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INTRODUCTION TO TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY HISTORY  
BY  
JUDGE JOHN M. KUYKENDALL

Our children have been taught the histories of Europe, of the United States and of Mississippi, but to this day they have not been taught anything about the history of their own Tallahatchie County. Very few of our children know the histories of their own families; they learned in school who Leonidas was and where he fought, about the heroism of such men as Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee; but they have learned little or nothing about "Grandpa" who followed the historical heroes, and little or nothing about the plain heroes of humdrum every day life, the soldiers of pioneer days, who fought and won the battles in changing a wilderness into what is now Tallahatchie County.

We spend money for monuments and memorials and neglect the memorials we can build in hearts and minds by teaching our children, through such a county history as this, reverence for their forefathers. Why study the lives of national heroes and neglect the lives of our local heroes who followed them?

We have here at home traditions of noble deeds and sacrificial service, told to us by our fathers, who were told in turn by their fathers. Shall we let these traditions into a history, and pass them on to our children that they, in turn may have a record for transmitting the traditions to their children?

Surely, local history should be made a part of the work of every high school; every child who attends public school should be taught the history of his own county--of the parts played in its establishment, protection and development by the men and women who were his forebears. The child should be taught to respect and cherish such history and such memories. With such knowledge of it and its people, would not the child have a much higher regard for his county, a greater love for its past and present inhabitants, a higher local patriotism?

In the lower part of the new Capitol in Jackson the State has its Hall of Fame. These exhibits are of great value; they are highly appreciated by the people of Mississippi. Why not have, in each county Court House, a County Hall of Fame? We Tallahatchians, like inhabitants of other counties, take pride in our local history. Our county men and women have made sacrifices--their history, yet unwritten, is full of prayerful service, of manhood and courage--in the founding, construction and reconstruction of our state and local governments. Our men have fought in all our wars and our women have suffered in sacrificial service with our men. Yet, where can the child find this record?

Instead of limiting this work of compiling county histories, its scope should be broadened, to the end that to the minds and hearts of our people, especially the children, should be brought the realization that this great nation is made up of individual men and women who, in their humble stations here at home, made it what it is. We should preserve their memory and make adequate record of their deeds.

While such knowledge is one of the intangible things that make life sweeter and grander, the tangible value of such county records of local families should not be overlooked. The lawyer, in abstracting title, is met with the problem of family history whenever he makes an abstract. He may find that William Jones owned a certain tract of land; the next conveyance recorded may be from Virginia Smith. Unless he has some way of knowing that William Jones

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died intestate, leaving as sole heir his daughter, Virginia, who married John Smith, and is the Virginia Smith making this second conveyance, The lawyer is faced with a missing link in the claim of title.

Several years ago it was the custom of students in the University of Mississippi, competing for prizes, to submit thesis on the history of Reconstruction in the several counties of our state. Much valuable information was in this way accumulated; if this data could be assembled, printed and put into use, especially in the schools, it would prove of great value.

The walls of the Tallahatchie County Court House are so prepared that upon them can be placed portraits and pictures of eminent county men. As there are no local funds for carrying on this work it is necessary to ask families of such men for these pictures. Attached to each picture should be a statement and record of man's part in local life and history. There should be space for other pictures having historical value; there should be provision for taking care of records of today's news which becomes tomorrow's history. Already, in our court house offices, are hidden documents of such historical value that they should be made known to our people.

Changing times bring about changing history. Those of us now in active life can remember things told us by our fathers, who knew about first settlers and early conditions. As we pass off life's stage, this contact with the past will be lost forever, except as there recorded, in the history of Tallahatchie County.



# Susie Staton

## HISTORY OF TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY

### CHAPTER I: FORMATION

#### County Organized

The lands comprising Tallahatchie County were originally included in the Choctaw nation and were inhabited by Choctaw Indians prior to 1830, when the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek was signed. Under the terms of this treaty the Indians granted to the United States all their lands east of the Mississippi River. In exchange they were given a tract of land in the Indian Territory and \$20,000 per year for twenty years. In 1832 the Indians were removed from this region, and in 1833, an influx of white settlers began and Tallahatchie County was created by an Act of the Legislature, December 23, 1833. (1)

The county was named for the Tallahatchie River, an Indian name meaning "Rock River"; some students of the Choctaw language insist, however, that the word means "Crooked River," while other authorities disagree. (2)

(1) ~~Frederick L. Riley~~, Publications of Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. VI, p. 373-402.  
(2) R.L. Cannon, Sumner, Miss.

#### Shape, Size, and Boundaries

Tallahatchie County has been described as being "shaped like a boot," as the course of the Tallahatchie River makes a boot-toe, and the central-southern boundary line makes the heel. The rest of the county is rectangular in shape, its longest part running east and west. In the northeastern corner is a slight rise of the line, separating Quitman and Yalobusha counties.

There are 402,560 acres of land in Tallahatchie, or 629 square miles.

The county, as first created, was very large, including portions of Leflore, Grenada, Quitman, and Coshoka counties. Its present boundaries are: Panola and Quitman on the north; Leflore and Grenada on the south; Sunflower, with Coshoka, on the west; Yalobusha and Grenada on the east.

