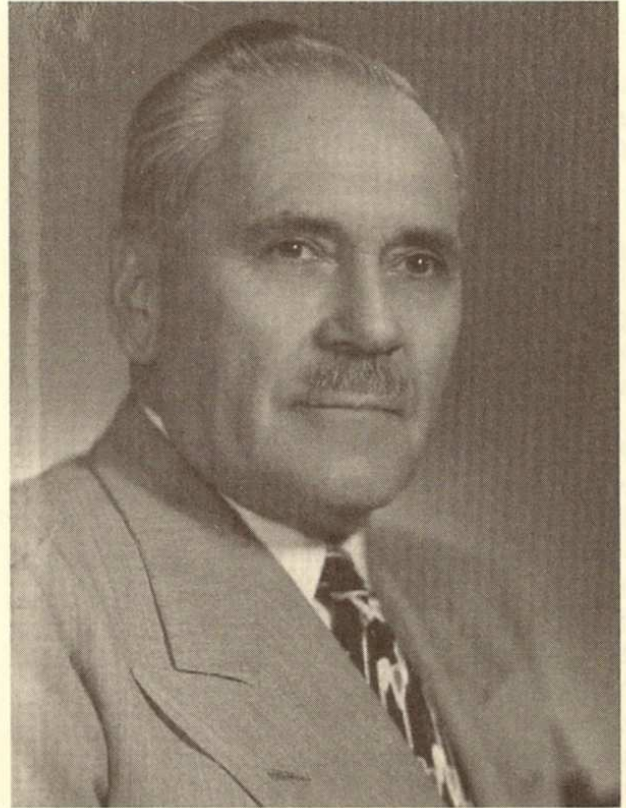
**Mr. and Mrs. James H. Skewes:** As community leaders who were the guiding force behind the growth of The Meridian Star into a major Mississippi daily newspaper, Mr. and Mrs. James H. Skewes contributed to Lauderdale County in diverse ways. James Henry Skewes purchased The Meridian Star with his father-in-law, W.E. Buckingham, in 1922. After the publication was purchased by the Skewes family, circulation tripled and The Star was expanded. Skewes served as editor and publisher of the daily from 1922 until his death in 1958, when his wife became president of the corporation and publisher, and his son, James Buckingham Skewes, assumed the editorship.

Prior to his move to Meridian, Skewes had worked on The Milwaukee Daily News. He was associated in ownership with The Laurel Leader-Call for more than 20 years and held other newspaper interests across the nation. In addition to his newspaper career, Skewes was an active community leader, serving as president of the Meridian Chamber of Commerce for seven terms. In 1954, the Chamber's board of directors named him president emeritus for "his long record of service to the Meridian area."



Mrs. Grace B. Skewes

In addition to pushing for the development of a municipal airport, Skewes also spearheaded local efforts to attract a military installation to Lauderdale County, an effort that resulted in the establishment of the Meridian Naval Air Station. He also served as director of the Financial Development Corporation, an organization instrumental in bringing new industry into the area, and as a contributor to the Lamar School Foundation. He was on the board of directors of the Meridian and Bigbee Railroad, the Merchants and Farmers Bank, the Lamar Hotel Company, and the Alabama Great Southern Division of the Southern Railroad System. A life member of the Rotary Club, Skewes was also active in the Mississippi Children's Home Society, the Mississippi Press Association and the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association. He was named "Meridian's Most Worthful Citizen" in 1925, the Exchange Club's "Citizen No. 1" in 1938, and was awarded the "Community Cup" in 1935 and 1936 for the "most worthwhile civic effort."



James H. Skewes

Mrs. James H. Skewes was also active in civic and social affairs in Meridian, serving on the Chamber of Commerce committee that established the local United Fund. A long-time member of the Episcopal Church, she served as an editor of *The Church News*, a publication of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi. She was a member of the board of directors of the Lauderdale County Chapter of the American Red Cross; vice president of the Meridian Museum of Art Association in 1970 and a member of the museum's board of directors from 1971 to 1973. The first person from the east central region of the state appointed to the Mississippi Arts Commission, Mrs. Skewes was an arts patron throughout her life, holding leadership roles with both the Meridian Little Theatre and the Meridian Symphony Association.

Today, the Skeweses' son continues to direct *The Meridian Star*, as publisher, along with his wife, Hilah, who serves as president of the corporation.



## 12 • Finding Paths to the Past

**T**HERE are many ways to discover the diverse paths to the past along the city streets and country byways in the area. These many paths traverse the county from the northeast to the southwest, opening windows to the rich trove of history ripe for harvest during any season. In the final chapter of *Paths to the Past*, a comprehensive look at the historic sites in five sections of the county—the Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest and Meridian—is provided to complement the overview map featuring selected sites. Many of the historic spots of Lauderdale County, and their overall contribution to the development of the state and nation, have been overlooked, or erased by the passage of time. While not all of the significant sites have been included, an attempt has been made to identify a variety of them. It is hoped that following these particular paths can help uncover the wealth of history to be found.

The county's story can be traced in museums, in the architecture of old buildings downtown or in country general stores. It can be found in many places, and it is hoped that the map and guide will inspire individuals or groups on quests for local history.

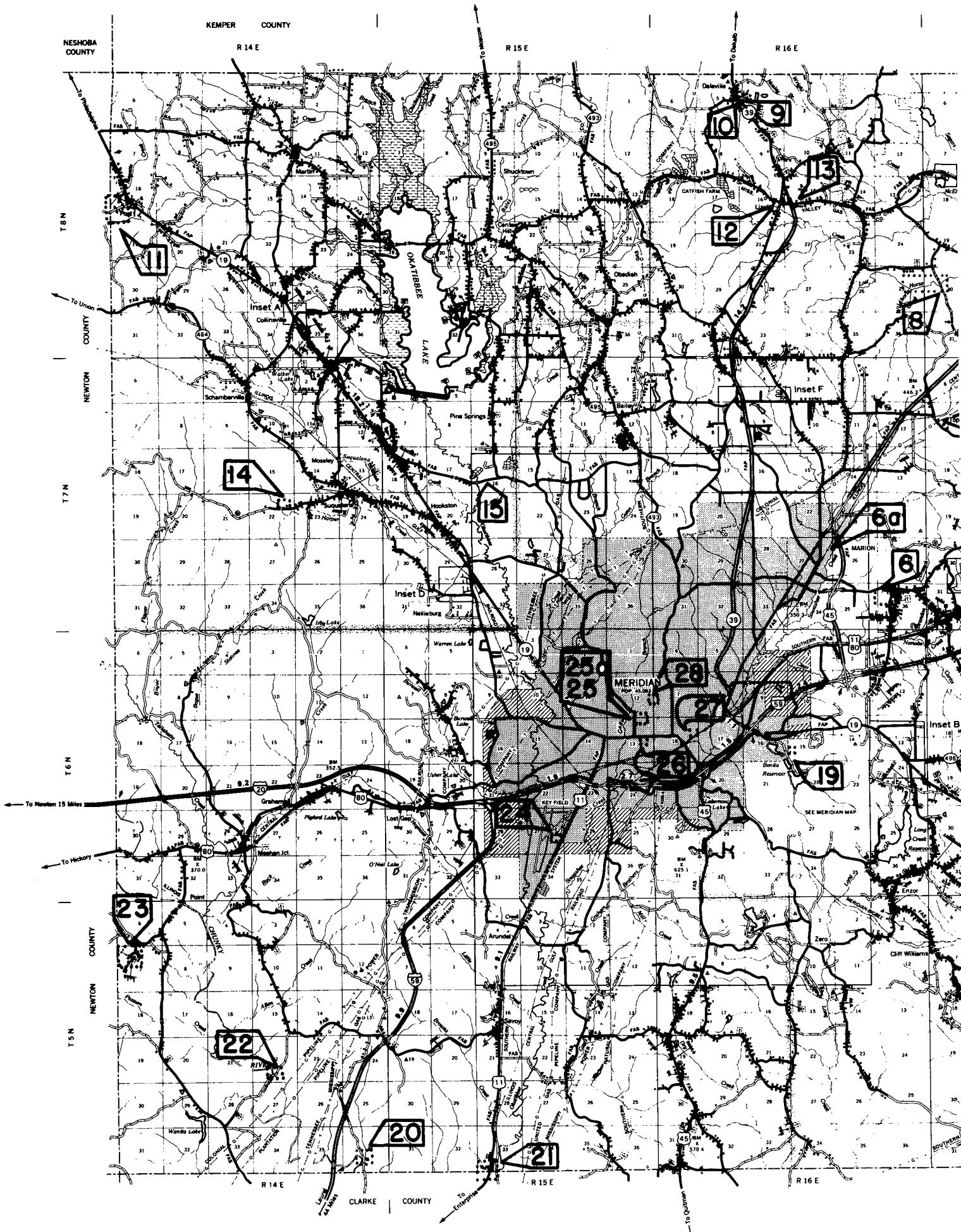
Numbered sites on the Paths to the Past map, designed by Grady Herrington and Maxey Baucum, correspond with the numbers below, and information on each site follows. While most of the sites described are indicated on the map, other points of interest are also mentioned. For more information on the historic sites, interested parties can contact the Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History at 482-9752 or by writing LCDAH, P.O. Box 5511, Meridian

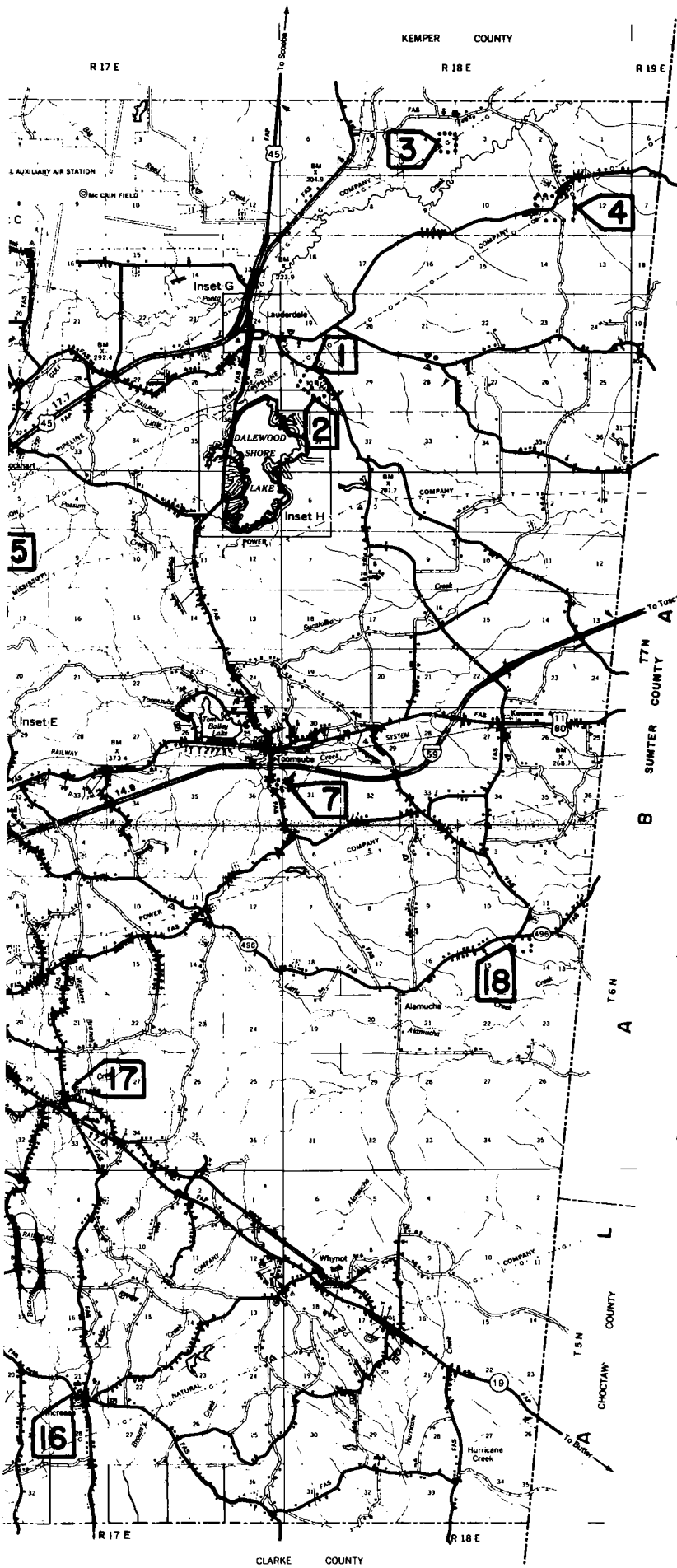
MS 39302. The Archives and the Meridian Public Library have additional information available to enrich visits to, or study of, the sites.

In addition, significant trends and developments in the county's history can be seen in the names and histories of its many communities, some of which have now disappeared from the maps. Exploring these ghost towns, and the villages that survived to become modern towns, provides yet another passport to the past. Summary descriptions of these settlements, based on information abstracted from WPA files compiled from 1936 to 1940, are offered. The files are now held by the Meridian Public Library and the LCDAH. The descriptions provide lasting tributes to the communities, which all, during different periods, played a vital role in the development of the county.

### THE NORTHEAST

The journey begins in the northeast section of Lauderdale County, an area encompassing the site of the former county seat, Marion, and the history-rich Lauderdale area to the north. The site of Coosa, once the largest Choctaw Indian village of its day, can be found in the area, as can Courthouse Hill, the scene of the county's earliest court sessions. Lauderdale Springs, and its adjoining Lauderdale Springs Confederate and Union Cemetery, also reflect important aspects of the county's history. Near the springs, on the famous trail blazed by pioneer Sam Dale, is Brinkalo, the restored inn of the E. C. McGonagill family and one of the oldest occupied homes in





## LEGEND

- (1) LAUDERDALE SPRINGS: Former site of antebellum resort, Confederate hospital and post-Civil War Orphans' Home. 1 1/2 miles southeast of Lauderdale.
  - (2) LAUDERDALE SPRINGS CONFEDERATE CEMETERY: Burial ground of 1,100 Confederate and Union soldiers. Next to Lauderdale Springs on Lauderdale-Kewanee Road.
  - (3) BRIKALO: Restored stagecoach inn of early 1800's. Private residence northeast of Lauderdale.
  - (4) COURTHOUSE HILL: Site of first court sessions in county. Near Alabama line on Oxford Road. Early settlement area.
  - (5) TOPTON & MAGNOLIA: Site of county's dividing ridge for watershed and old Barney Gunn Cotton Gin and General Store. Nearby, now-extinct town of Magnolia saw county's first hanging.
  - (6) OLD MARION: Early settlement. Former county seat and location of early courthouses. Near former U.S. Sugar Crops Experimental Station.
  - (6A) MARION STATION/MARION: County seat was moved to Meridian from here. Site of several antebellum homes and pre-Civil War businesses destroyed by Sherman.
  - (7) PETER BOZEMAN PLANTATION HOME: Private residence is only surviving antebellum plantation home. County's first sawmill industry was located nearby, in Kewanee.
  - (8) GAINES TRACE & COOSA VILLAGE SITE: Prior to 1830, one of the largest towns of the Choctaw Nation. Coosa, was situated here. The village once bordered still visible portion of Gaines Trace, an important trading route to Mobile.
  - (9) SAM DALE MEMORIAL PARK: Final resting place of pioneer Samuel Dale is marked by statue. 18 miles north of Meridian.
  - (10) COOPER NORMAL COLLEGE: Site of one of the county's first institutions of higher learning. Part of one of original dormitories still stands, across from Sam Dale monument in Daleville.
  - (11) BATTLEFIELD: Site of major battle during Choctaw Civil War. Bloody conflict left lasting name for an area on Lauderdale-Newton county line.
  - (12) LIZELIA: Home place of pioneer Sam Dale was here, in "Old Daleville."
  - (13) COLE CABIN: Original log cabin of early settler William Cole has been preserved behind Leonard Cooper home. One of the oldest homes still standing in the county.
  - (14) STERLING JOHNSON CABIN: Private residence near Suqualena is a post-Civil War log cabin featuring a typical "dog-trot." Sherman's troops passed near here.
  - (15) JIMMIE RODGERS' BIRTHPLACE: "The Father of Country Music" grew up here, near the Pine Springs community.
  - (16) CAUSEVILLE GENERAL STORE & GRIST MILL: Restored 19th-Century general store with operating grist mill. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Approximately 12 miles southeast of Meridian.
  - (17) COKER CABIN: Private residence is now being restored by descendants of original builder. One of the oldest continuously lived-in homes in county.
  - (18) WELCH PLANTATION SITE: Site of former plantation home of Dr. Jacob Perry Welch. In Alamucha area south of Salem Baptist Church. Early settlement area.
  - (19) OAKY VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH SITE: Now-vanished church was forerunner of Meridian's First Baptist Church. Established in 1839, Oaky Valley was one of the first churches built in county.
  - (20) DUNN'S FALLS: Historical park is being developed along waterfall harnessed by John Dunn, who operated a water-powered cotton factory on the Chunky River prior to and during the Civil War. 15 miles southwest of Meridian.
  - (21) ENTERPRISE: Once busy riverport town that played important role in development of region. 16 miles southwest of Meridian.
  - (22) STUCKY'S BRIDGE: Oldest bridge in the county was once haunt of Stucky, a notorious member of the Dalton Gang.
  - (23) CHUNKEYVILLE: Extinct community was one of earliest settlement areas in county. Established near former Choctaw Indian ballfield.
  - (24) KEY BROTHERS MUSEUM: Tribute to Meridian aviation pioneers Fred and Al Key. Housed in Meridian Municipal Airport at Key Field.
  - (25) HIGHLAND PARK: Historic city park. A main feature is a restored 1900's carousel. At 19th Street and 21st Avenue.
  - (25A) JIMMIE RODGERS MEMORIAL MUSEUM: Highland Park "depot" museum contains memorabilia highlighting career of "The Father of Country Music." Restored steam engine stands nearby as tribute to railroad men.
  - (26) ROSE HILL CEMETERY: Site of both the graves of the King and Queen of the Gypsies and a joint grave of soldiers who died in Meridian during the Civil War. City founders Ball and Raggsdale are also buried here. On Seventh Street.
  - (27) McLEMORE CEMETERY: One of oldest cemeteries in city. Established by city father Richard McLemore. Corner of Sixth Street and 14th Avenue.
  - (28) LABRING SONS CEMETERY: Oldest black cemetery in city. Oldest grave appears to be marked 1860. Corner of 26th Street and 35th Avenue.
- FINDING PATHS TO THE PAST: Some sites identified are not easily accessible to the public. Stars identify sites best suited for visits. For more information, consult the Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History. For more information write: LCDAH, P.O. Box 5511, Meridian Ms. 39302-5511.

# PATHS TO THE PAST

## LAUDERDALE COUNTY

## MISSISSIPPI

PREPARED BY  
LAUDERDALE COUNTY DEPARTMENT  
OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

the county. Farther south, the community of Tipton is the location of the old Barney Gunn Cotton Gin and General Store. This community, at the highest point in the county, is near the site of its first hanging, in now-extinct Magnolia.

The section is also home to Marion and the former site of Old Marion, once the most populous and prosperous communities in the county. Early courthouses were located in both villages, as were several plantation homes and early businesses. Last but not least, the communities of Toomsaba and Kewanee, both developed on the site of former Indian villages, have stories of their own to tell, Kewanee being the site of the first sawmill built in the county and Toomsaba boasting an antebellum plantation home.

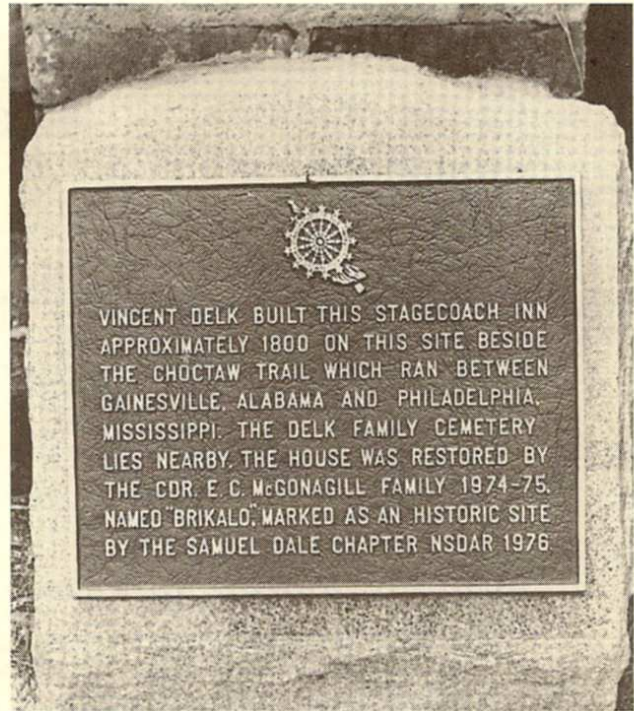
*NOTE: Large bold print numbers correspond with those on Paths to the Past map.*

**1. Lauderdale Springs:** Rumored to have "magic healing powers," the springs attracted Indians long before the arrival of the first white settlers, and later served as a drawing card for an antebellum resort, which was enlisted in the cause of the Confederacy as a hospital during the war and as an orphans' home later. The springs are on private property approximately one and half miles southeast of present-day Lauderdale, off the Lauderdale-Kewanee Road, next to the Confederate and Union Cemetery.

**2. Lauderdale Springs Confederate and Union Cemetery:** The cemetery is the burial ground for 1,100 Confederate and Union soldiers who died in the Confederate Hospital that once stood near the site. The cemetery is owned and maintained by the Winnie Davis Chapter 24 of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

**3. Brikalo:** The restored stagecoach inn dates to the early 1800s, includes an antique out-house, and is rumored to be haunted by spirits from the past. The private residence of Mr. and Mrs. E. C. McGonagill stands near an early pioneer trail still visible today north of Lauderdale.

**4. Courthouse Hill:** The isolated point east of Lauderdale near the fire tower on the Oxford Road was the site of the earliest court sessions held in Lauderdale County, and a cabin there



possibly served as an even earlier territorial headquarters before the county was organized.

**5. Tipton & Magnolia:** The county's highest point is located here, where the Barney Gunn Cotton Gin and General Store operated for many years. The community of Magnolia, where the county's first hanging occurred, was to the south. The area is almost two miles east of U. S. 45 North on the old Tipton-to-Russell Road.

**6 & 6A: Old Marion and Marion:** These communities were the sites of courthouses before 1870. The towns, which enjoyed antebellum prosperity, were hit hard by the Civil War. The area was home to the county's once-thriving strawberry industry, and the site of both the "Aunt Muggie" Warbington duel and the Marion Riot of 1881. The now-extinct village of Old Marion was east of present-day Marion, where village residents moved after the arrival of the Mobile and Ohio tracks in the 1850s.

**7. Toomsaba & Kewanee:** Early settlements both, Kewanee featured the first sawmill built in the county, and the Peter Bozeman plantation home still stands near Toomsaba today. In Kewanee, the Simmons-Wright General Merchandise Store still operates in the 'old-fashioned' way,

selling everything from seeds to overalls, one mile east of Interstate 59. The Peter Bozeman home, now the private residence of Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Crane, is one mile south of Toomsuba on the Toomsuba-Alamucha Road.

**8. Gaines Trace & Coosa Village Site:** Vestiges of Gaines Trace, a major early pioneer trail, which led to Mobile and passed by the large Choctaw town of Coosa, cut through this section near the Lizelia Road and the Meridian Naval Air Station. The former Indian village site, listed on the National Register of Historic Sites, is on private property and not open for tours.

## NORTHEAST COMMUNITY CHRONICLES

### Coonville

*Location:* Twenty-two miles northeast of Meridian.

*Legend:* This community, named for Coon Clay, was born in 1893 and died shortly afterwards, in 1905. Situated close to the Alabama line, the village once boasted a post office and a sawmill operation owned by Col. William Nunnery.

### Gilead

*Location:* Near Toomsuba on U. S. 80.

*Legend:* The small, scattered settlement was near the Mount Gilead Baptist Church. Some of the county's earliest settlers are buried in the old community cemetery two miles from the church. The area was first known as the Old Georgia community because many of the original settlers emigrated from Georgia in the 1830s.

### Kewanee

*Location:* Eighteen miles east of Meridian.

*Legend:* The name for this community comes from the Indian term *Kiwanie*, meaning "to make a noise." The county's earliest sawmill operation was here. The first post office was established in 1866. By 1940, the town also had five stores and a depot on the AGS Railroad line.

### Lockhart

*Location:* Thirteen miles northeast of Meridian.

*Legend:* The first post office was established in 1866 with S. Harvey as postmaster. The town was named for the first station agent for the

Mobile and Ohio railroad. The important Indian village of Coosa was west of here on Lost Horse Creek.

### Lauderdale & Lauderdale Springs

*Location:* Fifteen miles northeast of Meridian on U. S. highway 45 North.

*Legend:* The community, on the Mobile and Ohio railroad, was named for Col. James Lauderdale. In 1936, it had eight stores, a post office, depot, two gins, one sawmill and planer mill, three churches and a school. At the town's Hotel Belle, rates were \$1 per day. The first name of the present town was Mingo Houma, as a post office established in 1837 with postmaster Thomas H. Davis was dubbed. The area was also known as Davis Mills. The name was changed to Lauderdale Springs in 1846, as the village initially grew up around the springs, which lie to the east of the present-day Lauderdale. When the tracks arrived, the village was known as Lauderdale Station, with the name finally becoming Lauderdale.

### Markwell

*Legend:* Extinct village, possibly near Marion. No record of post office.

### Magnolia

*Location:* Between Topton and Russell on the old Topton-Russell Road.

*Legend:* Lauderdale County's first recorded hanging occurred in this now-extinct settlement. All that remains are the remnants of a graveyard.

### Melwyn

*Location:* Six miles east of Meridian.

*Legend:* This flag stop on AGS Railroad became a center of strawberry production. In 1914, J. A. Pigford and H. E. Pigford started a productive strawberry farm here, shipping two to three rail cars daily and working up to 200 pickers. Named in honor of the daughter of a railroad official, Melwyn died when the strawberry farm was abandoned in 1920.

### Ponta

*Location:* Nineteen miles north of Meridian.

*Legend:* Originally an Indian trading post. A post office was established here in 1850 and discontinued in 1905. The village, established on the Lauderdale-to-DeKalb road, took its name for an Indian word meaning Lost Horse.

### **Rushings Store**

*Location:* Twelve miles north of Meridian.

*Legend:* One of Charles Rushings' country stores was the heart of this settlement, which at one time featured a horse track and served as a voting precinct.

### **Russell**

*Location:* Seven miles northeast of Meridian.

*Legend:* John Russell, a railroad engineer, founded the community, and a post office established in 1867.

### **Tonic**

(later called Smith's Spur)

*Location:* Fifteen miles east of Meridian and two miles west of Kewanee.

*Legend:* Tonic boasted a post office from 1900 to 1910. A Mr. Boutwell suggested the name for the community, saying, "Well, I'm a Bout-well, so I guess we had better call this place Tonic." Later the place was called Blanks Station and, by 1936, was known as Smith's Spur.

### **Tisdale**

*Location:* Almost fourteen miles northeast of Meridian.

*Legend:* The short-lived settlement had a post office from 1901 to 1902.

### **Toomsuba**

*Location:* Fourteen miles east of Meridian.

*Legend:* Early settlers included Col. E. A. Durr. The name is an Indian word meaning "Tomb of a Dead Horse." The village survived the passage of time, and now is centered on a post office and several businesses operating just off Interstate 59.

### **Topton**

*Location:* Nine miles northeast of Meridian.

*Legend:* The area, with its first post office established in 1890, was so named because locals assumed it was the highest point between Mobile and St. Louis. The area was settled around 1861. Its post office was discontinued in 1910.

### **Vestals**

*Location:* Sixteen miles northeast of Meridian.

*Legend:* This settlement, extinct since 1910, was named for a family who owned property and a well-known spring called Vestal Springs.

## **THE NORTHWEST**

The northwestern section of Lauderdale County has progressed quietly through all the phases of history seen in other sections of the county since the days when early pioneer Sam Dale established his home in the area. Perhaps the most dramatic event to highlight the northwestern corner's history occurred when one of the bloodiest battles of the Choctaw Civil War took place in the 1750s. That conflict left behind the name Battlefield for the section where Lauderdale, Neshoba, Kemper and Newton counties adjoin.

Evidence of pioneer lifestyles, most notably the William Cole Cabin preserved on the Leonard Cooper farm, remains intact. Remains of an early institution of higher learning, the Cooper Institute, still stand in Daleville near the statue that pays tribute to Sam Dale. Farther south near Suqualena, the Sterling Johnson log house, built in the 1870s, has been restored.

Collinsville, Pine Springs, Suqualena, Bailey and other communities in the northwestern section retain the rural character that has marked the region since early farmers plowed their first fields. These communities provided much of the timber that fueled the lumber industry boom around the turn of the century and later managed to survive the hard times of the Great Depression by relying on the self-sufficiency their land allowed.

"The Father of Country Music," Jimmie Rodgers, was born in this section, as were many other less famous fiddlers and pickers who provided music for Saturday night square dances.

**9. Sam Dale Monument:** A statue stands in the heart of Daleville to mark the final resting place of county pioneer Samuel Dale.

**10. Cooper Normal College:** The site of the former Cooper Normal College is on either side of Mississippi Highway 39 in Daleville. Part of one of two dormitories for females is still standing on property owned by Bill Wright. Behind the dormitory remains is the Spring Hill spring.

**11. Battlefield:** This area was the site of a heated battle during the Choctaw Civil War. General William T. Sherman's Northern troops passed through during the War Between the States.



