

March 11, 1937  
HISTORICAL RESEARCH PROJECT  
Tallahatchie County

SUPPLEMENT - OLD HOMES - ASSIGNMENT #15

Project No. 2984

Canvassers - Mrs. Fairrest Carter  
Miss Birdie Harrison  
Mrs. Mary Wilson

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Today very little remains of the old, romantic South. The thrilling descriptions of the conditions and events of the era just prior to the Civil War have become merely excellent material for novels and other fiction, while what little exists of that period has become the effigy of a flamboyant past.

When we read such vivid accounts of our old South - of the spacious Colonial homes and extensive grounds, of the stage coaches and steam boats, the beautiful belles and the picturesque style of dress, and the large plantations with their slaves - we become keenly aware of what the war between the states brought about. It is true that we are proud of every one of our symbols of progress and every advance in modern civilization, yet we cannot help but feel that our Southland has been cruelly dismantled.

The ancient natural beauty of the landscape, the pretentious dwellings surrounded by plantations and carefree negro slaves, the gay social festivities, and the pony express have all become ante-bellum atmosphere. All that is extant of the old South is: the sadly related accounts of the few surviving makers of that epoch, the glowing dissertations of various authors, and a few partially demolished homes, stripped of their glamour.

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These homes, pathetic markers of a pompous past, with heads borne high, silently speak of the glory of days gone by.

Although we have retained comparatively so little of the pre-war background, we have the sacred memory of an aristocratic, romantic, stately, and heroic South of yesterday.

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The Staten Home

The Staten home is situated on the drive along the Tallahatchie River at Swan Lake, Mississippi; it faces the river and sets back about four hundred feet from the river bank.

It was built early in the nineteenth century by Ely Staten, who came to Tallahatchie County from North Carolina and was given thirty thousand acres of land by the government.

The house faces the west and the Tallahatchie River. A beautiful grove led from the lawn to the river and those oak trees were hundreds of years old. On the south side of the house was a large rose garden beyond which was an orchard. In the back yard were mimosa trees and box elders. The house is of old English style, painted white with green blinds. The house was very often the scene of gay festivities and elaborate entertainments.

Mrs. Betty Staten, wife of Ely Staten, had one custom to which she adhered with remarkable rigidity: this was the taking of a noon-day nap which she referred to as a siesta. Her sister was often the victim of bitter reproaches because of her frequent disregard of necessary quiet during Mrs. Staten's rest hour.

Mr. Staten was very fond of hunting. It was his custom to go on long

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hunting trips up the river accompanied by a negro. Their boats were dug-outs made of ash or cypress. Upon their return, their boats would be laden with wild game. On one occasion, his trophies included an old mother bear, two half grown cubs, five deer, wild turkey, ducks, squirrels, and o'possums.

Mr. and Mrs. Staten employed private tutors for their children. Mr. Staten was a highly respected man and an influential citizen.

All the lumber used in the construction of the house was from native trees; saw mill boats came up the river and sawed the material.

The magnificent rosewood furniture with the original plush upholstery, the lace curtains and draperies with the lambrequins and tie backs, all of which were bought in the early sixties, were in perfect condition at the time of Mrs. Staten's death about six years ago.

The Chicerice piano was hand-carved and made of genuine rosewood in 1835; the entire rack was hand-carved. This piano and one of the rosewood chairs with original red plush upholstery and stool to match, now adorn the living room of Mrs. B. F. Saunders, Webb, Mississippi.

Ely Staten, Jr., became a throat specialist and now resides at Columbus, Mississippi; Miss Susie Staten, a daughter of Ely Staten, is State Historian.

The home is in a very good state of preservation. It has been necessary recently to erect a levee near the house on the lawn and orchard; this, of course, mars the former beauty of the landscape.

The John Hancock Mortgage Company now owns the property. Renters occupy the house and take unusually good care of the house and property. \*

\* Reference: Mrs. B. F. Saunders, Swan Lake, Mississippi

The Avent Home

The Avent home is one of the old homes of Tallahatchie County and is located two miles north of Cascilla and thirteen miles south of Grenada on the public highway to Grenada. Before the war, this place, which was two large log rooms with several negro cabins and six hundred acres of land, was owned and founded by Mr. Tom Bridges, one of the old pioneer settlers.

In 1870, the place was sold to Ben Avent, who came from North Carolina with his family. He married a Mrs. Merriwether whose native home was in Georgia. After several years, Mr. Avent died leaving the property to his children and at this time, he had only one son and two daughters.

When Mr. Avent moved there, he used the two log rooms and added two more rooms with a wide hall running full length of the house with a front porch and a kitchen on the back; later the house was remodeled. Since Mr. Avent's death, some of his family, children and grand-children, have occupied the house.

These four rooms have a large fireplace in each room and two large mock orange trees are in the front yard and a row of large cedars surrounds the lawn; a beautiful fish pond and bathing pool have been added to the grounds. Only one piece of the original furniture has been preserved; this is a chest of drawers made of cherry wood. \*

The James Home

The James home was situated near the bank of the Tallahatchie River at Sharkey and was built in 1857 and owned by Greenwood Leflore Sharkey, who

\*Reference: Mrs. Lena Rayborne, Grenada, Mississippi

sold it to T. J. James in 1873; This house was a colonial style building, with two stories and was constructed of hardwood with cypress sills. The lumber of which the house was built was sawed by a steam-boat saw-mill that traveled up and down Tallahatchie River. Wooden pins were used for nails.

The first floor was composed of four rooms divided by a hall of full length. Two bed rooms on one side with a dressing room and bath on one side; on the other side, a parlor, library, dining room and kitchen which formed a court, with a veranda across the front and large square columns. The second story had two enormous rooms and attic. The house was white with green blinds.

Wild peach hedge circled around the drive and bordered the walks on the spacious lawn.