#### First Officers

The first officers chosen to direct the affairs of the new county were sworn into office on March 10 and March 11, 1834. This list of officers, who met at the three forks of Tillatoba

(1) H. S. Hallbert, "Story of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit,"



Creek and were qualified into office by Commissioner I. Tyson, were: B.B. Wilson, clerk of police court and probate court; Green B. Goodwin, sheriff; William Sutton, collector and assessor; William Berry, coroner; H.C. Davis, ranger; W.H. Wilkins, treasurer; William Fenning, A.S. Humphrey, Samuel Foster, Walter A. Mengum, and Joseph Carson, members of Board of Police. (1)

#### County Seats

At the time the county was established there were no towns within its borders; immigrants had chosen sites for homes at any desired point, and at this date the population was scattered, and consisted almost entirely of farmers, who, with a view to the rich agricultural prospects the land offered, had settled there to farm.

For more than a year after the formation, courts were held at the homes of settlers. "The first circuit court held its session at Sarah Doak's house. Examination of records will lead one to think that this was in Best <sup>3</sup> Three of the county, as the lands of the Doaks were in that section, but no deed is found convey-

(1) Minutes Police Court <sup>Book 1, p. 1</sup> Tallagatchie County, ~~Book 1, p. 1~~

ing lands to and from Sarah.

*From an article written by Judge J. M. Kuykendall, of Charleston, we learn that:* "The June, 1835, meeting was held at the 'house of John

Tyson, in the town of Decalb,' and at this meeting it was 'ordered that the Police and Probate and Circuit Court be holden at the house of John Tyson.' The board met in the town of Tillatoba on the 14th day of December, 1835, when it was ordered 'that circuit court be held in Watkin's storehouse, in the town of Tillatoba, at the next December term thereof,' and this meeting adjourned to meet on the 25th 'at the home of W.M. Beal, on Hubbard Creek, Section 12, Township 24, Range 2 East, for the purpose of examining the premises as to the practicability of locating the county site. The board met <sup>for its</sup> January term, 1836, at Tillatoba, when an order was entered locating the county site at "Dogwood Flat" on lands of John H. Page and Henderson,' but on the margin of this order appear these words: 'Cancelled by the new Board as not acceptable.'

"The Board of Police, at its March, 1836, term ordered that the county site be situated in the town of Tillatoba, on



north half of east half of northeast quarter, Section 27, in Township 25, Range 2 east; reciting that action was taken under the Act of Legislature approved February 1, 1836. This order <sup>is</sup> that the courts be held 'in such house in said town of Tillatoba as may be suitable for the convenience until a courthouse be built.'

"At the May, 1836, term it was ordered 'that the Board of Police will let out the court house and jail on Monday, June 27, next, and that a plan would be exhibited on that day.' Then, at the June term, 1836, it was ordered 'that sealed proposals for the building of a courthouse and jail be received and that these plans can be seen at Tillatoba and at Tuscohom, and advertisements were ordered made.' In September, 1836, the house of John H. Hill, in the town of Tillatoba, was allotted for the purpose of holding circuit court for the September, 1836, term, and provision was made for same.

"In March, 1837, proposals for the location of a courthouse and county site were received and voted on. Three members of the Board voted in favor of the offer of John S. Topp. This

was lands where the courthouse now stands in the town of Charleston. This order locates the county site, and at this term 'it was ordered, that the Probate Court, the Police Court and Circuit Court, after the first day of June, next, shall be held in the new town of Charleston.'

"In May, 1837, the order locating the county site at Tillatoba was set aside. In May, 1838, an election was ordered to be held in the county to fix the county site. The minutes of the June, 1838, meeting show that this election was held on the 1st and 2nd days of June, 1838, with the following result: Charleston, 148; Gersault, 104; Dogwood Flat, 8. So the most eligible point nearest the center of the county, Charleston, became the county site by the majority vote of the people. An order was entered declaring it such. This order was confirmed and definite location of the county site made July term, 1838." (1)

It is generally believed that immigrants from South Carolina were instrumental in naming the new county seat because

(1) Article ~~by~~, Judge J.M. Kuykendall, Charleston, Miss. <sup>March 23, 1923.</sup>  
 references ~~to~~ Police Board Record, Book I, pp. 1, 8, 18,  
 18, 21, 24, 25, 29, 34, 35, 42, 53, 58, 72, 77, 83, ~~and~~ *Mar. 73, 1923.*



that village was given the same title as the historic South Carolins town — CHARLESTON. (1)

In 1838, the site of the present town of Charleston was deeded to Allen Jenkins by Greenwood Leflore for the sum of \$3,500. Leflore received this land by the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek. Section Twenty-six, Township Twenty-five, Range Two, East, was sold by Jenkins to Topp, Davidson, and others — forming a Township Company — the same year for \$12,000, of which \$4,000 was cash. Later, this same section was sold by decree of the court to the highest bidder, and bought by J.G. Rayburn for \$1,300. The next year it was divided into town lots, William G. Sheley being probate clerk at that time. (2)

The first courts at Charleston were held in an old log house near the site of the present courthouse, a little to one side of the square, leaving room for the building which was afterward erected in the exact center of the square.