*Pioneer William Cole's second home was built near Lizelia around 1840. The home, a double-tiered, double-galleried Carolina-style plantation home reflects Federal and Greek Revival influences*

12. **Lizelia:** The homeplace of pioneer Dale was situated here. He was buried at the old Cochran Cemetery before his body was removed to Daleville. The original Daleville grew up around Dale's homeplace, once near what is now the main entrance to the Meridian Naval Air Station three miles west of present-day Lizelia.

13. **Cole Cabin:** The original log cabin of an early settler, William Cole, is located behind the home of the present Leonard Cooper residence. The log cabin is believed to be at least 140 years old.

14. **Sterling Johnson Log House & Suqualena:** This community was on Sherman's path to Meridian. The Johnson home has been restored to its original condition.

15. **Pine Springs and Jimmie Rodgers Birthplace:** The site of Jimmie Rodgers' birthplace is located in this community near the Okatibbee Lake.

## NORTHWEST COMMUNITY CHRONICLES

### Bailey

*Location:* Eight miles north of Meridian.

*Legend:* This settlement, named for Colonel S. M. Bailey, was born in 1858. Its post office was established in 1883. Colonel Bailey operated a sawmill and gin here. His son, John Bailey, served in the state Senate. In 1934, a disastrous cyclone hit the community.

### Battlefield

*Location:* Twenty-five miles north of Meridian.

*Legend:* A post office was established in this early settlement in 1849 with James M. Trussel as postmaster. The postmaster was the son of James Trussel, an early settler brought into the area by Sam Dale. The post office was discontinued in 1867. The area near the Newton County line was the site of a great battle between the Choctaw and Chickasaw prior to white settlement.

### **Bozeman**

*Location:* Eight miles northwest of Meridian.

*Legend:* This area, two miles south of Pine Springs, was named for Samuel M. Bozeman. The Bozeman post office was established in 1893 with Dora V. Bozeman as postmaster. The office was discontinued in 1906.

### **Bunnie**

*Location:* Nine miles north of Meridian.

*Legend:* This now-vanished settlement, named for Mrs. (R. S.) Bunnie Richardson, had a post office from 1890 to 1899.

### **Buttercup**

*Location:* Six miles north of Meridian.

*Legend:* The country community formed in 1885 was the site of the Jackson Springs picnic ground and the Buntin Dairy. A post office was established in 1899 with John M. Cook as postmaster, and discontinued in 1906.

### **Collinsville**

*Location:* Twelve miles north of Meridian on Mississippi 19.

*Legend:* Nathaniel M. Collins was the first postmaster of the Collinsville post office, established in 1884. The community was founded in 1867. Collins established a large plantation home, gin and general store here immediately after the Civil War. A railroad station at Schamberville was three miles to the southwest.

### **Dahlgreen**

*Location:* Eighteen miles from Meridian on Collinsville Road.

*Legend:* The now-extinct settlement was named for an officer in the Union Army.

### **Freeman**

*Location:* Eight miles north of Meridian near Suqualena on Mississippi 19.

*Legend:* A post office established here in 1901 was discontinued in 1906. Freeman's store was the center of the settlement.

### **Hookston**

*Location:* Nine miles northwest of Meridian near Suqualena.

*Legend:* The settlement was born after the Civil War and named for Alexander Hooks, who ran a store on the crossroads of what became Mississippi 19 and Mississippi 494.

### **Lizelia**

*Location:* Fifteen miles north of Meridian.

*Legend:* Old Daleville, where Sam Dale first settled, was approximately three miles west of present-day Lizelia. A post office established in 1886 was discontinued in 1911.

### **Hammel**

*Location:* Seven miles northwest of Meridian.

*Legend:* A now-extinct flag station named for J. H. Hammel was situated here.

### **Morrow**

*Location:* Nine miles north of Meridian between Bailey and Obadiah.

*Legend:* The community, also known as Andrew's Chapel, was named for early settler John Morrow. A post office established in 1890 was discontinued in 1910. John Morrow settled here before the Civil War.

### **Moseley**

*Location:* Twelve miles northwest of Meridian just beyond Suqualena.

*Legend:* Formerly known as Moseley's Crossing, the settlement formed in 1913 has been extinct since 1935. J. T. Moseley operated a sawmill when station siding and track were laid for flag stop on GM&N Railroad.

### **Nellieburg**

*Location:* Fifteen miles northwest of Meridian on Gulf, Mobile and Northern Railroad and Mississippi 19 west of Meridian.

*Legend:* Small community formed in 1915 was named for wife of railroad company president.

### **Obadiah**

*Location:* Fourteen miles north of Meridian.

*Legend:* A post office was established here in 1900.

### **Post**

*Location:* Eighteen miles from Meridian between Battlefield and Duffee on Mississippi 19 near Newton County line.

*Legend:* The population of this hamlet was 30 in 1900.

### **Schamberville**

*Location:* Sixteen miles northwest of Meridian, near Collinsville.

*Legend:* This now-extinct village was named for Captain Chamber, a member of the jewelry



firm of Meyer and Schamber in Meridian. Sawmill work and farming were the chief occupations. A post office established in 1913 later moved to Collinsville.

### Suqualena

*Location:* Eight miles northwest of Meridian on Mississippi 494.

*Legend:* Taking its name from an Indian word meaning Poor Hog, Suqualena had a post office established in 1851 and discontinued in 1860. W. R. Blanks was a pioneer merchant. Sherman's troops passed through the area in 1864.

### Wilsondale

*Location:* Thirteen miles west of Meridian on the GM&N Railroad between Suqualena and Collinsville.

*Legend:* The area featured a black settlement with a population of about 100 at the beginning of the twentieth century. The community boasted a sawmill, school and general merchandise store. The boll weevil hurt farmers in the area, where

the only known privately owned and operated race track run for blacks was located. The community was named for Professor Thomas Jefferson Wilson.

## THE SOUTHEAST

The southeastern section of Lauderdale County was one of the first areas to be settled by emigrants from the Carolinas and Georgia. The land was similar to that they had left behind except for one important factor—they had more room to breathe. Some of the first families settled in what had been an Indian village, Alamucha, making this now sparsely populated area one of the earliest settlements in the county. Near Alamucha, Dr. Jacob Perry Welch established a large plantation in antebellum days. Farther south, War of 1812 veteran James Madison Brewster built a prosperous farm on land he had acquired from the Choctaw. He was joined by Sir Peyton Coker, who helped settle the Vimville



*Causeyville General Store is listed on National Register of Historic Places*

area. Whynot's original post office, opened in 1852, was known as Whitesville until postal officials required a name change. The village with a name that draws attention was born prior to the Civil War in an area known today as Old Whynot, near the Boy Scouts' Camp Binachi. The post office was moved to present-day Whynot in 1879, where it stood near the oldest home, now occupied by the Means family. The Means home once served as a residence of teachers.

At the heart of Causeyville is the Causeyville General Store and Grist Mill. The general store, restored by owner Leslie Hagwood, is a nineteenth-century building that shows how community stores served vital roles in many rural areas across the South. Corn is still ground the old-fashioned way at the store, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, along with two other homes in the heart of Causeyville. Closer to Meridian, the site of one of the earliest churches in the county and the forerunner of the Meridian First Baptist Church, Oakey Valley Baptist, is located east of Bonita Reservoir.

**16. Causeyville General Store and Grist Mill:** Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the restored nineteenth-century general store still carries on an active trade in

Causeyville, approximately twelve miles south-east of Meridian on the Causeyville-Meridian Road.

**17. Coker Cabin:** This private residence, a log structure currently being restored, is one of the oldest continuously lived-in homes in the county. The cabin of Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Coker Jr. is a mile and a half from Coker's Chapel Methodist Church.

**18. Welch Plantation Site:** Dr. Jacob Perry Welch once operated one of the largest plantations in the county in the Alamucha area. The site, on Old Wire Road south of Salem Baptist Church on the property of Mrs. Millie Gunn Butler, is now marked only by remains of the large plantation home and the original farm bell.

## SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY CHRONICLES

### Alamucha

*Location:* Sixteen miles east of Meridian. Original settlement (Old Town) was three miles east.

*Legend:* The area was the site of Dr. J. P. Welch's plantation prior to the Civil War and Old Town was settled prior to the war also. The Alamucha post office was established in 1840,



*Cotton fields provided economic base for small villages and towns*

discontinued in 1867, and reestablished in 1894. It was finally discontinued in 1903. As early as 1840, the Alamucha Academy was located here. The Indian term Alamucha means "a hiding place." The historic Salem Baptist Church is in the area.

#### **Bonita**

*Location:* Two and a half miles east of Meridian.

*Legend:* Formerly known as McLemore Cemetery, the area was settled after 1833 by the McLemores, Strouds and Yarbroughs. The county's first landing field for airplanes was here, as were early industries such as the Pioneer Cotton Mill, built in 1866 near what is now Bonita Reservoir.

#### **Causeyville**

*Location:* Twelve miles southwest of Meridian.

*Legend:* The original settlement site was in the vicinity of the Old Ebenezer Church, which was constituted in 1842 west of the present community. The first post office was under the name of Edbony and was established in 1887 and closed in 1889. At this point, settlers shifted toward present-day Causeyville, which had a post office opened under the name of Increase in 1894. The post office was discontinued in 1929. The area was named for merchant William Causey.

#### **Celie**

*Location:* Eighteen miles southeast of Meridian.

*Legend:* This small settlement near the Clarke County line was named for Celie Reynolds, the daughter of D. J. Reynolds, who operated a store in the settlement. A post office established in 1904 was discontinued in 1914. Will McRaye operated a sawmill and commissary in Celie.

#### **Cliff Williams**

*Location:* Eight miles south of Meridian.

*Legend:* This flag station on a rail line was named in honor of Cliff Williams, a promoter of highways and railroads.

#### **Edbony**

*Location:* Twelve miles southeast of Meridian.

*Legend:* Named for Ed Martin and Bonaparte Williams, a post office established here in 1887 was discontinued in 1889. [See Causeyville]

#### **Enzor**

*Location:* Six miles southeast of Meridian.

*Legend:* This sparsely settled area was established around a general store owned by Ben Enzor. A post office opened in 1902 was discontinued in 1918.

#### **Hurricane Creek**

*Location:* Nineteen miles southeast of Meridian.

*Legend:* The Hurricane Creek post office was established in Clarke County in 1842 and moved back and forth across the county line several times. In the early days, the post office served a wide area in Clarke and Lauderdale counties, as well as Choctaw County, Alabama. It closed in 1925.

#### **Lodge**

*Location:* Six miles southeast of Meridian between Bonita and Vimville.

*Legend:* The area was named for a lodge built by blacks in 1905. The post office was established in 1911 and discontinued in 1918.

#### **Lisk**

*Location:* Twenty miles southeast of Meridian.

*Legend:* Never more than a hamlet, Lisk had a post office opened in 1886 discontinued a year later.

#### **Rawsonville**

*Location:* Ten miles east of Meridian.

*Legend:* The Rawsonville post office, established in 1854 by Charles Rawson, was discontinued in 1867.

#### **Stinson**

*Location:* Eight miles south of Meridian on U. S. 45 South.

*Legend:* Named for the Stinson brothers, who operated a nursery, the area was settled about 1886. A post office opened in 1899 and closed in 1903.

#### **Vimville**

*Location:* Nine and a half miles southeast of Meridian. Formerly known as Coker's Chapel.

*Legend:* The Vimville School was established between 1916 and 1920 near Coker's Chapel. A post office opened in 1885.

#### **Wright's**

*Location:* Seventeen miles due east of Meridian.

*Legend:* During the later part of the nineteenth century, a number of mills operated in the area, which was named for the Wright family. No post office was established.

#### Whynot

*Location:* Fifteen miles southeast of Meridian.

*Legend:* The McCrae Lumber Company ran a sawmill and planer operation here during the timber boom years. In its heyday, Whynot had three stores, two grist mills, a gin and other businesses.

#### Zero

*Location:* Nine and a half miles south of Meridian.

*Legend:* This settlement, known as a "jumping off place," was formed in 1853, and the Zero post office opened the same year. It was finally discontinued in 1905.

**19. Oakey Valley Baptist Church Site:** Meridian's founding father, Richard McLemore, helped build this church, now vanished, which was established in 1839 east of the Bonita Reservoir.

### THE SOUTHWEST

Rivers and railroads are at the heart of the southwestern region's history. The Chunky River, which cuts through this section, was the scene of the Chunky River Railroad Disaster during the Civil War. It also provided power for the mill operated by John Dunn at Dunn's Falls near the Lauderdale-Clarke County border before and during the war. Another large industry, the Wanita woolen mills, was also located near the river during the early nineteenth century.

The Chunky ran beneath one of the county's earliest bridges, Stucky's Bridge, where a notorious bandit was reported to have killed travelers during the early years of the nineteenth century. Stucky, a member of the Dalton Gang, was apparently one of many rogues, robbers and gamblers who operated here.

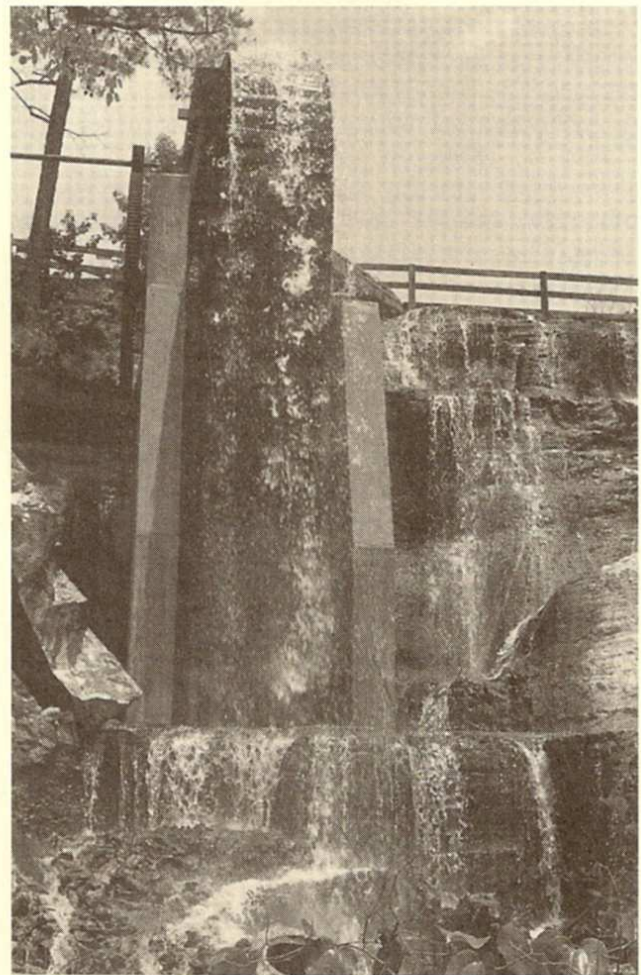
In addition to the Chunky River, there are numerous springs with colorful histories in the southwestern corner. Those springs include the famed "Fountain of Youth" near Meehan and Arundel Springs, a once-popular health resort.

The virtually extinct settlement of Sageville, which shares the distinction of being one of the

earliest in the county, was seven miles south of Meridian. Another early settlement in the southwestern section was Chunkeyville, which developed on the site of a large Indian ball field but died during the Civil War years. Later, railroads and the timber industry they served brought boom times to several communities in the section, including Meehan, former home of the large Cotton States lumber empire, and Lost Gap, which developed as a railroad flag station.

A visit to the southwest corner of Lauderdale County would not be complete without mention of its neighbor to the south in Clarke County, Enterprise. This historic community was a busy river port before the Civil War and a leading business center of the region.

**20. Dunn's Falls:** In 1854, an Irish immigrant named John Dunn channelled the energy of the Chunky River to power a mill he built here. By



*Dunn's Falls features water-powered grist mill*

1860, he had constructed a three-story frame building for a water-powered cotton factory. While Dunn's enterprises faded, his 65-foot waterfall survives as one of the most beautiful areas of the county. Now, the Pat Harrison Waterway District is developing the area into a park that will reflect its historic significance. The park is on the east bank of the Chunky River less than a mile north of the Clarke County line, fifteen miles south of Meridian.

**21. Enterprise:** A once-busy riverport town that played an important role in the development of the region, this community is about 16 miles southwest of Meridian on U. S. 11 in Clarke County.

**22. Stucky's Bridge:** The oldest bridge in the county, built in the mid-nineteenth century, was once the "haunt" of a bandit named Stucky. The bridge has been declared a landmark by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

**23. Chunkeyville:** This now-extinct community, one of the first in the county, was established on a former Indian ballfield and named for the Indian game of "Chunky Chitto." The town was once near Pine Forest Academy and Hospital, 19 miles west of Meridian.

## SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY CHRONICLES

### Arundel

*Location:* Six miles south of Meridian on U. S. 11.

*Legend:* Established on a tract of land where the antebellum plantation of B. F. Moore was once situated, Arundel eventually became the home of a resort, a small railway station and a freight station. The resort was built around Arundel Lithia Springs. Water from the springs was bottled and eventually sold throughout the United States.

### Bullards

*Location:* South of Meridian near Basic City on spur track of M&O Railroad.

*Legend:* Formed about 1900, this village has been extinct since 1925. A sawmill initially operated here by a Mr. Bullard was later owned by the Kimbrell Brothers. The population at the time the mill operated was 75. No churches, schools or post office were opened.



*Waters from Arundel Springs south of Meridian were once bottled and sold throughout the nation*

### Chunky Shoals

*Location:* Between Meehan Junction and Chunky on U. S. 80 in Newton County.

*Legend:* A swimming and fishing spot named for rapids in Chunky River.

### Graham

*Location:* Nine miles west of Meridian.

*Legend:* This village was named for W. J. Graham, a dealer in pine products who founded a sawmill and turpentine operation. The settlement, one mile from Meehan, was born in 1880 and has been extinct since 1932.

### Lost Gap

*Location:* Six miles west of Meridian.

*Legend:* The area was named Lost Gap by railroad workers who found their magnetic compass needles refused to work at this point, thrown off by heavy deposits of minerals. Lost Gap never had a post office and was essentially a railroad flag stop.

### LaPlace

*Location:* Fourteen miles west of Meridian.

*Legend:* W. J. Osborn, who homesteaded in the area in 1890, secured a post office, which was discontinued in 1891 when the lumber industry shifted closer to Meehan.

### Meehan

*Location:* Twelve miles west of Meridian.

*Legend:* Just after the Civil War, the Wanita Cotton and Woolen Mill was nearby. The settlement was later named for Meehan, who established the Cotton States Lumber Company. It was an important settlement in the timber boom years, as it was located at the junction of the A&V Railroad and the Tallahatta Railway, which ran north to Battlefield in Newton County. When Cotton States closed, other business activity left.

### Okatibbee

*Location:* Seven miles south of Meridian.

*Legend:* Named for Okatibbee Creek, the settlement has been extinct since 1858. First formed in 1848, the area was first served by a post office named Sageville. The name was changed to Okatibbee in 1855 and back to Sageville in 1857. The Okatibbee post office was closed in 1859.

### Point

*Location:* Fifteen miles west of Meridian.

*Legend:* A railroad station once stood here. A post office was established in 1895 and discontinued in 1907.

### Savoy

*Location:* Ten miles southwest of Meridian.

*Legend:* Formerly known as Corrine and Corry, this settlement grew up around a flag stop on the New Orleans and Northeastern Railroad. When the railroad came through in the 1880s, the stop was named Corrine, but a post office was established later under the name of Savoy. W. L. Fewell once operated a sawmill here.

### Sterling

*Location:* Seven miles south of Meridian on Old Valley Road.

*Legend:* Once known as Sageville and Okatibbee, a post office under the name of Sterling was established in 1894 and discontinued in 1905.

### Shumate

*Location:* Five miles west of Meridian.

*Legend:* A Shumate ran a sawmill here. A post office established in 1904 closed a year later.

## MERIDIAN

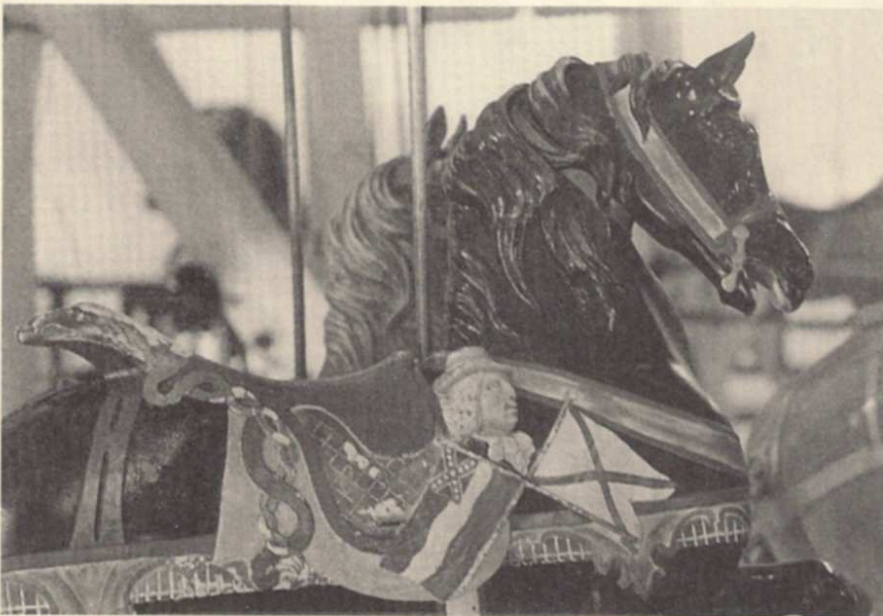
Monuments to some of its most prominent claims to fame—hundreds of anonymous railroaders, Jimmie Rodgers, and aviation pioneers Fred and Al Key, are among the many locations of historic significance within the city of Meridian. The Key Brothers Aviation Museum at the municipal airport is dedicated to the holders of the world's endurance flight record, set in 1935. Meridian's own Jimmie Rodgers, "The Singing Brakeman," is honored at Highland Park's Jimmie Rodgers Memorial Museum, which also features railroad equipment from the steam-engine era.

Perhaps the best way to see Meridian's story is through its buildings. In addition to two districts that won listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, several other neighborhoods have since achieved that status. The city's grand ladies, the Opera House and the Temple Theatre, are only two of the many downtown buildings of historical significance. One way to get a close-up look at historic buildings is on a leisurely Walk-About Meridian tour. These walking tours, made possible through the efforts of the Meridian Historical Preservation Commission and the Meridian Main Street Program, emphasize several buildings, some of which are now listed on the National Register of Historic Sites. Walking tours can be planned through the Meridian Main Street office.

Two districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places for their significance to the development of Meridian and the surrounding area are the Urban Center Historic District, which reflects the city's status when it was the largest city in the state, and the Depot District, east of the Urban Center District, which reflects the role railroads played in the development of business and industry in Meridian. Others included on the National Register include the Mid-Town District, the Poplar Springs Historic District, the West End Historic District, and the Highlands Historic District. In addition, The Merrehope District has been nominated for the distinction.



*Highland Park scene shows European-style pleasure spot*



*The Dentzel Carousel, which has been restored and now operates in Highland Park, is designated a National Historic Landmark*



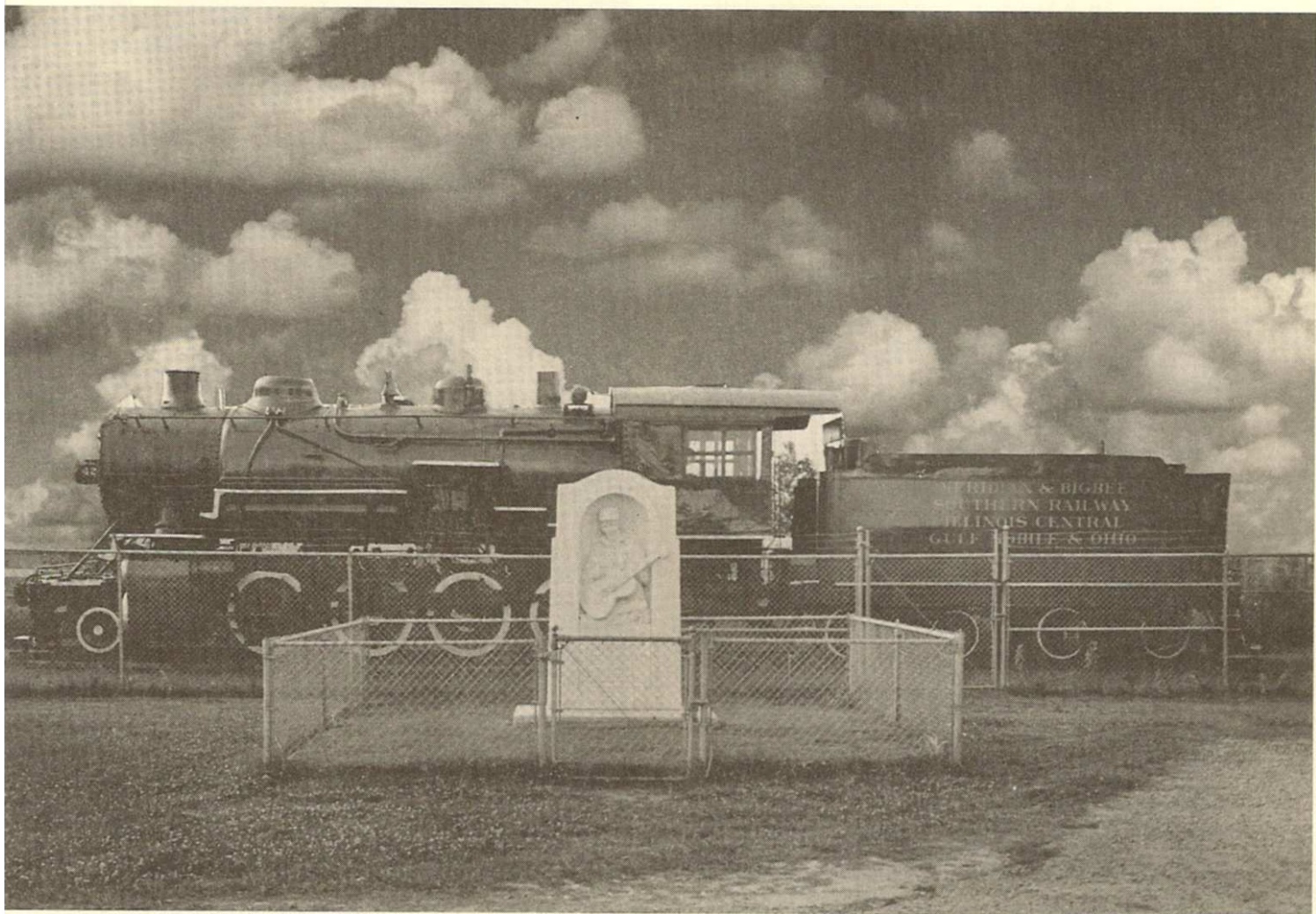
Three city cemeteries—Rose Hill, McLemore and Labring Sons—also tell the tale of Meridian's past. A host of other sites listed on the following Meridian tour, offer options for discovering paths to the past within the city limits.

**24. Key Brothers Aviation Museum:** Dedicated to the memory of Fred and Al Key, the museum in the airport terminal at Key Field, U. S. 11 South, offers a pictorial review of the history of flight, with particular emphasis on the brothers' achievement.

**25. Highland Park:** Built by the city in 1903 as a streetcar park, Highland Park, at Nineteenth Street and Forty-first Avenue, is home to the city's historic Dentzel Carousel, the Jimmie Rodgers Museum, and other attractions. The Carousel,

built in the 1890s by Gustav Dentzel, is one of only four of its type in existence. A centerpiece of the park, it is housed in a restored Victorian Carousel House. For more information on Highland Park, consult the Meridian Parks and Recreation office.

**25A. Jimmie Rodgers Museum & Train:** Constructed at Highland Park in 1976, the wood-frame, depot-like museum houses memorabilia relating to "The Father of Country Music," Jimmie Rodgers. Railroad equipment from the steam engine era is also displayed. Next to the museum is a 1917 Baldwin steam engine once used on the Meridian and Bigbee Railroad. It serves as a memorial to all deceased railroad men. The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

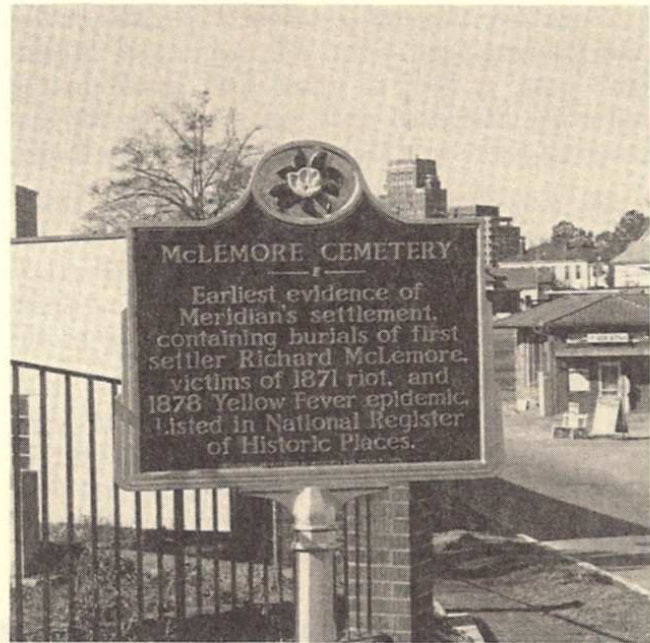


*Photo shows memorial to Jimmie Rodgers before it was moved to its present location in Highland Park*

26. **Rose Hill Cemetery:** In addition to the grave sites of the King and Queen of the Gypsies, this historic cemetery at the western end of Seventh Street, also includes a memorial to Confederate soldiers killed in Meridian during the Civil War. Confederate naval hero Charles W. Read is buried near the memorial.

27. **McLemore Cemetery:** One of the first graveyards established in Meridian, the cemetery, at the corner of Sixth Street and Tenth Avenue, was the family burying ground of Richard McLemore, first settler of Meridian. Others buried here include victims of the 1878 yellow fever epidemic. Nearby was an early Baptist church, which was used as an arsenal during the Civil War.