Mr. Tom James always kept a pack of hunting dogs and won ~~so~~ many silver trophies with them. He was a man with big vision, always looking into the future; he was full of enthusiasm and no undertaking was too big for him. Mr. James was always buying land. Colonel James would ask why he wanted to buy a certain piece of land and he would say, "Because it joins my land." At one time, he owned about fourteen hundred acres.

A Yankee gun-boat came down the river during the Civil War and fired a shot which killed Hugh Knot, the bullet going through one of the large columns on the porch; the hole remained there until the house was destroyed by fire in 1925.

Near the house was a boat landing called Sharkey landing for the boats which traveled up and down the Tallahatchie River loading cotton.

The house was furnished with beautiful antiques which were entirely destroyed by the fire. Among the most valuable of the antiques were a four

poster bed, a what-not, marble topped table, carved in an orn design, all made of mahogany.

The property is now in the hands of Walter K. James, who lives near the old home place. \*

#### The Bailey Home

The old Bailey home was built in 1832 and owned by Colonel James Bailey; it is located north of the Court House in Charleston.

It was surrounded by orange trees and oaks with a large apple orchard in the rear. The house was a one and a half story log building with four rooms and a wide veranda on the front and a kitchen in the yard separate from the house.

Colonel Bailey was the father of eight children - four boys and four girls. After the death of Colonel Bailey, the property was divided among the children and afterwards, one of the daughters, Miss Bell Bailey, bought the property from the remaining heirs and was sole owner of same until her recent death; however, the house has been remodeled in late years. \*

Colonel Bailey owned a spool cradle that he rocked all his children in. It has been in the immediate family all the time. Some years ago, it was broken and his daughter, Miss Belle Bailey, had it made into a swing which hung on her porch until her death one year ago. It is now in the possession of Mrs. William C. Bryant, her sister, who now lives in Coffeeville, Mississippi. Colonel Bailey also had a spool day bed, a chest of drawers, and an old square piano, all of which are now in Mrs. Bryant's home. \*

\*Reference: Mrs. Mary Collier, Charleston, Mississippi

\*\* Reference: Mrs. Hattie Bailey, Charleston, Mississippi

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\* ANTIQUES \*

A small sock which Mrs. W. H. H. Darby knitted when she was four years old, eighty seven years ago. She knitted the sock using four straws for needles; they could not knit the sock off so they took it off the needle and sewed up the toe.

Dress worn by Mrs. M. A. Trotman eighty four years ago. The material cost at that time, 1852, seventy five cents per yard.

Waist of the wedding dress of Sally Martha Riddick, wife of Robert Riddick, who was married in November, 1837. They were among the early residents of Charleston, Mississippi.

Scarf given to Sally Riddick in 1835, two years before she married Robert Riddick. He was in Japan and brought the scarf back to her as a gift. Robert Riddick was the great-grandfather of the Summers children and his name has been handed down for four generations. His last namesake being Robert Riddick Summers.

Chateline bag given to Miss Lottie Thompson (Cossar) by Mr. John Cossar, Christmas, 1895. It was worn fastened on the side of a belt.

Bracelet made of hair, quite the fad before the Civil War. It was left to Mrs. G. S. Allen, of Charleston, Mississippi, by her mother, Eliza Moore Houston.

Pin belonging to Mrs. S. A. Laycock of Grenada, Mississippi; was left to her by her grand-mother, Eliza Moore Houston, an old Tallahatchian. Pin is seventy five years old.

Pin belonging to Mrs. G. S. Allen, Charleston, Mississippi. Was left to her by her grand-mother, Patsy Herring Moore. The pin is over one hundred years old.

Locket brought from Munich, Germany, by Mr. Mike Hey, Sr., an old Tallahatchian, father of Mrs. A. B. Pressgrove, seventy three years ago. It was given to Mrs. Pressgrove by him.

Newspaper belonging to Mrs. W. H. H. Darby - The Tallahatchian published July 7, 1869.

Riding whip made by Bailey McDaniel before the Civil War. He was a Confederate soldier and was killed in battle.

Bennet worn seventy six years ago, in 1860, by a sister of Mr. J. E. Trotman; she died at the age of three.

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Coral necklace belonging to Mrs. Ellen Stacy, a great great great aunt of Mrs. Eldridge Darby and Miss Cora Ladd. It has been handed down four or five generations. Mrs. Stacy wore it shortly after the Revolutionary War at a dance in North Carolina and danced with General Lafayette.

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Indian arrow head was the property of Henry Tolbert; it was handed down to his daughter, Lucy Tolbert Tatum, and now belongs to her daughter, Mrs. A. C. Fonda.

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Platter dating back four generations. It first belonged to the mother of Mrs. Louvina Denman Fedric, who was the daughter of Mr. Dick Denman, an old settler of Tallahatchie County. Mr. Dan Fedric's children make the fourth generation.

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Butter dish about 125 years old. It belonged to Mrs. Collins, then to her daughter, Mrs. Little, then to Mrs. Little's daughter, Mrs. Isaac Burkhalter, and now belongs to Mrs. W. A. Milton, Enid, Mississippi, who is the daughter of Mrs. Isaac Burkhalter. This dates back to the first settlement in the county.

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Needle sharpener or Emery bag which is seventy five years old and was first owned by Mrs. Lydie Black and was handed down to Mrs. Bettie J. Kuykendall, and is now owned by Mrs. Henry Adams.

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Rolling pin made before the Civil War and has been in use every day since. It belonged to James A. Houston, grandfather of Mrs. G. S. Allen, Charleston, Mississippi.

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Earthenware jar about one hundred years old. It was bought by Isaac Burkhalter when he first married. Mr. Burkhalter was born about one hundred twenty-five years ago, and was one of the first settlers around Enid, Mississippi.