When court was in session the grand jury sat in a shedroom

(1) Articles by J.M. Rykendall, Charleston, Miss., published March 23, 1923. *Chancery clerk's office,*  
(2) Chancery Court Records, Charleston, Miss.

at one end of the courthouse; when the jury retired to find a verdict they were sent out of the house and usually found an old log in a secluded spot to get it up. (1)

In 1845, a brick courthouse was erected, which was used until 1900, when the present building was built, all the usable material in the old one being used in the construction of the new. (2)

In June, 1835, the police court passed an order calling for sealed bids for the building of a jail; Joe A. Young was appointed a committee of one to visit Coffeville, take <sup>the</sup> measure of jail, and draft plans for its reproduction. But, notwithstanding this early act, and many other often repeated efforts, the drafting of plans to duplicate the Carrollton jail, the selection of the location, and the letting of contracts, Tallahatchie County <sup>did</sup> ~~never~~ <sup>not have</sup> a jail until 1855, just twenty-five years after the first order for that cause. During the time, the county boarded its prisoners with Yalobusha County, from whence they were escorted to

(1) J.S. Bailey, ~~The~~ Democratic Herald, Charleston, Miss., Oct. 25, 1900.  
(2) The Mississippi Sun, Charleston, Miss., July 4, 1933.



Charleston for trial or execution, as the case might be, by the sheriff and his deputies; criminals were often carried twenty-five miles through the country.

In 1855, the county built a brick jail, lined with heavy timbers, but it was set on fire <sup>and destroyed</sup> by negro prisoners in 1882, ~~and destroyed~~. In 1883, a jail was built and fitted with modern conveniences (this is not the jail now in use in Tallahatchie County). (1)

On the lot occupied by the telephone office at Charleston, now owned by Dr. Harrison, stood an old hotel made of hand-hewn poplar logs. At what date this building was erected, or by whom, is not known, but it was one of the old landmarks until it was torn down thirty-two years ago. (2)

The newspaper office of the "Tallahatchian", edited by F.W. Merrin, occupied a lot on the north side of the public square (See Chapter 18 The Press). (3)

One of Tallahatchie's old-time physicians, Dr. J.M. Calhoun,

- <sup>Chancery clerk's office</sup>  
 (1) Chancery Court Records, Charleston, Miss.  
 (2) Mr. Steele, Charleston, Miss.  
 (3) The Mississippi Sun, Charleston, Miss., July 4, 1933.

<sup>who</sup> practiced medicine for forty years in the county and who made a celebrated record in the War between the States, was among the pioneers. He was born in Abbeville District, South Carolina, in 1832. <sup>He came</sup> coming to Tallahatchie and settling <sup>ed</sup> near Charleston when a small boy. (See Chapter <sup>20</sup> ~~XX~~, Health). (1)

Dr. Atherall Bell, who was probably the first physician in Charleston, <sup>was</sup> born in Virginia in 1811, <sup>he</sup> came to Charleston in 1836. (See Chapter <sup>20</sup> ~~XX~~, Health). (2)

The lot on which the Dr. Bardwell home now stands was once the location of the home of Dr. C.J.F. Meriwether, another old-time physician of Charleston, <sup>was</sup> uncle of the present editor of the Mississippi Sun. (See Chapter <sup>20</sup> ~~XX~~, Health).

The Bailey ancestral home, which is the oldest landmark in the town of Charleston, stands on the northeast corner of court square. Until recently it was occupied by the late ~~Miss~~ Belle Bailey, grand daughter of Colonel James S. Bailey, and daughter of James Spencer Bailey, noted Mississippi jurist.

- (1) Mrs. T.H. Calhoun, Grenada, Miss.  
 (2) Caroline Rayburn Elliott



One of the first lawyers to practice at Charleston was A.W. Davis, a Virginian; this was in the 1840's. J.P. Foree, a Kentuckian, also practiced law here during this period. (1)

Charleston has produced many brilliant members of the bar who have distinguished themselves both at home and abroad. Colonel Fitzgerald, Captain J.S. Eskridge, William Marshall, J.E. Eskridge, M.W. Byers, E.M. Caperton, all were actively engaged in this profession before the War between the States. (See Chapter 19, The Bar).

During the years of growth Charleston has progressed amazingly, although adversities have been many; one of the major calamities was the destruction by fire of the Lamb-Fish Lumber Company. In this disastrous fire not only was mill and lumber yard destroyed, but all of "Mill Town", as it was called locally, which included stores, drug store, many rows of houses, and the modern sixty-five-room Lafisco Hotel.

Modern Charleston, with a population of 2200, boasts eleven

(1) J.S. Bailey, ~~in~~ the Democratic Herald, Charleston, Miss., Oct. 25, 1900.

grocery stores, one wholesale grocery, seven dry goods stores, two five-and-ten's, one newspaper, six service stations, five garages, two automobile agencies, two oil corporations, three beauty shops, three barber shops, six cafes, three drug stores, three blacksmith shops, one hardware store, one furniture store, one retail lumber company, two shoe repair shops, a billiard parlor, a theatre, three pressing shops, two undertaking parlors, two cream-buying stations, ice and storage plant, gins, and lumber mills.