28. **Labring Sons Cemetery:** The oldest black cemetery in Meridian, with one grave dating back to the 1860s, this graveyard was established by a Masonic group. It is at on the corner of Twenty-sixth Street and Thirty-fifth Avenue.



*McLemore Cemetery in downtown Meridian*



*Ragsdale Monument stands in Rose Hill Cemetery*



*The Scottish Rite Cathedral, built ca. 1914, stood on Twenty-third Avenue before it was destroyed by fire*



*Merrehope, site of one of Meridian's most memorable moments*

#### OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST

**Merrehope & the F. W. Williams Home:** Merrehope, believed to be the only antebellum home in Meridian, is a 20-room mansion restored and furnished by the Meridian Restorations Foundation. The original cottage from which the home grew, in the rear of the current structure, was used as headquarters for Confederate General Leonidas Polk and was spared by General Sherman. After the war, the home was expanded. It is now the site of the annual Trees of Christmas Tour held each December.

In 1978, the Restoration Foundation had the Frank W. Williams house moved nearby. This Victorian home was built in 1886 as the home of Williams, a Meridianite who played an important role in the development of Mississippi's insurance industry.

The two homes are at 905 Thirty-first Avenue in Meridian. They are open year-round Monday through Saturday, and can be toured for a small admission fee.

**Meridian Museum of Art:** Formerly the Carnegie Library, the Museum of Art contains three galleries, and exhibits change each month. The museum is at the corner of Seventh Street and Twenty-fifth Avenue.

**Temple Theatre:** Opened as a movie house in 1927, the theatre boasted the second-largest stage in the United States. The theatre, at the corner of Eighth Street and Twenty-fourth Avenue, continues to host a wide variety of community events.

**Meridian Opera House:** Plans are evolving for the restoration of the opulent opera house now inaccessible within the Marks-Rothenberg Building. The Opera House, which opened in 1890, was the scene of performances by such stars as Sarah Bernhardt and Lillian Russell. Converted to a movie theatre in 1919, the Opera House was closed in 1926.

**Lauderdale County Courthouse and Annex:** Built in 1904-1905, the seat of government has

been remodeled twice. The statue in front of the building on the corner of Twenty-first Avenue and Fifth Street honors Civil War veterans. Across the street is the former Lamar Hotel, a structure built in 1927 that now serves as the Courthouse Annex.

**Meridian City Hall:** The design of this center of municipal government, on Twenty-fourth Avenue, was considered most progressive when it was completed in 1914.

**Threefoot Building:** This fifteen-story building in the heart of downtown Meridian was named for its owners, early cotton merchants. It was once featured in Ripley's "Believe It or Not," as a "15-story building built on a 'threefoot' lot."

**American Legion Monument:** This statue, where Sixth and Seventh Streets converge and intersect with Twenty-third Avenue, was built as a memorial to soldiers who died during World War I. It was designed by R. C. Springer of Meridian and was unveiled during the Armistice Day Celebration of 1927.

**Meridian Railroad Depot:** Listed on the National Register, the station was completed in 1906. Part of the Union Station has since been demolished. As late as 1930, Meridian had seven trunk lines passing through or terminating at the depot. Consolidation has cut that number to three, including Amtrak passenger service. The building is the heart of the Depot Historic District on Front Street.

**Father Louis Vally's Grave:** On the grounds of St. Patrick's Catholic Church is the grave of Father Louis Vally, a Catholic priest who served with valor during the yellow fever epidemic of 1878. It is the only grave located outside a cemetery in Meridian, a special dispensation having been granted in tribute to his service to the people of the city. The grave is off Vally Street at Twenty-sixth Avenue.

## MERIDIAN AREA COMMUNITY CHRONICLES

*Note:* Most of these settlements, originally outside the city limits, later were absorbed by Meridian.

### Arklet

(formerly McInnis Crossing)

*Location:* Once three and a half miles northwest.

*Legend:* This section was known as McInnis Crossing when it was formed in 1890. When the AGS Railroad built a line in 1883, a switch was built here.

### Biggers

*Location:* Once one and a half miles from Meridian between U. S. highway 45 South and Twenty-second Avenue.

*Legend:* This suburb of Meridian had a post office from 1905 to 1907. Richard Biggers was postmaster.

### Brunson

*Location:* Three and a half miles south.

*Legend:* Formed from a farm settlement, the community had a post office from 1893 to 1895. It was eventually absorbed by Meridian.

### Complete

*Location:* Now included within Meridian City limits on boundary lines of East Mississippi State Hospital.

*Legend:* A post office was established here in 1896 in the store of W. P. Henson. Early residents of Meridian built homes here.

### Eastville

*Location:* Four miles south.

*Legend:* This country community was formed in 1891, east of Zero. A sawmill was operated by M. E. Moore.

### Lucile

*Location:* Two miles north.

*Legend:* Also known as the Poplar Springs community, this area was absorbed by Meridian in 1927. Earlier, the area was the site of the Lucile post office, which was between Poplar Springs Elementary and Meridian High School. The area was a popular resort spot, with pavilions and springs. About 1900, a post office was established in the Scarborough store and named for the daughter of R. J. Johnson.

APPENDIX

# Partial Listing of Elected Officials Lauderdale County, Mississippi

This is a partial listing from the named sources. In election years the information is as complete as available information allows. In interim years changes are listed. Elections were held every four years.

SOURCES: Board of Police Minutes, Circuit Court Records, Chancery Court Records, Other County Records, Newspapers, Secretary of State Records, and Mississippi Department of Archives and History Records.

---

1835

---

Sheriff: L. W. Pennington  
Deputy Sheriff: E. L. Doty  
Judge, 5th Judicial District: Thomas S. Sterling  
Circuit Clerk: James Keeton  
Deputy Clerk: John Culbraith/ Owen Lee  
Tax Assessor & Collector: David Russell  
Attorneys: James Hair, Joseph Heyfren, John Watts,  
Henry Mounger, Green Grace.

Circuit Clerk: Lewis Spinks  
Board of Police: James Castles, President, T. R. Crews,  
V. C. Delk, L. Crane (or S. Crane).  
Justice of Peace: Joseph Martin, Kensley Shields, Vincent Delk, H. M. Finley, James P. Hill.  
Constable: Thomas Hightower, John A. Reed, R. B. G. Harper, J. P. Gray.  
Attorneys: Peter Doty, Henry Calhoun, James Keeton, Daniel Cameron, Edward Harper, James G. Gordon.

---

1836

---

Sheriff: Isham Pace  
Deputy Sheriff: John B. Collins/ B. F. Parker  
Judge, 5th Judicial District: Thomas S. Sterling  
Circuit Clerk: John Culbraith  
Deputy Circuit Clerk: Owen Lee  
Board of Police: Duncan Calhoun, President

---

1839

---

Sheriff & Tax Collector: Samuel H. Cochran  
Deputy Sheriff: R. B. G. Harper  
Judge 5th Judicial District: Henry Mounger  
Circuit Clerk: Lewis Spinks  
County Surveyor: Jesse Killingsworth  
Board of Police: T. R. Crews, President  
Justice of Peace: E. R. Brown, Benjamin Harry, W. J. House, Anderson Bounds, J. B. Rawlings, J. Thompson, Nicholas T. Walton, William H. White  
Beat 2: Elisha Moseley  
Beat 3: Benjamin Carpenter; John Trussell  
Beat 5: Paul M. Jones

---

1837

---

Sheriff: Isham Pace  
Deputy Sheriff: William Mann / J. B. Henderson  
Judge 5th Judicial District: Thomas S. Sterling  
Circuit Clerk: John Culbraith  
Deputy Circuit Clerk: Owen Lee  
Justice of Peace: Abia Clay  
Attorneys: Jarris Murray, Ransom McElroy, Joseph Heyfren, Theodore Swift.

---

1840

---

Sheriff & Tax Collector: Samuel H. Cochran  
Probate Judge: E. R. Brown  
Circuit Clerk: Lewis Spinks  
Board of Police: T. R. Crews, President  
Justice of Peace: Joseph Martin, Willie J. House, Benjamin Harry, J. B. Rawlings.  
Beat 1: E. R. Brown; J. B. Collins  
Beat 2: Elisha Moseley  
Beat 5: Paul M. Jones

---

1838

---

Sheriff: S. H. Cochran  
Deputy Sheriff: J. Castles  
Judge 5th Judicial District: Thomas S. Sterling  
County Treasurer: James Ray  
Chancery Clerk: James Keeton

---

1841

Sheriff: William H. White  
Probate Judge: E. R. Brown  
Circuit Clerk: James Ray  
Board of Police: Thomas R. Crews, President, John Trussell, Nicajah Crenshaw.  
Justice of Peace: H. M. Finley, James B. Rawlings, E. J. Thomson, Benjamin Harry, Joseph Martin, John B. Collins, E. R. Brown, Elisha Moseley, W. J. House.

---

1842

Sheriff: William H. White  
Special Deputy: James F. Dement  
Probate Judge: E. R. Brown  
Circuit Clerk: James Ray  
Board of Police: Nicajah Crenshaw, John Trussell, E. R. Brown, Allen Russell.  
Justice of Peace: William M. Hancock, H. M. Finley, Benjamin Harry, Etheldred Thomson, E. R. Brown, John Henderson, William C. Foster, Daniel Cameron.  
Beat 4: Bryant Rigby (Baptist minister)

---

1843

Sheriff: William H. White  
Probate Judge: E. R. Epps  
Probate & Circuit Clerk: James Ray  
Deputy Probate Clerk: W. J. Buckhalter  
Board of Police: T. R. Crews, President, John Trussell.  
Justice of Peace: E. R. Brown, H. M. Finley, William C. Foster, Etheldred J. Thomson, Benjamin Harry, Daniel Cameron, William R. Mason, James McNeil, John Henderson\*.

\*1st owner of land where Old Marion was located.

Attorneys: A. B. Dawson

---

1844

Sheriff: W. H. White  
Deputy Sheriff: Thomas D. Spain  
Probate Judge: E. R. Brown  
Circuit Judge: Henry Mounger  
Probate/Circuit Clerk: Benjamin F. Parke / James Ray  
Board of Police: Christopher Davis  
Justice of Peace: George B. Patty, James McNull, L. W. D. Joyner, William C. Foster, Samuel Simmons, William R. Mason, Bryant Rigby, John Henderson, Benjamin Mason, Robert Brown, John A. Blackman, Daniel Cameron (Acting).

*Note: W. C. Foster mentioned as President of Board of Police sometime prior to 1844*

---

1845

Sheriff: W. H. White  
Deputy Sheriff: William Keeton  
Circuit Judge: Henry Mounger  
Circuit/Probate Clerk: B. F. Parke  
District Attorney: George Wood  
Justice of Peace: William C. Foster, William New, G. B. Petty, Samuel Simmons, W. R. Mason, Daniel Cameron.

---

1846

Sheriff: William V. Raney  
Judge 5th Judicial District: Henry Mounger  
Judge 4th Judicial District: Armstead B. Dawson  
Probate Clerk: James Ray, Jubal B. Hancock  
Circuit Clerk: Benjamin F. Parke  
Deputy Clerk: Jesse G. Steele  
District Attorney: George Wood  
Attorneys: McElroy, Daniel.

---

1847

Sheriff & Tax Collector: William V. Rainey  
Deputy Sheriff: William Dearman  
Judge 4th Judicial District: Armstead B. Dawson  
Probate Judge: Jubal B. Hancock  
County Treasurer: James A. Horne  
Probate/Circuit Clerk: Benjamin F. Parke  
Coroner: George B. Petty  
District Attorney: George Wood  
Board of Police: L. B. Baine, President, George W. Clinton, L. B. Moore, William Newton, Allen Arant.  
*Note: Archibald White mentioned as former County Treasurer*

---

1848

Sheriff & Tax Collector: William V. Raney  
Judge 4th Judicial District: A. B. Dawson  
Probate Judge: Jubal B. Hancock  
County Treasurer: James A. Horne  
Probate/Board/Circuit Clerk: Benjamin F. Parke  
Deputy Clerk: Richard H. Herbert  
Tax Assessor: Richard B. G. Harper  
Coroner: George B. Petty  
Ranger: Walter Welch  
District Attorney: George Wood  
Board of Police: L. B. Baines, President, L. B. Moore, Isaac Suttles, Abia Clay, Daniel Cameron.  
Justice of Peace, Beat 5: Wesley W. Hall (Alamucha area)

---

1849

Sheriff & Tax Collector: William V. Raney  
Deputy Sheriff: R. N. Calhoun  
Judge 4th Judicial Circuit: Armstead Dawson  
Probate Judge: Jubal B. Hancock  
County Treasurer: James A. Horne  
Probate/Board/Circuit Clerk: Benjamin F. Parke  
Deputy Clerk: Richard H. Herbert  
District Attorney: George Wood  
Board of Police: L. B. Banes, President, L. B. Moore,  
Isaac Suttles, Abia Clay, Daniel Cameron.

---

1850

Sheriff & Tax Collector: Richard B. G. Harper  
Deputy Sheriff: W. P. Lasley  
Judge 4th Judicial Circuit: John Watts  
Probate Judge: Jubal B. Hancock  
County Treasurer: Charles E. Rushing  
Probate/Board/Circuit Clerk: Benjamin F. Parke  
Deputy Clerk: Charles W. Henderson  
District Attorney: George Wood  
Board of Police: L. B. Banes, President, William New-  
ton, William Parker, John A. Shelton, Abia Clay.

---

1851

Sheriff & Tax Collector: Richard B. G. Harper  
Deputy Sheriff: W. P. Lasley  
Judge 6th Judicial District: Francis M. Rogers  
Judge 4th Judicial District: John Watts  
Probate Judge: Jubal B. Hancock  
County Treasurer: Charles E. Rushing  
Probate/Board/Circuit Clerk: Benjamin F. Parke  
District Attorney: George Wood  
Board of Police: L. B. Banes, President, Abia Clay,  
John A. Shelton, William Parker, William Newton.  
Justice of Peace: W. W. Warden, G. B. Stiles, William  
J. Daniel, Samuel Simmons, W. V. White.

---

1852

Sheriff & Tax Collector: Richard B. G. Harper  
Judge 4th Judicial Circuit: John Watts  
Probate Judge: Jubal B. Hancock  
County Treasurer: Charles E. Rushing  
Probate/Board/Circuit Clerk: Benjamin F. Parke  
District Attorney: George Wood  
Board of Police: William Keeton, President, William  
R. Dennis, John Trussell, John G. Gardner, James  
H. Suttles.  
Justice of Peace: W. M. Hancock, V. A. Evans, W. W.  
Warden, G. R. Stiles, William J. Daniel, W. V.  
White, W. R. Dennis, Samuel Simmons.

---

1853

Sheriff & Tax Collector: Richard B. G. Harper  
Deputy Sheriff: W. F. Alford  
Probate Judge: Jubal B. Hancock  
County Treasurer: Charles E. Rushing  
Probate/Board Clerk: Benjamin F. Parke  
Circuit Clerk & Tax Assessor: William P. Lasley  
Board of Police: William Keeton, President, Wilbur R.  
Dennis, James H. Suttles. C. P. Partin replaced John  
Trussell who died in office just prior to 1/11/1853,  
John G. Gardner (J. P. before elected to Board).  
Jailer: L. B. Banes  
Justice of Peace: William V. White, William J. Daniel,  
G. B. Stiles, V. A. Evans, W. W. Warden, Steve  
Brown, Samuel Simmons, R. M. Kinley, William R.  
Dennis, John B. Collins, J. R. Jones, W. C. Cal-  
houn, John G. Gardner, William M. Hancock, C.  
W. Henderson.  
Constable, Beat 2: John Watkins  
Beat 4: Daniel H. Rainey  
Beat 5: Elbert J. Lawyers

---

1854

Sheriff & Tax Collector: Richard B. G. Harper  
Probate Judge: Jubal B. Hancock  
County Treasurer: Charles E. Rushing  
Probate/Board Clerk: William S. Lasley  
Circuit Clerk: B. F. Parke  
Tax Assessor: Warren F. Alford  
Surveyor: C. W. Miller  
Coroner: W. W. Hale  
Ranger: William G. Calhoun  
County Auctioneer: B. F. Parke  
Board of Police: Benjamin Meadow, President, Asber-  
ry E. Gray, Alford D. Pigford, William Parker,  
Robert Akins (Eakins?).  
Justice of Peace: C. W. Henderson, R. McKinley, W. V.  
White, John R. Jones, Samuel Simmons, W. W.  
Warden, A. Bell, V. A. Evans, J. B. Collins, W. J.  
Daniel, I. E. R. Fowley (acting).  
Constable, Beat 4: R. P. Dallas replaced Robert W.  
Maxey, who resigned  
Beat 5: John R. Jones

---

1855

Sheriff & Tax Collector: Richard B. G. Harper  
Probate Judge: Jubal B. Hancock  
Probate/Board Clerk: Benjamin F. Parke replaced  
William P. Lasley, who died in office  
Tax Assessor: Warren F. Alford  
Board of Police: Dist. 1: Benjamin Meader, President  
Dist. 2: Robert Eakin  
Dist. 3: William Parker  
Dist. 4: A. E. Gray

Dist. 5: Alford D. Pigford  
Justice of Peace: J. J. Dyess, J. B. Hancock, W. V. White, John Calhoun, A. Bell, John Stinson, J. M. Richardson.  
Beat 1: C. W. Henderson; W. J. Daniel  
Beat 2: W. W. Warden; R. McKinley  
Beat 3: Samuel Simmons; John B. Collins  
Beat 4: Green B. Stiles; Stephen Brown; Vincent A. Evans  
Beat 5: A. Bell; W. V. White, Jo. A. Jones  
Constable: Beat 4: V. J. Harrington

---

1856

---

Sheriff & Tax Collector: Benjamin F. Parke  
Probate Judge: William J. Daniel  
County Treasurer: C. E. Rushing  
Probate/Board Clerk: W. V. Raney  
Circuit Clerk: C. W. Henderson  
Tax Assessor: John R. Watts  
County Surveyor: C. W. Willis  
County Coroner: John Bishop  
County Ranger: Walter Welch  
Board of Police: Dist. 1: George S. Pace  
Dist. 2: William H. Hunt  
Dist. 3: Solomon Ethridge  
Dist. 4: A. E. Gray  
Dist. 5: W. W. Hall, President  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: John Calhoun; Jubal B. Hancock; Thomas Stokes, W. W. Mayfield; Abraham Bell  
Beat 2: R. McKinley; Thomas Simmons; J. W. D. W. McElroy; W. P. Payne  
Beat 3: J. B. Collins; A. H. Forest; S. B. Moore; J. F. M. Wooten; Edward Jolly; Elijah Dansby  
Beat 4: J. G. Gillaspie; David E. Rich; C. M. Gaddis; William Ashley  
Beat 5: Riley Shamburger; Peter H. Bozeman; William H. White; Alfred D. Pigford  
Sageville: V. J. Harrington; John Stinson; Wesley Taylor

---

1857

---

*Note:* Board of Police ordered wall taken out between Chancery and Circuit Court Clerk's offices—became one office.

Sheriff, Tax Collector & Jailer: Benjamin Meaders  
Probate Judge: William J. Daniel  
Probate/Board Clerk: W. V. Raney  
Chancery Clerk: C. W. Henderson  
Tax Assessor & Deputy Clerk: J. R. Watts  
Deputy Tax Assessor: Daniel Cameron  
Board of Police: William H. Hunt, Solomon Ethridge, George L. Pace, W. W. Hall, President, resigned 10/31/57, W. W. Pigford replaced Hall on Board, A. E. Gray replaced Hall as President.

Justice of Peace: John Calhoun, J. G. Gallaspy, John B. Collins, Thomas Simmons, A. H. Forest, R. McKinley, P. H. Bozeman, J. B. Hancock, W. H. White, L. B. Moore.  
Constable: Beat 3: E. Dansby; William Ashley  
Beat 5: Riley Shamburger

---

1858

---

Sheriff & Tax Collector: W. F. Alford  
Probate Judge: J. M. Brooke  
County Treasurer: C. E. Rushing  
Circuit Clerk: C. W. Henderson  
Probate/Board Clerk: W. L. Mayfield  
Tax Assessor: Alfred Pigford  
County Surveyor: M. N. Brackett  
County Coroner: Sherod Wilson  
Ranger: Sherod Wilson / Walter Welch  
Board of Police: George S. Pace, President pro-tem, Solomon Ethridge, William H. Hunt, A. E. Gray, W. W. Pigford—temporary, filled by Jesse B. Eaves after special election.  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: W. F. McKinnon; J. M. Pigott  
Beat 2: W. W. Warden; Robert McKinley  
Beat 3: W. Parks; W. C. Moseley  
Beat 4: A. C. Gray; John Warren  
Beat 5: P. H. Bozeman; John W. Wilkinson; John B. Collins  
Constable: Beat 5: W. W. Pigford

---

1859

---

Sheriff & Tax Collector: W. F. Alford  
Chancery Judge: William M. Hancock  
Probate Judge: J. W. Brooke  
Chancery/Circuit Clerk: C. W. Henderson  
Probate Clerk: W. L. Mayfield  
County Ranger: S. H. Wilson  
Board of Police: J. M. D. McElroy, President, W. H. Hunt, J. B. Eaves, A. E. Gray (resigned about Oct. 1859).  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: W. F. McKinnon, J. M. Pigott; S. S. Barker  
Beat 2: W. W. Warden; Robert McKinley  
Beat 3: W. Parks; C. Moseley  
Beat 4: A. C. Gray; John Warren  
Beat 5: P. H. Bozeman; C. C. Willis; John W. Wilkinson  
Marion: W. L. Spinks



---

**1860**

---

*Note:* Aug. 6, 1860 new cages ordered for jail at Old Marion  
Sheriff & Tax Collector: Warren F. Alford  
Deputy Sheriff: C. M. Gaddis  
Probate Judge: James W. Brooke  
County Treasurer: C. E. Rushing  
Probate Clerk: W. L. Mayfield  
Circuit Clerk: C. W. Henderson  
Tax Assessor: A. D. Pigford  
County Surveyor: D. M. Currie  
County Coroner: John Ethridge  
County Ranger: S. H. Wilson  
Board of Police: Beat 1: John D. W. McElroy, President  
Beat 2: John R. McLaurin / J. W. Parker  
Beat 3: M. D. L. House / P. H. Partin  
Beat 4: David E. Rich  
Beat 5: Jesse B. Eaves  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: Al G. Gonce; G. W. Roberts;  
W. G. Grace  
Beat 2: W. V. Ramsey, Thomas Jones  
Beat 3: H. L. Williamson; O. S. Mason; Alsa Pace  
Beat 4: O. M. Gaddis; V. N. Partin; D. E. Rich  
Beat 5: A. J. Rayner; J. W. Williams; C. C. Willis; J.  
W. Wilkinson  
Old Marion: L. L. Barker  
Special Bailiff: J. W. Agnew  
Swamp Land Commissioners: appointed by order  
Aug. 7, 1860: John R. McLaurin; C. E. Rushing; J.  
J. Dyess  
Mayor of Meridian: J. H. Gibbs (First Mayor, elected  
5/21/1860)  
Meridian Aldermen: I. S. O. G. Greer, W. J. Berry,  
John T. Ball, William Massingale (Secretary).  
Mayor Marion Station: A. F. Brown (elected  
6/7/1860)  
Aldermen: R. B. Carpenter, B. F. Parker, J. B. Moore,  
J. R. Smith, J. J. Glenn.

---

**1861**

---

Sheriff & Tax Collector: W. F. Alford  
Special Deputy: S. H. Alford  
Probate Judge: J. W. Brooke  
County Treasurer: W. P. Andrews  
Probate Clerk: W. L. Mayfield  
Circuit Clerk: C. W. Henderson  
County Surveyor: W. H. White / D. M. Curry  
Board of Police: Benjamin F. Parke, President, Jesse B.  
Eaves, M. D. L. House, William Clark.  
Justice of Peace: Beat 5: P. H. Bozeman; John W.  
Williams  
Centre Beat: W. G. Grace  
Meridian: Jas. W. Shackelford  
President, School Board: W. V. White

---

**1862**

---

Sheriff & Tax Collector: W. F. Alford  
Probate Judge: J. W. Brooke  
County Treasurer: L. B. Hancock  
Probate Clerk: W. F. Mayfield  
Circuit Clerk: C. W. Henderson  
Tax Assessor: A. D. Pigford  
County Surveyor: W. H. White  
County Coroner: J. Shedd  
County Ranger: W. H. Welch  
Board of Police: Beat 1: B. Meadors / Benj. F. Parke  
Beat 2: W. C. Wood / John W. Parker  
Beat 3: H. L. Williamson / P. H. Partin  
Beat 4: Joseph Akins  
Beat 5: William Clark  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: J. Shedd; E. G. Gibbons; D.  
C. Kinnard  
Beat 2: J. W. McConnell; W. W. Warden  
Beat 3: O. S. Mason; J. N. Rhodes  
Beat 4: Joseph Akins; D. E. Rich  
Beat 5: W. W. Hall; A. J. Rainer  
Meridian: ——— Rayfield

---

**1863**

---

*Note:* The Circuit Clerk's office began to maintain the general orders of the Confederate States Government on 8/31/1863. Thus the county government was under the control of the Confederate States. The County became a Division Headquarters and an induction center for the Confederate Army not only from Lauderdale County but also for the surrounding counties.

*Notes:* Small pox epidemic.

Deer Law 1863.

Distributed corn and salt to residents.

Sheriff & Tax Collector: W. F. Alford  
Deputy Sheriff: W. H. Cherry  
Probate Judge: J. W. Brooke  
Deputy County Treasurer: L. B. Hancock  
Probate Clerk: W. L. Mayfield  
Circuit Clerk: C. W. Henderson  
Board of Police: B. Meadows, President, W. C. Wood,  
H. L. Williamson, Joseph Eakins, William Clark.  
Justice of Peace: Beat 4: John Stinson / C. M. Gaddis

---

**1864**

---

Sheriff & Tax Collector: W. F. Alford  
Probate Judge: J. W. Brooke  
County Treasurer: L. B. Hancock  
Probate Clerk: W. L. Mayfield  
Circuit Clerk: C. W. Henderson  
Tax Assessor: John S. Newton  
Coroner: S. W. Kinard  
Ranger: M. H. Welch / John Ethridge  
Surveyor: William V. H. White  
Board of Police: Beat 1: B. Meadors, President  
Beat 2: W. C. Wood

Beat 3: D. McWilliams /H. L. Williamson  
Beat 4: Joseph Eakins  
Beat 5: R. Shamburger / William Clark  
Provost Marshall, Meridian: J. J. Fritzpatrick  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: James Henderson; E. G. Gibbons  
Beat 2: W. W. Warden; J. W. Brown  
Beat 3: O. S. Mason; J. W. F. Temple  
Beat 4: Joseph Eakins; J. C. Walker  
Beat 5: W. W. Hall; A. J. Rainer  
Meridian: George S. Pace; Roy R. Chadwick  
Sageville: John Stinson; F. M. Marcy; D. E. Rich

---

1865

*Note:* On Saturday, August 26, 1865, a special Court was set up in a courtroom in the City of Meridian by W. L. Sharkey, Provisional Governor of the State of Mississippi. The Governor appointed Lawrence Johnson from Marshall County, Mississippi, as Presiding Judge of this Special Court.

The Court Office set up to deal with all cotton contracts and other personal property in the county. The Judge had power to approve or disapprove contracts, of enforcement of the oath to the U.S. of America, and to hear disputes.

These minutes cease on 7/26/1866. These minutes are in the same book where the Confederate States Government records (inductions—orders) were recorded.

Sheriff & Tax Collector: W. F. Alford  
Special Court Judge: Lawrence Johnson  
Probate Judge: J. W. Brooke / M. H. Whitaker  
County Treasurer: J. Shedd  
Special Court Clerk: Robert C. Miller  
Probate Clerk: W. L. Mayfield  
Circuit Clerk: C. W. Henderson  
Tax Assessor: J. S. Newton  
Surveyor: W. V. H. White  
Coroner: G. Henderson  
Ranger: A. A. Pringle  
Board of Police: B. Meadors, President, W. C. Wood, D. E. McWilliams, John Brown, Joseph Eakins, Riley Shamburger.  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: J. B. Hancock; Jo Lowrey  
Beat 2: J. W. Brown; W. W. Warden  
Beat 3: J. W. F. Temple; W. Jemison  
Beat 4: John H. Dear; Jno. Stinson  
Beat 5: J. H. Bozeman; Jno. W. Mooney  
Meridian: George W. Pace; L. Gould; E. G. Gibbins  
Mayor of Meridian: John Armstrong, Justice & Mayor  
Aldermen: R. L. Henderson, R. N. Parker, W. H. Bain, J. W. Young.  
Constable: Beat 1: N. S. Smith  
Beat 2: William H. Walker  
Beat 3: R. M. Holiday  
Beat 4: C. Bates  
Beat 5: John Pearce  
Meridian: R. L. Hill; John Taylor

---

1866

*Note:* A newspaper by name of TROPHIE was published in Meridian in May, 1866. Probate Record Book 1, p. 553.