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Spinning wheel, belonging to J. A. Shannon, an old settler of Tallahatchie County, and now in the possession of Mrs. Laverne Shannon.

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In 1835, Miss Frances Redd painted a china perfume jug when she was a girl in college. She was the grandmother of Judge John Kuykendall and Mrs. S. H. Gaines of Enid, Mississippi. It is now in possession of Miss Mollie McLain, Enid, Mississippi.

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The work basket of little Sarah Jane Harris, great great great grandmother of Mrs. Fannie Harris, is now owned by Mrs. J. W. Burt, daughter of Mrs. Fannie Harris, of Cascilla, Mississippi. It is one hundred years old.

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Powder horn made by Mr. William Archie Worsham from the horn of a steer which he had raised. He used this horn during the Civil War.

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Turkey dish or platter brought to Tallahatchie County from Lincoln County, Georgia, in a covered wagon by Mr. and Mrs. Andres Lee, who settled here near Rocky Branch in 1830; it is now owned by Mr. John Cossar, great grandson of the Lees.

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Butter dish one hundred and forty years old. Mrs. George Sassaman first owned it and it was then handed down to Sarah Sassaman, eighty nine years ago. Mrs. Rosa Milam of Paynes, Mississippi, now uses it.

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Pipe made in January, 1862, of ivy root cut from the bank of the Potomac River, by Patrick Henry Houston, member of Company T. 21st Mississippi Regiment, while in camp where battle of Leesburgh was fought. The pipe is now the property of Mrs. A. F. Laughlin, Charleston, Mississippi, who is the daughter of P. H. Houston.

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Snuff box made from the leg bone of a Civil War prisoner, and carved by a fellow prisoner during the seige of Vicksburg. It was given to Reverend Jesse Porter, father of Mrs. W. H. Darby; Mrs. Darby is now living at the age of ninety and is the only true Civil War widow in Tallahatchie County.

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Counterpane handmade by Mrs. H. R. Shores, grandmother of Mrs. Edd Sims and Mrs. M. L. Robertson. The spread was made from thread spun at home on a spinning wheel; it dates back five generations, and was made in Tallahatchie County.

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Latin Bible, published in 1831, now owned by Miss Mollie McLain, aunt of Judge John Kuykendall, of Charleston, Mississippi

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Greek Bible owned by A. C. Fonda, one hundred and eleven years old; now in possession of his son-in-law, Mr. Dick Crenshaw.

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Papers now belonging to Mr. H. A. Pressgrove and originally the property of his father, Alvin Pressgrove, one of the first settlers of Tallahatchie County. The papers consist of bill of sale of negro slaves, dated 1844, bill of sale of cotton sent from Tuscahoma, Mississippi (Tallahatchie County) to New Orleans, Louisiana, lists of merchandise bought in New Orleans, old tax receipts, cancelled check for cotton, etc.; all papers dated prior to the Civil War. Also a paper published in 1867.

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Shell used to call the slaves in at the noon hour before the Civil War by James Moore, who was the grandfather of Mrs. G. S. Allen, of Charleston.

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Handkerchief made by hand by Mrs. Sue Cossar, Sara Lee and Mrs. Louisa Jenkins, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Lee, who lived at the Cossar home. It was made between 1820 and 1835 in Tallahatchie County.

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An Album quilt made by different girl friends of Mr. W. W. Pattison of Baltimore, Maryland; the quilt was made between 1830 and 1844. Mr. Pattison was the grandfather of Mrs. John Cossar, an old citizen of Tallahatchie County.

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Indian dagger dug out of an Indian mound on his old place on Tillatoba Creek by Mr. Pitt Laughlin.

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A jug which belonged to the Choctaw Indians was dug up on the Thornton place near "Old Tillatoba" across North Creek. It is now in the possession of Mrs. P. H. Thornton.

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A Yankee gun: Mr. O. M. Lyon, father-in-law of Mr. Pitt Laughlin, was on Pickett duty during the Civil War and as a result of an interview with the Yankees, the gun was brought home by Mr. Lyon.

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Water jug used by Mr. Will Jones's father during the Civil War.

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A bullet which killed Mr. William McDaniel during the Civil War and was found lodged in his pocket; now in possession of his sister, Mrs. J. E. Trotman.

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Glasses one hundred and fifty years old and were first owned by Mrs. Melissa Gray, were handed down to Mr. James T. Gray, and are now owned by Mrs. Henry Adams.

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Wallet made of home spun cloth in 1840 by Mrs. James Pressgrove; it was worn around the waist under the clothes and was used for protection for money and valuable papers.

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Shell and gun belonging to Mrs. B. B. Laster. It was given to Mr. Las-

ter by Mr. Dick Laster and was used during the Spanish American War.

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"Henry Rifle" used by the late Rouse Peters during the Civil War and is now in good order. Canteen, originally covered with kakhi cloth and webbing strap taken from the shoulder of George A. Daw, a fallen enemy from Philadelphia by Rouse Peters of the 42nd Mississippi Regiment of Volunteers during the heat of the battle of Gettysburg in July, 1863; he was seriously wounded while taking the canteen and carried to safety by a fellow comrade.

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Small magnifying glass used by Mr. William McDaniel during the Civil War to light his pipe and to light fires. Mr. McDaniel, a relative of Mrs. J. E. Trotman, was killed at the battle of Chickamaug.

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Sword left at the home of Mrs. Blanche Payne of Cascilla by a Confederate soldier who was passing by and stopped there during the war.

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Speens which have been handed down through five generations and are now in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Brown, citizens of Charleston.

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Silver spoon, the property of Mrs. W. E. Stone, Charleston, of the fifth generation of W. E. Stone; silver from which the spoon was made was dug in '49 by great grandfather, and made in Washington by hand without alloy.