By an Act of the Legislature, of 1902, Tallahatchie was divided into two judicial districts by a line that ran practically through the center, and, in a hotly contested election between the towns of Sumner and Webb, SUMNER was chosen as the seat of the second district.

Sumner is located in the western part of the county and is a typical Delta town, depending mainly upon cotton for its maintenance. The large and prosperous plantations surrounding it, the wealthy owners of these, and the plantation gins, constitute Sumner.



The town was named in honor of J.B. Sumner, an early citizen who came from Alabama and settled there in 1872/ and gave the site for the town. (1) Since that date, the Sumner family has played a leading role in the town's upbuilding and growth.

Others who have figured prominently, and helped make history for the town are T.C. Buford, philanthropist, merchant, planter, banker, and extensive landowner; the Jennings family, <sup>and</sup> the Mitchell and Flautt families.

#### Early Settlements and Settlers

Presbyterian church history records show that as early as 1820/ ROBERT BELL and JOHN C. SMITH were sent as missionaries to the Indians of this territory, and historical documents in the archives at Jackson mention the same facts. (2) SAMUEL FOSTER was the only white person found in what is now Tallahatchie County when the settlers arrived, <sup>4</sup> (See Chapter IV, Indians).

PHARSALIA was the name of the first town in Tallahatchie County, and derived its name from the chief city in the District of Pharsalia, in southern Thessaly. It was located in the hill

(1) Mrs. Frank Sumner, Sumner, Miss.

(2) Rev. Lee Jackson, Tallahatchie Herald, *Charleston, Miss.*

section, on the south bank of the Yocona River, in the north-eastern part of the county, and was settled in 1833.

Near here was the pioneer farm home of Colonel James Bailey, who was born in Kentucky in 1790 and came to Tallahatchie County on horseback. With him came Captain Samuel Caruthers and Captain Charles Bowen, former residents of Hickman County, Tennessee. These three men, wealthy farmers, brought with them many negro slaves and opened plantations.

Other settlers near this point were the Metcalfs, Samuel Foster, Curtis Matthews, Smiley Carrothers, and B.F. Gibson; all farmers who had filed on government lands in this fertile valley. Some of our oldest families came from Pharsalia -- the grandparents of our present circuit judge, John M. Kuykendall, being among them.

About one and a half miles north of where the derrick of the proposed Charleston oil well recently stood, is the location of what is now known as the Bailey graveyard/ which, so far as available records show, is the oldest burying-ground



in that immediate community. On points of ridges extending west to the valley, and northward, are what may be older family burying-grounds, but this is not shown by records. One thing is a matter of certainty, and that is that, at the foot of the ridge on which a group of tombstones marks the resting place of pioneer settlers, there is <sup>a</sup> cold spring of splendid water, which was used by the Indians and pioneers in common, and just above this spring is the site of the first pioneer log school house. The pioneer home of Colonel James Bailey was situated near here, and one of the tallest monuments of the group mentioned as at the head of Colonel Bailey's grave.

Pharsalia was quite an important point; one of the celebrated debates between Quitman and Foote occurred here; and it was also a point for the mustering of the militia, and here were held great gatherings. Gander pullings, at which great squawking ganders, suspended from branches of trees, with head and neck greased, were the prizes to be obtained by worthy youths who, on horseback, riding full tilt past, must pull off the head

of the gander to obtain the prize; but to their dismay, their horses received blows from whips of attendants stationed near the goals, so that as they reached for the gander, their horses sped up. Here also were held pole climbings, horse races, and great feasts at log-rolling.

The keel-boats running up Yocona River to Sardinia and down to McNutt brought freight, and here stagecoaches on the "Old Panola Road" from Memphis to the south brought passengers.

After weathering a severe smallpox epidemic, and the great financial panic of 1837, Pharsalia died out in 1842. All that marks this old center, now extinct, is the crumbling tombstones under old oaks. (1)

"CHOCCHUMA, an extinct town in the western part of what is now Grenada County, was once part of Tallahatchie, and named as the place for the sale of public lands of the United States Government. A land office being established there and a register and receiver appointed, gave such an impetus to the town that it soon numbered three or four hundred souls. After a few years (1842) (1) Rev. Lee Jackson, Tallahatchie Herald, Charleston, Miss.



the land office was removed to Grenada, then Chocchuma went down as suddenly as it had grown up." (1)

TUSCAHOMA: "The village of Tuseshoma was situated about twelve miles northwest of Grenada. Some of its early mercantile firms were: Gersault and McRes, Campbell and Adams, and Tulson and Company. Mr. and Mrs. Williams kept a hotel there at an early date. George W. Martin, an intimate friend of General Andrew Jackson, lived near this place. Its population at the time of its greatest prosperity was about three hundred. In 1836, it was incorporated by an Act of the Legislature. It became extinct about 1850.