Sheriff & Tax Collector: W. F. Alford / Jas. Eakins  
Probate Judge: M. H. Whitaker  
Treasurer: S. N. Sarham  
Probate Clerk: W. L. Mayfield / W. W. McElroy  
Deputy Probate Clerk: W. H. Curtis  
Circuit Clerk: C. W. Henderson  
Tax Assessor: John S. Newton  
Surveyor: J. C. Smith  
Coroner: W. A. Edgar  
Ranger: E. Radford  
Board of Police: R. S. Henderson replaced Benjamin Meadows, who resigned; W. C. Wood, John Brown, Joseph Eakins, A. J. Rainer, J. H. Dear, C. H. McLemore  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: James Moore; G. Henderson; Jo Lowrey  
Beat 2: J. C. Porter; Jackson Burton; J. W. Brown (J. W. Wedgeworth removed by Special Order)  
Beat 3: Alford T. Pace; J. W. F. Temple; Thomas Thompson  
Beat 4: J. H. Dear; R. P. Dollar; S. N. Jackson  
Beat 5: Joel Williams; W. V. H. White; William Dearman (Timothy Brooks & John Shepperd failed to qualify)  
Meridian: E. G. Gibbons; C. W. Mathews  
Sageville: E. J. Rew  
Constable: Beat 1: J. C. Smith  
Beat 2: Sam Lackey  
Beat 3: J. G. Jamison  
Beat 4: J. R. McLaughlin

---

1867

*Note:* Some of the following were removed from office by special order and others appointed.

Sheriff & Tax Collector: Joseph Eakins / R. J. Mosely  
Deputy Sheriff: W. F. Alford  
Probate Judge: E. P. Gibbins—removed / E. L. Bramlett—acting  
County Treasurer: Henry C. Smith declined; A. D. Edwards / Samuel Mulholland  
Probate Clerk: Aplin Sloan  
Circuit Clerk: Bart F. Moore appointed by Governor  
Tax Assessor: John A. Hill / Hanford Albert  
Coroner: G. Allen Freeman  
Ranger: W. Cole  
Board of Police: C. H. McLemore, J. H. Dear, A. J. Rainer, John Brown, W. C. Wood.  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: J. C. Peters appointed on special orders (resigned 7/20/1870)  
Beat 4: John H. Dear / William Parks  
Joseph Long, deceased, replaced by J. M. Boswell appointed by General Order on 11/25/1867

Constable: Beat 1: J. C. Peters appointed on special orders; resigned 7/20/1870  
Beat 4: James Ridgeway  
Meridian: G. P. Shedd  
Samuel Lackey on resignation of N. S. Smith  
Mayor, Meridian: R. L. Henderson (Justice & Mayor)  
Meridian City Marshall: J. R. Bowen, resigned 8/11/1869  
Mayor, Marion: J. Lowrey (Justice & Mayor)

---

1868

---

Sheriff & Tax Collector: Joseph Eakins  
Special Deputy Sheriff: J. M. Hicks  
Probate Judge: E. G. Gibbins  
Probate Clerk: W. W. McElroy  
Circuit Clerk: C. W. Henderson  
Board of Police: C. H. McLemore, President, John Dease, A. J. Rainer, W. C. Moore, John Brown.  
Constable: W. L. Gordon

---

1869

---

*Note:* Public newspaper in Town of Meridian MERIDIAN GAZETTE  
J. Aaron Moore authorized to perform rites of matrimony, June Term 1869, M. E. Church  
Sheriff & Tax Collector: Joe Eakins replaced by Robert J. Mosely in May 1869  
Probate Judge: E. G. Gibbins officially replaced by E. L. Bramlette in May 1869  
Probate Clerk: W. W. McElroy replaced by Aplin Sloan in May 1869  
Circuit Clerk: Aplin Sloan  
Constable: S. Lackey  
Board of Police: James Moore, President, Joel W. Wedgeworth, Samuel N. Jackson, A. T. Pace.  
Justice of Peace: G. W. Henderson  
Beat 2: J. W. Wedgeworth removed on 9/15/1869  
Beat 3: William Jamison by special order  
Beat 4: Wiley Taylor by special order  
Beat 1: E. S. Bramlett to fill existing vacancy  
Attorney: W. P. Evans  
Mayor, Lauderdale: James G. Y. Rayner appointed 1/27/1869  
Mayor, Marion: J. J. Glenn replaced J. Lowrey, deceased  
Mayor, Meridian: William Cathy removed 7/3/1869 on expiration of present term.  
Meridian Aldermen: J. A. Moore special order appointment 4/28/69  
Meridian Treasurer: J. R. Smith appointed special order 5/12/69  
Meridian Assessor/Collector: Manfred Albert special order appointment 5/12/1869  
Meridian Police: Dred Finley, appointed by special order 5/13/1869, Marshall Weir, appointed by special order 5/27/1867

Mayor, Meridian: William Sturgis, appointed by special order 7/3/1869  
Justice of Peace: Beat 2: W. H. Plummer—in place of J. W. Wedgeworth, by special order  
Beat 3: Stephen Tucker, by special order

---

1870

---

*Note:* It was in this year that the Board of Police became the Board of Supervisors, about the time the county seat moved to Meridian.

Sheriff: R. J. Moseley  
Probate Judge: E. L. Bramlette  
County Treasurer: Elisha Moseley  
Chancery Clerk: J. R. Smith  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. Albert  
Circuit Clerk: B. F. Moore appointed by Governor; resigned, replaced by Willis Meador 10/9/1871  
Assessor: Aplin Sloan  
Surveyor: John Greenlees  
Board of Police (Supervisors): Beat 1: Manfred Albert resigned 11/10/1879; replaced by Theodore Sturgis, who was removed 3/7/1871, and replaced by S. K. Lathan on 3/9/1871  
Beat 2: W. H. Plumer who was removed 3/7/1871 and replaced by J. C. Portis  
Beat 3: Wesley Twilley who was removed 3/7/1871 and replaced by J. W. F. Temple  
Beat 4: S. N. Jackson  
Beat 5: Joel Williams, died in office; replaced by Duncan Kelly who was removed 8/7/1871 and replaced by James Holbrook  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: E. S. Bramlette; James Moore  
Beat 2: Wesley Cole; James L. Simmons  
Beat 3: Charles Hughes; A. T. Pace  
Beat 4: S. N. Jackson; John A. Kennon  
Beat 5: James Holbrook; Granville Vernon  
Constable: Beat 2: W. A. J. Rivers  
Beat 3: James Houston  
Beat 4: B. F. House  
Meridian Marshall: J. J. Gainey  
Meridian Mayor: William Sturgis  
Meridian Aldermen: E. L. Bramlette—deceased in 1871, A. Wolfe, J. A. Moore, Henry Johnson—died in office, Manfred Albert—resigned 10/10/1870  
L. B. Fancher authorized to perform rites of matrimony Feb. 1870.

---

1871

---

Sheriff: Robert J. Mosely  
Probate Judge: E. L. Bramlette  
County Treasurer: L. K. Lathan  
Chancery Clerk: J. R. Smith / McRae Mosby  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: J. W. McMullan  
Circuit Clerk: Willie Meaders / R. L. Henderson  
Assessor: J. M. Harvey, A. Sloan (deceased by 7/17/1873)

County Surveyor: R. Smith  
County Coroner/Ranger: L. M. Hart  
Board of Supervisors: Beat 1: Theodore Sturgis—  
removed 3/7/1871, L. K. Lathan replaced T. Sturgis  
Beat 2: J. C. Porter  
Beat 3: J. W. F. Temple  
Beat 4: S. N. Jackson  
Beat 5: Duncan Kelly, removed by Governor, James  
Holbrook replaced D. Kelly  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: S. M. Boswell; W. W. Henry;  
J. P. Allen  
Beat 3: John Hughes; Wesley Temples  
Beat 5: James Deerman  
Meridian: Robert Holliday  
Meridian Marshall: W. A. Payne  
Meridian Mayor: William Sturgis, removed 3/7/1871;  
John W. Smith, replaced Sturgis, resigned; Grafton  
Baker replaced Smith, resigned 10/4/1871 and was  
replaced by B. T. Rush  
Meridian Aldermen: Theo Sturgis—removed  
3/7/1871; H. C. Fallon; John A. Lewis; L. A. Dun-  
can  
Lauderdale Mayor: John W. Ulrich  
Lauderdale Constable: A. G. Powe

---

1872

Sheriff & Tax Collector: R. J. Moseley  
Chancery Judge 4th District: Thomas Christian  
County Treasurer: L. J. McInnis  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. D. Cameron  
Circuit Clerk: R. L. Henderson  
County Assessor: J. M. Hicks  
Coroner & Ranger: Isaac Radford  
Surveyor: John Greenlees  
Board of Supervisors: Beat 1: Caleb H. McLemore  
Beat 2: E. C. Eason  
Beat 3: Joshua McLemore  
Beat 4: J. R. Mitchell  
Beat 5: William Clark  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: W. W. Henry; J. W. Brooke;  
A. D. Sadler  
Beat 2: James L. Simmons; J. W. Brown  
Beat 3: J. W. F. Temple (Daleville); Wilson Moore;  
C. G. Davis  
Beat 4: R. M. Holaday; J. H. Dean; John Ethridge;  
B. F. McCary  
Beat 5: G. W. Rainer; F. M. Pope (Toomsaba)  
Constable: Beat 1: R. C. H. West; W. J. Shelton  
Beat 2: J. L. DeWitt  
Beat 3: W. B. Brown  
Beat 4: B. F. House  
Beat 5: Thomas W. Vaughan  
Meridian: J. C. Peters

Mayor, Meridian: J. W. McMullan (commissioned  
12/9/1871)  
Aldermen: Ward 1: S. J. Randall  
Ward 2: C. W. Gallagher  
Ward 3: J. M. Williams  
Ward 4: E. V. Early  
Ward 5: L. A. Ragsdale, (Alderman commissioned  
12/9/1871)

---

1873

Sheriff: Robert Moseley  
Chancery Judge 4th District: Thomas Christian  
County Treasurer: L. J. McInnis  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. D. Cameron/ V. Bell  
Circuit Clerk: R. L. Henderson  
Tax Assessor: J. M. Hicks  
Surveyor: John Greenlees  
Coroner/Ranger: Isaac Radford  
Board of Supervisors: Beat 1: Edward Vance  
Beat 2: Joe Jamison  
Beat 3: J. L. McLemore  
Beat 4: Samuel Jackson  
Beat 5: William Clark  
Marion: Joe E. Harrison  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: J. L. Morris/ L. M. Hart  
Beat 2: J. L. Simmons/ Robert McKinley  
Beat 3: William Moore/ J. S. Thomas Thompson  
Beat 4: W. S. Easterling/ John Stinson  
Beat 5: F. A. Pope/ J. Watts  
Constable: Beat 1: Lem Hobson  
Marion: B. T. Rush

---

1874

Sheriff: Robert Moseley  
Judge 6th Circuit Court Dist.: R. Leachman  
Chancery Judge 7th District: George Wood  
County Treasurer: L. J. McInnis  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: V. Bell/ W. D. Cameron  
Tax Assessor: J. M. Hicks  
Surveyor: John Greenlees  
Coroner/Ranger: Isaac Radford  
Board of Supervisors: Beat 1: Edward Vance  
Beat 2: Joe Jamison  
Beat 3: J. L. McLemore  
Beat 4: Samuel Jackson  
Beat 5: William Clark  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: J. L. Morris; L. M. Hart; J. E.  
Harrison  
Beat 2: J. L. Simmons; Robert McKinley  
Beat 3: William Moore; J. S. Thomas Thompson  
Beat 4: W. S. Easterling; John Stinson  
Beat 5: F. A. Pope; J. Watts

Constable: Beat 1: Lem. Hobson; B. F. Rush; W. J. Bloodworth  
Beat 2: J. R. Walker  
Beat 3: R. M. Holliday  
Beat 4: B. F. House  
Beat 5: John Pigford

---

1875

---

Sheriff & Tax Collector: R. J. Moseley  
Chancery Judge 7th District: George Wood  
County Treasurer: L. J. McInnis  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. D. Cameron  
Circuit Clerk: R. L. Henderson  
Tax Assessor: J. M. Hicks  
Coroner/Ranger: Isaac Radford  
Supervisors: Beat 1: Edward Vance  
Beat 2: Joe Jamison  
Beat 3: J. L. McLemore  
Beat 4: Samuel Jackson  
Beat 5: William Clark  
Justice of Peace: Thomas Thompson, L. M. Hart  
Constable: (same as 1874)

---

1876

---

Sheriff: R. L. Henderson  
Chancery Judge 7th District: George Wood  
County Treasurer: A. A. Currie  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. C. Moore  
Circuit Clerk: W. D. Cameron  
Tax Assessor: D. S. Malone  
Surveyor: J. M. T. Hamilton  
Coroner/ Ranger: J. C. Houston  
Supervisors: Beat 1: W. F. Brown  
Beat 2: J. L. Nunnery  
Beat 3: J. A. Roberts  
Beat 4: William M. Vaughan  
Beat 5: William Clark  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: William M. Stone; L. M. Hart  
Beat 2: J. W. Brown; J. L. Simmons  
Beat 3: J. W. F. Temple; Thomas Thompson  
Beat 4: W. W. Hall, Jr.; E. J. Rew  
Beat 5: Andrew Brown; R. H. Camp  
Constable: Beat 1: P. H. Gully  
Beat 2: B. T. Rush  
Beat 3: M. R. Temple  
Beat 4: Walter Vaughan  
Beat 5: W. H. Smith

---

1877

---

Sheriff & Tax Collector: R. L. Henderson  
County Treasurer: E. T. Ramsey  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Circuit Clerk: W. D. Cameron  
Tax Assessor: D. L. Malone  
Surveyor: A. T. Harvey  
Coroner/Ranger: J. C. Houston

---

1878

---

Sheriff: R. L. Henderson  
County Treasurer: E. T. Ramsey  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Circuit Clerk: W. D. Cameron  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
Tax Assessor: D. L. Malone  
Surveyor: A. T. Harvey  
Coroner/ Ranger: J. C. Houston  
Supervisors: Beat 1: James M. Love  
Beat 2: J. L. Nunnery  
Beat 3: A. T. Pace  
Beat 4: John Stinson  
Beat 5: William Clark  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: W. M. Stone; L. M. Hart  
Beat 2: W. F. Holland; ———Harrison  
Beat 3: J. D. Huntington; W. Moore  
Beat 4: W. W. Hall; E. Nichols  
Beat 5: E. K. Smith; J.L. Wiggins  
Constable: Beat 1: L. W. Lackey  
Beat 2: J. A. McKinley  
Beat 3: William Moore  
Beat 4: C. R. James  
Beat 5: T. J. Bragg

---

1879

---

Sheriff: R. L. Henderson  
Chancery Judge 7th District: George Wood  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: A. Pennel  
Supervisors: Beat 1: James M. Love; Joseph R. Dial  
Beat 2: J. L. Nunnery  
Beat 3: A. T. Pace; M. D. Lyle  
Beat 4: John Stinson  
Beat 5: William Clark  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: W. M. Stone

---

1880

---

Sheriff: R. L. Henderson  
County Treasurer: E. T. Ramsey  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Circuit Clerk: W. D. Cameron / McRae Mosby  
Tax Assessor: A. T. Harvey  
Surveyor: J. W. T. Hamilton

Coroner/Ranger: J. C. Houston  
Commissioner of Census: William T. Welch  
Supervisors: Beat 1: W. S. Jenkins  
Beat 2: J. D. Miller; J. R. Beverly  
Beat 3: John Brown  
Beat 4: John Stinson  
Beat 5: William Clark  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: W. M. Stone; G. Henderson  
Beat 2: J. L. Simmons; W. R. McKensey  
Beat 3: R. J. Rawson; J. W. Harrington  
Beat 4: E. Nichols; E. Fairchild  
Beat 5: R. H. Camp; J. A. Glascock  
Constable: Beat 1: B. B. Smith; G. H. Ball  
Beat 2: A. H. Neace; S. D. Parker  
Beat 3: William Moore  
Beat 4: James Graham  
Beat 5: J. V. Camp

---

1881

Sheriff: R. L. Henderson  
County Treasurer: Samuel Williams  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Tax Assessor: A. T. Ramsey  
Surveyor: J. M. T. Hamilton  
Coroner/Ranger: J. C. Houston  
Justice of Peace: Beat 5: J. W. Dearman, Cooley Mann

---

1882

Sheriff: R. L. Henderson  
County Treasurer: A. F. Alford  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Supervisors: Beat 1: M. S. Jenkins  
Beat 2: John R. Beverly  
Beat 3: Dave Morrow  
Beat 4: John Daniels  
Beat 5: W. H. Webb  
Justice of Peace: Cooley Mann; M. Pigford  
Beat 1: S. W. Patton; G. Henderson  
Beat 2: Lott Parker; J. S. Simmons  
Beat 3: M. R. Temple; R. J. Rawson  
Beat 4: E. Nichols; S. E. Fairchild  
Beat 5: G. W. Welch; J. W. Dearman  
Constable: Beat 1: G. H. Ball; Robert J. Patton; A. J. Kinard  
Beat 2: A. A. Moss  
Beat 3: William Moore  
Beat 4: R. Steele  
Beat 5: T. E. Boseman

---

1883

Sheriff: R. L. Henderson  
Chancery Judge 7th District: S. Evans  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Meridian Mayor: T. H. Griffin

---

1884

Sheriff: Robert M. Bourdeaux  
County Treasurer: W. F. Alford  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: B. V. White; Robert C. Patty  
Circuit Clerk: W. D. Cameron  
Tax Assessor: J. M. Harvey  
Surveyor: W. T. Welch  
Coroner/ Ranger: J. C. Houston  
Supervisors: Beat 1: M. L. Jenkins  
Beat 2: J. R. Beverly  
Beat 3: David Morrow  
Beat 4: John Daniels  
Beat 5: G. W. Welch  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: W. S. Patton; G. Henderson  
Beat 2: J. L. Simmons; Lott Parker  
Beat 3: W. R. Denton; J. L. Smith  
Beat 4: Elijah Nichols; Joe Smith  
Beat 5: J. W. Dearman; N. Shirley  
Constable: Beat 1: J. F. Sanford  
Beat 2: J. H. Morse  
Beat 3: J. T. Williams  
Beat 4: John Spears  
Beat 5: G. W. Rollings

---

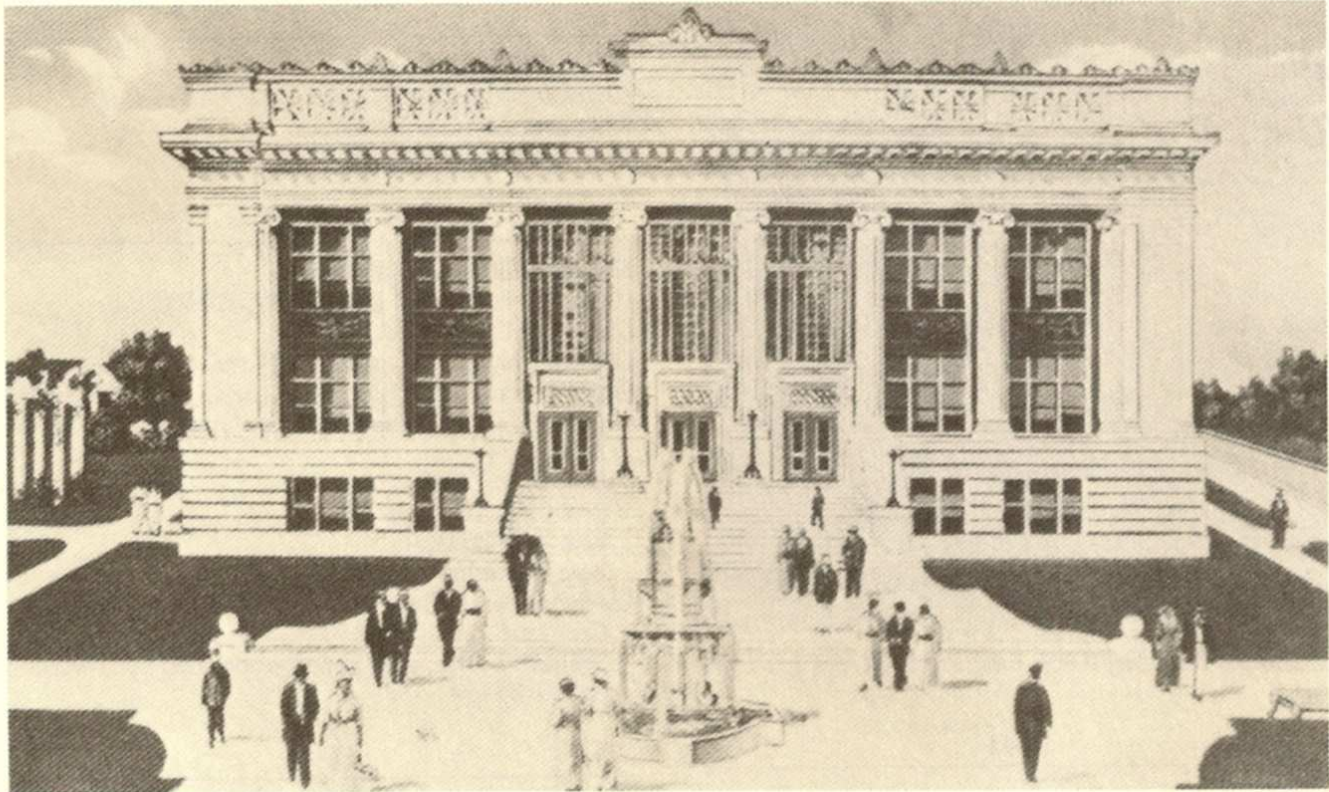
1885

Sheriff: Robert M. Bourdeaux  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: R. V. White  
Justice of Peace: C. H. Webb  
Beat 1: H. K. Foster

---

1886

Sheriff: Robert M. Bourdeaux  
County Treasurer: W. F. Alford  
Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
Tax Assessor: P. H. Gully  
Surveyor: W. T. Welch  
Coroner/Ranger: Charles Simpson  
Supervisors: Beat 1: W. F. Brown  
Beat 2: A. H. Moore  
Beat 3: F. M. Jones  
Beat 4: John Daniels  
Beat 5: G. W. Welch  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: W. M. Stone; G. Henderson  
Beat 2: Robert McKinley; T. W. Mosley  
Beat 3: Robin Smith; W. H. Denton  
Beat 4: Elijah Nichols; J. A. Coates  
Beat 5: M. Pigford; J. W. Dearman



*Meridian's City Hall, 1916*

1887

---

Sheriff: Robert M. Bourdeaux  
 Chancery Clerk: McRae Mosby  
 Deputy Chancery Clerk: B. V. White

1888

---

Sheriff: Robert M. Bourdeaux  
 Chancery Clerk: W. H. Curtis  
 Circuit Clerk: W. D. Cameron  
 Justice of Peace: Marion: W. M. Stone; William S. Patton  
 Beat 1: W. T. Holland; T. P. Brown  
 Beat 2: R. McKinley; T. W. Moseley  
 Beat 3: W. B. Brown; J. L. Moore  
 Beat 4: D. F. Lee; F. A. Dallas  
 Beat 5: J. W. Dearman; A. G. Snelgrove

1889

---

Sheriff: Robert M. Bourdeaux  
 Justice of Peace: Marion: John L. Spinks  
 Constable: Beat 1: J. F. Sanford; S. Henderson  
 Beat 2: J. B. Webb  
 Beat 3: C. A. Hand  
 Beat 4: Joe Turnage; W. J. James  
 Beat 5: J. T. Phillips; David Smith

1890

---

Sheriff: Robert M. Bourdeaux  
 County Treasurer: W. F. Alford  
 Chancery Clerk: W. H. Curtis  
 Deputy Chancery Clerk: G. Henderson  
 Tax Assessor: P. H. Gully  
 Surveyor: J. L. Stone  
 Coroner/Ranger: Charles Simpson  
 Superintendent of Education: J. M. McBeath  
 Commissioner of Census: J. R. Mitchell  
 Supervisors: Beat 1: J. E. Platt  
 Beat 2: J. L. Moore  
 Beat 3: F. M. Jones  
 Beat 4: E. Nichols  
 Beat 5: Andrew Brown  
 Justice of Peace: Beat 1: W. M. Stone; J. L. Spinks  
 Beat 2: R. McKinley; T. L. Mosley  
 Beat 3: G. P. Temple; W. B. Brown  
 Beat 4: C. J. Mayerhoff; J. P. Smith  
 Beat 5: A. G. Snelgrove; J. W. Dearman  
 Constable: Beat 1: F. C. Harris  
 Beat 2: H. K. Foster; W. T. Clay  
 Beat 3: N. D. Drake  
 Beat 4: T. J. Camp  
 Beat 5: T. M. Sims



Old Meridian Star building, on Fourth Street prior to 1912

1891

Sheriff: Robert M. Bourdeaux  
 Chancery Judge 2nd District: S. Evans  
 Chancery Clerk: W. H. Curtis  
 Deputy Chancery Clerk: G. Henderson

1892

Sheriff: William C. Moore  
 Chancery Judge 2nd District: W. T. Houston  
 County Treasurer: W. F. Alford—died in office, E. J. Martin replaced Alford 2/11/1892  
 Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
 Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
 Circuit Clerk: W. D. Cameron  
 Tax Assessor: T. J. L. Keene  
 Surveyor: J. M. T. Hamilton  
 Coroner/Ranger: C. Simpson  
 Justice of Peace: Marion: J. J. Hall  
 Beat 1: J. L. Spinks; J. W. McCormick  
 Beat 2: J. W. Ulrick; W. S. Pigford  
 Beat 3: W. D. Blanks; G. R. Temple  
 Beat 4: W. Curris; G. W. McInnis  
 Beat 5: J. T. Phillips; R. A. Jackson  
 Constable: Marion: M. D. Hassell  
 Beat 1: H. K. Foster; F. C. Hardin  
 Beat 2: J. N. Lackey  
 Beat 3: N.D. Drake  
 Beat 5: L. J. Bunyard; W. T. Wolfe  
 Superintendent of Education: C. D. Thompson, replaced by W. G. Stevenson on 6/6/1892

1893

Sheriff: William C. Moore  
 Chancery Judge 2nd District: W. T. Houston  
 Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
 Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole

1894

Sheriff: William C. Moore  
 Chancery Judge 2nd District: W. T. Houston  
 Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
 Deputy Chancery Clerk: J. E. Nunnery  
 Supervisors: Beat 1: J. E. Platt—resigned; replaced by J. R. Mitchell, appointed by Governor Stone on 3/16/1894  
 Beat 2: Joseph Eakins  
 Beat 3: F. M. Jones  
 Beat 4: J. D. Poole  
 Beat 5: Andrew Brown  
 Justice of Peace: Beat 4: Elijah Nichols appointed by Governor on 6/21/1894 to fill unexpired term of William Currie. J. R. Speed, appointed by Governor on 6/28/1894

1895

Sheriff: William C. Moore  
 Chancery Judge 2nd District: W. T. Houston  
 Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
 Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
 Justice of Peace: Beat 1: W. M. Stone appointed 3/23/1895 to fill vacancy after death of J. W. McCormick  
 W. N. Ethridge appointed as Councilman for Meridian on 4/17/1895 by the Governor, replacing J. H. Rivers for Ward 5



Grist mill at Whynot





*Hotel Lamar, now houses Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History*

1896

Sheriff: J. E. Reed  
 Chancery Judge 2nd District: W. T. Houston / John W. Fewell  
 District Attorney 10th Judicial District: A. M. Boyd  
 County Treasurer: H. P. Culpepper  
 Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
 Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
 Circuit Clerk: W. D. Cameron  
 Tax Assessor: P. H. Gully  
 Surveyor: J. M. T. Hamilton  
 Coroner: F. C. Sinclair  
 Superintendent of Education: W. G. Stevenson  
 Supervisors: Beat 1: J. R. Royals  
     Beat 2: J. D. Miller  
     Beat 3: C. L. Gunn  
     Beat 4: L. B. Vaughn  
     Beat 5: Andrew Brown  
 Justice of Peace: Marion: T. C. Kinard  
     Beat 1: Thomas H. Griffin; H. J. Woods  
     Beat 2: J. W. Ulrick; W. S. Pigford  
     Beat 3: G. P. Temple; T. O. Clarke  
     Beat 4: G. W. McInnis; E. Nichols  
     Beat 5: W. T. Welch; R. A. Jackson  
 Constable: Beat 1: F. C. Hardin; H. K. Foster  
     Beat 2: J. N. Lackey  
     Beat 3: S. T. Gibson  
     Beat 4: Jim Tillman  
     Beat 5: M. D. Sims  
 Marion: M. D. Hassell

1897

Sheriff: J. E. Reed  
 Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
 Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
 Mayor of Meridian: T. L. Lyle

1898

Sheriff: J. E. Reed  
 County Treasurer: W. F. Kennedy  
 Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
 Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
 Coroner/Ranger: F. O. Sinclair, resigned, replaced by J. C. Lloyd, appointed on 4/2/1898  
 Justice of Peace: Beat 1: H. J. Woods, resigned, replaced by A. Kline, appointed on 5/26/1898  
 Marshall of Meridian: A. W. Bradshaw

1899

Sheriff: J. E. Reed  
 Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
 Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
 Superintendent of Education: W. G. Stevenson, resigned, replaced by John R. Ellis, appointed 10/18/1899



*Federal Building, once on the corner of Eighth Street and Twenty-second Avenue, 1901*

---

1900

Sheriff: R. H. Jemison  
County Treasurer: J. W. Stainton  
Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
Circuit Clerk: W. D. Cameron  
Tax Assessor: P. H. Gully  
Surveyor: J. M. T. Hamilton  
Coroner: E. W. Hunnicutt  
Superintendent of Education: J. R. Ellis  
Supervisors: Beat 1: J. R. Royals—Meridian  
Beat 2: George W. Barrett—Lauderdale  
Beat 3: C. L. Gunn—Bailey  
Beat 4: L. B. Vaughn  
Beat 5: Andrew Brown  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1—Meridian: T. H. Griffin; Abe Kline  
—Marion: T. C. Kinard  
Beat 2—Lauderdale: J. W. Ulrick  
Lockhard: W. D. Pigford  
Beat 3—Ft. Stephens: G. B. Temple  
Hookston: W. T. Blanks, Sam McNeil  
Beat 4: E. Nichols; B. J. Stinson  
—Siding: G. W. Fairchild  
Beat 5—Increase: R. A. Jackson  
Toomsaba: T. M. Sims  
Constable: Beat 1—Meridian: H. K. Foster; Moody Price  
—Marion: M. D. Hasselle  
Beat 2—Lockhart: E. D. Null  
Beat 3—Hookston: J. D. Bounds  
Beat 4—Sterling: J. R. Speed  
Beat 5—Increase: C. S. Fountain  
Meridian Mayor: W. D. McWilliams  
Meridian Marshall: J. P. Goffney  
Meridian Aldermen: Samuel J. McConnell; W. F. Kennedy; S. K. Gully

---

1901

Sheriff: R. H. Jemison  
Chancery Judge 2nd District: Stone Devrouis  
Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1—Meridian: E. B. Williams  
Beat 2: A. H. Morse replaced E. D. Null who resigned

---

1902

Sheriff: R. H. Jemison  
Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
Justice of Peace: Beat 5: D. W. Molpus  
Meridian Mayor: W. J. Hargroder  
Meridian Marshall: J. A. Morgan  
Meridian Treasurer: J. E. Nunnery  
Meridian Aldermen: W. J. Stevenson; A. A. Dillehay;  
L. J. Lancaster; E. H. Walker; W. D. McWilliams;  
C. S. Wilkinson  
*Note: apparently some of these left office during the year*

---

1903

Sheriff: R. H. Jemison  
Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: W. P. Taggard replaced  
Moody Price who resigned

---

1904

Sheriff: J. R. Temple  
Chancery Judge District 2: Stone Deavrous  
County Treasurer: T. G. L. Keene  
Chancery Clerk: B. V. White  
Deputy Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
Circuit Clerk: W. D. Cameron  
Tax Assessor: H. P. Gully  
Superintendent of Education: J. R. Ellis  
Coroner: D. A. Ray  
Surveyor: John Greenlees  
Supervisors: Beat 1: J. H. Kennedy  
Beat 2: T. R. Johnson  
Beat 3: J. M. Ethridge  
Beat 4: J. G. Moore  
Beat 5: M. Johnson  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1—Meridian: W. M. Stone; G. W. Townsend  
—Marion: T. C. Kinard  
Beat 2: R. D. Walker; J. R. Beverly  
Beat 3: H. A. Phillips; W. F. Parker; J. T. Hambrick  
Beat 4: B. J. Stinson; E. Nichols  
Beat 5: D. W. Molpus; B. F. Mason  
Constable: Beat 1—Meridian: H. K. Foster; W. P. Culpepper  
—Marion: M. D. Hassell  
Beat 2: J. C. Allen  
Beat 3: G. W. Harbour; W. E. Lee  
Beat 4: J. R. Speed  
Beat 5: D. Smith; B. H. Boutwell

---

**1905**

---

Sheriff: J. R. Temple  
Justice of Peace: Lott Parker replaced D. W. Molpus who resigned.  
Beat 4: H. Hunnicut replaced J. R. Speed who resigned

---

**1906**

---

Sheriff: J. R. Temple  
Justice of Peace: Beat 2: A. H. Morse—appointed  
Beat 3: D. D. Pace—special election  
Beat 4: J. R. Pace

---

**1907**

---

Sheriff: J. R. Temple  
Justice of Peace: A. H. Morse—special election  
**Meehan Junction**  
Mayor: G. B. Fields/ Robert Golden became Mayor on 11/1/1907  
Marshall: J. M. West  
Treasurer: C. Clark/ J. W. Flynn became Treasurer on 11/1/1907  
Clerk: W. H. Towns  
Aldermen: F. H. Marshall; Robert Golden; W. H. Towns

---

**1908**

---

Sheriff: W. C. Moore  
County Treasurer: T. G. Rayner  
Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
Circuit Clerk: W. D. Cameron  
Tax Assessor: P. H. Gully  
Superintendent of Education: John R. Ellis  
Surveyor: John H. Blackwell  
Coroner: D. A. Ray  
Supervisors: Beat 1: John H. Kennedy  
Beat 2: T. L. Johnson  
Beat 3: J. D. Bounds  
Beat 4: J. G. Moore  
Beat 5: M. Johnson  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: Frank Hull died in office; replaced by T. G. Keene on 4/4/1908; J. M. Dabney; T. C. Kinnard  
Beat 2: J. R. Beverly; J. F. Kelly  
Beat 3: William H. Parker; L. L. Ratcliff  
Beat 4: Burwell J. Stinson; Elijah Nichols  
Beat 5: T. M. Sims; B. F. Mason  
Constable: Beat 1: W. P. Culpepper; Edward E. Mosby  
Beat 2: A. H. Moore; Joe C. Allen  
Beat 3: J. H. Vinson; J. H. Sanford  
Beat 4: Jas. R. Speed  
Beat 5: H. L. Boswell; L. M. Boswell

---

**1909**

---

Sheriff: W. C. Moore  
Circuit Clerk: W. D. Cameron, deceased; replaced by Charles B. Cameron, appointed 6/14/1909, F. C. McGhee elected in special election on 7/14/1909  
Tax Assessor: P. H. Gully, deceased; replaced by W. N. Denton on 2/26/1909  
**Meehan Junction**  
Mayor: Robert Golden  
Marshall: S. W. Stucky  
Treasurer: F. H. Marshall  
Aldermen: J. W. Flynn; W. H. Towns; W. H. Davis

---

**1910**

---

Sheriff: W. C. Moore  
Judge 10th Judicial District: J. L. Buckley  
Circuit Clerk: F. C. McGhee  
County Auditor: W. R. Pistole  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: J. M. Dabney  
Beat: T. G. L. Keene  
**Meehan Junction**  
Mayor: T. J. Broadway (to fill vacancy)  
**Meridian**  
Mayor: J. W. Parker  
Councilmen: Ward 1: W. H. Ethridge, Jr., V-President  
Ward 2: Jasper Boykin  
Ward 3: W. H. Owen  
Ward 4: J. H. Rivers, President  
Ward 5: J. E. Bolton

---

**1911**

---

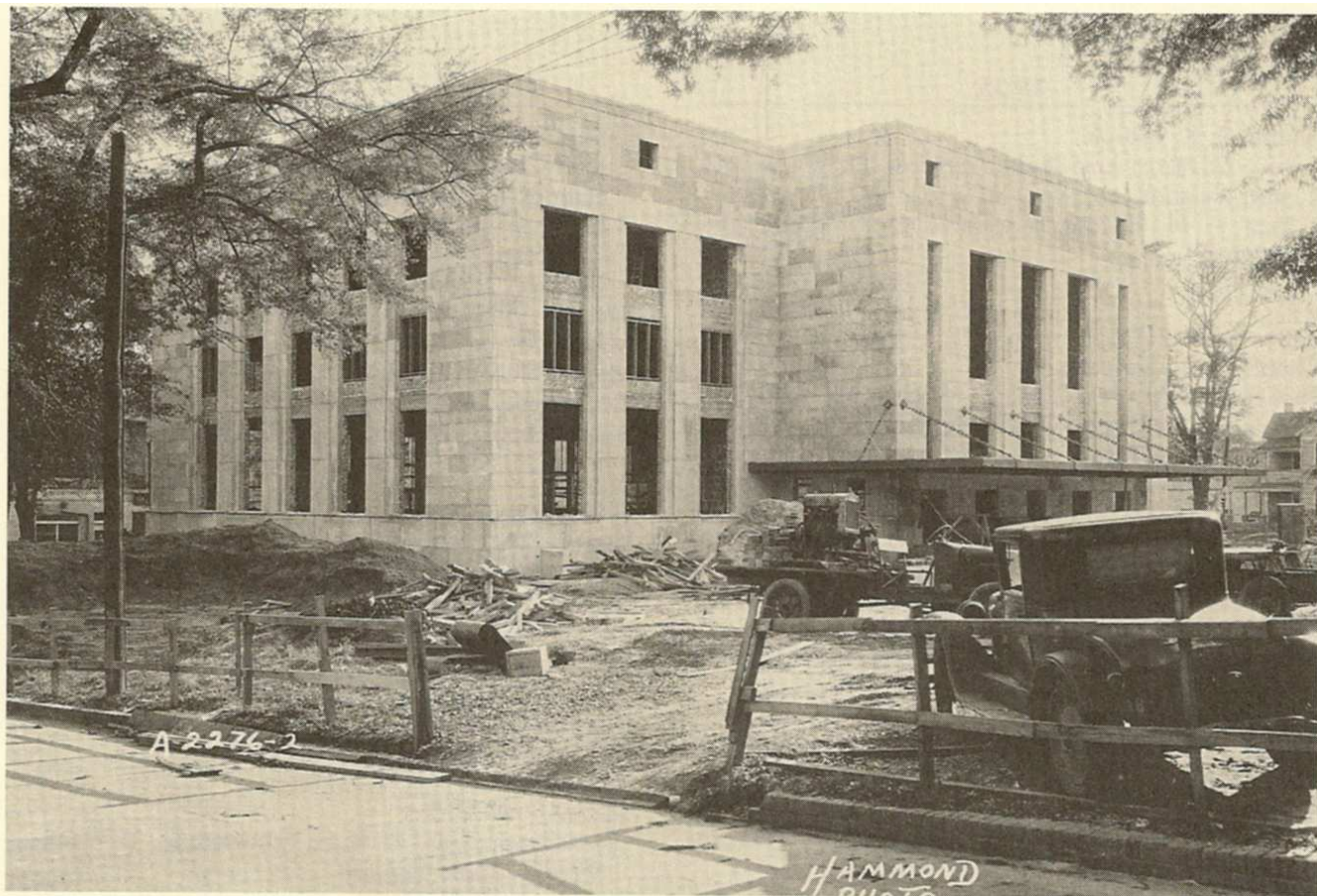
Sheriff: W. C. Moore  
**Meehan Junction**  
Mayor: R. Golden  
Marshall: W. G. Stokes  
Treasurer: A. G. Cameron  
Aldermen: T. A. Flynn; Dr. W. N. Davis; F. H. Marshall

---

**1912**

---

Sheriff: John H. Kennedy  
County Treasurer: Robert F. McElroy  
Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
Circuit Clerk: R. L. Harbour  
Tax Assessor: W. N. Denton  
Superintendent of Education: J. R. Ellis  
Coroner: H. R. Berry  
Surveyor: W. T. Welch  
Supervisors: Beat 1—Vimville: W. T. Raney  
Beat 2—Lauderdale: T. L. Johnson  
Beat 3—Bailey: W. J. Talbert  
Beat 4—Chunky: J. G. Moore



*Construction of Meridian's Post Office in 1933 provided Depression-era jobs.*



*Among those on hand for dedication of the impressive building were: Senator Hubert D. Stevens, second from left; Senator Pat Harrison, fourth from left; Postmaster General Farley, third from left; and Mayor Clint Vinson, fourth from right; E. F. Billington, second from right; and Allan McCants, far right.*

Beat 5—Increase: J. E. Blanks  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1—Marion: T. C. Kinard  
—Meridian: J. M. Dabney; H. K. Foster  
Beat 2—Lauderdale: A. H. Morse  
—Lockhart: E. J. Miller  
Beat 3—Bailey: L. L. Ratcliff  
—Battlefield: J. S. Tucker  
Beat 4—Meehan: E. Nichols  
—Meridian: A. M. VanDeven  
Beat 5—Whynot: B. F. Mason; B. P. Means  
Beat 1—Raymond Clay on 4/1/1912 special election  
Constable: Beat 1—Marion: J. B. Kinard  
—Meridian: W. P. Culpepper; E. E. Mosby  
Beat 2—Kewanee: J. C. Allen  
—Lauderdale: S. W. Shelby  
Beat 3—Bailey: W. W. Grissom  
—Suqualena: H. M. Brown  
Beat 4—Meehan: J. R. Speed  
Beat 5—Whynot: H. L. Boswell; L. N. Boswell

---

1913

Sheriff: J. H. Kennedy  
Justice of Peace: Beat 4: W. R. Watson special election  
9/19/1913  
Beat 5: J. A. Butler special election 1/7/1913  
**Meehan Junction**  
Mayor: Robert Golden  
Marshall: W. G. Stokes  
Treasurer: J. W. Flynn  
Aldermen: F. H. Marshall; W. N. Davis; T. A. Flynn  
**Meridian**  
Mayor-Commissioner: J. W. Parker  
Commissioners: Will H. Owen; J. M. Slaughter

---

1914

Sheriff: J. H. Kennedy  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: Moody Price special election  
11/3/1914  
Beat 2: H. J. Robinson special election 11/3/1914  
Beat 4: B. F. Ponds special election 12/29/1914  
Beat 5: C. F. Fountain special election 2/10/1914

---

1915

Sheriff: J. H. Kennedy

---

1916

Sheriff: J. P. Young  
County Treasurer: J. B. Kinard, Sr.  
Chancery Clerk: W. R. Pistole  
Circuit Clerk: M. C. Fleming  
Tax Assessor: W. N. Denton  
Superintendent of Education: T. C. Lockard

Coroner: D. A. Ray  
Surveyor: W. T. Welch  
Supervisors: Beat 1—Vimville: W. T. Raney  
Beat 2—Lauderdale: R. L. Brown  
Beat 3—Bailey: W. J. Talbert  
Beat 4—Meridian: J. G. Moore  
Beat 5—Increase: J. E. Blanks  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1—Marion: T. C. Kinard  
Meridian: Moody Price; A. R. McGraw  
Beat 2—Lockhart: E. J. Miller  
Lauderdale: J. R. Beverly  
Beat 3—: J. F. Strange; R. P. Pool  
Schamberville: Lee Jenkins  
Beat 4—Meehan: B. F. Ponds  
Meridian: G. W. Fairchild  
Beat 5—Whynot: B. F. Mason; E. E. Allen  
Constable: Beat 1—Meridian: John H. Elkins; W. B.  
Culpepper  
Marion: J. B. Kinard  
Beat 2—Lockhart: E. D. Null  
Lauderdale: J. C. Allen  
Beat 3—Duffee: H. M. Brown  
Bailey: J. O. Lovett  
——: J. W. Bounds  
Beat 4—Meehan: J. W. Vaughn  
Meridian: R. S. Moore  
Beat 5—Increase: C. S. Fountain; H. L. Boswell

---

1917

Sheriff: J. P. Young

---

1918

Sheriff: J. P. Young  
Coroner: C. D. Hobgood appointed by Governor on  
5/18/1918  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1: Raymond Clay appointed  
8/30/1918 and elected on 11/4/1918  
Constable: Beat 1: E. E. Mosley appointed 9/16/1918  
and elected on 11/5/1918

---

1919

Sheriff: J. P. Young

---

1920

Sheriff: John M. Martin  
County Treasurer: Joe McGraw  
Chancery Clerk: George F. Hand  
Circuit Clerk: M. L. Rush  
Tax Assessor: W. N. Denton  
Superintendent of Education: J. A. Riddell  
Coroner: C. D. Hobgood (Marion)  
Surveyor: W. W. Watkins, Will G. Fowler—special  
election



*Lauderdale County's present Courthouse, in downtown Meridian, had several forerunners.*

Supervisors: Beat 1—Meridian: T. G. S. Keene  
 Beat 2—Lauderdale: R. L. Brown  
 Beat 3—Schamberville: T. O. Clarke  
 Beat 4—Meehan: W. T. Carlisle  
 Beat 5—Increase: M. Johnson  
 Justice of Peace: Beat 1—Marion: T. C. Kinard  
 Meridian: Raymond Clay; W. D. Roberts  
 Beat 2—Lauderdale: A. C(?) Morse  
 Lockhart: Joe Kelly  
 Beat 3—Bailey: W. G. Snowden  
 Schamberville: G. L. Grace  
 Beat 4—Meehan: J. R. Speed; B. F. Ponds  
 Beat 5—Whynot: W. C. Culpepper  
 Toomsba: F. M. Sims  
 Beat 2—Lockhart: M. L. Pigford—special election  
 1/30/1920  
 Lauderdale: R. L. Murray special election  
 1/30/1920  
 Beat 3: L. L. Ratcliff after W. G. Snowden failed to  
 qualify  
 Beat 4: G. W. Fairchild, special election 1/30/1920

Constable: Beat 1—Meridian: E. E. Mosby; W. T.  
 Pullman  
 Beat 2 ———: E. Danna (Cuba, Rt. 1)  
 Lockhart: Ed Null  
 Beat 3—Bailey: J. J. Love  
 Duffee: W. E. Lee  
 Beat 4—Meridian: R. L. Moore  
 Meehan: Lee Irby  
 Beat 5—Whynot: J. E. Culpepper  
 Increase: C. S. Fountain

---

1921

Sheriff: John M. Martin  
 Supervisors: Beat 1: T. G. S. Keene replaced by Walker  
 George appointed 9/30/1921 and elected special  
 election 11/4/1921

---

1922

Sheriff: John M. Martin  
 Constable: W. L. Pullman resigned; John R. Giles  
 appointed 12/1/1922, elected on 1/5/1923

1923

Sheriff: John M. Martin  
Justice of Peace: Beat 2—Marion: Norman Payne appointed 4/4/1923  
W. W. Watkins appointed 4/14/1923

1924

Sheriff: N. E. Cannady

1925

Sheriff: N. E. Cannady

1926

Sheriff: N. E. Cannady  
Judge: (County Judge): Hardy R. Stone  
Chancery Clerk: J. B. Holland  
Circuit Clerk: M. L. Rush

Tax Assessor: W. N. Denton  
Superintendent of Education: J. A. Riddell  
Coroner: C. D. Hobgood  
Surveyor: W. G. Fowler  
County Attorney: Caspar Phillips  
Supervisors: Beat 1: R. H. Seymour  
Beat 2: R. L. Brown  
Beat 3: B. M. Stephens  
Beat 4: J. B. Warren  
Beat 5: H. L. Boswell  
Justice of Peace: Beat 1—Marion: T. C. Kinard  
Meridian: W. D. Roberts; R. H. Jemison  
Beat 2—Lauderdale: W. W. Watkins  
Lockhart: J. S. Clayton  
Beat 3—Schamberville: R. W. Gipson  
Bailey: Walter F. Temple  
Beat 4—Meehan: G. W. Fairchild; B. F. Ponds  
J. W. Boardman appointed Vice B. F. Ponds; W. I. Wilson elected special election 4/12/1927  
Beat 5—Toomsba: T. M. Sims



*Photo shows the Meridian City Council of 1953, when Bill Smylie Sr. served as mayor*

Whynot: J. A. Butler  
 Constable: Beat 1—Marion: W. E. Hasselle  
 Meridian: W. F. Shannon; J. R. Giles  
 Beat 2—Lauderdale: E. D. Null; James Dial  
 Beat 3—Bailey: H. M. Brown; D. D. Pace  
 Beat 4—Meridian: R. Sam Moore  
 Meehan: Will Vaughn  
 J. J. Lee: special election 9/28/1926. Vice J. S. Moore  
 Beat 5—Lauderdale: W. L. Miller  
 Increase: J. E. Culpepper  
 S. L. Catlett special election 3/11/1926—Vice W. L. Miller

1927

Sheriff: N. E. Cannady

1928

Sheriff: M. J. Stone  
 County Judge: Hardy R. Stone

Chancery Clerk: J. B. Holland  
 Circuit Clerk: H. L. Rush  
 Tax Assessor: W. N. Denton  
 Superintendent of Education: J. A. Riddell  
 Coroner: C. D. Hobgood  
 Surveyor: J. M. T. Hamilton/ I. L. Stone on 9/4/1928—Hamilton deceased  
 County Attorney: J. V. Gibson  
 Supervisors: Meridian: Frank S. Kennedy  
 Lauderdale: T. L. Johnson  
 Bailey: B. M. Stevens  
 Meridian: J. B. Warren  
 Toomsaba: H. L. Boswell  
 L. D. Walker Vice J. B. Warren on 12/1/1928  
 Justice of Peace: Beat 1: R. Clay; T. C. Kinard  
 Beat 2: W. W. Watkins; Marvin Morgan; J. E. Rogers  
 Beat 3: James White; O. S. Moore  
 Beat 4: G. W. Fairchilds  
 Beat 5: J. A. Butler; J. M. Robinson, appointed  
 Beat 2: Monroe Morgan appointed Vice W. W. Watkins, who resigned



*Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors, 1988. Seated left to right, Billy Melton, Ikie Ethridge; standing left to right, Ray Boswell, Raymond Fountain and Jimmie Smith*



Constable: Beat 1: W. P. Shannon  
 Beat 2: E. D. Null; S. N. Shelby; J. E. Rogers  
 Beat 3: J. J. Foster; Hilliard Brown  
 Beat 4: L. L. Banes; W. B. Vaughan  
 Beat 5: S. T. Catlett; C. E. Butler; T. L. Bailey

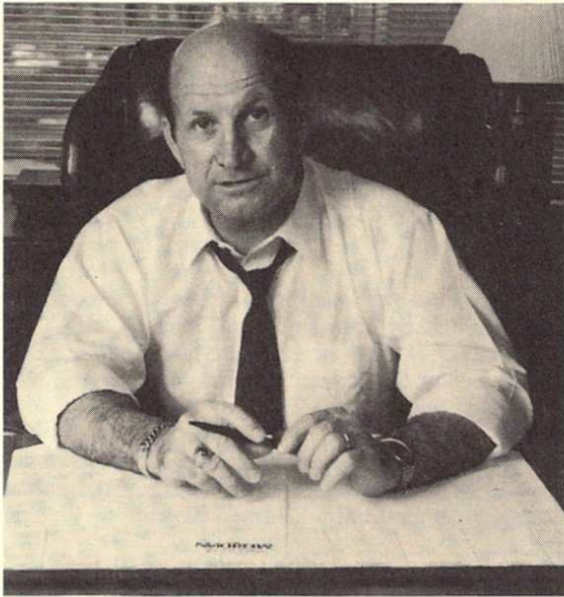
1929

Sheriff: M. J. Stone  
 Chancery Clerk: J. B. Holland  
 Justice of Peace: Beat 4: Curtis Taylor appointed by  
 Governor on 12/14/1929

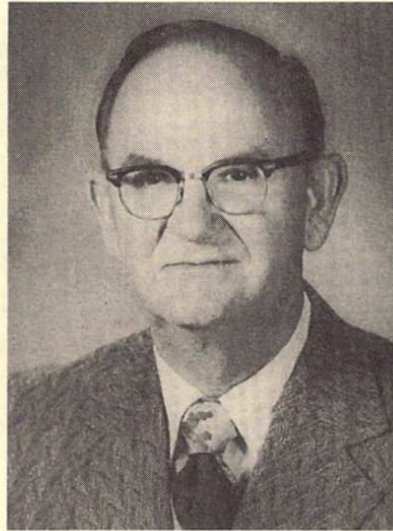
1930

Sheriff: M. J. Stone  
 County Judge: A. M. Byrd on 12/31/1934, Vice,  
 Hardy R. Stone  
 Surveyor: H. C. R. Shrank on 1/30/1930—I. L. Stone  
 deceased  
 Justice of Peace: Beat 1: S. M. Bailey on 12/10/1930,  
 Vice T. C. Kinard, deceased  
 Beat 2: J. K. Pigford on 2/11/1930, Vice J. E.  
 Rogers, resigned

MERIDIAN CITY OFFICIALS, 1988



Mayor Jimmy Kemp



Councilman Howard Williams



Councilman Norvin Wilson



Councilman Ed Frasier



Councilman Hobert Kornegay



Councilman George Thomas

# NOTES

## 1/Foundation on the Frontier

1. Dunbar Rowland and A. G. Sanders, eds., *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1729-1740 French Dominion* (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History Press) Vol. 1, pps. 21-54.

2. Copy of Henry Sale Halbert's "Bernard Romans Map of 1772," from *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, in Goldman Collection held by Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History (LCDAH).

3. Pickett Papers, "Second Conversation with George S. Gaines," in *Notes Upon the History of Alabama*, Spring, 1848, Sec. 14, No. 2, (University of Alabama Special Collections: Alabama Department of Archives and History, Maps and Manuscript Division).

4. Copy of Sam Wells' "The Place of Mixed Bloods in Choctaw History," in Goldman Collection held by LCDAH.

5. Tom Goldman interview, Sept. 29, 1987.

6. *Armstrong Indian Census*, 1831; Copy available LCDAH.

7. Goldman interview.

8. Wells.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *The Meridian Star*, April 19, 1965.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Henry Sale Halbert, "Creek War Incidents," in *Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society*, ed. Thomas McAdory Owen, (Alabama Historical Society: 1898), Vol. II, pp. 108-109.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Gideon Lincecum, "Life of Apushimitaha," in *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society* (Jackson, 1906) Vol. IX, p. 421.

16. Halbert, p. 118.

## 2/Poor Man's Land: The Territorial Transition

1. Alan V. Briceland, "Ephraim Kirby: Mr. Jefferson's Emmissary on the Tombigbee-Mobile Frontier in 1804," *The Alabama Review: Quarterly Journal of Alabama History* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Historical Association) No. 2, Vol. 24, April 1, 1971, p. 98.

2. W. H. Sparks, *The Memories of Fifty Years* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Bensen and Haffelfinger, 1870) p. 332.

3. Briceland, p. 97.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Sparks, p. 331.

6. John Ray Skates, *Mississippi: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1979, for the American Association for State and Local History) pp. 17-18.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

8. Charles Lowery, "The Great Migration to the Mississippi Territory, 1798-1819," *The Journal of Mississippi History*, Vol. 30, No. 3, August, 1968, p. 175.

9. *Ibid.*, pg. 174.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

11. Briceland, p. 102.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Skates, p. 12.

14. Works Progress Administration (hereafter referred to as WPA) papers held by Meridian Public Library (MPL).

15. H. S. Halbert, "Story of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit," *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, ed. Franklin L. Riley, Vol. 6, 1902, p. 375.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Bob Ferguson, edited version of speech delivered at 150th Anniversary of Signing of Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, in Goldman Collection held by LCDAH.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Laws of Mississippi*, Session 18, January, 1833, p. 511.

20. WPA File No. 230.

21. Skates, p. 18.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

25. Sparks, p. 331.

26. J. F. H. Claiborne, "A Trip Through the Piney Woods," *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, Vol. 9, ed. Franklin L. Riley, 1906, p. 521.

27. Sparks, p. 331.

28. Claiborne, pp. 487-488.

29. *Ibid.*, pg. 522.

30. *The Galveston Daily News*, Sunday, Feb. 4, 1917.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*

33. Mary J. Welsh, "Recollections of Pioneer Life in Mississippi," in *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, Vol. IV, ed. Franklin L. Riley, 1901, p. 344.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 346.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 347.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Skates, p. 69.

### 3/Carving Out a County

1. Jack D. Elliott, Jr., "A Report on the Location of the Extinct Town of Old Marion," (Prepared at the request of the LCDAH, Dec. 11, 1987)
2. The Meridian Star, Oct. 22, 1933.
3. James F. Doster and David C. Weaver, *Tenn-Tom Country: The Upper Tombigbee Valley*, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press), 1987.
4. Welsh, pp. 344-347.
5. Doster, Weaver.
6. A. W. Malone, "The History of Meridian," in The Meridian Star, May 8, 1960.
7. *Laws of Mississippi*, 1937.
8. *Deed Book D*, Available LCDAH.
9. Board of Police minutes, 1847-1854, Available LCDAH.
10. *Ibid.*
11. James T. Dawson, "History of Education in Lauderdale County," (LCDAH Publication, 1988).
12. WPA File: County History.
13. Lauderdale Baptist Association History, Copy available LCDAH.
14. History of Meridian First Baptist Church, Copy available LCDAH.
15. *Ibid.*
16. The Meridian Star, May 8, 1960.
17. Dorothy Lorie Smith, "A History of Lauderdale County, Mississippi," (Master's Thesis: Mississippi College), 1961.
18. *Deed Book B*, Lauderdale County, Available LCDAH.
19. First Baptist Church training tape; June, 1974.
20. *Deed Book A*, Lauderdale County, Available LCDAH.
21. Frank Durr, "Chronicle of Old Marion From 1838 to 1865," reprinted Dec. 24, 1982, by J. L. Hobgood from Evening Star newspaper of Sunday, June 13, 1909. Copy available LCDAH.
22. The Meridian Star, Oct. 22, 1933.
23. Durr chronicle.
24. WPA File: County History.
25. *Ibid.*

### 4/The Calm Before the Storm

1. William K. Scarborough, "From Prosperity to Poverty: Economic Growth and Change to 1900," in *Sense of Place: Mississippi*, ed. by Peggy Prenshaw and Jesse O. McKee (University Press of Mississippi, 1980).
2. Harper's Gazeteer, "Cotton Blockade," reprinted in The Meridian Star, Oct. 22, 1933.
3. The Lauderdale Republican, 1854-1856: Microfilm copies available Meridian Public Library.
4. Personal diary of Major David Gavin: Copy available LCDAH.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Personal diary of Dr. J. P. Welch: Copy available LCDAH.
7. H. Blackwood, Moore Plantation log: Copy available LCDAH.
8. WPA File: Slavery.
9. *Ibid.*

10. Gavin diary.
11. WPA File: County History.
12. The Lauderdale Republican, April 11, 1854.
13. The Lauderdale Republican, December 13, 1854.
14. WPA File: Towns and Cities.
15. The Lauderdale Republican, May 16, 1854.
16. The Lauderdale Republican, April 11, 1854.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Durr Chronicle.
19. Hewitt Clarke, "The Barbecue," Copy available LCDAH.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. The Lauderdale Republican, April 11, 1854.
23. The Meridian Star, May 8, 1960.
24. Robert J. Cangelosi, "MRA History of Meridian," Special report for Historic District Nomination Form, August, 1986, Copy available LCDAH.
25. The Meridian Star, May 8, 1960.
26. *Ibid.*
27. "Meridian Centennial Celebration: Rails to Runways," May 8-14, 1960, Publication sponsored by the Meridian Centennial Inc., Copy available LCDAH.
28. *Ibid.*
29. The Lauderdale Republican, Dec. 25, 1855.

### 5/Trial by Fire: The Civil War Years

1. Elton Gregory Snowden, "The Meridian Campaign: Sherman in Mississippi," (Honors Thesis: University of Alabama), April, 1976.
2. Snowden, pg. 14.
3. Smith, pg. 47.
4. Welch Diary.
5. The Meridian Star, Oct. 22, 1933.
6. WPA File: County History.
7. The Meridian Star, March 1, 1987.
8. The Meridian Star, March 15, 1987.
9. WPA File: Slavery.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Snowden, pg. 5.
12. Smith.
13. Snowden, pg. 15.
14. WPA File: Slavery.
15. Welch Diary.
16. *1882 Business Directory of Meridian*, pg. 27.
17. Official Records Series I, Vol. XXXII, *The War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1883), pg. 654.
18. Speech by Mrs. Elizabeth Mahan Sims, 1937, Copy available LCDAH.
19. Durr Chronicle.
20. Margie Riddle Bearss, *Sherman's Forgotten Campaign: The Meridian Expedition*, (Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc., 1987, Sponsored by the Jackson Civil War Roundtable, Inc.) pg. 192.
21. *Ibid.*, pg. 190.
22. Snowden, pg. 20.
23. Durr Chronicle.
24. The Meridian Star, October 22, 1933.

25. Snowden, pg. 34.
26. Welch Diary.

### 6/Reconstruction and Recovery

1. WPA File: County History.
2. The Meridian Star, October 22, 1933.
3. The Meridian Star, May 8, 1960.
4. Smith, pp. 55–61.
5. WPA File: Slavery.
6. The Meridian Star, October 22, 1933.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Mary J. Welsh, "The Confederate Orphans Home of Mississippi," *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, Vol. 5, pp. 121–136.
9. The Meridian Star, May 8, 1960.
10. *1870 Directory of Business*, Copy available LCDAH.
11. WPA File 250: Growth and Development.
12. WPA File: Slavery.
13. Smith, pp. 55–61.
14. *Ibid.*
15. WPA File: Slavery.
16. Smith, pp. 55–61.
17. W. Silas Vance, "The Marion Riot," *Mississippi Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 4, Fall, 1974, pp. 447–463.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. Jack Shank column in The Meridian Star, July 12, 1987.
22. Cangelosi, MRA Nomination Form.
23. W. B. Jones, *Methodism in the Mississippi Conference: 1870–1894* (The Hawkins Foundation: Mississippi Conference Historical Society), p. 31.
24. *Ibid.*, pg. 223.
25. Smith, pg. 70.
26. Cangelosi, MRA Nomination Form.
27. The Meridian Star, October 22, 1933.
28. *Ibid.*

### 7/Riding the Rails to Progress

1. J.F.H. Claiborne, "A Trip Through the Piney Woods," *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, Vol. 9, ed. Franklin L. Riley, 1906. Originally published in 1841–1842 Natchez Free Trader and Gazette.
2. Smith, pg. 67.
3. F.M. Runnels, ed., *Illustrated Handbook of Meridian, Mississippi*, (Printed by the Meridian Board of Trade and Cotton Exchange, 1907), pg. 43.
4. The Meridian Star, October 6, 1983.
5. Smith, pg. 65.
6. "Rails to Runways."
7. *Illustrated Handbook*, pg. 43.
8. *Ibid.*, pg. 58.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Jack Shank column in The Meridian Star, January 5, 1986.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Illustrated Handbook*, pg. 45.
13. WPA File 252: Growth and Development.

14. Personal interviews with Mary Ellen White, *et al.*, June, 1987. Available transcripts, LCDAH.
15. Personal interviews with Mrs. Katherine Gaddis, *et al.*, July, 1987. Available transcripts, LCDAH.
16. Personal interview with F.P. Posey, July, 1987.
17. Personal interview with Leslie Hagwood, *et al.*, August, 1987.
18. Personal interview with C.L. Cahoon, June, 1987.
19. WPA File: Towns and Cities.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Jack Shank column in The Meridian Star, October 5, 1986.
22. WPA File 250.
23. Harper's Weekly, January 17, 1880, pg. 43.
24. Shank, October 5, 1986.
25. *Illustrated Handbook*, pg. 36.
26. *Ibid.*, pg. 41.

### 8/The Golden Age

1. *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi*, Vol. II, (From 1891 edition reprinted in 1978 by The Reprint Company, Spartanburg, S.C.) pg. 153.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Illustrated Handbook of Meridian*, 1907.
4. Dunbar Rowland, abstracted "History of Lauderdale County," Available LCDAH.
5. *Ibid.*
6. WPA File 250: Meridian Growth and Development.
7. The Meridian Star, May 8, 1960.
8. WPA File 250.
9. *Illustrated Handbook of Meridian*.
10. *Meridian Illustrated*, 1904, Copy available LCDAH.
11. WPA File 250.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. Cangelosi, MRA Nomination Form.
16. *Black Business Directory: 1906–1910*, Copy available LCDAH.
17. Jim Dawson, "History of Education in Lauderdale County," (LCDAH Publication, 1988).
18. *Black Business Directory*.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Dawson.
21. The Mississippi United Methodist Advocate, March 15, 1978.
22. Jack Gold, Special report for National Register of Historic Places nomination form, Copy Available LCDAH.
23. WPA File 250.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *1907 Meridian Illustrated*.
26. *Black Business Directory*.
27. Jim Williams speech, "The Influence the Railroads had on Meridian," May 25, 1979.
28. WPA File 700: Meridian Railroad Saga.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Williams speech.
31. WPA File 700.
32. Personal interview with Oscar Kent, July, 1987.
33. The Meridian Star, October 10, 1933.

**9/Hard Times and Heroes:  
The Depression Years**

1. WPA File 252.
2. WPA File 633.
3. WPA File 252.
4. WPA Files 630 and 633.
5. *Ibid.*
6. WPA File 230.
7. WPA File 630.
8. Jack Shank column, *The Meridian Star*, November 8, 1987.
9. WPA File 657.
10. Cangelosi, MRA Nomination Form.
11. "Centennial '86: Annual Report/Policy Statement of Greater Meridian Chamber of Commerce," Brochure.
12. Personal interview with Mortimer Johnson, June, 1987.
13. Personal interview with Evelyn "Ebbie" Smith, July 1987.
14. Personal interview with Mrs. Sadie Johnson, June, 1987.
15. Personal interview with Mary Ellen White, July, 1987.
16. *The Meridian Star*, May 12, 1986.
17. Jimmie Rodgers: special edition of *The Meridian Star*, May 20, 1988.
18. Chamber annual report.
19. A.G. Weems, "The Key Brothers," reprinted in Sesqui-centennial Edition of *The Meridian Star*, October 6, 1983.
20. Personal interview with A.D. Hunter, August, 1987.

**10/The Way We Were**

Information provided by Meridian Public Schools' Talented and Gifted program students.

1. WPA File 240.

**11/Famous Folks & Local Legends**

1. Dorothy Abbott, ed., *Mississippi Writers: Reflections of Childhood and Youth*. Vols. I & II (Oxford: University Press of Mississippi, 1986).
2. Abbott.
3. Abbott.
4. *The Commercial Appeal*, March 9, 1987.
5. Dr. Harris D. Riley, Jr., "Mississippi's First Pediatrician—Dr. F. Gail Riley," in *Journal of Mississippi State Medical Association*, Vol. 28, pp. 243–249, September, 1987.
6. Progress Edition of *The Meridian Star*, February 21, 1985.
7. Miss America 1986 Scrapbook in *The Meridian Star*, October 16, 1985.

**12/Finding Paths to the Past**

Information obtained from WPA File: Towns and Cities: Available LCDAH.

*Note:* Additional Reference Material on Lauderdale County History is available from LCDAH. The organization has published numerous Census and index guides for sale to the public.



*Friends and alumni of Haven Institute in 1945*

# INDEX

## A

ABC - TV, 136  
 Academy of Vocal Arts, 134  
 Acme Building & Supply, 109  
 Adams, Robert A., 99  
 Adkisson, J. W., 72  
 Afro-American, 115  
 Akin, Earl, 149  
 Akin, Susan, 149  
 Alabama (state), 19, 22, 23, 42, 51, 54, 57, 70, 71, 75, 82, 141, 155  
 Alabama & Chattanooga Railroad, 88  
 Alabama & Great Southern RR. Co (AGS), 80, 155, 170  
 Alabama & Vicksburg RR (A&V), 51, 52, 59, 61, 80, 81, 164  
 Alabama River, 19  
 Alamucha (community), 15, 28, 29, 34, 35, 44, 45, 63, 159, 160  
 Alamucha Academy, 35, 161  
 Alamucha Infantry, 56  
 Alden Mills, 108  
 Alexander, John, 134  
 Alford, Warren, 41  
 Alford, W. F. (sheriff), 50  
 Alfred (slave), 46  
 Allen, John, 54  
 Allison, W. B., 23, 47  
 Americans, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 29, 41  
 American Academy of General Practice, 141  
 American Academy of Pediatrics, 145  
 American Bicentennial Commission, 137  
 American Legion Monument, 170  
 Ames, Gov. Adelbert, 70  
 American Revolution, 16, 17, 18, 23  
 Amey (slave), 45  
 Amis, A. B. (Alfonso Bobbett), 147  
 Amos, Jack, 60  
 Anderson, (Professor), 53  
 Anderson, Daniel, 18  
 Anderson, Elmina, 85  
 Anderson, John, 17  
 Anderson, Joseph "Tobe" Tillman, 85  
 Anderson, Samuel, 141  
 Anderson, Dr. William Jackson "Dr. Billy", 85  
 Anderson, Dr. William Jefferson, Sr. "Jeff", 85, 86, 141

Anderson, Dr. William Jefferson, Jr. "Jeff", 141  
 Anderson Family Cemetery, 35  
 Anderson's Infirmary, 141, 142  
 Jeff Anderson Regional Medical Center, 141, 142  
 Andrews Chapel (community), 158  
 Antioch School, 98  
 Appalachian Foothills, 15  
 Arkansas (state), 23, 59  
 Arklet (rr crossing), 170  
 Armistice Day Celebration, 170  
 Armstrong Family, 87  
 Armstrong Indian Census of 1831, 17  
 Arundel (community), 28, 45, 87, 163  
 Arundel Lithia Springs, 87, 162, 163  
 Associated Consultants in Education, 140  
 Atkinson, J. W., 75, 99  
 Atlanta, 55, 56, 80  
 Atlanta University, 140  
 Attala County, 24  
 Australia, 90  
 Avenues-Early Names, 105  
 "Aviation Day," 118

B

Baier, Jerry Moore, 137  
 Bailey (community), 34, 37, 47, 156, 157, 158  
 Bailey, B. H., 49  
 Bailey, Harold Melby, 147  
 Bailey, John W., 49  
 Bailey, John, 157  
 Bailey, Col. S. M., 47, 157  
 Bailey, Thomas L., 112  
 (Thomas Lowry), 147  
 Bains, L. B., 49  
 Baker, Jeff, 123, 128  
 Baker's Creek, 59  
 Baldwin, John M., 54  
 Ball, John T., 51, 52, 53, 63, 69, 77, 80, 88, 105  
 Ball, John T., Cotton Compress, 88  
 Banes (Harper & Banes Store), 48  
 Banes (Bains) Hotel, 48  
 Baptists, 75, 101  
 Bardwell, H. L., 93  
 Barksdale, U. S. Rep. William, 50  
 Barnett, Joe, 57  
 Barnett, Joseph, 72

Barr, Isaac, 35  
 Bartel, John G., 49  
 Basic City (community), 163  
 Batt, William R., 35  
 Battle of Bull Run, 56  
 Battlefield (settlement), 30, 81, 156, 157, 158, 164  
 Baucum, Maxey, 58, 151  
 Baum, Joseph, 69  
 Baumgardner, Mrs. Emogene, 46, 47  
 Bayne, John C. C., 49  
 Bay Springs School, 99  
 Beck, Alfred, 51  
 Beeson's College, 99, 100  
 Beeson, M. A., 99  
 Beeson, J. W., 99  
 Bell, Abraham, 60  
 Bell, John W., 60  
 Bennett, H. H., 69  
 Bennett, W. H. (Dr.), 69, 75  
 Berivon Company, 146  
 Berkeley, Cal., 135  
 Bernhardt, Sara, 95, 169  
 Bernstein, Leonard, 137  
 Berry (Strayhorn & Berry), 98  
 Berry, Major M. F., 57  
 Bethel School, 98  
 Bidwell, J., 24  
 Bigbee River, 45  
 "Big Central" School, 99  
 Biggers (suburb), 170  
 Biggers, Richard, 170  
 Bird, Isaac, 35  
 Birmingham, Ala., 80  
 Biscuit Creek, 40  
 Blacks, 17, 18, 21, 24, 26, 37, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 54, 55, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 75, 84, 91, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 112, 139, 140, 141, 159, 161, 167, 168  
 Black Medicine Water Springs, 47  
 Blackman, Andrew, 83  
 Blackwell, Wesley, 35  
 Blackwood, H., 45, 46  
 Blake, (slave), 45, 46  
 Blanks Station (community), 156  
 Blanks, William, 83  
 Blanks, W. R., 159  
 Bluegrass Hall of Fame, 116  
 Board of Police, 29, 35, 54, 67  
 Bonds School, 98  
 Bonita (community), 36, 106, 116, 118,

161  
 Bonita Reservoir, 36, 69, 160, 161, 162  
 Bonita School, 99  
 Booneville, Miss., 144  
 Booth, Richard, 17  
 Bostick, Eugene, 82  
 Bostick, T. J., 82  
 Boutwell, 156  
 Boutwell, H. D., 49  
 Boy Scouts of America, 136, 143  
 Boy Scout Camp Binachi, 160  
 Bozeman (community), 158  
 Bozeman, Dora, 115  
 Bozeman, Dora V., 158  
 Bozeman, Peter, 44, 56, 67, 154, 155  
 Bozeman, Peter H., 56  
 Bozeman, Samuel M., 158  
 Bramlette, Judge E. L., 71  
 Brandon (town), 51, 53  
 Brantley & Co., 70  
 Brewster, James Madison, 29, 159  
 Briggs (Williams & Briggs Machine Shops), 93  
 Brikalo, 32, 34, 151, 154  
 Brinner, Oliver F., 49  
 Broach, John, 60, 61  
 Broach, Sam (slave), 60, 61  
 Broach, Willie, 60, 61  
 Broach, William P., 60  
 Broadway, 137  
 Broke, James R., 35  
 Brooke Army Medical Center, 143  
 Brooks, Maggie, 100  
 Brooks, John H., 99  
 Brooks, Robert N., 100  
 Brookshire, W. C., 69  
 Brower, J. R., 30  
 Brown, Berry, 35  
 Brown, Epps, 41  
 Brown, Isaac, 57  
 Brown, J. W., 30, 72  
 Brown, John, 57  
 Brown, L. P., 88  
 Brown, Littleberry, 43  
 Brown, Sister M. Vincent, 77  
 Brown, W. A., 75, 93  
 Brown, W. F., 51, 93  
 Bruister, T. E., 29  
 Brunson (farm settlement), 170  
 Bryan, Lewis, 17  
 Buchanan, Dr. James M., 95

Buckatunnay Baptist Church,36  
Buckatunna Creek,30  
Buckingham,W.E.,149  
Buckler,James,49  
Bullards (sawmill village),87,163  
Bullard,Mr.,163  
Bunnie (settlement),158  
Buntin Dairy,158  
Burleson,Rosanne,123,127,130  
Burriss,Robert N.,49  
Burwell,Abram,28  
Butler,Mrs.Millie Gunn,44,160  
Butlock,W.C.,69  
Buttercup (community),158  
Buxton,Martin C.,28

## C

Cahn & Co.,70  
Cahn, E.,93  
Cahoon,C.L.,56,86  
Caldwell,J.D.,59  
Calhoun,Henry,54  
Calhoun,John,49  
Calhoun's (W.C.) Ten Pin Alley & Confectionary,49  
California,137,139  
Calvary Baptist Church,101  
Calvert,Jennie Ruth Scott Crump,139,140  
Cameron,Daniel,29,35  
Cameron,Hugh D.,56,57,95  
Capote,Truman,135  
Carnegie Library,169  
Carnegie Medal, 102,103  
Carolinias (states),18,22,25,29,159  
Carousel House,167  
Carpenter,Benjamin,36  
Carpetbaggers,67,70,71  
Carr,Abraham,35,46  
Carroll County,24  
Carson,William,28  
Carter,B.J.,93  
Carter,E.L.,93  
Carter,(Capt.)T.C.,56,58  
Carter,William,35  
Carter,Dr.William L.,86  
Carter,W.P.,37  
Cartwright County,N.C.,22  
Castles,James,40  
Catholics,37,75,77,101  
Catholic Schools,100  
Causey,William,161  
Causeyville (community),29,35,82, 85,87,141,160,161  
Causeyville General Store,82,85,114,129  
Causeyville General Store & Grist Mill,160  
Causeyville School,99  
Celie (village),87,161  
Center Hill (community),36  
Central Methodist Church,72  
Cephus (slave),68  
Chafin,88  
Chandler,Lockard & Co.,70

Chandler,G.C.,48  
Chandler,George,65  
Chandler,George W.,46  
Chandler,Greene C.,49  
Chandler,William,37  
Chaney,Lon,95  
Chaney,Ned,46  
Chattanooga,Tenn.,55,80  
Cheers,William,48  
Chester,John F.,35  
Chicago,120,139,142  
Chicago Lyric Opera,137  
Chicago Music College,142  
Chicago School of Medicine,142  
Chickasawha River,65  
Choctaws,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22, 23,24,25,26,28,30,34,41,60,151,157, 159  
Choctaw Civil War,16,156  
Choctaw County Miss.,24  
Choctaw County,Ala.,29,47,161  
Choctaw Nation,16  
Chucky (Station),15,30,54,56 (community),58,60,61,86,87,163  
Chunky Chitto,30,163  
Chunky Heroes (Volunteers),56  
Chunky River,47,54,58,59,60,86, 162,163  
Chunky River Railroad Disaster,58,59,60,162  
Chunky Shoals (fishing spot),163  
Chunkeyville,28,30,47,62,162,163  
Cincinnati,79,103  
Cincinnati Conservatory of Music,37,134  
The Cincinnati Enquirer (news),147  
Cincinnati Music Hall,134  
Cincinnati Zoo Opera,134  
Citizens National Bank,93,111  
Citizens Savings Bank,93  
City Hall,94,170  
Civil War,27,29,30,31,34,35,40,42, 44,46,47,48,53,(55-66,67,68,75,77, 97,154,158,160,162,164,168,170  
Civilian Conservation Corps,111  
Claiborne,J.F.H.,25,78,79  
Clark,Benjamin,41  
Clarkdale School District,99  
Clarke County,16,24,29,47,52,85,87, 135,161,162,163  
Clarke,Hewitt,50  
Clay,Coon,87,155  
Clayton,Charles,37,43  
Clayton,William,43  
Clayton Plantation,67  
Cliff Williams (flag station),161  
Clopton,Mr.,71  
Clopton,William,70  
Clutts,David,49  
Coates School,98  
Coats,Sion,27  
Cochran,John,41  
Cochran,Samuel H.,37  
Cochran Cemetery,157  
Coffee,(Gen.)John,24  
Coffee,Roberts & Co.Grain Co.,69  
Cokers,31,32

Coker,Darling,31  
Coker,Hiram,31  
Coker,Mr.& Mrs.Hiram,Jr.,160  
Coker,Sir Peyton,29,30,31,159  
Cokers Chapel (community),161  
Coker's Chapel Methodist Church,30,160  
Coker's Chapel School,98  
Cole Cabin,157  
Cole,William L.,31,156,157  
Colebiate Springs,47  
Coleman,L.,98  
Coleman,Lula,46  
College Heights,99  
College Home,72  
Collins,Nathaniel Monroe "Dinks",84,158  
Collins,Ross A.,147  
Collins,Rosser A.,84  
Collinsville (community),34,84,115,147,156,158,159  
Cologne (settlement),86  
Columbia University,136  
Columbus (Town),69  
Company D.,3rd Regiment Miss. Volunteer Infantry,CSA,56  
Co.H 14th Miss. Regiment,57  
Complete (community),170  
Concord School,99  
Confederacy,47,50,53,55,56,57,58, 59,60,61,62,63,64,65,66,67,68,69, 154,158  
Confederate Cemetery Marion,59  
Confederate Circle,59  
Confederate Dept. of Ala.,Miss. & East Louisiana,61  
Confederate Hospital,63,154  
Confederate Orphans Home,68  
(The) Confederate Veteran (news),60  
Congregational Church,101  
Connecticut,70  
Con Sheehan Hall,70,71,94  
Cook,John M.,158  
Cooks Academy,98  
Coonsha (Coosa),17  
Coonville (Village),87,155  
Cooper,Anderson,135  
Cooper,Mrs.Abner,75  
Cooper,Carter,135  
Cooper,Leonard,31,75,76,156,157  
Cooper,Wyatt,135  
Cooper Institute,75,76,77,156  
Cooper Normal College,156  
Coosa,16,17,19,20,24,25,34,43,151,155  
Corby,England,137  
Corinth,56,59  
Corrine (flagstop),164  
Corry (flagstop),164  
Cotton States Lumber Co.(Meehan),81,85,86,162,164  
"Countrymen",15,16,18  
Country Music Hall of Fame,116  
Court,H.R.,58  
Courthouse Annex,170  
Courthouse Hill,40,151,154  
Covert's Meridian Furniture

Factory,93  
Cram,L.,40  
Crane,Spencer,44,155  
Crawford,Jerry,133  
Creek - Indian,19  
Creek War,20  
Crenshaw,Tommi,123  
Culbreath,John,24  
Culpepper,Bryan,149  
Culpepper,Mrs.Lessie,85  
Curlen,S.I.,98  
Curtis Chapel School,98  
Cusick,J.W.,69

## D

(United) Daughters of the Confederacy,59,154  
Dahlgreen (settlement),158  
Dale,James,41  
Dale,Joseph (or James), sheriff,41  
Dale,Samuel "Big Sam",15,16,18,19, 20,21,23,24,25,30,31,75,76,151,156,157, 158  
Daleville,19,47,75,76,156  
Daleville Line School,99  
Daleville United Methodist Church,75  
Dalewood,127  
Dallas Opera,137  
Dalton Gang,53,54,162  
Dancing Rabbit Creek,24  
Daniels,W.J.,41,48  
Daniels,William,41  
Daniel,William J.,49  
Davis,H.L."Red",40  
Davis,Jefferson,56  
Davis,Thomas H.,155  
Davis Mills (community),155  
"Jeff Davis Neckties",63  
Dawson,Helen Moore,137  
Dawson,Jim,58  
Dearman,Solomo,35  
Decatur, Miss.,32,138  
Defenders (Volunteers),56  
DeKalb (town),60  
DeKalb County,60  
Delk,Mrs.Mary,34  
Delk,Vincent,32,34,40,41  
Dement,James P.,49  
Demopolis,Ala.,62  
Denton,William Rice,83,84  
Dentzel Carousel,95,96,167  
Dentzel,Gustav,167  
Denver University,140  
Dept. of the Gulf for the Confederacy,60  
Depot District (The),96,164,170  
Dial,E.H.,91,93  
Dickerson,Willis,49  
Dobbs,T.D.,49  
Dobbs,W.C.,49  
Doster & Weaver,31  
Doty,Judge,41  
Doty,Peter,40,54  
Draughn,J.W.,70  
Dry Creek School,99

Dubose, Wade, 35  
Ducktown, 115  
Duckworth, Lt. Ben, 60  
Duffee (community), 158  
Duke University, 134  
Dunn, Aubert Culberson, 147  
Dunn, John, 47, 162, 163  
Dunn's Falls, 47, 162, 163  
Dupree, E., 69  
Durham, D. C., 69  
DuRoulett, Regis, 15, 17  
Durr, Colonel E. A., 44, 68, 156  
Durr, Emanuel (Manual) A., 37, 57  
Durr, Frank, 41, 48, 53, 54, 63, 64, 65  
Dutch Settlers, 86  
Dyer, C., 24  
Dyess, John, 86

## E

Eagle Cotton Oil Mill, 93  
Eakens, Joseph, 69  
Early, D. P., 98  
East End Historic District, 96  
East End School (black), 99  
East Mississippi Baptist Assoc., 100  
East Miss. Cotton Mill, 90, 93  
East Miss. Female College, 72, 99  
East Miss. State Hospital, 95, 170  
Eastville (community), 170  
Eaton, John, 24  
Eaves School, 98  
Ebenezer (community), 29, 35  
Ebenezer Baptist Church, 35, 161  
Edboyn (community), 161  
El Bethel Baptist Church, 101  
Elizabeth School, 98  
Elliott, Jack, Jr., 28  
Ellis, William, 24  
Emerson (Professor), 53  
Emmons Brothers, 111  
Empire Hotel, 106  
English, 16, 17, 18, 21, 30, 115  
Enterprise (community), 47, 52, 56, 57, 59, 162, 163  
Enzor (settlement), 161  
Enzor, Ben, 161  
Episcopal Church, 37, 61, 75, 101  
Estes, Myrtle, 142, 143  
European, 15, 16, 17, 22, 95  
Evans, Bill, 54  
Evans, Emmet, 98  
Evans, George, 24  
Evans, Mary Louise, 118  
Evans, S., 48  
Evans, Sylvester, 49

## F

Faber, Jacob, 69  
Fallen, H. C., 69  
"Father of Country Music," 116, 156, 167  
Father of Lauderdale County, 16  
"Father of Meridian," 37  
Federal Emergency Relief Administration, 111

Fellowship Baptist Church (Center Hill), 36  
Ferguson, Brigadier Gen. Samuel W., 62  
Fewell, W. L., 164  
Felder, Dr. Alvin, 143  
Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Church, 36  
Financial Panic of 1837, 41  
Financial Panic of 1873, 72  
Finch Fire Co. #3, 95  
Findley, D., 69  
First Mississippi (Mexican War), 41  
Fire Station Co., #1, 95  
Fire Station Co., #5, 95  
First Baptist Church (Meridian), 35, 149, 160  
First Battalion of Choctaw Indians, Confederate Army, 60  
First Congregational Church, 101  
First Mississippi Regiment, 41  
First National Bank, 93, 111  
Fisher family, 53, 54  
Fisher, Southy, 49  
Fisher, William, 53  
Fisher, William T., 49  
Fisher's Hotel, 46  
Fleming, L. F., 52  
Florida, 16, 75, 136  
Flourney, Mrs. C. E., 26  
Flourney, J. G., 69  
"Flying Keys," 118, 121  
Ford, Dr. D. U., 48, 49  
Ford, Stephen H., 49  
Forest (town), 59, 136  
Forest Lawn Memory Garden Cemetery, 71  
Forrest, Gen. Nathan Bedford, 57  
Fort Mims, 19  
Fort Stephens, Ala., 17  
Fortner, Mager, 45  
Foster, William C., 35  
"Fountain of Youth" (Meehan), 162  
Frederickson, Roy, 17  
Freeman (settlement), 158  
Freeman's Store, 158  
Freidreichter, A. G., 69  
French, 15, 16, 17, 21, 46, 48, 134  
French, O. C., 71  
Friendship Baptist Church (Marion), 35  
Frye, H. J., 99

## G

Gaddis, Katherine, 83, 84  
Gaines, George S., 17  
Gaines Trace, 155  
Gainesville, Ala., 32, 37  
Gallaspy, John G., 30  
Gary & Shearer, 70  
Garlandville (town), 30  
Garvin, Benjamin, 17  
Gary, J. H., 93  
Gary, John, H., 88  
Gary House (The), 63  
Gaston, E. H., 98  
Gathright, Y. C., 72

Gavin, Major David, 43, 46  
Gavin, Henry, 17  
The Gazette (news), 70  
General Electric, 136, 137  
Georgia (state), 15, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 29, 42, 66, 155, 159  
Georgia Institute of Technology, 139  
Georges, W. W., 93  
Germany, 86, 99, 115, 134, 143  
Gilead (settlement), 155  
Girls' Industrial Home School, 99  
Golden Age, (The), 90, 91, 93, 96, 102, 105, 106, 111  
Golden & Williams Sawmill, 69  
Golden, John M., 69  
Goldman, Tom, 17, 18, 34  
Goodloe, A. J., 70  
Gordon, C. M., 75-99  
Gordon, Mrs. Grace, 127, 128  
Gould, (Professor), 53  
Gower Printing Office, 111  
Gower, H. A., 111  
Grace, Green, 41  
Grace, W. G., 75  
Grace, W. R., 70  
Graham (sawmill village), 87, 163  
Graham, Benjamin, 28  
Graham, W. J., 87, 163  
Granberry, Edwin, 136  
Grand Opera House, 95, 164, 169  
Grange Organization, 28  
Grant, 56, 65  
Grant, M. R., 81  
Grantham, Emma, 114  
Grantham, Joseph, 114  
Grayson, Samuel, 24  
Great Depression, 78, 82, 84, 90, 91, 96, 105, 107-122, 142, 156  
Green Hill School, 98  
Greene, Mason, 123, 130  
Greer, I. S. O. G., 53, 62, 63  
Gresham, Lt. Thomas, 60  
Gressett, A. - Music House, 93, 118  
Grissett, Ashley, 123, 126  
"The Grove", 83, 84  
Gulf Coast, 16, 56  
Gulf, Mobile & Northern Co. (RR), 79, 111, 158, 159  
Gulf, Mobile & Ohio RR., 79, 158  
Gunn, J. D., 130  
Gunn (Barney) Cotton Gin & General Store, 130, 154  
Gypsy King & Queen, 168

## H

Hagwood, Leslie, 85, 114, 129, 160  
Halbert, 20, 24  
Hale, Henry, 24  
Hall, Josephus M., 35  
Hamm Lumber Co., 109  
Hammel (flag station), 158  
Hammel, J. H., 158  
Hamrick Family Cemetery, 34  
Hancock, J. B., 49  
Hancock, Jubal, 54  
Hancock, W. M., 48  
Hancock, William M., 49  
Hannah, Barry, 136  
Hardin's Bakery, 111  
Hardin, Phil, 111  
Hardwood Manufacturing Co., 109  
Hardy, Capt. W. H., 56  
Hardy, William Harris, 79  
Hare, Simon (slave), 68  
Harper, Glen, 41  
Harper, R. B. G., 47, 49  
Harper and Banes Store, 48  
Harper's Gazetteer of the World (news), 42, 88, 90  
Harper's School, 99  
Harrington, Dr. Neville, 86  
Harrington School, 98  
Harris, John W., 98  
Harris-Brooks Lumber Co., 109  
Harris High School, 141, 143  
Harris High School/Junior College, 140  
Harris Junior College, 141  
Harrison, Sen. Pat, 58  
Pat Harrison Waterway District, 162  
Harry (slave), 46  
Hart, Mrs. E. H., 101  
Hart, Wilson & Slaughter, 70  
Hartfield, Asa, 24  
Harvard University, 136  
Harvey, Alac, 57  
Harvey, Alex T., 72  
Harvey, James, 72  
Harvey, Rick, 57  
Harvey, S., 155  
Hattiesburg, 79  
Haven's Chapel, 101  
Haven Institute (The), 99, 100, 143  
Havens Teachers College & Conservatory, 140  
Hawkins School, 98  
Hayes, Helen, 95  
Hazelhurst, 60  
Hearn, William, 41  
Henderson, Granville, 49  
Henderson, John, 29, 49  
Henderson, R. L. (sheriff), 72  
Henderson, William, Sr., 37  
Henry, Nettie, 62, 68, 70  
Henson, W. P., 170  
Herrington, Grady, 151  
Hester, Susan, 123  
Hefron, Joseph, 54  
Hickory Grove Baptist Church, 35, 57  
Hickory Grove School (Black), 98  
Higgins, John C., 62,  
Higgins, Mrs. H. E., 75, 99  
Highlands Historic District, 96, 164  
Highland Park, 62, 95, 164, 167  
Hill, Nancy Perry, 37  
Hobgood, Jim, 57  
Hoffer's Phoenix Iron Works, 93  
Holden, Col. E., 48  
Hollie, H. H., 98  
Holy Ground Campaign, 20  
Homeowners Loan Corporation, 112  
Hooks, Alexander, 158  
Hooks, Mrs. Edna, 46



Hookston (settlement), 158  
 Hopkins, W.M., 99  
 Johns Hopkins Hospital School of  
 Medicine (Baltimore), 142  
 Hopson Family, 87  
 Horn's (A.G.) Mercury, 70  
 Horton, W.E., 105  
 Hotel Belle, 155  
 Houston, R.M., 69  
 Houston Opera, 137  
 Howard, Dr., 98  
 Howe, Col. James H., 63  
 Howie, William, 37  
 Huffmaster, Gary "Beetle", 58  
 Hughes, Charles, 49  
 Hughes, James, 49  
 Hughes, Joel W., 49  
 Hughes School, 98  
 Hulett, F.A., & Sons Furniture  
 Store, 93  
 Humphreys, Gov. Benjamin G., 67  
 Hunter Brothers, 120  
 Hunter, A.D., 23, 65  
 Hunter, Anthony, 22  
 Hunter, Anthony Davis, 23, 120, 121  
 Hunter, Clarkie Davis, 22  
 Hunter, Ed, 22  
 Hunter, Isaac, 22  
 Hunter, Libbeus, 22, 23  
 Hunter, Libbeus, Jr., 22  
 Hurlburt & Brothers, 70  
 Hurlbutt, Levi, 68  
 Hurricane Creek (community), 29, 161  
 Hussey, E.Y., 43  
 Hussey, Edmund G., 35  
 Hussey, Shields L., 54  
 Hutchinson, C.L., 94, 95  
 Hutchinson, S.C., 99  
 Hyde, Captain Jack, 46

## I

Illinois Central RR, 53, 58  
 Institutions of Higher Learning in  
 Mississippi, 140  
 (The) International Register of  
 Profiles, 144  
 Iochohopi, Chief, 19  
 Irish, 17, 18, 21, 25, 31, 46, 47, 85, 115, 162  
 "Iron Horse," 50, 52, 53  
 Italian, 134  
 Ivey, Miss Emma, 99  
 Ivey, S.C., 99  
 Ivy, Dr. Horace M. (H.M.), 112, 140

## J

Jackson, Miss.  
 (city), 51, 53, 59, 65, 91, 105, 140  
 Jackson, Tenn., 79  
 Jackson Springs, 158  
 Jackson State University, 140  
 Jackson Weekly Clarion (news), 72  
 Jackson, Andrew, 19, 20, 24, 57  
 Jackson, S.N., 72  
 Jacobson, Wolf & Co., 70  
 James, Frank, 32, 53

James, Jesse, 32, 53  
 James, Robert, 24  
 Jasper County, 16, 24, 28, 30, 60  
 Jef (slave), 45, 46  
 Jefferson, Col. (Mexican War), 41  
 Jefferson, Thomas (President), 21,  
 22, 23  
 Jefferson, W.W., 69  
 Jenkins, Dr., 105  
 Jennings School, 98  
 Jewish Temple, 75-101  
 Jewish Temple Beth Israel, 101  
 Jim (slave), 45  
 Johnson, 57  
 Johnson, Dr., 41  
 Johnson, C.M., 69  
 Johnson, Fred, 82  
 Johnson, M.E., 99  
 Johnson, Mortimer, 112  
 Johnson, R.J., 170  
 Johnson, Dr. Reuben, 82  
 Johnson, Mrs. Sadie, 113  
 Johnson, Sterling, 156-157  
 Johnson, Sterling, Log Cabin, 156  
 Johnson, Tracy, 123, 125  
 Johnston, George, 17  
 Johnston, J.J., 54  
 Jolly, 83

Jones House, 63  
 Jones, Aaron, 46  
 Jones, Charity, 61  
 Jones, Charles L.S., 35  
 Jones, G.C., 99  
 Jones, Leon, 83  
 Jones, Marshall, 83  
 Jones, Milton, 102, 103  
 Jones, Paul D., 75, 99  
 Jones, Ransom J., 72  
 Joyner, Martha, 49  
 Junior Chamber of Commerce,  
 111, 118  
 Juzon, Charles, 15, 17, 18  
 Juzon, Pierre, 15, 17, 18

## K

Kamper, John, 93  
 Keaton, T.J., 69  
 Keeton, James, 40, 118  
 Keever, Miss L.V., 99  
 Keever, Mrs. M.V., 75, 99  
 Kemper County, 16, 24, 26, 31, 51, 60,  
 75, 118, 156  
 Kennedy & Co., Bakers, 70  
 Kennedy School, 99  
 Kent, Oscar, 103, 105  
 Kewanee, 15, 29, 30, 154, 155  
 Kewanee-Alamucha School, 99  
 Key, Al, 107, 108, 116, 117, 118, 120,  
 121, 122, 164, 167  
 Key, Dr. & Mrs. Elmore Benjamin, 118  
 Key, Fred, 107, 108, 116, 117, 118, 120,  
 121, 122, 164, 167  
 Key Brothers, 23, 116, 117, 118, 120,  
 121, 122, 139  
 Key Brothers Aviation Mu-  
 seum, 164, 167

Key Brothers Flying Service, 122  
 Key Field 120, 122, 167  
 Kimbrell Bros. Sawmill, 163  
 Kinard, Horace D., 115  
 King, Lloyd, 58  
 King, Patti, 123, 127  
 Kingsbury (missionary), 34  
 Kirby, Ephraim, 21, 22, 23  
 Kittrell, Nathaniel, 57  
 Kittrell, Ross, 57  
 Kitty Hawk, 102  
 Kling, F., 69  
 Knox's School, 98  
 Komegay, Dr. Hobert, 143  
 Krouse, P.F., 94

## L

L&N Railroad, 103  
 Labring Sons Cemetery, 167, 168  
 Lake Pontchartrain, 79  
 Lamar Hotel, 170  
 Lamar School Foundation, 150  
 Lamb & Turner's Saddles, 49  
 Langford, Mary S., 147  
 Langphier, William, 17  
 LaPlace (village) 164  
 Larke, Benjamin T., 35  
 Lasley, William P., 49  
 Lasley, W.P., 48  
 Lauderdale (town)  
 30, 32, 34, 41, 69, 87, 154, 155  
 Lauderdale, James (Colonel), 24, 155  
 Lauderdale Cotton Mill, 90  
 Lauderdale County, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20,  
 21, 22-26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 41, 42, 43, 45,  
 46, 48, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 71, 75,  
 77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 87, 90, 91, 94, 105,  
 107, 108, 111, 113-116, 118, 120, 122,  
 123, 125, 128, 129, 130, 132, 134, 135, 136,  
 137, 139, 140, 141, 144, 145, 147, 149, 150, 151,  
 154, 156, 159, 161, 162  
 Lauderdale County Baptist  
 Association, 101  
 Lauderdale County Board of  
 Police, 29, 35, 54, 67  
 Lauderdale County Confederate &  
 Union Cemetery 59, 151, 154  
 Lauderdale County Courthouse &  
 Annex, 169, 170  
 Lauderdale County Dept. Archives &  
 History (LCDAH), 123, 151  
 Lauderdale Mission (Methodist), 37  
 Lauderdale-DeKalb Road, 155  
 Lauderdale-Kewanee Road, 154  
 Lauderdale-to-Oxford, Ala. Road, 40  
 Lauderdale Republican (news)  
 "The Republican", 42, 47, 48, 52, 66  
 Lauderdale Rifles (Volunteers), 56  
 Lauderdale School, 99  
 Lauderdale Springs, 46, 47, 59, 65, 68,  
 69, 87, 151, 154, 155  
 Lauderdale Springs Grays (Volun-  
 teers), 56  
 Lauderdale Springs School  
 (black), 98  
 Lauderdale Station School, 98

"Lauderdale Volunteers," 41  
 Lauderdale Zouaves (Volunteers), 56  
 The Laurel Leader-Call (news), 149  
 Leachman, L., 72, 99  
 Leake County, 24  
 Leath, John R., 35  
 Lee, S.D., 62  
 Leeville School, 99  
 LeFlore, Greenwood, 24  
 Leonard, 61  
 Levy & Tannebaum Confection-  
 ary, 70  
 Lewis, John A., 93  
 Lewis, Noah, 49  
 Liberty Baptist Assoc., 36  
 Liberty Baptist Church, 36  
 Liberty School, 99  
 Lincecum, Dr. Gideon, 20  
 Lincoln School, 99  
 Lindbergh, Charles A., 116  
 Lindley, Simon, 49  
 Lisk (hamlet), 161  
 Little, Mr. & Ms., 149  
 "Little Central" School, 99  
 Lizelia, 19, 24, 31, 35, 43, 75, 167, 158  
 Lizelia Road, 155  
 Lloyd, J.C., 69  
 Lockard (Chandler, Lockard &  
 Co.), 70  
 Lockhart (community), 56, 63, 87, 155  
 Lockhart School, 99  
 Lodge (settlement), 161  
 Loeb, Alex, Co., 111  
 Logan, Griffin G., 99  
 London Weekend Television, 139  
 Long Bell Lumber Co., 85  
 Long Creek Baptist Church, 36  
 Long Creek School, 99  
 Lord, Dr. J.E.W., of London, 142  
 Loring, Gen., 63  
 Los Angeles, Cal., 135, 139  
 Lost Gap (flagstop), 162, 163  
 Lost Horse Creek, 17, 155  
 Louis, L.M., 94  
 Louisiana, 60, 75, 82  
 Louisiana Territory, 16  
 Love & Co., 93  
 Lowenstein & Bros. Grocery, 70  
 Lowenstein, Johathan, 49  
 Lowery, Charles, 23  
 Lowery, Joseph, 35, 49  
 Lowry, Alvin, 109  
 Lucas, William W., 99, 100  
 Lucile (community), 170  
 Lumberton (town), 103  
 Lyle, Tom, 88  
 A.J. Lyon & Co., 93  
 Lynn, Miss Genevieve, 118

## Mc

McCall, Charles D., 35  
 McConagill, Chatt, 32, 34  
 McConagill, E.C., 151, 154  
 McConagill, Harriet, 32, 34  
 McDermitt School, 34  
 McDonald & Co. Turpentine

Distillery,86  
 McDonald,Pendleton,35  
 McDugal,James,54  
 McElroy,Bruce,57  
 McElroy,Eliza,141  
 McElroy,Capt.Kennan,56  
 McElroy,R.M.,49  
 McElroy,Ransom M.,54  
 McElroy,Miss Sophronia,56  
 McElroy,Wallace,57  
 McGhee, Frank C.,93  
 McGhee,George,Jr.,93  
 McGuire,Sister M. Bernard,77  
 McInnis Crossing,170  
 McLane,Canada,49  
 McLaurin,Neal,35  
 McLemores,36,161  
 McLemore,Caleb,37  
 McLemore,Cemetery,161,167,168  
 McLemore,Charity,37  
 McLemore,Joshua,37  
 McLemore,Juriah,37  
 McLemore,Lavinia,37  
 McLemore,Martha,37  
 McLemore,Mary,37  
 McLemore,Nancy,37  
 McLemore,Richard,35,37,50,51,69,162,168  
 McLemore,Sarah,37  
 McMillen,A,69  
 McMorris,Ed,93  
 McMullin,J.W.,69  
 McRae,Gov John,50  
 McRae Lumber Co.,162  
 McRaven,K.,93  
 McRaye,Will,87,161  
 McWilliams,Elsie,116

M

Macon,59  
 Magnolia,40,154,155  
 Mahan,Hiram D.,63  
 Malone,A.W.,52  
 Mann,M.M.,54  
 Mansion House,48  
 Marion,28,34,35,40,41-44-47,48,50-52,55,57,59,61,63,64,151,154,155  
 Marion Academy,35  
 Marion Male & Female Academy,35,47  
 Marion Masonic Hall,66  
 Marion Methodist Church,35  
 Marion Riot of 1881,67,71,72,154  
 Marion-Russell Road,28  
 Marion School (black),98  
 Marion School (white),98,99  
 Marion Station,50-52,59,66,69,70,71,72,77  
 Marks,I.A.,95  
 Marks,Rothenberg & Co.,93,95,111,169  
 Markwell (village),155  
 Marshall,H.,94  
 Marshall,J.A.,54  
 Marshall,Joseph A.,24  
 Martin,Ed,161  
 Martin,Sister M.Germaine,77

Martin,Morman,24  
 Martin School,99  
 Mason, Miss Maggie,99  
 Massey,C.C.,95  
 Matamora,41  
 Mathis,Kristen,123,130  
 Matty Hersee Hospital,95  
 Matty Hersee Hospital School of Nursing,100,142,143  
 Maury,Gen.Dabney H.,60  
 Maury,Dabney H,Camp,60  
 Meador,Benjamin,41,49  
 Means Family,160  
 Means,T.A.,30  
 Medical Field Service School,143  
 Meehan Junction, 54,81,85,87,162,163,164  
 Meehan School,99  
 Meharry Medical College,143  
 Melton (slave),45  
 Melwyn (flagstop),87,155  
 Meridian,17,23,26,28,29,37,42,50,51,52,53,55,56,57,59,61-63,65-70,72,75,77,78-83,87,88,90,91,93,94-97,99-103,105,108,111,112,114,115,116,120-122,132-135,137,138-141,143,144,145,147,148,151,155-158,160,161-164,168,169,170  
 Meridian & Bigbee Railroad,111,167  
 Meridian & Memphis Railway (M&M),79,84  
 Meridian Academy,99  
 Meridian Aid Society,77  
 Meridian Avalanche (news),77  
 Meridian Baptist Seminary,100  
 Meridian Brick Co,111  
 Meridian Carriage & Pump Mfg.Co.,93  
 Meridian Chamber of Commerce,88,116,144,149  
 Meridian College,99  
 Meridian Community College,140  
 Meridian Community College Teen Learning Center,143  
 Meridian Cotton Exchange & Board of Trade,88  
 Meridian Daily News,80  
 Meridian Female College,72,75,79  
 Meridian Fertilizer Factory,106  
 Meridian Freedman School,72  
 Meridian Grain & Elevator Co.,109,110,111  
 Meridian High School,112,118,136,170  
 Meridian Historical Preservation Commission,164  
 Meridian Invincibles,57  
 Meridian Junior College,135,141  
 Meridian Lumber Co.,81  
 Meridian Main Street Program,164  
 Meridian Male & Female College,99  
 Meridian Municipal Airport,116  
 Meridian Municipal Junior College,112,115  
 Meridian Museum of Art,72,169

Meridian National Bank,93  
 Meridian Oil Mills, & Mfg. Co.,79  
 Meridian Parks & Recreation,167  
 Meridian Photostat Co.,93  
 Meridian Planing Mills,93,109  
 Meridian Public Library,132,151  
 Meridian Public Schools,123,134,138,139,140  
 Meridian Public Schools Talented & Gifted Program (TAG),123  
 Meridian Railroad Depot,170  
 Meridian Regional Hospital,143  
 Meridian Restorations Foundation,169  
 Meridian Riot,67,71,72  
 Meridian Sanitorium,141  
 Meridian Savings Institution,70  
 Meridian School of Music,101  
 Meridian Separate School District,100,141  
 (The) Meridian Star (news),90,116,136,138,149,150  
 Meridian Union Stockyard,111  
 Meridian Wagon Works,82  
 Merrehope,62,167  
 Merrehope Historic District,164  
 Methodists,37,75,99,101  
 Methodist Campground (Bailey),37  
 Methodist Episcopal Church,37,72  
 Metropolitan Opera,134,137  
 Mexican War,41  
 Meyer & Schamber Jewelry Co.,93,158,159  
 Meyer,George W.,93  
 Meyers,Joe,111  
 Meyers,Sam,111  
 Meywebb Mills,108  
 Miazza,J.F.,94  
 Miazza Woods Bldg.,93  
 Mid-Town Historic District,96,164  
 Military Road,30  
 Miller,Sen.C.G.,50  
 Miller,Mrs.H.L.,99  
 Millsaps College,140,147  
 Milton (slave),45  
 (The) Milwaukee Daily News,149  
 Miner,J.H.,93  
 Mingo (Chief),20  
 Mingo Houma (settlement),155  
 Mississippi (state),15,16,19,20-23,25,27,37,40,42,45,47,50,54,56,57,59,69-71,75-78,82,91,93,99,100,114,118,120,123,131,135,137,138,140,142,144,148  
 "Miss America," 149  
 Mississippi-Alabama State Fairgrounds,114,116  
 Mississippi Arts Commission,115  
 Mississippi College,136  
 Mississippi Cotton Oil Co.,93  
 Mississippi Dept. of Archives & History,28,115,163  
 Mississippi Education Association,140  
 Mississippi Governor,147  
 Mississippi Head Start Program,143  
 Mississippi Magazine,138

Mississippi Medical College,99  
 Mississippi River,18,19,21,23,25,41,61  
 Mississippi State Baptist Assoc.,69  
 Mississippi State Pediatric Society,145  
 Mississippi State University,138,148  
 Mississippi Teachers' Association,140  
 Mississippi Territory,16,18,19,21,22,23,30  
 Mississippi Valley State College,140  
 Mississippi Volunteers Infantry,Co.D,3rd Regiment,CSA,56  
 Missouri,118  
 Missouri Ridge,62  
 Mobile,Ala.,15-17,25,32,37,45,50,61,155,156  
 Mobile & Ohio RR (M&O),42,50-53,59,61,63,67,77,79,80,87,103,105,111,115,154,155,163  
 Moffitt-McLaurin Institute for Girls,99,100  
 Monroe County,144  
 Monterey,41  
 Montgomery,G. (Gillespie) V. "Sonny",148  
 Montgomery Insurance Agency,148  
 Moody,Heather,123,130  
 Moonshine Bridge,79  
 Moore,Aaron,71  
 Moore,Anita S.,136  
 Moore,B.F. "Bart",45,46,163  
 Moore,J.Aaron (Rev.),67,70  
 Moore,Dr.J.F.,57  
 Moore,James,72  
 Moore,Levi,72  
 Moore,M.E.,170  
 Moore,Thomas M.,136  
 Moore,Thomas Waldrop,Sr.,136,137  
 Moore Plantation,45,46  
 Moorehead & Co. Foundry,69  
 Morehouse College,143  
 Morris,Willie,123  
 Morrow (community),158  
 Morrow,John,158  
 Moseley (settlement),158  
 Moscow,47  
 Moseley's Crossing,158  
 Moseley,J.T.,158  
 Moshulitubbe,24  
 Mosely & Co.,70  
 Mount Barton,116  
 Mount Carmel Church (Presbyterian),37  
 Mt.Carmel School,98  
 Mount Gilead Baptist Church,36,155  
 Mount Horeb Baptist Church,36  
 Mount Zion Baptist Church,101  
 Mounted Scouts Battalion,60  
 Murdock,A.J.,69  
 Murray,James,35  
 My (settlement),86  
 Mytton,R.G.,102

N

NASA Skylab Mission, 139  
 NASA Apollo-Soyuz Mission, 139  
 N.O.M.&C.Railroad, 79  
 Natchez, 16, 17, 21, 25, 37  
 Natl. Aeronautics & Space Adm. Assoc. Administrator, 139  
 Natl. Endowment for the Arts, 115  
 National Education Association, 140  
 National Elementary Principals Assoc., 140  
 Natl. Register of Historical Sites, 17, 96-97, 100, 130, 155, 160, 164, 170  
 Naval Air Station (Meridian), 17, 31, 43, 150, 155, 157  
 Naval Air Station Museum Foundation, Inc., 137  
 Neal (Warren & Neal General Store), 70  
 Neal, S.P., 69  
 Negro Normal College, 99  
 Nellieburg (community), 158  
 Neshoba County, 16, 24, 60, 75, 84, 156  
 Neville, Sam, 79  
 New Hope Baptist Church, 36, 75, 100, 101  
 New Hope School, 98  
 New Orleans, 17, 79, 102, 103, 115  
 New Orleans & Northeastern Railroad, 78, 80, 81, 115, 164  
 New Orleans & Northeastern Freight Depot, 106  
 Newton County, 16, 24, 30, 60, 86, 156-158, 163, 164  
 New York, 68, 88, 116, 134, 135, 137  
 New York City Opera, 137  
 New York Philharmonic, 137  
 New Zealand, 90  
 Nicholas Beazley Flying School, Marshall, Mo., 118  
 Nicholson, 88  
 Nimocks, J.M., 98  
 Niolon, A.H., 111  
 Niolon, Adolph, 111  
 Nittakechi, 24  
 Nix, E.W., 69  
 Norman, Jeremy, 123, 127  
 North Carolina, 24, 45  
 Northeast Mississippi Hospital (Booneville), 144  
 Northeast School District, 99  
 Northeast & Southeast Alabama RR, 80  
 Noxubee County, 24, 59  
 Nunnery, William, 87, 155

O

Oakey Valley Baptist Church, 35-37, 160, 162  
 Oak Grove Baptist Church (Bonita), 36  
 Oak Grove Cemetery, 116  
 Oak Grove School, 98  
 Oakland Heights Separate School, 99  
 Obadiah (community), 158

Obadiah School, 99  
 Odom, James, 37  
 Odom, Margaret, 37  
 Okatebbaha School, 98  
 Okatibbee (settlement), 15, 77, 164  
 Okatibbee Creek, 164  
 Okatibbee Lake's Pine Springs Park, 82  
 Okatibbee Lake Reservoir, 157  
 Oklahoma (Indian Chief), 17  
 Oklahoma (state), 23  
 Oklahoma City, Okla., 58  
 Oktibbeha County, 24  
 Old Daleville, 30, 43, 76, 158  
 Old Dutchtown, 86  
 Old Georgia Community, 155  
 Old Marion, 28, 40-42, 47, 48-54, 66, 154  
 Old Marion Methodist Church, 37  
 "Old Town," 29, 44, 47, 160  
 Old Whynot, 160  
 Old Wire Road, 160  
 "Ole Miss" (airplane), 118-120  
 O'Neil Marble Works, 93  
 (The) Opera House, 95, 164, 169  
 Oppelt, Benjamin C., 54  
 Osage Indians, 19  
 Osborn, W.J., 164  
 Owen, Mayor W.H., 112  
 Oxford, Ala., 40  
 Oxford, Miss., 136  
 Oxford Road, 154

P

Pace, Isham, 24  
 Paddy (horse), 19  
 Page, John, 57  
 Palmer, Baylor, 72  
 Parke's, Benjamin F., Auction & Comm. House, 49  
 Parker, B.F., 49  
 Parker, Joel, W., 49  
 Parker, John W., 49  
 Partin, P.H., 49  
 Pascagoula, Miss., 136  
 "Paths to the Past", 123, 134, 151, 154  
 Patrick, Julian, 137  
 Patton, Gen. W.S., 46  
 Paulding, 28, 34  
 Paulding Clarion News, 47, 48  
 Payne, J.B., Jr., 70  
 Payne, M.S., 99  
 Payne, W.A., 69  
 George Peabody College for Teachers, 140  
 Pearce, Major J.W., 60  
 Pearl River, 21, 22, 25  
 Peavey Electronics, 137, 138  
 Peavey, Hartley, 137, 138  
 Peavey, Mr. & Mrs. J.B., 138  
 Peavey, Melia, 138  
 Peer, Ralph, 116  
 Pensacola, Fla., 19, 137  
 Peoples Savings Bank, 93

Pettus Guards (Volunteers), 56, 57  
 Philadelphia, Penn., 134  
 Phillip-Jones Co., 108  
 Phillips, C., 102  
 Phoebe, 17  
 Phoenix Hotel, 70, 72  
 Pickard Grist & Sawmill, 69  
 Pinckney Vaughn School, 34  
 Pigford Building, 144  
 Pigford, H.E., 87, 155  
 Pigford, J.A., 87, 155  
 Pigford, T.D., 57  
 Pigford, T.S., 56  
 Pigott, James M., 49  
 Pilgrim Progress Baptist Church, 101  
 Pine Forest Academy & Hospital, 30, 163  
 Pine Springs, 46, 82, 113, 114, 115, 156, 157, 158  
 Pine Springs School, 82, 99  
 Pine Springs Southern Methodist Church, 82  
 "Piney Woods," 16, 21, 25, 78, 79  
 Pioneer Cotton Mill, 69, 88, 161  
 Planter's Press & Warehouse, 88  
 Pleasant Grove Church, 30  
 Pleasant Ridge School (Black), 98  
 Pleasant Valley School, 98  
 Plummer, William M., 30  
 Point Bridge, 86  
 Point (Village), 164  
 Polk, Gen. Leonidas, 61, 62, 169  
 Ponta, Miss., 155  
 Ponta School, 99  
 Poor Man's Land, 21  
 Poplar Springs Community, 170  
 Poplar Springs Drive (road), 95, 96  
 Poplar Springs Elementary School, 170  
 Poplar Springs Historic District, 96, 164  
 Poplar Springs School (Black), 98  
 Poplar Springs Separate School, 99  
 Portis, Benjamin, 56  
 Posey, F.P., 84  
 Post (hamlet), 158  
 Potachile Creek, 59  
 Powell, Nicole, 123, 125, 129  
 Presbyterian Church, 34, 37, 72, 75, 101  
 Preston House, 48  
 Prewitt, E., 70  
 Prewitt, L.A., 70  
 Price, Ernestine, 144  
 Prime Lumber Co., 109  
 Prince, W.E., 46  
 Pringle, F.M., 60  
 Pringle, Isaac, 60  
 Pringles School, 98  
 Progress Machine Works, 79, 93  
 Pryor, Bill, 102, 103  
 Public Broadcasting Corp., 136, 137  
 Pushmataha, Chief, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 34, 60

Q

Queen & Crescent System

(R.R.), 80, 103  
 "Queen City," 77, 103  
 Queen City Savings Bank, 98  
 "The Queen of the East," 97  
 Quitman (town), 65, 135

R

Radcliff's (James A.) Eagle Tin Shop, 49  
 Radford, Isaac, 72  
 Ragland & Company Drugs, 48  
 Ragland, W.S., 49  
 Ragsdale, Lewis A., 51-53, 66, 69, 72, 77, 80, 88  
 Ragsdale City, 51-52  
 Ramsey, B.Y., 41  
 Randall, Capt. S.J., 56  
 Randolph, J.B., 100  
 Raney, William, 41  
 Rankin County, 106  
 Rawson, Charles, 161  
 Rawsonville (settlement), 161  
 Ray, James, 49  
 Rayford, M.A., 99  
 Rea, Conn (Constantine), 42, 43, 47, 48, 50-52, 54, 56, 66  
 Rea, Margaret, 66  
 Rea, Richard N., 66  
 Read, Charles, 59  
 Read, Charles W., 168  
 Redford School, 98  
 Redmond, Sidney D., 99  
 Redux, Robert D., 35  
 Reed, Samuel, 43  
 Reed, W.A., Jr., 140, 141  
 Reed, (W.A.Jr.) Vocational-Technical Bldg., 140  
 Reese, George M., 100  
 Rembert, Katie Belle, 145  
 Rew, Edward J., 28  
 Reynolds, Celie, 161  
 Reynolds, D.J., 87, 161  
 Rex Planing Mills, 109  
 Rhodes, William, 43  
 Rice, Dr. C.A., 95  
 Rice, S.T., 72  
 Richardson, A.B., 99  
 Richardson, Mrs. R.S. "Bunnie", 158  
 Riddell, J.A., 112  
 Rigby, James Q., 35  
 Riley, Dr. Franklin Gail, 144, 145  
 Riley, Richard F., 145  
 Riley, William Gail, 145  
 Riley Memorial Hospital, 143, 145  
 Riot of 1871, 67-71  
 Ripley's "Believe-It-or-Not," 170  
 Rivers, John, 35  
 Rivers, S.A., 98  
 River's School, 34  
 Robbin, Curtis, 118  
 Roberts (Coffee, Roberts & Co. Grain Co.), 69  
 Robinson & Co. Terra Cotta & Brick Works, 93  
 Rock'n Roll Hall of Fame, 116  
 Roberson, Jeff, 126, 127

- Rocky Ridge School, 98, 99  
 Rodgers, Aaron Woodberry, 115  
 Rodgers, Eliza Bozeman, 115  
 Rodgers, Anita, 116  
 Rodgers, James Charles, 115  
 Rodgers, Jimmie, 107, 108, 115, 116, 156, 157, 164  
 Rodgers, Jimmie, Memorial Festival, 116  
 Rodgers, Jimmie, Memorial Museum & Train, 164, 167  
 Rodgers, Talmedge, 115  
 Rodgers, Walter, 115  
 Rogers, Evelyn, 118  
 Rollins College, 136  
 Roos, M., 69  
 Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 111  
 Rooster Creek, 40  
 Rose Hill Cemetery, 59, 167, 168  
 Rosenbaum Bros., 70  
 Rosenbaum, D&I Store, 48  
 Rosenbaum, David, 49, 50, 51  
 Rosenbaum, T., 49  
 Rosenbaum, 's D. Mercantile, 93  
 Ross's Rridge (Ala.), 54  
 Rothenberg, Levi, 88  
 Rowland, Dunbar, 65, 91  
 Rubush, C.M., 94, 96  
 Runnels, F.M., 79  
 Rush/Berivon Co., Inc., 146  
 Rush, B.T., 69  
 Rush, Dr. J.H., 145  
 Rush, Dr. Leslie V., Sr., 145, 146  
 Rush, Dr. Vaughn, Jr., 146  
 Rush Hospital, 145  
 Rush Foundation  
 Hospital, Meridian's, 145  
 Rush Memorial Hospital, 145  
 "Rush Pin," 145  
 Rushing, C.E., 49  
 Rushing, Charles E., 35, 48, 156  
 Rushing, Charlie, 48  
 Rushing, Clara, 48  
 Rushing, Crawford, 48  
 Rushing, Eddie, 48  
 Rushing, Horace, 48  
 Rushing, Mary, 48  
 Rushing Store School (black), 98  
 Rushing Store, 156  
 Russell (community), 40, 44, 156  
 Russell, Allen, 40  
 Russell, John, 156  
 Russell, Lillian, 169  
 Russell, Travis, 57  
 Rust College, 100, 140  
 Ruton, James, 35
- S**
- Sadler, A.D., 69  
 Saenger Temple Theatre, 114  
 Sageville, 18, 34, 45, 47, 162, 164  
 Sageville Methodist Church, 35  
 Sageville School, 98, 99  
 St. Aloysius Academy (Catholic), 77, 100  
 St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, Philadelphia, Pa., 144  
 St. James AME Church, 101  
 St. Joseph's Institute, 100  
 St. Louis, 90, 156  
 St. Patrick's Catholic Church, 77, 170  
 St. Patrick's Parish, 100  
 St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 101  
 St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church, 75, 99, 101  
 St. Stephens, Ala., 26  
 Salem Baptist Church (Ala-mucha), 35, 36, 160, 161  
 Salem School, 98  
 Sanderford School, 98  
 Sanders, J.W., 93  
 Sanford, E.T., 69  
 Sanford, James F., 69  
 Sanford, Williams & Co. Sash Factory, 69  
 Sash & Blind Factory, 93  
 Satcher, Andrew, 57  
 Satcher, Herrin, 57  
 Satcher, Wesley, 57  
 Savage, Matthew, 100  
 Savoy (community), 164  
 Scarborough Store, 170  
 Schamber (Meyer & Schamber Jewelry), 158, 159  
 Schamber, Captain, 158  
 Schamberville (community), 158  
 Schamberville School, 99  
 Schanrock, John, 86, 87  
 Schenck, R., 69  
 Schoenrock, William "Bill," 86, 87  
 Scholastica, Sister M., 75, 99  
 Scotch, 21  
 Scotch-Irish, 17, 18, 25, 31  
 Scott County, 24, 60  
 Scott, Gillian, 28  
 Seattle Opera, 137  
 Segars, Jeff, 72  
 Segars, Vincent, 72  
 Selma, Ala., 62, 80  
 Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 30  
 "Shadow" (dog), 103, 105  
 Shank, Jack, 81, 88  
 Shannon, J.J., 70  
 Sharp, Hardy Co., 115  
 Shaw, Amanda, 123, 126, 129  
 Shaw, J. Beverly F., 99, 100  
 Shearer (Gary & Shearer), 70  
 Sheehan, Con, 139  
 Shelton, Thomas F., 49  
 Sherman, Gen. William T., 54, 56, 61-67, 77, 86, 88, 156, 157, 159, 169  
 "Sherman Hairpins", 63  
 Sherrod, Dr., 98  
 Shields, 83  
 Shiloh, 59  
 Shoemek, 53  
 Shumate (village), 164  
 Shumate, Mr., 164  
 Silliman, Dr. William, 34  
 Sills, Beverly, 134  
 Siminski, Madame, 48  
 Simmons, Samuel, 49  
 Simmons, W.C., 49  
 Simmons-Wright General Mdsc. Store, 154  
 Sims, B.F., 98  
 Sims, Bill, 57  
 Sims, Elizabeth Veatch Mahan "Veach," 63, 64  
 Sims, Henry, 57  
 "The Singing Brakeman", 115  
 Six Towns District (of the Choctaw), 20, 34  
 Skates, John Ray, 23, 24  
 Skewes, Mrs. Hilah, 150  
 Skewes, James Buckingham, 149  
 Skewes, James H. (Henry), 116, 149, 150  
 Skewes, Mrs. James H., 150  
 Slaughter (Hart, Wilson & Slaughter), 70  
 Slaughter, Robert, 58  
 Smith County, 24  
 Smith, General, 64  
 Smith, B.B., 47, 56  
 Smith, Mrs. Evelyn "Ebbie," 82, 113  
 Smith, (J.A.)-Sawmill, 109  
 Smith's (J.R.) Meridian Chronicle, 70  
 Smith, J.W., 98  
 Smith, Jim, 82  
 Smith, M.A., 99  
 Smith, Miss Sarah Ann, 35  
 Smith, W.B., 40  
 Smith, William A., 49  
 Smith's Spur (community), 56  
 Smithsonian Institution, 17  
 Snell, 29, 36, 87  
 Snowden, Greg, 55  
 Snowden, Robert, 72  
 Snowden, Stacy, 115  
 Solomon, J.S., 90  
 Soule, G.W., 93  
 Soule Steam Feed Works, 93  
 South Carolina, 21, 24, 26, 30  
 Southeast School District, 99  
 Southern Assoc. of Colleges & Secondary Schools, 140, 141  
 Southern Bank, 93  
 Southern Railroad, 80, 111  
 Southern Railroad Shops, 111  
 Southern Standard Press Co., 93  
 Sowashee, 15, 52  
 Sowashee Creek, 62, 90  
 Sowashee Station, 50, 51  
 Space Shuttle Challenger, 139  
 Space Shuttle Columbia, 139  
 Space Shuttle 747/Enterprise, 139  
 Space Shuttle Flight, 139  
 Spanish, 15, 16, 17  
 Spann, Major S.G., 59, 60  
 Sparks, W.H., 21, 22, 25  
 Spinks, Dr. E.E., 75  
 Spinks, W.L., 57  
 Spout Springs, 46  
 Spring Hill, 76  
 Spring Hill School, 98  
 Spring Hill Spring, 156  
 Springer, R.C., 170  
 Standard Drug Co., 143  
 Stanford & Sons Iron Works, 79
- Stephens (of Georgia), 50  
 Stephens, Alexander Hamilton (V.P. of Confederate States), 50  
 Stevenson School, 75, 99  
 Sterling (community), 164  
 Stevenson's Grist Mills, 93  
 Stewart, Clyde, 29, 87  
 Stewart, Tammy, 123, 126, 129  
 Stinson (community), 161  
 Stinson Brothers, 161  
 Stinson, John, 35  
 Stone, Osbourne, 49  
 Strasbourg Opera, 137  
 Strayhorn & Berry, 98  
 Streets-Early Names, 105  
 Street, H.M., 93  
 Strouds, 36, 161  
 Stucky, 54, 162, 163  
 Stucky's Bridge, 54, 162, 163  
 Sturges Co., 109  
 Sturges, R.W., 109  
 Sturgis, Theodore, 69, 70  
 Sturgis, William (Mayor), 70, 71  
 Sullivan, Cindy, 123, 127, 128, 129  
 Summers, E.L., 143  
 Sumter County, Ala., 24  
 Suqualena (Sookalena), 34, 47, 55, 83, 84, 112, 156, 157, 158, 159  
 Suqualena Masonic Lodge, 83  
 Suqualena School, 99  
 Suqualena United Methodist Church, 83  
 Sutherland, Joan, 134  
 Swift, Theodore S., 35, 54
- T**
- Taft, Elias, 49  
 Tallahatchee County, 24  
 Tallahatta, 15  
 Tallahatta Railway, 81, 164  
 Tangipohoa, La., 60  
 Tannebaum, A., 69  
 Tannebaum (Levy & Tannebaum), 70  
 Taylor, J.M., 69  
 Teasdale, Rev. T.C., 69  
 Tecumseh, 20  
 Temple Theatre, 164, 169  
 Tennessee (state), 24, 30, 32, 48, 59, 116  
 Tennessee Trace, 32  
 Texas, 26, 42, 75, 141, 143  
 Thatcher, Frannie, 123, 126  
 13th Mississippi Regiment, 56  
 Thompson, W.W., 69  
 Threefoot, A., 69, 94  
 Threefoot Building, 94, 170  
 Threefoot, H., 88  
 Threefoot, Kutcher, 94  
 Threefoot, Sam, 94  
 Threefoot Wholesale Grocery, 94  
 Tisdale (settlement), 15  
 Todd, L.O., 141  
 Tombigbee River, 32  
 Tompkinsville, 45  
 Tonic (community), 156  
 Toomsba, 15, 37, 44, 56, 154, 155

Toomsaba-Alamucha Road, 155  
 Toomsaba Creek, 30  
 Toomsaba School, 98  
 Toomsaba Valley School, 99  
 Topton-to-Russell Road, 40, 154, 155  
 Topton, Miss. (town), 115, 130, 154, 155, 156  
 Tories (English), 16, 17, 18  
 Tornado of 1906, 106  
 Travis, W.H., 69  
 Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, 20, 21, 23, 24  
 Treaty of Doak's Stand, 20, 23  
 Treaty of Paris, 16  
 Triplett, E.H., 99  
 Trotter, William B., 54  
 Truly, Bennett, 139  
 Truly, Richard  
   H. "Dick" (Admiral), 139  
 Truly, Mrs. Smith, 139  
 Trussell, James, 30, 157  
 Trussell, James M., 157  
 Trussell, W.C., 30  
 Tuchungkee, 30  
 Tucker, Abraham, 43  
 Tucker, Arthur, 43  
 Tuckers School, 98  
 Tucker, Stephen Benjamin, 115  
 Tulane University, 141, 147  
 Tunnel Hill, 53  
 Turnage, Mrs. Mattie, 30  
 Turner, J.W., 69  
 Turner, Dr. R.B., 95  
 Turner (Lamb & Turner Saddles), 49  
 Turner Hospital, 95, 141  
 Tuskegee University, 140  
 Tyler, 71  
 Tyler, Warren, 70

U

UDC, 59, 154  
 Union, Miss., 79  
 Union Baptist Church, 101  
 Union Passenger Station (RR), 1, 101, 170  
 Union Troops, 34, 56, 57, 59, 61, 62-67, 154, 158  
 United Methodist Church, 140  
 United States, 16, 21, 24, 29, 80  
 Urban Center Historic District, 164  
 U.S. Air Force Aerospace Research Pilot School, 139  
 U.S. Army Dental Corps in Munich, Germany, 143  
 USAF Manned Orbiting Laboratory Program, 139  
 U.S. House of Representatives, 148  
 U.S. Sugar Crops Experiment Station, 28  
 University of Alabama, 137, 142, 147  
 University of Arkansas, 136  
 University of California, 135  
 University of Mississippi (Oxford), 136, 142, 147, 149  
 University of Missouri, 136  
 University of Pennsylvania, 144  
 University of Tennessee (Mem-

phis), 144, 145  
 Urban Center Historic District, 96  
 Usher, John Bunion "Bun," 82  
 Usher, Sam, 82

V

V-J Day, 122  
 Valley Street School, 99  
 Vally, Rev. Father Louis, 77, 170  
 Vance, Ed, 71, 72  
 Vance, John L., 71  
 Vance, Will, 72  
 Vanderbilt, Gloria, 135  
 Vardaman, Gov. James K., 106  
 Vaughn, Pinckney, 34, 49  
 Veatch, Commander James, 63  
 Vestals (settlement), 156  
 Vestal Springs, 156  
 Vicksburg, 26, 41, 51, 52, 53, 59, 61, 63, 77, 81, 91  
 Vicksburg, Jackson & Brandon Railroad (Alabama & Vicksburg), 51  
 Vicksburg, Shreveport & Pacific RR, 80  
 Vienna Volksoper, 137  
 Village Fair Shopping Mall, 111  
 Vimville, 30, 31, 109, 159, 161  
 Vimville School, 99, 161  
 Vinson, Mayor Clint, 118  
 Virginia (state), 18, 24, 25, 37  
 Voorhies, M.N., 69

W

Wagoner, A.R., 69  
 Wahalak, 26  
 Walker, H.L., 69  
 Walker, M.G., 99  
 Walsh, Capt. M., 59  
 Walter Reed Institute of Dental Research, 143  
 Walthall's Brigade (Volunteers), 56  
 Wanita School, 98  
 Wanita Cotton and Woolen Mills, 162, 164  
 War of 1812, 19, 22, 23, 24, 29, 159  
 Warbington, Horatio B., 35  
 Warbington, "Aunt Maggie," 53, 54, 154  
 Ward, H.W., 24  
 Ward, W.H., Jr., 118  
 Warren, A.G., 72  
 Warren, John, 86  
 Warren, Joseph P., 32  
 Warren, Sam, 83  
 Warren & Neal General Store, 70  
 Washington National Airport, 120  
 Waters, H.H., 99  
 Watkins & Co., Dry Goods, 70  
 "The Way We Were," 123  
 Weaver (Doster & Weaver), 31  
 Webb, Beryl, 146  
 Webb, Hunter, 147  
 Webb, Nellah (Bailey), 147

Webster County, 147  
 Wechsler, Rabbi Jacob, 99  
 Wechsler School, 99, 100, 112, 139, 140  
 Weems, A.G., 120  
 Weidmann's, (Felix) Restaurant, 70  
 Welch, J.H., 69  
 Welch, Dr. J.P., 44, 45, 50, 55, 56, 63, 65  
 Welch, Dr. Jacob Perry, 159, 160  
 Welch, Jarvis, 44  
 Welch, Mrs. Martha T., 56  
 Wells Family, 87  
 Wells, Sam, 18  
 Welsh, Mary J., 26, 31, 69  
 Welsh National Opera, 137  
 West End Historic District, 97, 164  
 West Lauderdale School District, 99  
 Western Reservations, 17, 19  
 White, A., 49  
 White, Algie, 115  
 White, Billy, 115  
 White, Claude, 115  
 White, Elijah, 40  
 White, Ernest, 115  
 White, Humpty, 115  
 White, J.L., 115  
 White, Dr. J.M., 49  
 White, John, 114, 115  
 White, Leo, 115  
 White, Mrs. Mary Ellen, 82  
 White, Perry, 115  
 White, William (sheriff), 41  
 White, William B., 50  
 White's Store, 47  
 White Sulphur Springs, 46  
 Whitehead, James, 28  
 Whitesville (settlement), 160  
 Whitfield, Major George, 62  
 Whitney, Eli, 23  
 Who's Who in Black America, 144  
 Who's Who in the South & Southwest, 144  
 Winner-Klein & Co., 93  
 Winslow, Col. Edward F., 62  
 Winston County, 24, 75  
 Winston, J.A., 98  
 Winter, Governor William, 140  
 Whynot (town), 22, 29, 30, 47, 85, 126, 160, 162  
 Whynot School, 99  
 Wilcox, C.N., 69  
 Wilkersons, 26  
 Wilkerson, William J., 49  
 Williams, Bonaparte, 161  
 Williams, Brian, 123, 125, 128  
 Williams, Cliff, 161  
 Williams, Douglas, 115  
 Williams, Elder, 60  
 Williams, F.W., 88, 169  
 Williams, G., 69  
 Williams, Joseph, 70  
 Williams, S., 69  
 Williams, Atty. Gen. William, 106  
 Williams & Briggs Machine Shops, 93  
 Williams (Golden & Williams Sawmill), 69  
 Williams (Sanford, Williams &

Co., Sash Factory), 69  
 Williamson, Carrie, 116  
 Williamson, M.C., 99  
 Williamson, Marie, 149  
 Williamson, Scott, 123, 127  
 Willis, Benjamin F., 29  
 Wills Vally Railroad Co., 70  
 Wilson, Dr., 41  
 Wilson, Dr. H.R., 49  
 Wilson, Professor (black), 84  
 Wilson, H.S., 69  
 Wilson, Henry, 69  
 Wilson, John L., 99  
 Wilson, S.M., 54  
 Wilson, T.J., 98  
 Wilson, Temple J., 99  
 Wilson, Professor Thomas Jefferson, 159  
 Wilson (Hart, Wilson & Slaughter), 70  
 Wilsendale (settlement), 84, 159  
 Winner, M., 88  
 Wolf, Rev. Matthias, 36  
 Wolf (Jacobson, Wolf & Co.), 70  
 Wolf Path Trail, 19  
 Wood, George, 41, 54  
 Woodruff, Ben, 118  
 Woods, Henry J., 94  
 Woods, Thomas H., 95  
 Woodward Liver Regulator Co., 93  
 WPA-Works Progress Administration, 46, 60, 61, 68, 84, 102, 103, 105, 111, 115, 132, 133, 151  
 World War II, 82, 122, 149  
 WPA Mississippi Writer's Project, 111  
 Wright (community), 161, 162  
 Wright, Bill, 75, 76, 156  
 Wright family, 162  
 Wright, J.H., 93  
 Wright, Mrs. J.H., 95

X-Y

Yalobusha County, 24  
 Yarbroughs, 36, 161  
 Yarbrough, Ambrose, 35  
 Yarbrough, J.B., 37  
 Yates, Allen, 18  
 Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad, 111  
 Yellow Fever Epidemic, 67, 77, 86, 88, 168, 170  
 Young, Dr., 98  
 Young, C.L., 99  
 Young, Charles L., 139  
 Young, E.F., Jr., 139  
 Young, E.F., Jr., Manufacturing Co., 139  
 Young's Hotel, 139

Z

Zehler, Frank, 95  
 Zero (community), 162, 170  
 Zion Hill School, 98



*An aerial view of Meridian in 1958 shows how Ball's and Ragsdale's dream of building a city materialized.*

## CONTRIBUTING SPONSORS

The following contributing sponsors helped the Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History make *Paths to the Past possible*.

Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Crooks, Jr.  
Meridian Coca-Cola Bottling Company  
The Meridian Star

Peavey Electronics  
Riley Memorial Hospital  
Rush Foundation Hospital

### JEFF ANDERSON REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

William Jefferson Anderson milked cows and juggled a variety of odd jobs to pay his way through medical school, an early sign of the hard work and determination that would eventually transform his vision into the reality of the Jeff Anderson Regional Medical Center.

The hospital that bears his name, one of the most modern and well-equipped medical centers in East Central Mississippi, has provided high-quality medical care for the region since 1928.

The man behind the hospital was Dr. William J. Anderson. He completed his medical studies at Tulane University in 1902 and later finished postgraduate work at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. According to his daughter, Mary Kate Hollingsworth, the hospital Dr. Anderson developed in Meridian "...was his baby."

The hospital began when Dr. Anderson, who had been associated with the Meridian Sanitarium, took over Turner Hospital after the death of Dr. R.L. Turner in 1927. In May, 1928, Dr. Anderson purchased the two-story brick-and-wood building, which then included about 30 patient rooms and laboratory space.

Convinced that Dr. Anderson's dream of establishing a major hospital for Lauderdale County and the surrounding counties could come true, several nurses and two physicians, Dr. T.L. Bennett and Dr. T.G. Cleveland, followed him to what became known as Anderson's Infirmary.

After purchasing the building, Dr. Anderson and a dedicated corps of nurses and family members

scrubbed and cleaned as they brought new life to the old hospital building, which faced east on the present site of today's facility.

While renovating and acquiring equipment for the facility, Dr. Anderson set up his office and prepared living quarters for the nurses before opening the doors for patients.

The long task of building and expanding was just beginning when the Great Depression arrived. According to a history by Dr. T.G. Cleveland, patients came for care but had little or no money. During the height of the Depression, Dr. Anderson took a bold gamble on his dream, mortgaging his property and borrowing money to keep the doors open.

At the time, room rates were between four and six dollars a day, and deliveries cost parents between twenty-five and thirty dollars. Although the difficulties of the Depression dashed all hopes of financial security, Dr. Anderson continued to accept all who came for treatment, hoping to receive some compensation at a later date. Only determination and hard work kept the doors of the hospital open during the 1930s. Yet, its prospects began to turn the corner on the way to a bright future as the Depression faded.

Improvements came rapidly, with the 1940s bringing growth. Grateful patients served during the lean Depression years began paying off their old debts as soon as they could.

But, just as his dream was coming into fruition, Dr. Anderson died, on December 19, 1951. Yet

his legacy was kept alive, with a Board of Trustees—Dr. William Jefferson Anderson, Jr., Reuben S. Johnson, Jr., and Thomas R. Ward—appointed to carry on the hospital's mission. Continued growth soon demanded a new building. Plans were made to build a larger hospital on the foundation of progress Dr. Anderson Sr. had established.

When the Jeff Anderson Memorial Hospital opened in May, 1965, the transformation from a small infirmary to a major hospital was everything Dr. Anderson had envisioned. The facility then featured a modern, five-story building equipped with 120 beds on four floors, offices, labs, operating rooms and other departments. Soon another 30 beds were added, bringing the hospital's capacity to 150 beds.

The growth was far from over. Today, the Jeff Anderson Regional Medical Center is a 250-bed general and acute-care facility licensed by the Mississippi Commission on Hospital Care and accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals.

During the years since the hospital's founder died, his children and grandchildren, including Dr. W.J. Anderson, Jr., Mrs. Mary Kate Hollingsworth, Dr. W.J. Anderson III, Gay Anderson Whitworth, Joseph M. Anderson and Jefferson Franklin Hollingsworth, made their own contributions.

Expansion continues year after year, with additions in recent years including the William J.

Anderson Jr. MD-Wing in 1978; the Women's Breast Care Clinic; and the Reuben S. Johnson parking complex in 1985. The hospital's Wellness and Rehabilitation Center and a five-story office building and pharmacy will open in 1989. One milestone was reached when the Jeff Hollingsworth Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory opened on March 5, 1986, in the Medical Office Building adjacent to the medical center. The facility, named in honor of Dr. Anderson's grandson, offers the area cardiac catheterization capabilities. And Anderson is now operating an open-heart surgery program.

The medical center offers a wide range of services, including medical, surgical, pediatric, obstetrical and newborn care, with fully equipped and staffed ancillary departments.

Due to the plans so carefully detailed by the hard-working Dr. Anderson, the hospital's growth seems guaranteed into the next century. Indeed, the words of Dr. Cecil Gaston, Jr., who spoke on behalf of the medical staff when the expanded hospital was dedicated in 1965, still ring true today. He said, "Thank God that we citizens of Meridian, Lauderdale County, and Mississippi have been blessed by having such a fine and wonderful man, Dr. Jeff Anderson, to lead us in our goal to improve medical and surgical treatment in this community. This beautiful and well-equipped facility is an ideal memorial to such a dedicated physician."



*Old Anderson Infirmary grew into regional medical center of today.*



## SUPER STOP

From a small beginning with Jitney Jr. No. 1, opened in Oakland Heights on Old U.S. Highway 80 West in July, 1966, a chain of convenience stores now known as Super Stops developed into a multi-million-dollar business for president and owner Glen Deweese. Senator Deweese, a self-made man in business, is also a respected politician, family man and community booster. He and his wife, Janice Thomas Deweese, both plan to continue their work on behalf of their home county and state.

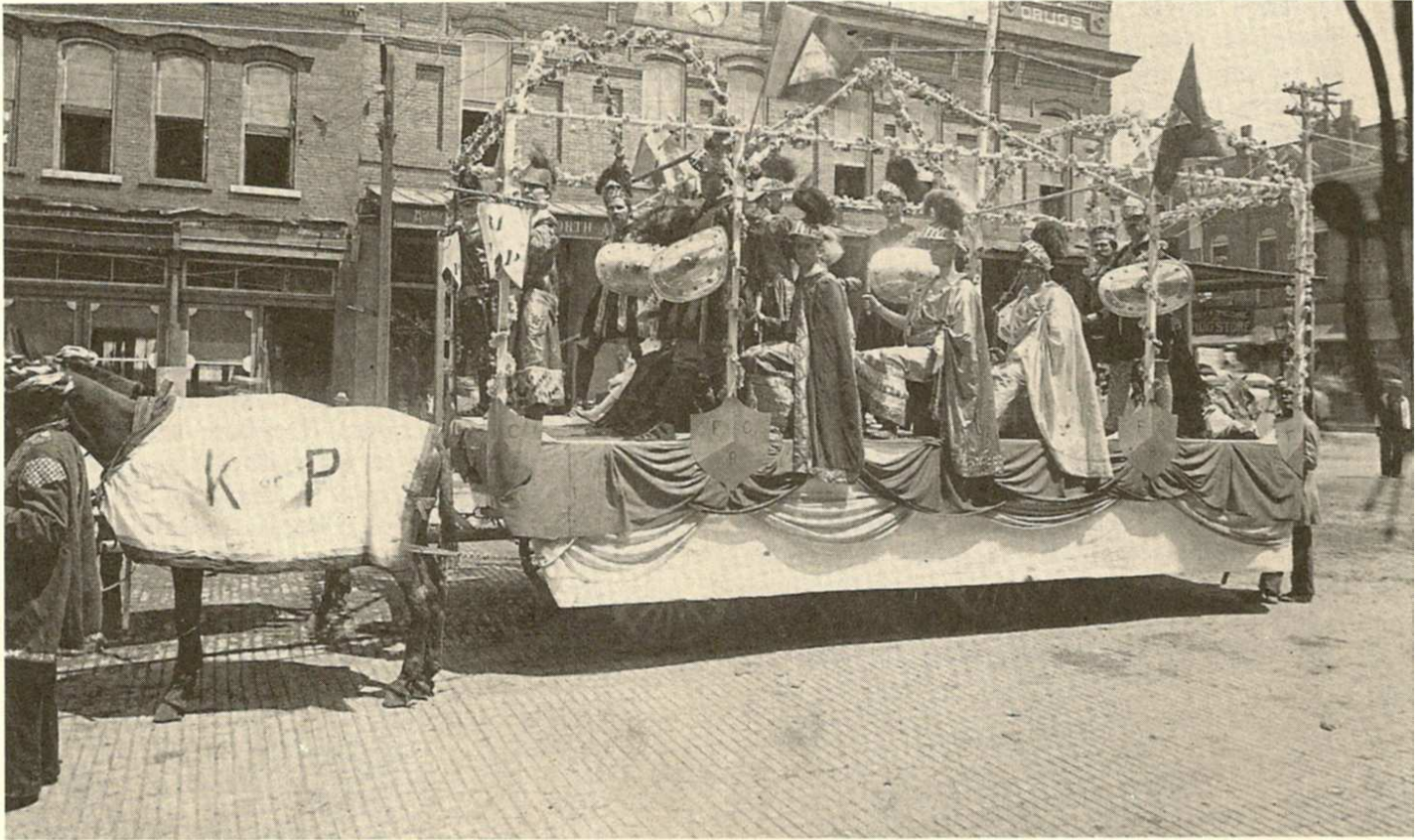
Deweese, a senator in the Mississippi Legislature, started his working life as a Meridian Star paper boy, his business skills soon apparent when he had five others delivering papers for him. He founded the convenience store chain, which now has 72 outlets, in 1966. Today, the chain boasts annual sales of \$50 million.

The success story began to take shape when he bought out the Quick Shop Stores from James Walker in Meridian. By August, he had ten stores in Meridian and had opened his first store in Jackson.

In 1968, he installed the first ice maker in

Super Stop Number Twelve in Meridian, to supply all his stores. In 1968, the chain's first self-service gasoline pumps were installed at Jitney Jr. No. 7 on Forty-fifth Avenue. In 1971, the chain built an ice house that now has a production capacity of 120 tons per day. As the chain reached the 50-store mark, an office headquarters was completed in Meridian. But the growth was far from over, Deweese's chain purchasing the seven-store Jr. Mart chain in Birmingham, Ala., in 1978. All of the stores began operating under the Super Stop name in 1980. Four years later, more expansion came with the purchase of the 13-store Tote-Sum chain in Jackson.

Today, 72 Super Stops are in operation, 65 of them offering gasoline. The chain also serves nearly 400 ice accounts. Deweese attributes Super Stops' growth to his staff and the company's ability to respond to changing market conditions and customer needs, including the installation of gasoline pumps, Super Stop operates stores in Jackson, Greenville, Birmingham and its birthplace, Meridian.



*Flowers and prosperity marked the once-popular Flower and Industrial parades held in Meridian. Above photograph show scene from parades held July 4, 1899.*