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Pure brass bucket with iron handle brought to Tallahatchie County by Mrs. Kirkland from Kentucky in 1875. The bucket had been in use for many years previous to this date. It was given to Mrs. Smithers, who in turn gave it to her daughter, Mrs. Lavern Shannon.

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Salt cellar, one hundred and twenty-five years old, belonged to Jane Morman, then handed down to Celia Cly, next to Emma Laster, then to Mrs. Sam Fielder.

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Mrs. Foster Thompson of Charleston owns a small gourd, dating back to 1858; this gourd belonged to Mrs. Mollie Harper Thompson and has been in use in the family for seventy nine years.

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Mrs. Bessie Hawkins of Charleston, has some sterling silver spoons which date back to 1782. The family has been in possession of these spoons for one hundred fifty-five years.

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Chest of drawers, made of mahogany, owned by Mrs. O. L. Fox, belonged to her mother. Has been in the family sixty years and she bought it from an old lady, Mrs. Colbert, that had had it about forty years and had been sent to her from someone in France.

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Water bag which was brought back from the Mexican war by James Knott, and in the possession of Mrs. Cox, his niece. An autographed album belonging to Mrs. Matilda Tallaola R. Cox which was presented to her mother, Mrs. Jane M. Rice, in 1830, by her husband, Mr. G. W. Rice.

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Mrs. Sam Hamilton, of Tutwiler, has two silver cups that were awarded Mrs. T. F. Clay - one dated in 1855, the other 1857.

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Mrs. Hamilton has a breast pin of her grandmother's, Mrs. T. F. Clay, which was made from her ear-bobs. The center of the pin is a glass case which

holds a lock of her hair and is surrounded by tiny pearls. She also has a breast pin that belonged to her great uncle, William Saunders; it is oblong, has a picture of a baby in the center, the corners are of onyx, with pearls across each end and both sides.

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Mrs. Hamilton has a Friendship watch fob of her great uncle William Saunders, which is made of silver quarters and are linked together with two silver links between each quarter. There were only about five quarters left of this fob and they were dated in 1844 to 1847. She has a hugh silver watch which belonged to this same great uncle. She did not know how old it was but a piece of paper was found in the back which had the date 1851 on it. Of course, this watch was wound with a key, but Mrs. Hamilton has misplaced it.

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Mrs. Hamilton has a dress that belonged to her father, John Oliver Clay when he was an infant. It was made by hand and the stiches are so tiny that they can hardly be seen. Around the neck and front is tiny tucking; lace is inserted in the skirt; there were two yards of lace in the dress and it cost four dollars a yard. She also has a rosewood library table that was made out of a piano in 1918 by a German. This piano did belong to Annie Lawler of Clarksdale, Mississippi, but has been in the Hamilton home since 1904. Mrs. Hamilton said that it was at least sixty years old if not older. Mrs. Hamilton has a silver spoon which is about one hundred years old and it has been handed down to her from her grandmother, Mrs. T. F. Clay.

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Mrs. B. F. Saunders, of Swan Lake, Mississippi, has a hundred year old album which was handed down to her from her mother, who was Miss Margaret

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Pattison. It is bound with red velvet; one side has four rests made of solid silver; on the other side, the word "Souvenir" is written in silver. Each side has a picture of an open book and the hook is a lyre. There are compartments for pictures.

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Family Bible of M. B. and L. A. Denman, parents of Mrs. Brooksey Denman Hey (Mrs. J. P. Hey) which was published in 1870.

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Family Bible which belonged to Mrs. Rachel Mohead, grand-mother of Mrs. Brooksey Hey; this Bible was published in 1830 by Towar, J. & D. M. Hogan; and Hogan & Company, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and contains seven books between the Old and New Testaments which have been extracted from the modern Bible. The books are as follows: - Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Soloman, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and Maccabees.

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One large platter eighteen inches long and one large soup bowl with a hole in the top for the ladle; it is of a blue flower or willow design and has been in the family for seventy five years, belonging to Mrs. J. P. Hey.

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A walnut suit of furniture, comprised of bed, marble topped dresser and wash-stand, and wardrobe about one hundred years old belonging to Mrs. Nobel Houston of Philipp, Mississippi.

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One walnut desk about eighty years old, handed down from the W. B. Marshall, now in the possession of his daughter, Miss Mary Marshall.

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Dr. Shade Neely, son of one of our Civil War veterans, Mr. John T. Neely, has a watch over one hundred years old; it was handed down from his grand-father, S. C. Barnes, and was made in Germany.

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*Mrs. Isabel Summers*

Mrs. Isabel Summers, Supervisor  
Historical Research Project  
Tallahatchie County

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TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY HOMES

September 17, 1936  
HISTORICAL RESEARCH PROJECT  
Tallahatchie County

"OLD HOMES": ASSIGNMENT #15

Canvassers-Janie L. Fonda  
Janie Koonce

Project No. 2984

I. The Taliaferro home, built by one General E. L. Taliaferro one hundred years ago, when he owned one thousand acres of land near Enid, Mississippi in beat one, stands in a cedar grove. A fence is around the house and from the gate a concrete walk leading up to the house which is a white one-story, Dutch Colonial home. The large front porch has big square columns. The side porch is surrounded by a small terrace fence. The front door is enclosed with glass panels and leads into a hall with a large room on each side. All of the doors and other woodwork, are of oak. The doors as well as the windows, are extremely tall. Each of the front rooms have huge open fireplaces made of beautiful marble. There are five other rooms to the house. Some of the walls are plastered, while others are papered.