"A newspaper, the Tuseshomian, was published at that place in 1835. In the same year a ferry was established there by A.L. Campbell. The first license granted by the authorities of Tallahatchie County to sell spirituous and intoxicating liquors led to the establishment of a saloon at Tuseshoma ( ~~January~~, 1835). This privilege cost the princely sum of <sup>\$15.00</sup> fifteen dollars. The second road in Tallahatchie County was 'viewed out' between

Phersalis and Tuseshoma, both of which are now extinct." (2)

(1) Rev. Lee Jackson in Tallahatchie Herald, Charleston, Miss.

(2) Publications of Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. V, p. 369.

TILLATOBA, located <sup>a mile</sup> northwest of Charleston, and a point of early settlement, was a small town, established March, 1834, by the Board of Police and the first settlement to have an official name. It was here that the county Board of Police met in the first year of the new county's existence. Some of the surnames of the first settlers were Watkins, Caruthers, Humphreys, Hill, Sherman, Alford, and Phillips.

Nothing now remains of this old village except an old cemetery, where twenty-three graves are marked with tombstones on which inscriptions are barely legible. The oldest marker is to Fannie D. Bell, wife of G.G. Hervey, born in Virginia, April 31, 1816; died May 11, 1841. Another stone is inscribed Judith B. Marshall, who died July 10, 1877. (1)

LOCOPOLIS, an early hamlet, situated on the banks of the Tallahatchie River, in the central part of the county, was a thriving center in 1839. (2)

A ferry was operated at this point and boats from New

(1) Rev. Lee Jackson in Tallahatchie Herald, Charleston, Miss.

(2) Mrs. T.L. Harrison, Charleston, Miss.

(2) Franklin L. Riley, "Extinct Towns and Villages of Mississippi,"



Orleans came up the Mississippi River into the Tallahatchie and landed at this wharf. (1) The town at this time operated one hotel, three or four stores, a number of dwellings, and a timber camp and grist mill were run by Lee Berry. "Every day the streets were filled with wagons freighted with heavy bales of cotton; cotton prices were high and money plentiful. Little steamboats were almost continually puffing at the landing, unloading stores and supplies, and returning with cotton. A little steamboat, or floating palace, as it was called, had sent handbills ahead advertising a performance." (2)

The town was in the hey-day<sup>a</sup> of its importance as a business point; wagons from a vast territory came here with produce and returned heavily laden with groceries and merchandise which had been obtained from Vicksburg and New Orleans.

Some of the citizens of the town were / J.S. Watkins, William H. Allen, John Helms, Isaac Guill, and Henry Giles. (3)

As was the case in so many of the pioneer towns of the

state, Locopolis did not survive --although it is still an

(1) Democratic Herald, Charleston, Miss., Dec. 8, 1898.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

historic site<sup>a</sup> nothing remains of it but a few old landmarks; however, the surrounding community still bears the name --Locopolis, which is of Latin derivation, meaning "Place for a city." (1)

#### Pioneer Delta Plantation Settlements

Many of the oldest Delta plantations<sup>a</sup> from whence came a large percentage of the county's population, were settled in the early days; though only a few towns were founded at these points until later, some of the most interesting of Tallahatchie County's history is centered around these delta plantations.

One of these was SUNNYSIDE, the Staton plantation, situated on the west bank of the Tallahatchie River and just across from Swan Lake. Eli Staton, who had come from North Carolina, a young man of eighteen, settled here in the 1820's, built a log cabin, opened a plantation, and later became one of the largest landowners in the Delta. He had two sons and a daughter. The <sup>e</sup>older son, James Harvey, lost his life on the Mississippi after saving several other lives from a burning palace steamer. He was drowned (1) Mrs. T.L. Harrison, Charleston, Miss.



going back to this boat to rescue others.

When Eli Staton came to Tallahatchie County he brought with him from North Carolina a young man, Jim Hunt, who remained with him, serving as general handy-man during the entire life of Eli Staton. After Staton's death, Hunt transferred his allegiance to Henry C. Staton, second son of Eli, with whom he remained until his death. (1),

Another old settler was Benjamin Sturdivant, founder of the Tallahatchie branch of Sturdivants, who opened the TWILIGHT plantation, which adjoined the Staton plantation. (2)

ALBIN Plantation, north of Swan Lake, was opened by Alfred Bassett Robinson, of Sidon, Mississippi, who bought many thousand acres of land in Tallahatchie County. At his death, his Tallahatchie County property was left to his son, Jerry, who operated the plantation during his entire life. Some of the descendants of <sup>this</sup> the pioneer still reside on the property. (3)

John D. Hawkins, from North Carolina, first came to

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(1) Susie Staton, Winona, Miss.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Mrs. Nancy Robinson Fitzgerald, Clarksdale, Miss.

Mississippi and settled at Gerenton, Carroll County; later, <sup>he</sup> purchasing land in the Delta, at what is now Swan Lake, and opened the Hawkin's plantation. (1)

The T.G. James plantation, called SHARKEY, was settled by Greenwood Leflore Sharkey, an early pioneer. (2)

GRABALL was a voting precinct on a plantation owned by N.J. McMullen; this settlement was near Twilight plantation.

The name Graball originated from the custom of a merchant who, every Saturday, would charge "five cents a grab" for cigars, and upon one occasion, when a man succeeded in seizing an extra large hand-full, another man cried, "Don't grab ~~ten~~ all!" When these families arrived, the nearest postoffice was at Charleston, and mail came once a week, brought by hack to Graball. (3)

#### Other Settlements

A settlement west of Boothe, MITCHELL'S CROSSROADS, was founded about 1850, by William Washington Mitchell, at the foot-hills of Bear ~~one~~, by the forks of two roads-- one running from

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(1) Susie Staton, Winona, Miss.

(2) Ibid.

(3) W.J. Stevens, Webb, Miss.



Charleston to Batesville, being intersected by another that led from Mississippi to Helena, Arkansas; the road to Helena forming the boundary line between Tallahatchie and Panola counties.

Mitchell, of Scotch ancestry, for whom the settlement was named, was born in North Carolina and came to this territory as a young man; soon after, he married ~~Miss~~ Jane Carson, whose family were also from North Carolina and had journeyed to Mississippi in a caravan of fifty wagons.

Mitchell established a mercantile business at the crossroad, ~~also~~ had extensive farming interests, and was known to his friends and neighbors as a man of highest integrity, whose word was as good as his bond. He was the founder of that family which has, since his advent into the county, taken a leading role in the affairs of other towns of the county. The Mitchell family today is represented by successful professional and business men and women. (1)

The small town of ENID is located in the extreme northeast corner of the county, on the main line of the Illinois Central

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(1) N.B. Mitchell, Enid, Miss.

Railroad, one mile west of U.S. Highway 51, in Marsh Best, or Best ~~one~~. When the first railroad was built through this best in 1851, a station was erected on the plantation of General E.L. Taliaferro, and called Taliaferro Crossing, which was located south of Enid, on the Yocoma River.

General Taliaferro was an early settler who bought many hundreds of acres of land along the Yocoma River, amassed great wealth, and was one of the most substantial citizens the county has had. This old home, much deteriorated, still marks the site of this property.

About 1900, the name of the station was changed to Enid.

Enid has produced its share of prominent citizens; Judge John M. Kuykendall, was born here; (See Chapter 19, The Bar); Jacob Kuykendall, relative of Judge Kuykendall and merchant of Enid, is its oldest living citizen.

Dr. A.A. Wheat, an old-time doctor who practiced medicine here for more than a quarter of a century, settled here shortly after the War between the States. It is said that Dr. Wheat was



a member of Morgan's Men during the War between the States.

<sup>De</sup> Descendants of Dr. Wheat still reside here. W.C. Mitchell, son of William Washington, of Mitchell's Crossroads, opened a store here in 1865, shortly after his return from the army, where he served under General Forrest. N.B. Mitchell, retired business man, and one-time European representative for Gayoso Lumber Company, Memphis, is a grandson of William Washington Mitchell, and now resides at Enid. Paul B. <sup>M</sup>Mitchell, successful business man of Charleston, is another grandson of the pioneer, who was reared at Enid. Lamar and James Mitchell, great-grandsons, are successful professional men of Memphis and Atlanta.

Enid is a friendly and progressive town. In addition to its gins and stock raising, which contribute a great deal to the town's progress, <sup>it</sup> has a clay business, which, though not as thriving as formerly, is still recognized as one of the natural resources.

R.C. Pickle is mayor of the town; A.C. Clogston, ~~marshal~~; and Leon Wheat, H.I. Brown, and S.H. Gaines, members of board of aldermen. (1)

(1) N.B. Mitchell, Enid, Miss.

CASCILLA, a small town in the hill section, in Best <sup>3</sup>Three, fifteen miles from Charleston, was given its name, which is a Spanish word meaning "Little House," by Pete Pressgrove. The center of a farming section, with churches, schools, mail routes, good secondary roads, friendly and hospitable citizens, Cascilla has all that could be desired in a small town. It has been said of Cascilla that "We are located ten miles from nowhere, but get your feet wet in Asculmore Creek, and you'll be back."

Cascilla is the birth place of Attorney General Greek L. Rice. (See Chapter 19, The Bar).

Many outstanding citizens have lived here; names of prominent families that have contributed to Tallahatchie's growth include; Rice, Whitten, Avent, Byars, Bibby, Franklin, Rainey, and Calhoun. (1)

Dr. Lowe Hayden Bibby practiced medicine here for many years.

(1) Benton Shankle, Mississippi Sun, Charleston, Miss., 1936.



PAYNE: "In a cove of the bluff hills, with all the overshadowing trees of cedar, pine, and oak, is this beautiful historic community — five miles south of Charleston, in Beat Three. Since the days of the covered wagon this little village has showed progress.

"The exact date of the founding of the community is something the oldest inhabitants can't remember. About one hundred years ago Dr. George Washington Payne, of Charlottesville, Virginia, settled here and built the Paynes home, a two-story building of Colonial design. It has since been demolished by fire. The descendants of Dr. Payne live in the beautiful home upon the hill, directly behind the business section of town.