In 1852, 398 acres of land were deeded to J. E. Taliaferro by J. G. Brady. Since then there has been three generations of Taliaferros. When E. L. Taliaferro, son of J. E. Taliaferro inherited this property it was heavily involved. This indebtedness was paid in a few years. He established a stock farm here and had some of the finest blooded cattle and hogs that could be found anywhere. One year he had a poland-china hog that weighed 900 pounds, the largest grown in this county. Mr. Taliaferro also raised fine mules and sheep. Before his death he accumulated approximately \$75,000.00 and 5000 acres of land. All of this property was inherited by his grandson Ed,

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who having been taxed so heavily by drainage district and the county, lost it all.

At one time the lawn had a very rare and expensive box hedge growing on it. It is said that this hedge has to grow a hundred years before it becomes of any size. Ed Taliaferro, who now lives in Memphis, Tennessee sold this for \$1000.00 to a nursery in New York.

Since this property is no longer in the hands of the Taliaferros, it has been damaged considerably. The stables have been torn down and only a few of the outhouses are left. These few outhouses left standing are made of lattice work. They are now used for chicken houses, their original use is unknown.

The Taliaferro furniture has been described as exquisite. The house was furnished with massive antiques, and had every available convenience. A huge square piano now stands on the front porch in a delapidated condition. The rest of the furniture was carried to Memphis by Ed Taliaferro and sold to an antique dealer.\*

II. The Bellamy house, located two miles north of Charleston was built by a Mr. James Alford, great uncle of Mrs. C. W. Manley, one of the oldest living citizens of Charleston, Mississippi. It was built prior to the Civil War by Mr. Alford who married a widow Mrs. Thompson. At the time of their marriage, Mrs. Thompson had one child, a daughter. This daughter married a Bellamy (initials unknown), and they had two sons, Jim and John. Jim accidentally killed himself jumping a paling fence when a youth. John lived and inherited the Bellamy home at the death of his mother and father. He married Col. Wm. Fitzgerald's daughter.  
\*Reference- Mr. N. B. Mitchell, Enid, Miss. Sept. 1, 1936

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"OLD HOMES"

(Note: Col. Fitzgerald played a very important part in Tallahatchie's history of the War Between the States.)

The Bellamy home is a big white two-story house trimmed in green and has green shutters. It stands on a hill just above a creek and large trees surround the place. The walls are all plastered but are marred with names of people written over them. There are four rooms down stairs, divided by a wide hall in which is the stair case leading to second floor where there are three rooms. These rooms have not been used for years, except for store room. Leading from one of the rooms in the upper story there is an attic. About eight or ten years ago, when the people who now occupy the Bellamy house, moved there, they found stored in the attic numerous old fashioned clothes and quilts. Possibly these had been placed there three-quarters of a century ago.\*

III. The old Staton home at Swan Lake is situated on the east bank of the Tallahatchie River about ten miles south of Sumner, Mississippi. The house was built early in 1800-(exact date unknown). Eli Staton was fifteen years old when he came from North Carolina to what is now Sumner, Miss. He bought, and was given by the government 30,000 acres of delta land in Tallahatchie County.

The home on Tallahatchie was built about 1825. The building is frame two-story with a hall 44 feet by 23 feet running east and west with the rooms opening into it. Five rooms on first floor opening into the hall. Two bathrooms on same floor. The second floor contained two very large rooms.

The front and back entrances were composed of four massive folding doors, each, leaving the entire front and back open for

\*Reference-Mrs. C. W. Manley, Charleston, Miss., Aug. 27, 1936

summer. The doors, front and back, had the paneled sides and over doors of glass.

The hall, parlor and living room were paneled in oak with a deep wainscoting of oak. The porch in front was a portico supported by large square pillars. The back a long latticed and screened gallery.

The furniture in parlor was rosewood with large square piano of same wood. The bedrooms had walnut furniture and the hall oak. The grounds covered twenty two acres and held an office and commissary and old fashioned lattice covered cistern.

Beyond the back yard was the barn, and south of that the gin. The back yard had a number of mimosa trees and box elders with frames of roses. These mimosas and the roses were brought from the southern part of the state.

The front lawn held great old oaks and a black walnut tree. On the south side with steps into it from the front porch was the rose garden. Around the front base of the house were white spireas. On the south was the large orchard, and beyond the orchard the negro quarters.

The house faced the west and the Tallahatchie River. A beautiful grove led from the lawn to the river, and those oak trees were hundreds of years old. In the past few years a levee has been built through that grove.

The house was and still is, white with the traditional green blinds, and in the parlor and hall were glass chandeliers. These were replaced with fixtures for acetylene.

Eli Staton had the house erected. He lived there, his son James Harvey Staton, Henry Staton, and his sister and Eli's daughter, Elizabeth Staton Martin, also. The plantation on which the dwelling is located was a forest and cane brake when Eli Staton bought the land from the government. The property is now owned by the John Hancock Mortgage Co. \*

IV. The historic James mansion at Sharkey was one of the most noted of the ante-bellum plantation residences for 67 years. This two-story home was built of hardwood with cypress sills which was ancient but finely preserved structure.

In 1924 the residence was totally destroyed by fire, losing the innumerable household treasures accumulated throughout a half hundred years, ancestral oil paintings, rare old silver family jewels, including Mrs. James diamond studded watch, a wonderful old rose wood four poster bed, and hundreds of other treasured things which cannot be replaced.

Attached to the house hold was an aged negress who had been with the family a half century. About all that was saved was salvaged by Old Aunt Maria. Her duty had been to attend to the beds and that was the first thing she thought of and somehow managed to gather up several armfuls of sheets and blankets.

Going over the ruins after the fire had cooled, the family explored the spot where the china closet had been and were amazed to find that most of their china ware, many of whose pieces were thin as tissue paper, had withstood the fire. They also found considerable plated silver were intact, but all of the solid silver service had been melted.

\*Reference-Mrs. Susie Staton, Winona, Mississippi  
August 12, 1936

The old mansion was built in 1857 by Greenwood Leflore Sharkey and sold to T. G. James, Sr. in 1873. A notable feature of the solid old structure were the cypress sills 56 feet in length and measuring 12 x 12 inches.

The home, situated near the bank of the Tallahatchie River, was surrounded by a plank fence, with a grove of trees in the yard. A porch 60 feet long ran across front of the house. There were four rooms across the front. Also a hall 24 feet was used as a dancing place before it was occupied by the James. The dining room and kitchen ran down one side behind these four rooms and two bed rooms down the other side, there were in L shape. In each room there was a big open fireplace.

The property is now in the name of William Kearn James, who is working off the indebtedness. He lives across the road from this place in what use to be called the manager's home.\*

V. In 1832, prior to the founding of Tallahatchie County, Colonel James Bailey, with his family, and two other pioneers with their families, settled on Tillatoba Creek. Colonel Bailey built a home north of town. This building was made of logs, and part of it still stands. A son of Col. Bailey, also James Bailey, a youth at the time the family moved into this territory, bought property in the town of Charleston. In 1846 he carried his bride to her new home, which he had built for her and is now the oldest land mark in Charleston. The property on which the home stands was originally owned by

\*Reference-Mrs. Mary Collier, Charleston, Miss. Sept. 2, 1936  
Mississippi Sun, 1924

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Greenwood Leflore and was sold to J. S. Bailey by A. Pattison, President of the Board of Police. The home is located north of Court Square on Panola Street. It is a two story, log building but the logs were finished so as to give it the appearance of a frame building. It has a porch across the front which leads into a hallway separating the two front rooms. This hallway running east and west leads into another hall running north and south which divided the front and back of the house. Originally there were two stairways. One in the front hall which has been torn down, and one in the back hall, which has not been remodeled. This leads to the second story where there are three rooms and a hall. With the exception of the bathroom added and this stairway closed, there have been no other changes made in the house which has been standing ninety years. It is a nice looking old home, painted dark brown and trimmed in cream. The yard is well kept, and is shaded by old trees that have been standing as long as can be remembered by people living in Charleston. A concrete walk, the only modern feature seen from the outside of the house leads from the side walk to the steps. Until recently an antique swing was hung on this porch. This swing was made from a cradle, used two generations ago by the Bailey family. Until the death of Miss Belle Bailey, daughter of the second Col. James Bailey, a few months ago, this home had always been used by that family. It was furnished with antiques, handed down from generation to generation. At her death the property was divided among relatives, and the furnishings moved away from the old home site. The house, itself, has been rented, although it is still owned by members of the Bailey family.\*

\*Reference—Mrs. Maggie Lea Bryant, Coffeeville, Miss.  
March 31, 1936

VI. About six miles up the valley, northwest of Charleston, stands a beautiful two-story colonial home facing the east. The home, which is now the property of Mr. Phil Sherman, was built by his father, Mr. Granville Sherman in 1856. Prior to the building of this home Mr. Granville Sherman and his family lived in a small log cabin while the house was being built. The material of which the house is built was secured from the property on which it now stands. The house is exactly as it was eighty years ago. It has the same floors and chimneys. An old negro, Tom Pinn, who was hired by the year, built the windows, doors and sashes. The house was planned by Jim Tanner. It has green blinds on every window. These blinds do not have any nails but are put together with wooden pins. When the house was built there was a small porch at the entrance. A few years ago the steps and porch were made of solid concrete. The porch has bannisters and tall columns, supporting a small porch on the second story. On entering the house you come into a hall. At the right of the hall is the stairway. The bannisters are carved out of one solid piece of wood having no joints. On each side of the hall is a large bedroom. A bathroom has been built on the back porch and part of the porch has been screened. There is a back hall between the dining room and bedroom. The kitchen is not connected with the house but stands a little distance out in the back yard. The kitchen that was built with the house burned and since then three more have burned.

The upstairs is arranged as downstairs having a hall and three large rooms. Two are bedrooms and the other a storeroom. The walls of this home were plastered when first built and have

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been plastered only once since then. The second time, by an Englishman.

The foundation of this home is good and made of bricks which were molded on the place by Halbrook an Irishman. There is a huge pecan tree that is seventy-five feet across. The grounds are very pretty. In the backyard is an old well that has been there since the house was built. Water has been piped into the house, in recent years from this same well.

There are 1100 acres in the whole place. There is no furniture that has been there as long as the house, other than a few chairs. But all of the furniture in the house is over sixty years old, bought by the present Mr. Phil Sherman, who has lived there all of his life.\*

It is interesting to note that the section of land on which this home is built was a United States Grant (Patent) made to G. Sherman, May 10, 1848.

\*Reference-Mr. Phil Sherman, Enid, Miss. R. F. D.  
September 21, 1936

*Mrs. Isabel Summers*

Mrs. Isabel Summers, Supv.  
Historical Research Project  
Tallahatchie County  
Charleston, Mississippi

TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI  
OLD HOMES

*Lucie Staton*

## HISTORY OF TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY

## CHAPTER VIII: WARS

## WAR BETWEEN THE STATES

Introductory

At the beginning of the War between the States in 1861, Tallahatchie County was at the peak of a period of prosperity; the era, now so publicized and known as ante-bellum days, was typified in the homes of hundreds of the county's citizens whose lives ran in a comfortable, easy manner, secure in the thought that their holdings, which included thousands of black slaves, were theirs to have and to hold. The majority of the citizens was composed of pioneers -- people who had made a wonderful place to live out of a wilderness, and who were indignant that their rights had been infringed upon.

When the first war guns boomed, Tallahatchie's young men from every profession, lawyers, doctors, farmers, ministers, and every other walk of life, shouldered their guns, and offered

their lives to the Confederacy.