"Among the celebrities who have lived at Paynes are: Dr. Dotson McGinnis Nelson, President of Mississippi College; Dr. Denken, father of Dr. Willie Denken and Honorable Richard Denken of Greenwood; Miss Annie Denken, blind poetess of Mississippi; the Shook family, the Wynns, and the Meriwether family.

"Miss Nora Wynn is the efficient postmistress, and its just an old family custom with the Wynns, for they have had charge of the postoffice for thirty-five years.

"Some of the older families of the community are: Taylors Paynes, Denleys, Shooks, Wynns, Ramsey's, Statens, Crows, Tubbevilles, Pressgroves, Reineys, Weeks, and McKnights." (1)

SWAN LAKE, one half mile from the Tallahatchie River, in Beat <sup>4</sup>four of the second district, was named for the lake west of the community bearing the same name.

This Delta community is famous as a cotton town; nowhere in the Mississippi Delta can be found a better example of comfortable and luxurious living, higher class citizenship, more humane treatment of laborers, than at Swan Lake. As Natchez, at the period before the War between the States, was an example of the best the state had to offer in culture, so was Swan Lake in the 1900-1930 period.

Mrs. Janie Turner Saunders, a charming and brilliant woman, prominent in club work, began this work while residing at Swan Lake; she held many offices, among them being Recorder of (1) Benton Shankle, Mississippi Sun, Charleston, Miss., 1936.



Crosses of the United Daughters of <sup>the</sup> Confederacy, Secretary of Stonewall Jackson Chapter No. 975 U.D.C., in 1908; Secretary of the chapter at Webb in 1902. In 1911, she was chaperon at Beauvoir Home and, while holding this office, was influential in collecting money and securing passes on the railroad for all veterans of the "Home", making possible a trip to the Reunion at Little Rock, Arkansas. She was President of Mississippi Federation of Women's Clubs, 1917-~~19~~19; President of Mississippi League of Women Voters, 1921-~~19~~22.

The most outstanding thing accomplished during her regime was getting the legislature to pass the Absterment Act--abolishing the Red Light District. A bill was also proposed to establish a home for these girls who would <sup>be</sup> turned out upon society; the Legislative Committee presented it, but did not succeed in passing it. However, they were successful in getting a bill passed forcing them to report all venereal diseases.

Another law which deserves favorable mention was the County School Law, which was also passed during this administration, and

for which this group of women deserves credit. (1)

Dr. J.W. Lipscomb, Columbus, President of Mississippi State Board of Health, began his medical career at Swan Lake, where he practiced for a number of years before returning to Columbus. While residing here Dr. Lipscomb married ~~Miss~~ Annabelle Sturdivent, of Twilight plantation. (2)

Dr. Lowe Hayden Bibby and Dr. C.J.F. Meriwether also practiced medicine at Swan Lake; the latter was living here at the time of his death. Dr. James Harris and Dr. Robin Harris both practiced medicine here for a few years. Dr. D.E. Staton, Eye, Ear, Nose, and Throat Specialist, of Columbus, was born and reared at Swan Lake. Dr. Cass Collier, Memphis surgeon, was born near Swan Lake. (See Chapter XX, Health). (3)

WEBB, in the Delta section of the county, located nineteen miles west of Charleston, in Beat <sup>5</sup>~~Five~~, of the second district, is a small town with a population of 550. The town's first name was Hood; later, the citizens changed it to its present name in honor

(1) Susie Staton, Winona, Miss.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.



of Judge J.L. Webb, large landowner and outstanding citizen.

There are many family names familiar to all Tallahatchie Countians, whose bearers have aided in placing the town of Webb on the map; some of these are: Shaw, Webb, Turner, Catoe, King, Abbey, Walker, Harris, Hightower, Abernathy, Berry, Smith, and Dyess.

TUTWILER is a typical Mississippi Delta town. The railroad built the town, and from the engineer who surveyed the right-of-way for the railroad company it received its name.

The Clay, Rylee, and Cammack families were pioneers of the town and still have descendants living there.

Dr. T.F. Clay practices medicine in Tutwiler, and is active in the church and civic life of the town.

Dr. W.H. Harrison, former member of State Board of Health and President of Bank of Tutwiler, was a pioneer physician of Tutwiler, whose ability, proven by forty-one years of service, won for him state-wide prominence. (1)

The Gibson family came to Tutwiler about 1904, and no one  
(1) Mrs. Addie B. Austin, Tutwiler, Miss.

women has contributed more to the cultural life of the town than Mrs. Gibson, who made a very definite contribution to the town in her training of its children in the Sunday School and in her private school. Mrs. Gibson is also a capable business and club woman.

Few men among the early settlers of Tutwiler exercised a greater influence for good in the community than David W. Fite, a native of Catawba, North Carolina, who came here in 1897. He was deacon in the Baptist Church, merchant, postmaster, bank director, agent of the Standard Oil Company, school trustee, and three times mayor of the town. In 1907 he was married to Courtenay Fraser, of Grenada, a teacher and a graduate of the University of Mississippi, who, with her two children, David W., Jr., and Hugh Sigmund Fite, has made her home in Jackson for a number of years.

One of the most interesting couples who have lived in Tutwiler was J.A. Pegg and his wife. They were beyond sixty when they came here, where they lived almost twenty years and gave to the community perhaps its best example of what intelligence, industry,



and thrift can accomplish. Pegg was an Englishman, with the proverbial Englishman's love of privacy in his home, but his wife was a cultured southern woman, who was a member of the Barry and Neilson families, of Columbus, and loved to have people around. Pegg was a carpenter by trade and advanced in years, but they were thrifty and lived comfortably in their own home, surrounded by all the comforts the small town provided.

PHILIPP, a small town on the banks of the Tallahatchie River, in Best <sup>4</sup> ~~Four~~, on the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad, was named for Colonel E.J. Philipp, of the Delta Cooperage Company, which was organized in 1894. (1)

Another Delta cotton town, Philipp has its gins, large surrounding plantations, and the usual schools and churches.

A large portion of the land around the farming community of MACEL, in Best <sup>4</sup> ~~Four~~, has been the property of the Willingham family since 1885. The community was named for Maysel Willingham (Mrs. F.M. Burkhalter), the difference in spelling is attributed to (1) Mrs. Lillie Henry, Charleston, Miss.

an error on the part of the painter who painted the name on the depot of the town.

The two thousand-acre <sup>i</sup>Willingham plantation is joined by the Arnold Hey and J.T. Roane plantations.

Three stores serve the town; a train stops there, the railroad having been built ~~there~~ in 1906. (1)

PADUCAH WELLS, a community six miles northwest of Charleston, in Best <sup>2</sup> ~~Two~~, is a famous hunting locality, and its origin dates back to 1912. In that year the Paducah Cooperage Company, of Paducah, Kentucky, logged-off the timber near that vicinity and had an office located near the depot in Charleston. The community's name, Paducah Wells, is credited to the cooperage company. One of the best flowing wells in this section is located here; business men of Charleston have a club house here, and, on Thursday afternoons of the summer months, enjoy picnics and fishing.

GLENDORA is a small town on the banks of the Tallahatchie River, in Best <sup>4</sup> ~~Four~~ of the second district, with a population of (1) Mrs. Nobel Houston, Philipp, Miss.



Two hundred. The Grahsm family, of Scotch descent, former residents of the community, gave the town its name. It is incorporated, and its mayor, W.R. Gay, has served in that capacity for thirty-two years. Two physicians, Dr. C.F. Freeland and Dr. E.M. Meek, serve the people of that territory.

Glendora is a busy town, <sup>it</sup> and supports two service stations, a shoe shop, a garage, two cafes, one grocery store, six general merchandise stores, one drug store, and two gins. (1)

Other communities in the county are; FRIENDSHIP, a small rural community in west Tallshatchie, with a church and grammar school; ROSEBLOOM, so-called for the profusion of roses there when it was first settled; VANCE, which received its name from Captain C.B. Vance, who once owned land in <sup>and</sup> around the community; STOVER, first called Lay, for John Lay, who operated a logging camp there, and ~~was~~ later called Bessie, for John Lay's daughter.

COWART received its name from Dave Cowart, a conductor on the railroad line between Charleston and Philipp; EFFIE, a small train-stop on the Charleston-Philipp line, is a plantation, named

(1) Susie Stator, Winona, Miss.

for Dr. T.B. Harrison's oldest daughter; MURPHREESBORO was named for the R.D. Murphy family, who settled that community; TEASDALE was first called Boothe, but later the townsmen re-named it for a Dr. Teasdale, who lived there; PORTER HILL, located three miles east of Payne, is a farming community, and was named in honor of George Porter, one of the early settlers of Best <sup>3</sup> Three; OAK GROVE, in Best <sup>2</sup> Two, four miles east of Charleston, is a farming community; CENTER POINT, in the hills of Best <sup>3</sup> Three, one mile from the Grenada County line, has one officer, Earl Bloodworth, Justice of the ~~Peace~~ <sup>Peace</sup>; SPRING HILL, in Best <sup>2</sup> Two, three miles west of Oakland, is an attractive community with many pretty homes; JACKSON GROVE, two miles from the Panola County line, is in Best <sup>1</sup> One; PINE HILL community was christened in 1858, and is in Best <sup>2</sup> Two, six miles northeast of Charleston.

In Tallshatchie County is a place which should be known as "Nowhere," as it is not included in the legal description of Tallshatchie, Yalobusha, or Panola counties. It is described as Section <sup>4</sup> Four, <sup>5</sup> Five, and <sup>9</sup> Nine, Township <sup>11</sup> Eleven, Range <sup>7</sup> Seven, West.



and is surrounded by the three above mentioned counties.

However, taxes on this property have always been paid in Tallahatchie County, and no question has ever been brought up about this land of "Nowhere," even though (legally) there is no such place in existence. (1)

(1) Judge J.M. Kuykendall, Charleston, Miss.

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