Only a small part of the heroism, courage, and loyalty with which these men fought can be written. All of them have passed on, but the sacred cause for which they fought will ever remain fresh in the memory of their descendants.

#### Fighting Units From County

During the War between the States Tallahatchie County furnished three companies of infantry, two companies of artillery, and two cavalry companies. The infantry companies were: COMPANY B RAYBURN RIFLES, commanded by Captain E.R. Neilson; COMPANY B ROBSON REBELS, commanded by Captain Robert Robson, and COMPANY F TALLAHATCHIE RIFLES, commanded by Captain W.H. FitzGerald. The two cavalry companies were both commanded by Captain W. Scott Eskridge. The first of these, the TILLATOBA GREYS, numbered over one hundred men. On the organization of the army in April, 1862, Captain Eskridge resigned the command of the Tillstobs Greys, came home and organized the second company with the intention of entering the partizan ranger service, but on its organization was ordered into Company I-Bellantine's

Regiment and remained in it to the close of the war.

The two cavalry companies were: COMPANY B MCLENDON'S BATTERY, commended by Captain J.M. McLendon, and another commended by Captain H.F. Merrin. (1)

#### History of Fighting Units

All of the fighting units from Tallahatchie County were connected with the Western Army under Generals Bragg, Joseph E. Johnston, J.B. Hood, and others at different times, and were engaged in all the great and small battles that were fought in the western department.

THE TALLAHATCHIE RIFLES, mustered in as Company F, composed a part of the 21st Mississippi Regiment, a regiment distinguished for its splended discipline and its superb courage during the whole war. This regiment, under Colonel Humphreys, took part in ten of the bloodiest battles of the War between the States, Melvern Hill, Fredericksburg, Sharpsburg, (or Antietam), Chick-sauga, Gettysburg, Spottsylvania, Cold Harbor, The Wilderness, Savage Station and Petersburg.

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(1) W. Scott Eskridge, Charleston, Miss.

It was in the second days battle at Gettysburg that Captain John T. Neely, of the Tellshatchie Rifles, lost a leg. That part of the wide-spread battle, in which he was disabled, is thus described by General H.J. Hunt, Chief of the Artillery of the Union Army: "The breaking of the Pesch Orchard angle exposed the flanks of our batteries on the crest. Bigelow's Ninth Massachusetts made a stand in the corner of the field. He was ordered to hold that point until a line of artillery could be formed. After accomplishing its purpose, all that was left of Bigelow's battery was his drum, being closely pressed by Colonel Humphreys' Twenty-first Mississippi, the only Confederate Regiment which had succeeded in crossing the run. His men entered the battery and fought hand to hand with the cannoners. The battery went into action with 104 officers and men. Of the four battery officers, one was killed, one was mortally wounded, and one severely wounded. Of the seven sergeants two were killed and four wounded. The battery suffered a further loss of twenty-eight men and sixty-five out of eighty-

TELLSHATCHIE COUNTRY, WARS

eight horses killed or wounded." (1)

A copy of "The Confederate Veteran," which contains a history of the war record of the Twenty-first Regiment, written by J.B. Boothe, speaks in highest terms of "Cap" Houston, as he was known to his comrades. Reciting a dramatic incident which took place at the battle of Chickasuga, J.B. Boothe tells of the brigade commander, General Humphreys, calling for volunteers to go into a dense undergrowth in front of the lines, and ascertain if the enemy was there, and says, : "Cap" Houston, William Barnett from Vicksburg, and ----- Conrad, from Wilkinson County responded, and soon after disappeared from view in the bushes. According to their report made within an hour or two, when they had gone a few hundred yards, they came suddenly upon what was evidently the remnants of a brigade, with guns loaded, bayonets fixed, and fourstands of colors. Seeing that something had to be done at once or they would be killed or captured, Barnett said, low enough not to be heard of the enemy, who had not yet discovered them: "Cap, let's bluff 'em." Cap replied,

"All right", and they sprang up from the bushes which had concealed them and peremptorily commanded them to halt, throw down their arms and surrender at once, or they would order their men in line near by to fire on them. After some little hesitation, and another warning that they would be fired on if they longer hesitated, the men threw down their arms. The prisoners were at once ordered to face to the left and move forward and follow Conrad, who was directed to precede them through the bushes, Cap and Barnett, with their guns loaded and bayonets fixed, bringing up the rear. Before the captors and prisoners reached our lines some of the officers said to their captors: "If we had known that your men were so far away, we would not have surrendered, but would have captured you. We thought, of course, that your line was only a few yards away in the bushes, or you would not have been so bold and daring, and so thinking, your bluff worked all right." The prisoners were members of a Michigan brigade, and there were four color bearers, each bearing a regimental flag. There were a good many officers among them,

whose swords were all sheathed when our line was reached. The officers appeared to be very much chagrined, over their inglorious surrender, and officers and men were at once marched back to the rear of our lines under guard. I do not recall whether they were counted or not before going back to the rear, but I know that their number was afterwards reported to be about three hundred. They were evidently the remainder of a brigade that became separated from their command during the progress of the battle, and were in confusion at the time of their capture, for they were marching west parallel to our line when they should have been going nearly due north in the direction the main army had been driven. (1)

Of the several companies made up in Tallahatchie County the Tallahatchie Rifles was the only one forwarded to Virginia. This company did not reach Richmond in time for the battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861, but after that date participated in every general battle from the first Manassas to the close of the war at Appomattox. (2)

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(1) Mrs. Lillie Henry, Charleston, Miss.

(2) W. Scott Eskridge, Charleston, Miss.

Names of Enlisted Men

Roster of Tallahatchie Rifles:

W.H. FitzGerald, Captain	J.G. McCassell
T.W. Boisclair, 1st Lieutenant	J.J. Lee
J.H. Rayburn, 2nd Lieutenant	W.R. Neill
E.E. Armstrong, 3rd Lieutenant	L.J. Polk
John Able	G. Brewer
Wm. Able	J.B. Boothe
R.F. Benton	R.J.H. Bogan
T.H. Benton	R. Bowman
H.S. Boisclair	E.S. Bodry
W.J. Burgess	W.F. Bruce
D.J. Burgess	T.R. Chapman
T.J.N. Bloodworth	G.S. Collier
Wm. Bean	Jas. Coughlin
J.A. Kreigrus	Clark, R.H.
J.D. Kerr	J.C. Crump
T.P. Lan kin	Dan Curren
B.M. Leughlin	W.M. Crutche#
A.J. Means	Wm. Clemmons
Lee May	Thos. Clemmons
T.D. Matkins	R.T. Crenshaw
Daniel McCerty	Dan Carter
P.B. McDaniel	R.E. Davidson
S.J. Mathews	S.T. Dunlap

TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

## Tallahatchie Rifles Con'td

F.C. Freil	Jerry Robinson
L.H. Ford	Thos. H. Shores
J.H. Foster	Jas. H. Shores
J.R. Gates	H.D. Shores
John Graham	C.C. Shores
D.R. Halbrooks	Jas. B. Steel
M. Hartsfield	H.R. Smith
R.D. Houston	Saml. Sewell
Alex Houston	J.M. Thompson
E.E. Jones	H.H. Simmons
Thos. Jones	P.H. Thornton
E. Jackson	J.W. Trailor
Thos. Johnston	D.L. Toole
B. H. Collier	Jas. Toole
J. Hutson	Robt. Toole
----- Williams	G.W. Wall
----- Baker	A.J. Wilson
---- Rolf	John Watkins
J.H. Blackburn	Charles Williams
D.W. Page	J.N. Worley
J.F. Page	G.B. Worley
G.W. Prewitt	Thos. Wills
Wm. Pryor	Jas. B. Sutton
Thos. Price	R.M. Worley
W.C. Rupell	Jas. L. Simmons
Robt. Riddick	Chas. T. Worley
E.G. Roff	Wm. Robinson

Tallahatchie Rifles Cont'd

Chas. Venet  
 Alex Piper  
 George W. Lence  
 Jas. Ablis  
 Dixon Priddy  
 Ass Walker  
 P.H. Houston  
 John Neely  
 N.W. Ward (1)

Stephen Benjamin  
 Griffin Ross  
 W.S. Jones  
 J.W. Rice  
 J.W. Scott  
 Stanford Smith  
 J.W. Slaughter  
 J.W. Shelton  
 E.O. Smith

Roster of Rayburn Rifles:

E.R. Neilsen	James Bell
W.W. Hall	H.T. Benton
John Boyle	W.A. Benton
P.P. Brown	C.W. Benton
J.E. Noel	J.H. Brown
B.A. Ferris	B. Bailey
H.A. Summers	Thos. Bailey
W.L. Walker	J.A. Byrd
S.W. Lunn	Jas. Bloodworth
W.B. Crostwait	J.H. Bull
W.S. Murphy	Wm. Crizell
Jas. Dogan	J. Connor
R. Neill	H. Dogan
A.S. Ashmore	B.F. Dowden
Green Arrendale	J.H. Duke
Dan Arrendale	C.M. Dees

(1) Copied from Muster Roll of Tallahatchie Rifles prepared by John T. Neely, owned by Mrs. Lillie Henry, Charleston, Miss.

TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

Rayburn Rifles Con'td

A.A. Dees	Stephen Repjohn
C.F. Dees	Griffin Ross
A.J. Estridge	W.E. Ross
Jas. Fowler	J.W. Rice
W.H. French	J.R. Scott
Jas. Garner	Stanford Smith
W.B. Holeshouser	G.W. Smithers
L.A. Holeshouser	J.S. Shelton
W.J. Holland	F.O. Stein
Geo. Hutchinsyn	M. Sherrill
Jas. Hudson	John Stone
Geo. Hudson	Wm. Sheely
Robt. Jones	Wm. Stone
W.G. Keelen	E.R. Sheley
Robt. Neill	W.B. Shaw
J. McBell	S.P. Sherrill
John McCertney	F.O. Steele
James. McDow	Jesse Sullivent, Sr.
W.O. O'Dell	Jesse Sullivent, Jr.
Harris O'Daniel	Geo. Cooch
George Patterson	G.W. Grace
E.H. Prince	W.M. Hanks
Jas. Pickle	J.H. Hanks
J.L. Quarles	Mathew Harris
F.M. Repjohn	Jesse Housen

Rayburn Rifles Con'td

John Hobbs	Thos. O'Daniel
J.H. Tate	Gideon Gooch
J.M. Tribble	A. B. Ashmore
Able Warner	Ed. Pennington
H.C. Warner	A. C. Wiliford
L. Williams	Tillatobe Greys
John Willisims	W. S. Eskridge
O.S. Weslake	C. C. Marshall
B. Arbuckle	W. M. Steele
Alex Brown	S. Smith
Owen Smith	R. Simmons
W. P. Harris	Jas. Bailey
Joel Rice	J. C. Brady
Jasper Henson	Jas. Brown
Thos. Mc Kinney	R. H. Bell
Ed. Campell	J. M. Bell
John Roland	A. Cole
Silas Sullivant	Thos. Cole
John Bayliss	Wm. Cole
Jas. Johnston	Jes. Cole
Thos. Ward	J. W. Cox
S. W. Law	Jes. Craig
Newton Farris	W. J. Cooper
M. C. Bell	W. R. Crenshaw
T. W. McDaw	W. N. DeHart
Walter Sherman	W.S. Ellett
	Wm. Falkner
	Wm. Flannigen

TAYLOR COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI