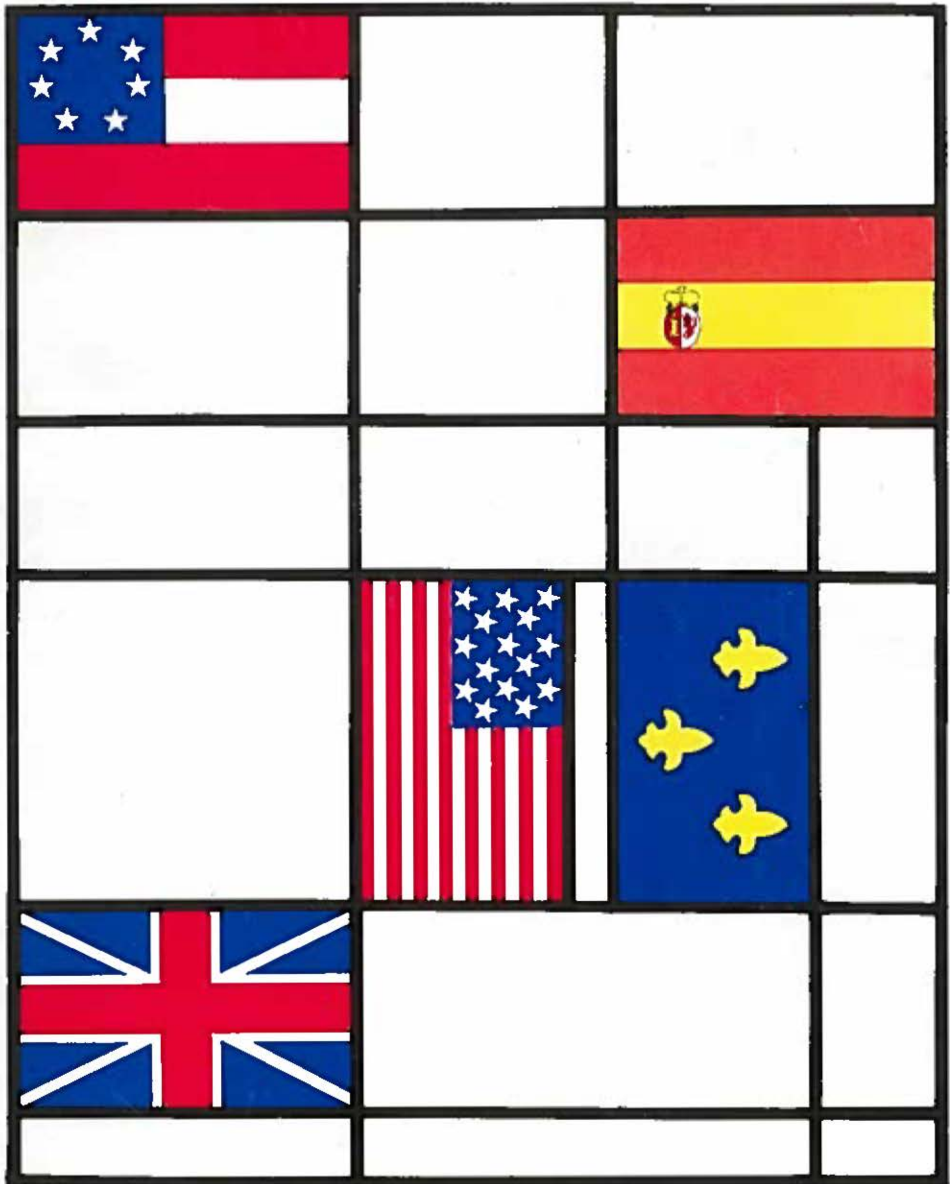
GCHR Gulf Coast Historical Review
Vol. 1 No. 1



Gulf Coast Historical Review

Vol. I | Fall 1985 | No. I

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Dr. William Coker
University of West Florida, Pensacola

Mr. W. Dean DeBolt
University of West Florida, Pensacola

Mr. Caldwell Delaney
Museums of the City of Mobile, Mobile

Dr. James Downey
William Carey College on the Coast, Gulfport

Samuel Eichold, M.D., Mobile

Mr. Prieur J. Higginbotham
Mobile Municipal Archives, Mobile

Mr. Glen Johnson
Certified Genealogist, Mobile

Most Rev. Archbishop Oscar H. Lipscomb, Mobile
Archbishop of Mobile

Lloyd May, M.D., Mobile

Dr. James R. McGovern
University of West Florida, Pensacola

Dr. Tennant McWilliams
University of Alabama, Birmingham

Dr. Robert Rea
Auburn University, Auburn

Dr. Ben Shearer
Spring Hill College, Mobile

Dr. Howard Smith
Spring Hill College, Mobile

Dr. Frederick P. Whiddon
University of South Alabama, Mobile

Cover design by
Marilyn Thomason

The *Gulf Coast Historical Review* is published biannually in the Fall and Spring by the History :partment of the University of South Alabama, Humanities 344, Mobile, AL 36688. The subscription ice is $10.00 a year with payment to accompany order. Inquiries about subscriptions or submission of inuscripts and other material for future issues of the *GCHR* should be sent to the Managing Editor, *CHR*, at the address above. The *Gulf Coast Historical Review* is not responsible for statements of inion or fact made by its contributors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Articles: Page

"Old Town, Young City: Early American Mobile." Harriet E. Amos

"The Long Road to Louisiana: Acadian Exiles and the *Britain* Incident." Carl A. Brasseaux 2

"Gainesville and its *Advocate:* A Year in the Life of a Mississippi Frontier Town." Lawrence J. Nelson 3

Features:

Beauvoir: Jefferson Davis' Home and Biloxi's Confederate Museum. Michael Thomason 5

Clio's Notes 6

Essay Contest 6

When Downtowns Were the Thing: On the Streets of Gulf Coast Cities in the "Roaring Twenties" Michael Thomason 6

Book Reviews:

Paul M. Gaston, *Women of Fair Hope,* Howard W. Smith 7

Frank L. Owsley, Jr., *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands: The Creek War and the Battle of New Orleans 1812-1815* John D. W. Guice 7

George F. Pearce, *The U.S. Navy in Pensacola; From Sailing Ships to Naval Aviation, 1825-1930,* W. Robert Houston 7

C. C. Lockwood, *The Gulf Coast: Where Land Meets Sea,* Michael Thomason 7

Martha H. Swain, *Pat Harrison: The New Deal Years,* William S. Coker

From the Archives:

Cookin' with History . . . . An Old South Catsup Recipe. George Daniels

From the Editors. . .

The *Gulf Coast Historical Review* will encourage the study of our region's history and facilitate communication between scholars and the general public. To make this possible the editors and Editorial Advisory Board are determined to provide a bright and appealing vehicle both for our authors and readers. This review will bring its readers scholarly articles, timely book reviews and a variety of features such as essays of old photographs, visits to historic landmarks and reproductions of interesting documents. Our scholarly standards are high, but no less is our concern for writing style. Your editors believe that history is first of all fascinating, whatever else it may be, and we are committed to authors who can make their research come alive on the printed page. While we will publish a great many illustrations, their purpose is to compliment, not substitute for, good writing and sound research.

We invite you, our readers, to write us with your comments on this first ssue. Tell us what you like and let us have your suggestions for mprovements in future numbers. We also invite manuscript submissions. These will be read by a panel of reviewers looking for work on interesting regional topics, an engaging writing style and sound research. Authors need not be historians by formal training because we are interested in all scholars who study the Gulf Coast from a historical perspective.

We believe that both scholars and laypersons have long wanted a ournal focusing on the history of the Gulf Coast region. We are sure that hey will support a publication which is attractive, scholarly and interesting. That is what your editors are determined the *GCHR* will be.

EDITORIAL STAFF

George H. Daniels, Executive Editor

Michael Thomason, Managing Editor

Patricia G. Harrison, Book Review Editor

W. Robert Houston, Copy Editor

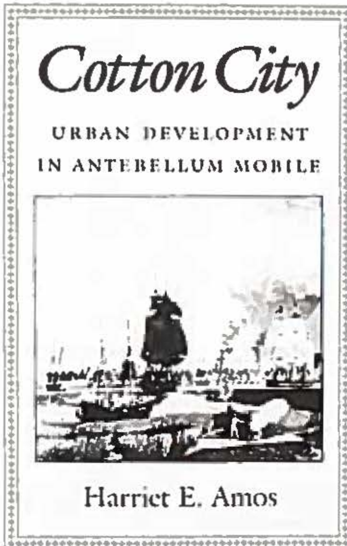
Kathy Jones and Sonny Joiner, Editorial Assistants

Loretta J. Pounds and Deborah K. Pool, Administrative Assistants

Old Town, Young City: Early American Mobile

Harriet E. Amos

"Mobile is becoming a place of great importance," reported *Niles Register* in 1822, "and it is possible, may soon be one of the most populou of our southern cities." *Niles' Register* based this prediction on the town' growth from 300 at the time of American occupation in 1813, to 809 at th city's incorporation by the new state of Alabama in 1819, and to 2,800 i 1822. [1] After years of stagnation under foreign rulers, could Mobil capitalize on its geographical and historica advantages to become not just a resettle boom town but a major seaport? Thi question intrigued Mobile's new resident and visitors from other parts of the Unite States and foreign countries. They had bee lured to the Alabama port by hopes o financial gain as the Cotton Kingdor pushed into the Southwest. News o Mobile's growth as a young American cit attracted the attention of "distant ad venturers of every description," includin attorneys, doctors, merchants, and mechan ics, who, according to a local physiciar "have fled hither as to an Eldorado." [2]



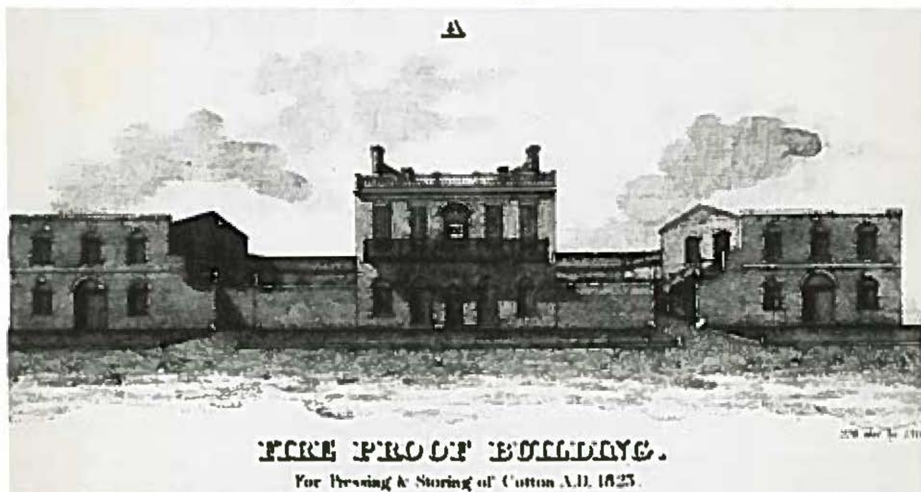
University of Alabama Press

With its multinational populatior American Mobile initially lacked com munity cohesion. Legacies remained c foreign colonial rule: French, 1702 to 1763; British, 1763 to 1780; an Spanish, 1780 to 1813. After 1813 a "new population" headed to Mobile "t make money." [3] These inhabitants, according to an American officer c occupation in 1817, were generally "a mixture consisting of the Creol (principally coloured), and emigrants from England, Scotland, Ireland, an different parts of the United States who are governed entirely by person interest; and exhibit very little of what may be termed National feeling." Adam Hodgson, a merchant from Liverpool, found Mobile in 1820 "an ol Spanish town, with mingled traces of the manners and language of th French and Spaniards." [5]

Mobile appeared to many visitors in the 1820s as more of a roug frontier town than a long-established city. "Indeed, for a place that has bee so long settled, more than a hundred years," observed Welcome Arnol Greene from Rhode Island in 1824, "there is little evidence of improveme

in the way of polish and refinement as I suspect of any town of but half that age, in our country, would display." At the time of Greene's visit, Mobile had 240 houses, 110 stores and warehouses, 30 brick buildings, 2 churches, 3 hotels, and several buildings used for other public purposes, certainly all the structures then expected in a small city. [6] However, neither the construction of homes nor cultivation of gardens created a settled appearance for Mobile, according to the standards of visitors from the eastern United States.

In architecture Mobile displayed a hodgepodge of styles, some used by Creoles during the colonial era and others introduced by recently arrived New Englanders. Construction of early residences and public buildings apparently was more often controlled by utility and expediency than by aesthetics and durability. Creole - style wooden houses suited to the hot, humid climate, with long, sloping roofs and galleries on the front, predominated in the older sections of the city. Most private homes were made of wood, while most public buildings such as the theater, bank, and

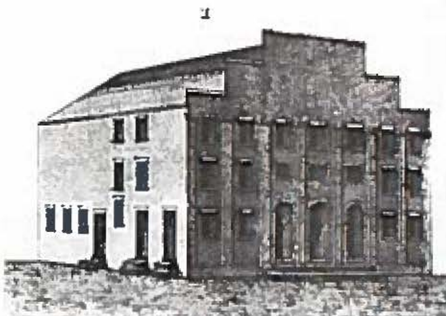


ire Proof Building, Royal St. (1824) Special Collections Division, Mobile Public ibrary

ederal and county courthouses were built of brick. When contractors tried o use brick for townhouses, they sometimes were not able to get enough to omplete the construction. Thus newly built brick houses might have a ayered look, with the first two stories of red brick and the third of yellow rick. [7] It is no wonder that their appearance failed to make a favorable mpression upon visitors from New England and Britain.

Even more than their makeshift architecture, Mobilians' behavior ffended British visitors in the 1820s. Portraits drawn by these Englishmen orroborated observations which European tourists generally made of the

habits of Jacksonian Americans. Boorishness received particular attentior in visitors' journals. Adam Hodgson reported that he "saw much more o men than of manners" at a Mobile tavern where he took his meals witł thirty or forty other men, mainly assorted agents and clerks. He began tc believe the story he had been told, that travelers proceeding westward ir America might take their longitude by observing the decreasing amounts o time spent at meals. Five to six minutes was the average time in Mobile Hodgson estimated. Margaret Hall confirmed Hodgson's observations. A a "noisy, bustling public table" in a boarding house she watched while "sixty persons dispatched their unchewed dinner in the course of twenty minutes.' A private dinner in the home of a prominent local attorney failed to make a more favorable impression upon Mrs. Hall, who considered the dining tabl overloaded with badly cooked food. [8]



Theater, Theater St. (1824) Special Collections Division, Mobile Public Library

United States Hotel, Royal St. (1824) Special Collections Division, Mobile Public Library

In their materialistic value system, Mobilians, like other Jacksoniar Americans, stressed above all the pursuit of wealth. Refinement in socia manners mattered little while newly established merchants competec furiously for business. Business opportunities attracted a large number o merchants to Mobile; in 1817, for instance forty - two merchants competec for the patronage of 600 residents plus settlers headed for cotton land upstate or elsewhere in the Southwest. [9] By 1822, when the city was according to the *Mobile Register*, assuming a settled character, merchant who leased stores or rented warehouses from year to year still scrambled fo business. Some shopowners actually beckoned people from one store tc another, even ones across the street from each other. Trying to dissuad merchants from these unseemly practices, the *Mobile Register* urged then to adopt self - restraint for the sake of the good image of the city. [10]

Opportunity seekers initially came alone to the port city, sc Mobile abounded with young single men. The disporportionate male female ratio retarded urban growth and social development. Throughou

he 1820s young white males outnumbered white females in Mobile more han two to one.[11] Many of the young men worked as itinerant agents of otton firms based in New York. As one local resident described them, they vere "mere birds of passage - here in the winter and off in the summer." An 'occasional epidemic. . .frightened away the unacclimated," he added.[12] The sexual imbalance in the population, plus the itinerant habits of the otton merchants, retarded urban growth in Mobile as elsewhere in the otton South before 1830.[13]

Social development also proceeded slowly while single males pre-lominated in Mobile. One young physician found companions for card ;ames and supper parties among bachelor merchants from the North. "The vant of female society is sensibly felt in Mobile," Dr. Solomon Mordecai eported in 1823, "as it would be in all places where the population as here onsists of single gentlemen."[14]

Recognizing the potential of Mobile to become more than a rough rontier town, some residents supported social activities found in estab-ished cultural centers of the South. They attended horse races and heatrical productions. They organized Masonic lodges that gave balls.[15] Sponsors of these activities soon emerged as social leaders. While the ommon people of Mobile were as coarse and rough as the buildings in their ity, according to one visitor from New England, "the better class who have ome here to seek their fortunes" included "a few whose gentlemanly nanners, united to a full share of natural talents and acquired intelligence, vould be creditable to any place."[16] Solomon Mordecai, one of these entlemen, predicted in 1825 that Mobile would become "the Charleston of Alabama."[17]

Mobile's future as a city depended in part upon the fate of a rival city cross Mobile Bay, Blakeley. This boom town was the brainchild of Josiah lakeley, a native of Connecticut who had moved to Alabama during the ite Spanish period. When he eventually concluded that the port of Mobile ad only limited possibilities for business, he decided to establish his own eaport to produce greater financial returns for his investment. In 1813 lakeley bought a site for his town on the Tensaw River on the east side of Mobile Bay, opposite the town of Mobile. He obtained permission the next ear from the Mississippi Territorial Legislature to lay out a town on his nd. Following the plan of New England townships transplanted to the outhwest, Blakeley reserved two parcels of land for public use, one for a ark and one for public buildings. A few lots may have been sold as early as 813, but most sales occurred in 1817 and 1818. Blakeley, who died in 1815, ever witnessed the settlement of his town.[18]

As a boom town from 1817 to 1820, Blakeley, in direct competition ith Mobile, attracted entrepreneurs from across the United States. Town

MOBILE COMMERCIAL REGISTER.

Vol. I.] MOBILE, ALABAMA, THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 21, 182[illegible]. [No. 21.

NOTICE.

Theodore Graham,

For Sale,

GLOBE HOTEL.

SALT.

Cypress Shingles.

Drugs & Medicines.

Doctor A. B. Woodson,

Drugs & Medicines.

DR. LEWIS,
Wholesale & Retail Druggist,

Sugar and Molasses.

T. & G. Holt, & Co.

NEW GOODS.

Molasses.

Journeyman Watch Maker.

Ginseng, Beeswax, &c.

Coffee.

Bar Keeper Wanted.

New Supplies.

J. Hunt,

TO RENT.

The Steam Ferry Boat
EMELINE,

LEWIS DENT,
Att'y & Counsellor at Law,

Dissolution of Copartnership.

United States' Hotel,
MOBILE.

Madeira Wine.

Livery Stable—Mobile.

CHART.

Certificate.

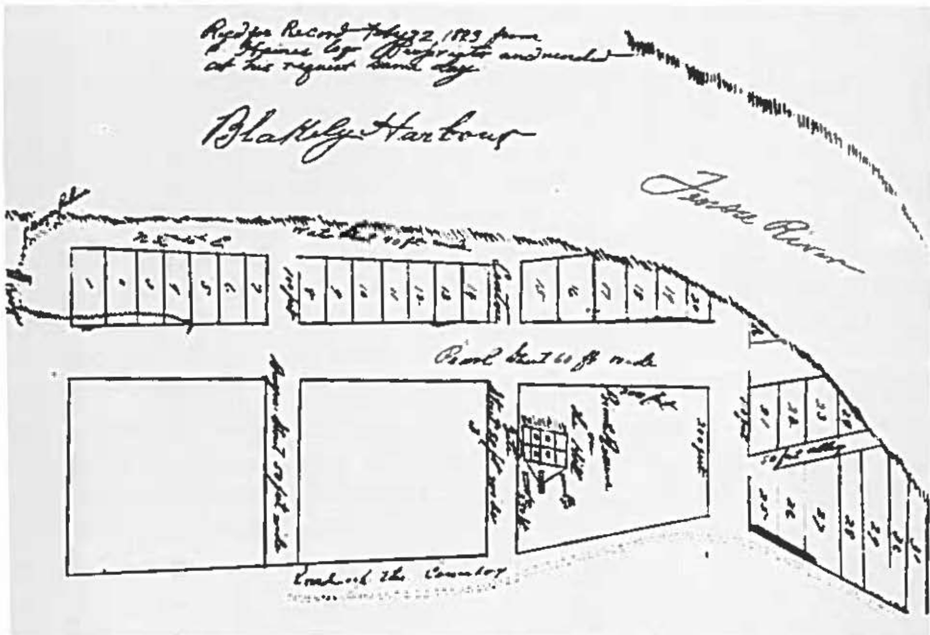
PRICE CURRENT.

PROSPECTUS
of the
Planters' Magazine.

David Hunt,
and
Willoughby Barton,

John G. Mitchell,
Att'y & Counsellor at Law,

Special Collections Division, Mobile Public Library



1ap of Blakeley (1823) Special Collections Division, Mobile, Public Library

›romoters in early Alabama usually did not employ a booster press, but 3lakeley published its own, the *Blakeley Sun*. In 1818 the *Sun* boasted that .00 houses had been built in the area, which had had only one the previous 'ear. Reprints of this claim appeared in newspapers as far away as Dayton,)hio. New Yorkers and New Englanders in particular moved to Blakeley to ›pen commercial firms or businesses that served commerce. Twenty - one nerchants from seventeen firms petitioned the United States Congress in)ecember 1818 to establish Blakeley as a port of entry and delivery. They eminded Congress that the town's population of 300 people had all moved here since November 1817, a fact that indicated to them a great potential or growth. Congress did not grant the petition until 1822, but the Alabama ieneral Assembly did pass an act in 1820 to regulate the port and harbor of llakeley. Commerce between Blakeley and Mobile increased enough by arly 1819 to justify ferry service between the two ports. [19] By 1820 a visiting ıerchant from Liverpool observed that Mobile and Blakeley were contending violently for the privilege of becoming that great emporium 'hich must shortly spring up in the vicinity of this outlet for the produce of ıe young fertile state of Alabama." [20]

Alabama's "great emporium" became Mobile instead of Blakeley. .fter 1824 Blakeley declined as a port. While Mobile exported most of the otton produced in south Alabama, Blakeley exported 4 percent of the crop ı 1825 but only 1 percent the next year. In 1827 the collector for the new

port moved his records to Mobile. Blakeley remained as an official United States port of entry until 1831, when Congress repealed the 1822 legislation that had established the customs district of Blakeley. Blakeley never again challenged the commercial preeminence of Mobile. [21]

As a port Blakeley had initially appeared to offer geographic advantages superior to those of Mobile. For this reason historians have had trouble explaining Blakeley's decline in conventional terms of natural advantages. One theory maintained that Blakeley declined while Mobile thrived because improvements in approaches to the harbor of Mobile eventually made it more accessible to the bay than Blakeley. According to this view, the dredging of the Choctaw Pass allowed vessels of the size that had been going to Blakeley to proceed directly to Mobile. That made the wharves of Mobile more convenient to the bay than those of Blakeley. But the Choctaw Pass was not dredged until 1831, several years after Blakeley was virtually defunct so the dredging could have had no appreciable effect on the town's demise. Besides that, the harbor at Blakeley was not as easy to reach from the bay as town promoters suggested. Vessels sometimes had to remain in Mobile Bay for a week to get winds strong enough to propel them up the Tensaw River to Blakeley. [22] Geographic determinism does not explain the survival of Mobile in contrast to the decline of Blakeley.

Another theory explained Blakeley's decline in terms of its reputation for unhealthiness as yellow fever ravaged the town in 1819, 1826, and 1828. Although the epidemic of 1819 prompted temporary evacuation, survivors returned to Blakeley. Before the outbreaks of yellow fever in 1826 and 1828 commerce had already declined drastically. [23]

Runaway land speculation has also been suggested as an explanation for Blakeley's demise. As speculators drove up land prices in the frontier seaport, the lower and more stable prices for land in Mobile attracted an increasing number of the merchants who came to south Alabama. The *Mobile City Directory for 1855-56* subscribed to this view. So did the nineteenth-century journalist Bernard Reynolds, who presented Thomas Hallett as an example of an ambitious merchant who headed for Blakeley only to settle ultimately in Mobile. Hallett, according to Reynolds, arrived in Mobile Bay "determined to open a commercial house" at Blakeley. When Hallett tried to secure a location for his business, he found such extravagantly high prices placed on lots in Blakeley that he "determined to try his fortune in Mobile." Reynolds interpreted the arrival of Hallett as "the signal for a complete change in the relative positions, in point of importance, of the two places" since "trade soon flourished in Mobile and languished in Blakeley." [24] Certainly land speculation contributed both to Blakeley's rise and to its decline. Deflation in land values caused by the Panic of 1819 halted Blakeley's growth, yet the same thing happened to

other towns that eventually recovered and grew even faster in the 1820s than they had before 1819.

Blakeley declined and Mobile survived ultimately because of Mobile's earlier founding. As the *New York American* noted in 1823, "Blakeley has every advantage over Mobile, except that of being begun when this was already established." Urban growth may be explained by factors other than site and situation, and urban historians and urban geographers now agree hat the case of Mobile illustrates this fact. Nineteenth - century America's argest cities tended to be the long established ones, which took advantage of their early leads. [25] In the final analysis, that first century of Mobile's existence, even under colonial rule and in relative commercial stagnation, had laid the foundation for the city's survival and growth.

With the demise of Blakeley, Mobile dominated settlements on Mobile Bay. Yet it ranked second after New Orleans among ports on the Gulf of Mexico. From its position of superiority, New Orleans complimented Mobile in a patronizing way. For instance, in 1822 the *Louisiana Gazette* oted that, after almost a century "buried in obscurity and little esteemed," Mobile had dramatically become "a seaport of the second order." Responding to this description, the *Mobile Argus* maintained that Mobile ad "all the characteristics of one of the first order." Not only did Mobile ave a large, rich hinterland, but its residents reportedly felt "no servile nitation, no mark of colonial dependence." In other words, Mobilians had ie attitudes of citizens of a first - class port. The *Argus* recognized that Mobile was "destined to carry on a large foreign trade" as well as to iaintain close trading relationships with New York and New Orleans, both rst - class ports. [26] Mobile, striving to become a first - class port, competed ith New Orleans in a rivalry that intensified over the years as gaps in evelopment narrowed between the two Gulf cotton ports. In this process Mobile sought release from the colonial dependency that had characterized ie city's first century.

Since its founding in 1702, Mobile had remained basically a trading utpost for successive French, British, and Spanish colonial rulers. ommercial and security advantages had persuaded a French Canadian oldier named Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville to select Mobile Bay as the site r a French colony in southern Louisiana. Mobile Bay possessed an dequate harbor at Massacre Island and resources in timber and inland ater connections that appeared superior to those of Biloxi Bay or the wer Mississippi River, which had been considered as alternative sites. obile suited the security considerations of French officials, who wished to und a settlement to protect their interests in Louisiana against European olonial rivals and to make inroads into Britain's monopoly on trade with e Indians of the Southeast. Not only was Mobile Bay located close to the

path of the British advance southward from Carolina, but it also provided a communication link with major Indian nations in the interior via the Alabama-Tombigbee River system that flowed into the Mobile River on its way to the bay. [27] The name Mobile came from the French rendering o "Movile," the Spanish version of "Mobila," which was the name that th Indians gave to the bay. [28] More commonly in French and English, *mobil* serves as an adjective meaning "capable of moving or being moved."

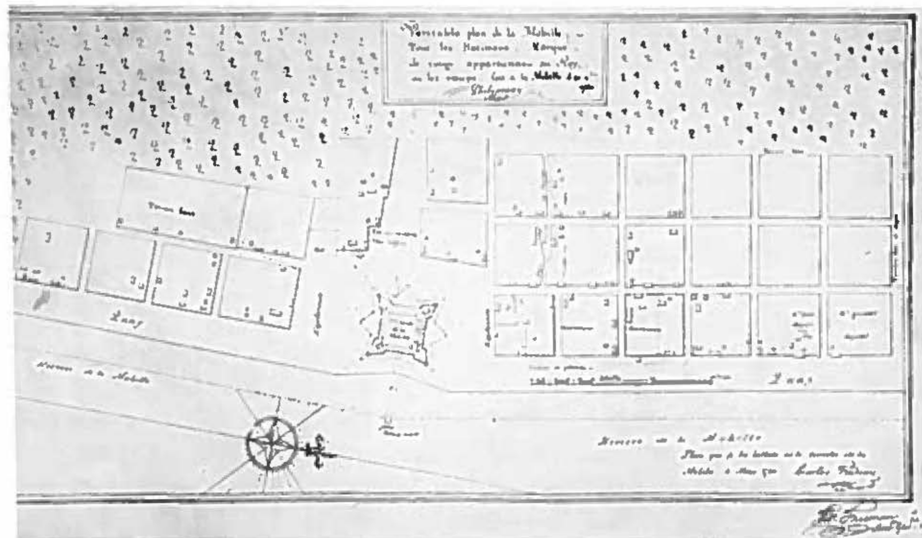
This description suited the settlement that became the city of Mobile for it moved from its original site to a permanent one. In 1702 the French Canadians led by Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville established Fort Louis de la Louisiane on a bluff twenty - seven miles north of the mouth of the Mobile River. Built in the French colonial style of a fort surrounded by a town, Fort Louis served as capital of the French colony on the Gulf. Afte seven years of problems caused by poor drainage at the upriver site, th French founded their permanent settlement in 1711 on a plain along th west bank of the Mobile River delta. [29] Fort Conde served to protect settler who lived on the streets surrounding it.

Mobile (1725) Special Collections Division, Mobile Public Library

As a French settlement Mobile never claimed more than a few hundre inhabitants, an indication of its relative insignificance in the ultima colonization of Louisiana. In 1718 Biloxi replaced Mobile as capital of tl colony, and in 1720 the newly founded city of New Orleans supplant

Biloxi. By the middle of the eighteenth century, New Orleans had ;uperceded Mobile as the most important town in the Gulf region. Mobile ;erved basically as the main center for trade with the Muscogee Indians. Colonists also exported animal skins and engaged in forestry and umbering, but their trade did not seriously challenge the commercial primacy of New Orleans. [30]

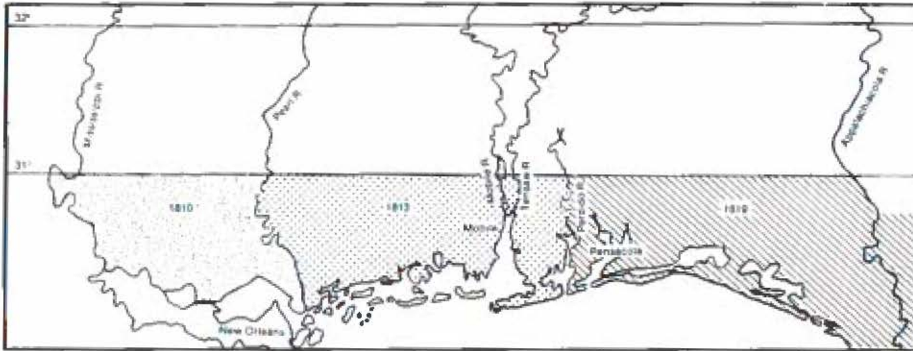
Mobile grew slowly under the colonial rule of the British, who claimed he town as part of the settlement of the French and Indian War arranged by he Treaty of Paris of 1763. Major Robert Farmar, the British commandant, ;ave French residents several months to choose allegiance to George III or migrate. According to Farmar, about forty of the one hundred French amilies remained in Mobile. Many of the remaining Frenchmen moved heir homes from the town to sites along the river and bay where they could aise cattle. [31] Other colonists continued to trade with the southeastern ndians and to export skins and furs.



obile (1760) Special Collections Division, Mobile Public Library

Economic conditions changed little if any under the new Spanish lers, who occupied Mobile in 1780 during the American Revolution and ined formal title to British West Florida in the Treaty of Paris of 1783. obile reportedly had 746 residents in 1785 and 1,468 three years later, yet e population, exclusive of the garrison, dropped to perhaps 300 by the end the Spanish occupation in 1813. [32]

Shortly after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the United States .imed that its title to Louisiana included West Florida to the Peridido ver east of Mobile Bay. According to the treaty the province of Louisiana d the same boundaries as it had had under French possession and

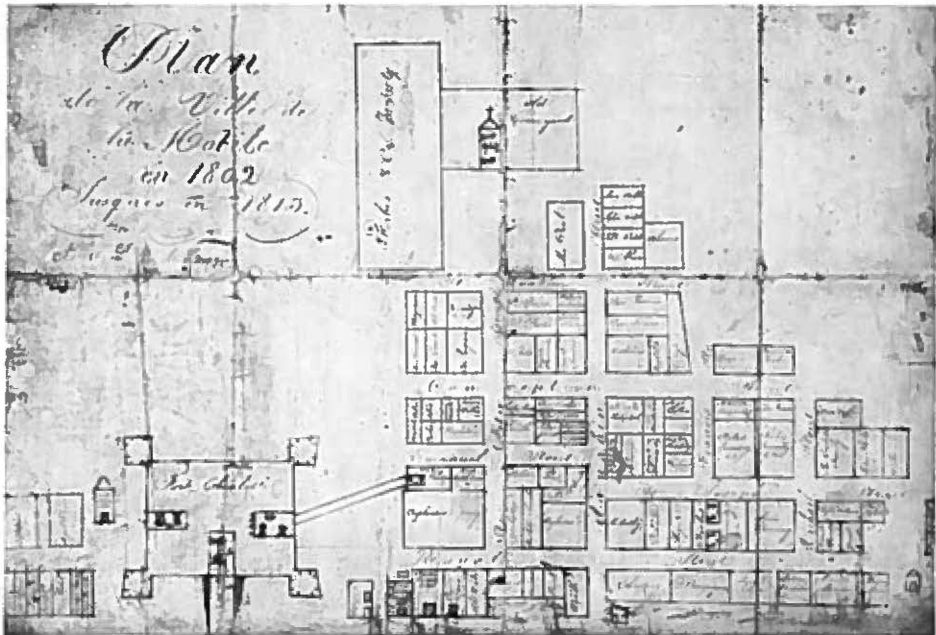


West Florida (1810 - 1819) Marilyn Thomason

Spanish control. This provision was ambiguous since the boundarie differed under the two rulers. Under the French the eastern boundary c Louisiana had indeed been the Perdido River. But in 1763 when Englan received Florida from Spain, the territory was divided into East and We: Florida with a western boundary of the Mississippi River. When Spai regained the Floridas in 1783, the boundaries remained the same. Thus a the time of the Louisiana Purchase, the Mississippi River served as th boundary between West Florida and Louisiana, except for New Orleans. I 1803 citing the earlier French boundaries, the United States claimed that th Perdido River was the eastern boundary of Louisiana south of the thirty first parallel. [33]

Mobile, located in the disputed territory between the Perdido an Mississippi rivers, was placed into a United States Customs district in 180 Spain protested this action and refused to surrender West Florida to th United States on the grounds that West Florida was not part of Louisian: In 1810, after large planters in the western part of West Florida declare their independence from Spain, President James Madison issued proclamation that annexed parts of the province between the Mississip and Pearl rivers and along the Gulf coast to the Peridido. Even though th town of Mobile was included in this proclamation of annexation, Spai maintained its garrison there. [34]

The Spanish occupation finally ended during the War of 1812. Sin the Spanish allowed British naval vessels to rendezvous in Mobile and oth Gulf ports in their possession, the American government decided to occu Mobile in order to stop this indirect Spanish aid to the British. In Februa 1813 Madison ordered Major General James Wilkinson, the commander New Orleans, to take possession of Mobile. Wilkinson moved effectively mid-April to cut off the land and sea communications of the Spani: garrison in Fort Charlotte (formerly Fort Conde). He informed t commander of the garrison that he was simply relieving the forc



Mobile (1802) Museums of the City of Mobile

occupying a post considered within the legitimate boundaries of the United States. The Spanish forces, who were out of provisions, surrendered the fort without bloodshed. [35] As Spanish civilians departed along with the troops, Americans moved into the town. It was the only territory that the United States acquired as a result of the war. In 1819 the United States obtained the remainder of Florida by diplomacy in the Adams - Onis Treaty.

Americans soon provided government for the town of Mobile. Under the provisions of an act of the Mississippi Territorial Legislature passed in January 1814, the white male landholders, freeholders, and householders within the town elected seven commissioners and a town treasurer, collector, and assessor. These new officers, chosen in March, included relative newcomers and long - time residents. Among the leaders were Commissioners James Innerarity, a partner in the large commercial house of John Forbes and Company; Lewis Judson, a merchant from Connecticut; Samuel H. Garrow, a refugee from Santo Domingo; and the assessor Miguel Eslava, a former Spanish official. At their first meeting in a private home, the commissioners outlined the boundaries of the town and divided it into three wards. Ward designations followed those used by the Spanish: South for the area south of the fort, Middle for land from the fort to Dauphin Street, and North for land north of Dauphin Street. French, rather than Spanish, was the predominant language besides English in early

Mobile (1815) Special Collections Division, Mobile Public Library

American Mobile, as indicated by the commissioners' decision to translate their resolutions into French and post three copies in public places. [36]

Territorial town government operated with severe financial restraints. Commissioners had authority to raise sums they considered necessary "for the well regulation" of the town, provided that the maximum annual assessment never exceeded 12 ½ cents per $100 worth of property subject to taxation. License taxes on stores, liquor dealers, carriages, and billiard tables augmented the town's meager resources. To conserve these funds, the commissioners contracted with private individuals to construct a public market house and wharf in 1815. Fees on transactions at the market apparently paid for its maintenance in the early years. Commissioners auctioned off the lease for the public wharf to the business partner of Commissioner S. H. Garrow. This wharf builder had to build the wharf to town specifications, collect proceeds from tolls for nine years to recoup his construction costs, and then sell the property back to the town. Town expenditures were kept low. To save money the board of commissioners rented a room for its meetings. Even so the first board of commissioners handed a balance in the treasury of less than $70 to its successor. [37]

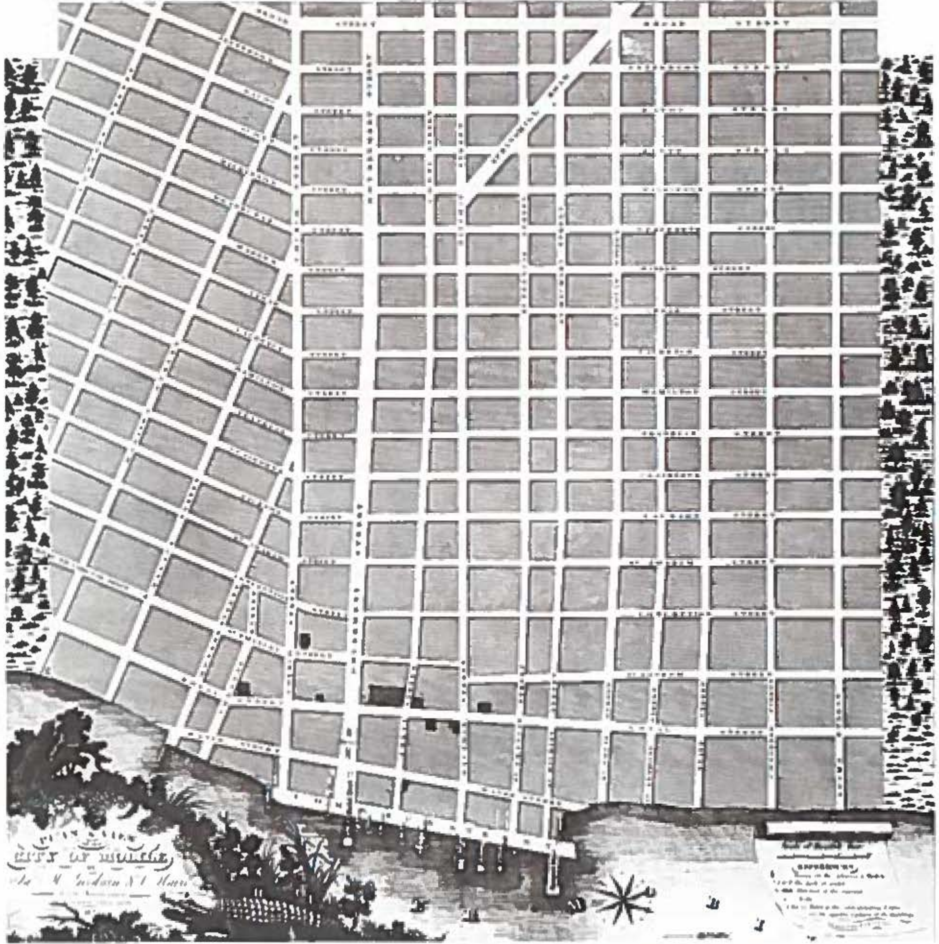
Conventional civil government for Mobile began under an act of incorporation passed by the General Assembly of the new state of Alabama

on December 17, 1819. As usual for the early nineteenth century, the chapter was a simple document, containing only fourteen sections. According to its provisions, the electorate consisted of free white male adult residents who owned freehold property within the city or who had lived in the city for one year and paid taxes during the year before the election and had rented a tenement or separate rooms for six months just before the election. Voters directly selected seven aldermen, who in turn chose one of their number as mayor. The alderman and mayor appointed other city officers and levied poll taxes and property taxes, which were not to exceed the maximum property tax rate of forty cents per $100. [38]

American Mobile expanded as private developers purchased the Fort Charlotte property in 1820. Congress had authorized the sale because the fort was no longer needed for defense. A locally formed syndicate, the Mobile Lot Company, purchased the bulk of the property. This real estate development company had the land platted to conform to adjacent streets before selling building lots. City funds paid for the demolition of the fort's walls to clear new streets laid to the river through the site of the fort. Debris from the demolition was used to fill private lots as well as easily flooded Water and St. Francis streets. Location of the former fort was not even marked on the Goodwin and Haire map of the city drawn in 1823, which emphasized the harbor and public buildings developed by the Americans. [39]

Settlement during the 1820s clustered primarily along the banks of the Mobile River. The river front and wharves from the foot of Dauphin Street to the foot of Government Street, a new one hundred foot wide thoroughfare, made up the downtown commercial core of the city. The hearts of the business district was the corner of Conti, the main east - west street, and Water, the front street of the town. Most businesses were located on one of these streets. New businesses located south of Government Street after Henry Stickney built a block of brick stores on the southwest corner of Water and Church streets in the late 1820s. Conception Street was the favorite residential address. Building lots for homes opened on the former site of Fort Charlote. [40]

In the 1820s private interests directed Mobile's development, furthering their own commercial goals while government simply facilitated the process. Expediency often influenced the actions of real estate promoters, who, in their haste to open new development, sometimes neglected drainage problems caused by poor grading of new streets and fire hazards resulting from wooden construction of buildings. During the early part of the decade, town government hardly assumed an activist role in regulating and supervising private interests, for those interests essentially demanded noninterference from government. In the second half of the decade, however, disaster prompted government to take on the regulation



Mobile (1824) Special Collections Division, Mobile Public Library

and coordination of private concerns. This development did not in itself change the course of urbanization in Mobile, but it set precedents for greater government responsibilities in the maturing city.

Significant regulation of private sector activities only began to develop after a fire in October 1827 which consumed two - thirds of the business district bounded by Conti and St. Michael streets. Flames destroyed numerous businesses along with their books and merchandise, and 169 private homes. Property losses exceeded $1,000,000. Since seven - eights of the buildings razed were wooden, Mobilians realized the necessity of rebuilding with more durable materials. Within three months of the fire, insurance companies settled the losses that they covered (about half of the total), and people again invested in real estate, this time in brick buildings as required by a new city ordinance for the fire district. [41] By 1831 four years

after the conflagration, Mobile looked like a new city. Few discernible traces of the fire remained as brick houses replaced log huts. [42] In 1833 the *Mobile Register* boasted that the city had "risen in all the vigor and beauty of a phoenix." [43]

The disaster had graphically reminded Mobilians of the destruction that could result from the pursuit of private gain without regard to the community welfare. It had the immediate and direct result of promoting construction with brick instead of wood. It had the long - term and indirect result of encouraging organization for civic purposes. In the decade after the fire Mobilians formed six fire companies to protect their property. They also supported three charitable groups that organized in 1829: the Female Benevolent Society; the Auxiliary Tract Society, an affiliate of the American Tract Society; and the Temperance Society. These groups augmented services that had been provided by the Hibernian Benevolent Society since 1822 and the Mobile Bible Society, an auxiliary to the

Protestant Church, Church St. (1824) Special Collections Division, Mobile Public Library

American Bible Society, since 1825. Such voluntary associations provided more avenues for drawing the heterogeneous elements of Mobile's new American population together than the one institution that had survived from the colonial era, the Roman Catholic church. Many of the Americans were Protestants who wanted their own churches instead of the one preferred by the Creoles. In 1822 they erected a small church, which served Protestants until various denominations formed their own congregations later in the decade.

By the end of the 1820s Mobile differed markedly from the town occupied by the Americans in 1813. Some changes might be traced to the permanent removal of colonial governments that had sought to control commerce for their own benefit. However, the initiative of the new American settlers in Mobile was a far more important factor. Mobilians committed to private enterprise purchased the fort that had dominated the town and its commerce and demolished it, and used the site for new streets leading to a dozen new private wharves. They developed the waterfront property to provide the wharves and terminal facilities needed by the steamboats that had just begun to ply the Mobile River en route to the cotton districts of southern Alabama and southeastern Mississippi. Thus they prepared the way for Mobile to handle its burgeoning cotton trade. Commerce in cotton would ultimately make Mobile "a place of great importance," as predicted by *Niles' Register*. At the end of the 1820s times looked promising not only for Mobile's development as a cotton entrepôt but also as a cultural center, the "Charleston of Alabama" as Solomon Mordecai had suggested. How important Mobile would become in comparison to other southern ports, especially New Orleans, would eventually be determined by the economics of the Cotton Kingdom.

Mobile Waterfront (1824) Special Collections Division, Mobile Public Library

Notes

[1] *Niles' Register* 22 (1822): 96. *Niles' Weekly Register* became *Niles' National Register* in 1839, but for consistancy's sake it will be cited here as *Niles' Register*. See also *Mobile Register*, February 7, 1822. The *Register* changed its title slightly several times during the antebellum period, but the citation will remain the same here.

[2] Solomon Mordecai to Ellen Mordecai, August 29, 1829, Mordecai Family Papers, Spring Hill College, Mobile, AL (SHC).

[3] Karl Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, *Travels Through North America During the Years 1825 and 1826,* 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1828), 2:39.

[4] Clarence E. Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States, Vol. 18, The Territory of Alabama, 1817-1819* (Washington, 1952), 124.

[5] Adam Hodgson, *Remarks during a Journey through North America in the Years 1819, 1820, and 1821, in a Series of Letters,* ed. Samuel Whiting, 2 vols. (New York, 1823), 1:151-52.

[6] Welcome Arnold Greene, *The Journals of Welcome Arnold Greene: Journeys in the South,* ed. Alice E. Smith (Madison, 1957), 228; and *Rowan's Mobile Directory and Commercial Supplement for 1850-51* (Mobile, 1850), 15-16.

[7] Peter Joseph Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile: An Historical Study Largely from Original Sources, of the Alabama - Tombigbee Basin and the Old South West from the Discovery of the Spiritu Santo in 1519 until the Demolition of Fort Charlotte in 1821,* rev. ed. (Boston, 1910; reprint ed., Mobile 1951), 479 and 390; *Mobile Register*, February 7, 1822; and Karl Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar- Eisenach, *Travels,* 2:39.

[8] Edward Pessen, *Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics,* rev. ed. (Homewood, IL. 1978), chap. 2; Hodgson, *Remarks,* 1:152-53; and Margeret Hall, *The Aristocratic Journey: Being the Outspoken Letters of Mrs. Basil Hall Written during a Fourteen Months' Sojourn in America, 1827* - 1828, ed. Una Pope-Hennessy (New York, 1931), 246 and 248.

[9] *Mobile Register,* July 6, 1856; and Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile,* 446.

[10] *Mobile Register,* December 2, 1822.

[11] *Niles' Register* 39 (1830); 156.

[12] Bernard Reynolds, *Sketches of Mobile, from 1814 to the Present Time* (Mobile, 1868), 21.

[13] David Ward, *Cities and Immigrants: A Geography of Change in Nineteenth - Century America* (New York, 1971), 29.

[14] Solomon Mordecai to Ellen Mordecai, December 8, 1823, Mordecai Family Papers, SHC.

[15] Solomon Mordecai to Ellen Mordecai, February 2, 1825, December 19, 1823, Mordecai Family Papers, SHC.

[16] Greene, *Journals,* 228.

[17] Solomon Mordecai to Ellen Mordecai, February 2, 1825, Mordecai Family Papers, SHC.

[18] James C. Parker, "Blakeley: A Frontier Seaport," *Alabama Review* 27 (1974): 39 and 41; and Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile*, 449. Hamilton explains (407) that "Blakeley" sometimes appears incorrectly in records without the second e.

[19] Stuart Seely Sprague, "Alabama Town Promotion during the Era of Good Feelings," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 37 (1974): 19-20; Parker, "Blakeley." 42-43; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 18:498; Harry A. Toulmin, *A Digest of the Laws of the State of Alabama* (Cahawba, 1823), 796-798; and *Mobile Argus*, December 5, 1822.

[20] Hodgson, *Remarks*, 1:151-52.

[21] James C. Parker, "The Development of the Port of Mobile, 1819-1836" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Auburn, 1968), 119.

[22] Parker, "Blakeley," 49-50.

[23] Ibid.; and Peter A. Brannon, *Lilies, Lions and Bag - pipes: A Tale of Other Days in Alabama* (Montgomery, 1934), 25.

[24] Parker, "Blakeley," 46, 50; and Reynolds, *Sketches of Mobile*, 10.

[25] Parker, "Blakeley," 51; *New York American*, quoted in *Niles' Register* 24 (1823): 295; Allan R. Pred, *Urban Growth and the Circulation of Information: The United States System of Cities, 1790 - 1840* (Cambridge, 1973), 225; and Ward, *Cities and Immigrants*, 13.

[26] "The Sea-Ports in the Gulf of Mexico," *Louisiana Gazette* (New Orleans), quoted in *Mobile Argus*, December 30, 1822.

[27] Jay Higginbotham. *Old Mobile: Fort Louis de la Louisane, 1702-1711* (Mobile, 1977), 24-25; Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile*, 83-84; and Peter Joseph Hamilton, *Mobile of the Five Flags: The Story of the River Basin and Coast about Mobile from the Earliest Times to the Present* (Mobile, 1913), 44-48, 78, and 116.

[28] Higginbotham, *Old Mobile*, 21-22n.

[29] Hamilton, *Mobile of Five Flags*, 61; and David R. Goldfield and Blaine A. Brownell, *Urban America: From Downtown to No Town* (Boston, 1979), 13-14, 27.

[30] Weymouth T. Jordan, "Ante-Bellum Mobile: Alabama's Agricultural Emporium," *Alabama Review* 1 (1948): 181; and Hamilton, *Mobile of Five Flags*, 96 and 68.

[1] Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile,* 251; and Jordan, "Ante-Bellum Mobile," 81.

[2] Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile,* 332; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington, 1853), liii; and *Mobile Register,* February 7, 1822.

[3] Clement Eaton, *A History of the Old South,* 2nd ed. (New York, 1966), 200- 201; and Thomas P. Abernathy, *The South in the New Nation, 1789-1819* (Baton Rouge, 1961), chap. 13.

[4] Abernethy, *South in the New Nation,* chap. 13.

[5] Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile,* 410-13.

[6] Toulmin, *Digest of Laws,* 780-82; and Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile,* 439-41.

[17] Toulmin, *Digest of Laws,* 780-81; and Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile,* 442-45.

[38] Toulmin, *Digest of Laws,* 784-93. According to an 1820 clarification of the act of incorporation, property was not taxable past one-half mile west of the easternmost street in the city. Subsequent acts passed in 1820 and 1821 dealt with surveying land, opening, widening, extending, and regulating streets, and keeping records.

[39] Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile,* 478-81.

[40] Ibid., 473; and Hamilton, *Mobile of Five Flags,* 219.

[41] *Niles' Register* 33 (1827): 182-96; and *Mobile Register,* July 6, 1856 and January 19, 1828.

[42] Edouard Delius, *Wanderungen eines jungen Norddeutschen durch Portugal, Spanien, und Nord - Amerika in dem Jahren 1827 - 1831,* ed. Georg Lotz, 4 vols. (Hamburg, 1834), 4:111; Thomas Hamilton, *Men and Manners in America* (Philadelphia 1833), 328; and Carl David Arfwedson, *The United States and Canada in 1832, 1833, and 1834, 2 vols. (London, 1834),* 2:44.

[43] *Mobile Register,* quoted in *Niles' Register* 45 (1833); 165.

Harriet E. Amos is Associate Professor of History at the University of Alabama in Birmingham. A native of Mobile, she received her Ph.D. in 1976 from Emory University. This article is adapted from her forthcoming book entitled *Cotton City: Urban Development in Antebellum Mobile.* It is reproduced here through the courtesy of The University of Alabama Press.

The Long Road to Louisiana: Acadian Exiles and the *Britain* Incident

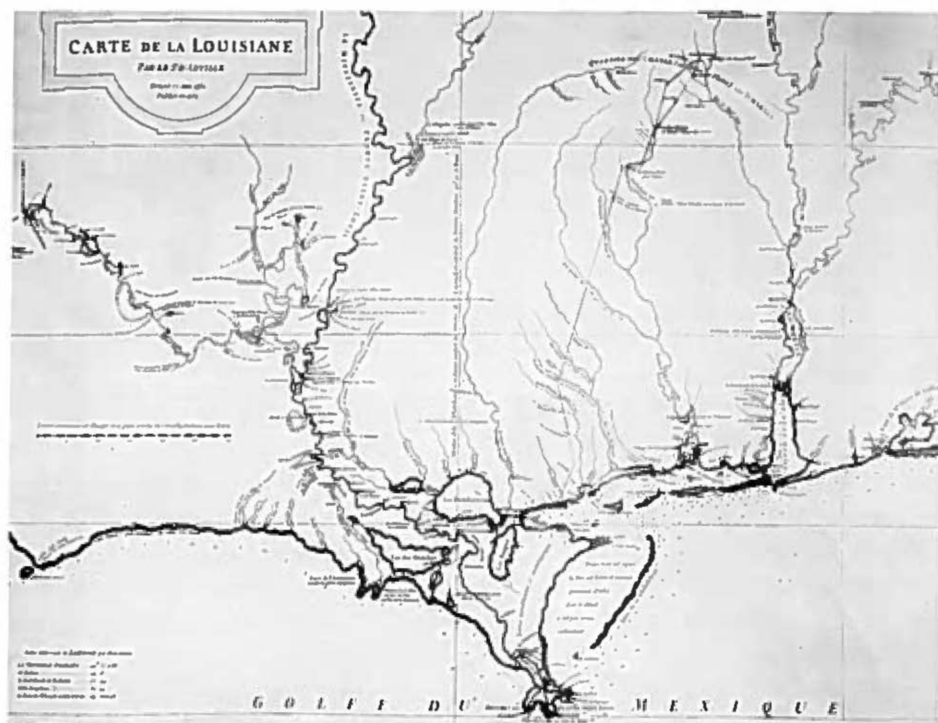
Carl A. Brasseaux

The Acadian diaspora of 1755 and the subsequent distribution of the displaced Nova Scotians among the British seaboard colonies has been the subject of close scrutiny and intense debate among historians since the publication of Longfellow's *Evangeline* in 1847. The preoccupation of historians with the dispersal contrasts sharply with the almost complete neglect of the ultimate fate of the exiles. Indeed, while it is generally known that large numbers of Acadians eventually came to Louisiana, no reliable account of their migration has yet been seen in print. This scholarly oversight stems directly from the fact that information about the Acadian migrations was scattered throughout North America and Europe. Recent archival programs at American and Canadian universities, however, have assembled the material necessary to reconstruct this chapter of Acadian history.[1]

The most fully documented, and certainly the most intriguing, of the Acadian voyages involved the stragglers in the large-scale emigration of Maryland refugees. The exodus from Maryland was precipitated by Louisiana Governor Antonio de Ulloa's decision to permit Acadians already established in that colony to invite their relatives to join them along the lower Mississippi River. The resulting invitations drew an immediate response from the Acadians in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Between 1766 and 1768, approximately 600 exiles sailed from Chesapeake Bay ports to New Orleans aboard chartered English merchant vessels. These voyages were consistently short and uneventful.[2]

Such was not the fate, however, of the final Maryland expedition of 1769. Intending to follow their confrères to Louisiana, thirty-two Acadians chartered the *Britain*, a schooner owned by Athanasius Ford, a merchant from St. Mary County, Maryland and commanded by his brother, Philip. They were joined by fifty-seven German Catholics, who were unwilling to endure the local anti-Catholic hysteria born of the French and Indian War. In 1768 they had sent an envoy to New Orleans with earlier Acadian emigrants. As a result of that representative's glowing reports, the Germans also anticipated a promising future at the end of a routine voyage.[3]

Their illusions were quickly dispelled as the passengers soon discovered that Philip Ford had misrepresented the condition of his vessel. Its situation was such that their departure would be delayed while it was made seaworthy. When Ford showed little interest in refitting the *Britain*, the passengers themselves were obliged to refit the decrepit schooner. For three



Louisiana (1752)
Special Collections Division, Mobile Public Library.

weeks they repaired the rigging, chopped wood, and replenished the ship's supply of fresh water. [4]

The delay in setting sail caused concern among the passengers, as they consumed a large portion of the provisions intended for the voyage. When the Acadians and Germans confronted Ford about the matter, he assured them that the schooner's store of provisions would be replaced, but when the *Britain* finally sailed from Port Tobacco on January 5, 1769, the ship's supplies remained dangerously low. [5]

Despite these initial problems, the crossing was uneventful, though memories of Ford's faithlessness and the lingering problem of supplies fed a strong current of animosity among the passengers. For his part, the self-righteous Ford made no apologies for his fraudulent business dealings, and bitterly resented the passenger's attitude. Such mutual hostility created a volatile atmosphere heightened by the close contact among the people aboard the tiny vessel.

These seething, if suppressed, emotions burst forth when the *Britain* reached the Louisiana coast on February 21. With remarkable ineptitude at navigation, Ford, Francis Loundes, the pilot, and John Steele, the captain of the schooner, were unable to locate the mouth of the Mississippi River.

When they encountered a fresh-water current carrying a large number ol logs, the passengers concluded that they had reached the river's mouth, and upon sighting a light along the coast, insisted that two men be sent ashore to verify their position. Angered by his passengers' proposal which he thought presumptive, Ford arbitrarily rejected it. The Acadians and Germans responded by demanding that he set a northerly course into the current. Ford refused, noting tersely that his charts did not include the coastal area, and ordered the captain to turn the ship to a southerly heading. [6]

This confrontation brought to an end the uneasy truce that had existed between Ford and the passengers since the *Britain*'s departure from Port Tobacco. Tensions, intensified by the incident, were heightened further when the Acadians and Germans subsequently noticed that the schooner sailed in one direction when Steele was on duty, and in the opposite direction when Ford and Loundes commanded. To make matters worse, Ford and the pilot were now almost constantly drunk and worse still, the vessel's food supplies were exhausted. Indeed, by Ford's own admission, the passengers and crew were reduced to a diet of "rats, cats, and even all the shoes and leather in the vessel" in the days following the dispute along the Louisiana coast. [7]

When the situation had grown truly desperate, the Acadians and Germans confronted Ford and the pilot and threatened to throw them overboard. Realizing that their threat was genuine, Ford made landfall as quickly as possible. Any relief experienced by the passengers was short-lived, however, for Loundes, apparently under the influence of alcohol, proclaimed: "You think that you have arrived at New Orleans, but you are wrong. I shall make you suffer before you get there." [8]

Now certain that they had been led hopelessly astray, the passengers resolved to seek whatever assistance was available to them on these unfamiliar shores. However, fearing that they would be marooned if Ford and his accomplice remained aboard the *Britain,* the Acadians and Germans forced them to join the two search parties which were sent ashore within three days of landfall. This did little good, for a violent thunderstorm arose shortly after the second group went ashore, with winds that tore the schooner from its moorings.

Having lost an anchor and surrounded by shoals, Steele was obliged to make for the open sea to save his vessel from destruction. Once in the relative safety of the Gulf, however, he had great difficulty in returning to his original anchorage. Indeed, it finally took him two weeks to find the spot. Although more than enough time had elapsed for the searchers to have returned with help, he found no trace of them. [9]

Disheartened, the surviving passengers instructed Steele to sail

Map of Louisiana and of the River Mississippi by John Senex
Special Collections Division, Mobile Public Library

southward to the Rio Grande, the only prominent landmark on thei unreliable navigational charts. However, shortly after the schooner ha(gotten under way, an Acadian passenger spotted a fire along the inner shor of a coastal lagoon. At the passengers' command, Steele eventually enterec Espiritu Santo Bay, although he grounded the vessel three times on a sanc bar first.

Once the schooner anchored, a small party of passengers went ashore and soon encountered five Spanish soldiers, who were investigating reports of English interlopers, and two members of the initial search party. The passengers quickly described the conditions of their arrival and the wretched situation aboard the vessel. Although unprepared for such a development, the troops provided what meager assistance they could. It was sufficient to keep the *Britain*'s survivors alive until help could be gotten from the La Bahia presidio, twenty leagues inland.

While the passengers and crewmen waited on the beach, Ford and his Acadian companions made their way to La Bahia. Meeting with Don Francisco Tovar, the post commandant, Ford demanded protection for his vessel and its cargo of English and Irish cloth and dry goods. His Acadian companions, on the other hand, sought help for their comrades. Knowing that the *Britain* had been out to sea, Tovar delayed action on the latter request until the troops recently assigned to the coast reported the vessel's return and the starvation evident among its occupants. Moved with pity, the commandant immediately dispatched a 100-horse supply train to feed the passengers and crewmen and to transport them and their few possessions to the presidio.

Having provided for the immediate needs of the immigrants, Tovar turned his attention to Ford and his crew. Ford pressed the commandant for a passport to New Orleans and sufficient provisions to make the voyage, but Tovar adamantly refused to permit his departure, pending orders from the viceroy in Mexico. The Spaniard's intransigence, however, was tempered somewhat by an uncharacteristic display of flexibility regarding the temporary disposition of the English crew and the *Britain*'s cargo. [10]

Though the commandant was under strict orders to prevent any English incursion into Spanish territory, he nevertheless suggested that Ford make tents from his sails and store his cargo in them. The goods would be protected by Spanish soldiers until the Mexican viceroy could rule on their disposition. Ford refused the offer, stripped the ship of its cargo, sails, and rigging, and on April 8, "carted" his belongings by means of the supply train to La Bahia where they were placed in a warehouse. [11]

Once in the presidio, Ford badgered the commandant into writing lengthy reports to the viceroy and equally verbose pleas for instructions.

The viceroy, however, was too preoccupied with matters of provincial importance to concern himself with such local problems. Hence, weeks dragged into months with no reply from Mexico City. Reluctant to act without instructions, Tovar detained the passengers and crew of the *Britain* at the presidio. As their support became increasingly burdensome, the Acadians and Germans were permitted to work on the ranches nearby, provided they returned to the post by nightfall. The English were denied this liberty, because of the charges pending against them, and to also prevent them from disposing of their contraband merchandise. Having no recourse but to accept their detention, they grew increasingly despondant as time passed. Yet, when they were offered the limited freedom afforded the Acadians, they refused to work, so Tovar placed Steele and Mattingly in stocks on May 21. This drastic action effectively quelled English dissent, and the crewmen quietly endured their captivity until August 11, when orders arrived from Governor Hugo O'Conor's office at San Antonio, permitting the Englishmen, Acadians, and Germans detained at La Bahia to leave the post, provided that Ford first disposed of his cargo.[12]

Given their freedom, the captives weighed the options available to them. The Acadians and Germans retained their interest in Louisiana but were obviously unwilling to trust their fate to Philip Ford. However, even had they been willing to continue their journey aboard the *Britain*, the vessel was now unseaworthy. Upon arrival at La Bahia in early April 1769, the schooner's crewmen had literally dumped the vessel's rigging and sails into a heap, without making the most modest efforts to protect them from the elements. Thus, by late August, the nautical gear was no longer serviceable. Replacements were unavailable at La Bahia, and though the schooner remained intact, it had become a useless hulk.[13]

Unable to travel by sea, the crew and passengers of the *Britain* faced a long hard overland journey to Louisiana. Because certain trails led into hostile Indian territory, Rafael Martinez Pacheco, the notoriously independent commandant of the eastern Texas presidio of San Agustín de Ahumada, was ordered by Governor Hugo O'Conor to guide the wayfarers safely to Natchitoches, the Louisiana post nearest the Texas border. For Pacheco, this normally onerous task proved a profitable undertaking: Arriving at La Bahia in early September, he purchased Ford's entire cargo. Buying the goods at their appraised value - obviously for resale in the isolated East Texas settlements - with a sight draft, Pacheco misrepresented the sale to his Vera Cruz financial agents, indicating that the transaction had involved cattle intended to supply the San Agustín presidio. Thus, Pacheco could, and did, claim government reimbursement for his expenses.[14]

The sale of Ford's small cache of merchandise removed the last impediment to the captives' departure. Transportation of the English goods to San Agustín however, created significant logistical problems for Pacheco, who by the second week of September, was busily organizing the overland expedition to Natchitoches. Having provided horses to the Englishmen, Germans, and Acadians, he also acquired an undetermined number of mules and three muleteers, ostensibly to transport the belongings of the now completely destitute travellers, but actually to haul the trade goods.[15]

The preparations complete, the caravan departed La Bahia on September 13 and arrived at San Agustín (near present-day Liberty, Texas) twenty-five days later, after a journey made all the more difficult by having to cross eight major waterways. After halting at the southwestern Texas presidio for five days, the motley company of travellers continued the journey along El Camino Real to Natchitoches under the leadership of Francisco de la Portillo Pacheco, who had been commissioned as a guide by his cousin, Martinez Pacheco.[16]

Upon reaching their destination on October 24, leaders of the German and Acadian contingents quickly contacted the local authorities and lodged a litany of grievances against Ford and his associates, hoping that the Englishmen would finally be brought to justice in this jurisdiction. Because of the gravity of the charges, Césaire Borme, captain of the Natchitoches militia, took depositions from the former passengers, and on October 28, sent this evidence, together with four plaintiffs, and all of the English defendants, to the governor's office in New Orleans aboard a local merchant's batteau.[17]

The litigants arrived at the colonial capital on November 9, and proceeded directly to Governor O'Reilly's chambers. After reviewing the evidence provided by Borme, the governor called for testimony, first from the Englishmen, with a rebuttal by the plaintiffs. Choosing to defend themselves using a brief drafted by Philip Ford, the *Britain*'s crewmen skillfully parried the former passengers' charges of malfeasance, fraud, and cruelty. They claimed to be the unfortunate victims of circumstances during the voyage and of rank exploitation by colonial officials after making landfall in Texas. Indeed, the English defense charged that Francisco Tovar, commandant of the La Bahia post, was a ruthless tyrant who had seized the schooner without justification, confiscated its cargo, arrested its passengers and crew, and then abandoned the vessel to the Indians. The commandant's ruthlessness was complemented by his cruelty, for according to the English defendants, "he obliged the crew and passengers to work until the 21st of May [1769] when he ordered the captain and pilot placed in

Route taken by the Acadians from Goliad to Natchitoches.
Carl Brasseaux

stocks, keeping them so twenty-four days on half rations. . . ." When finally released, the defendants, forced to abandon the schooner, were compelled to remove from the presidio, at great expense, the cargo and the now useless rigging and sails. In conclusion, the defendants asked not for leniency in view of their myriad misfortunes, but rather for full compensation for their property losses and personal injuries.[18]

The response of the English defendants left Governor O'Reilly in a quandary. He equivocated, and when he rendered a decision in early December, it displeased everyone. The defendants' charges were ignored and the plaintiffs were denied the satisfaction of seeing their former tormentors imprisoned. The Englishmen were released and sent to Pensacola, capital of British West Florida, where they resumed their ultimately unsuccessful quest for financial compensation.[19]

The passengers' disappointment over the release of the *Britain*'s officers and crewmen was compounded by O'Reilly's decision to settle the Acadian and German contingents in unfamiliar surroundings. There were large Acadian and German settlements already in Louisiana, and the 1770 immigrants could have been easily placed in these communities. But, having recently come to Louisiana to quell an uprising supported by the Acadian and German populations which had ousted his predecessor, O'Reilly was reluctant to strengthen the former rebels' numbers. Thus, the governor directed the Germans to settle at the predominately Acadian Iberville post, while the Acadians were assigned to predominately Creole Natchitoches.[20]

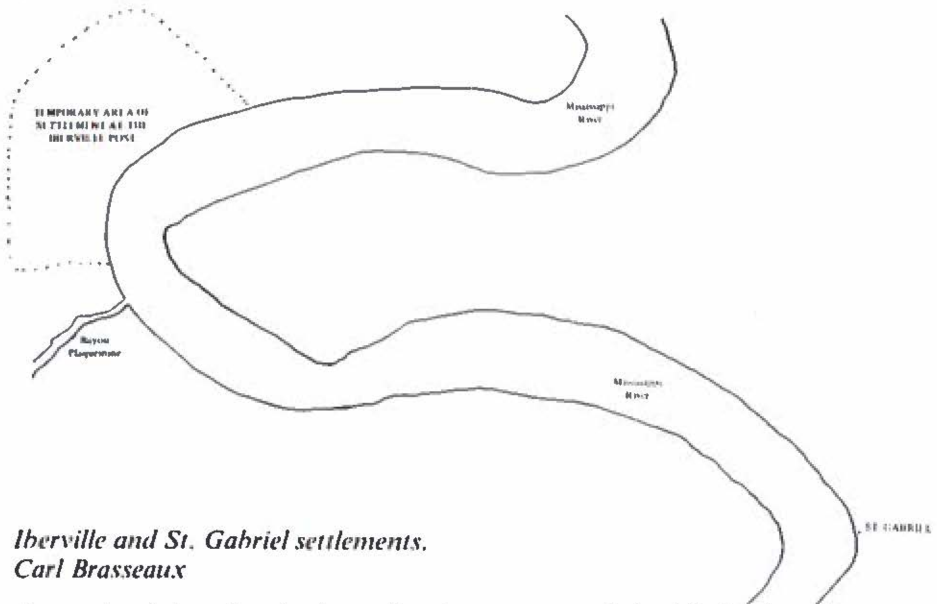
The Germans quietly accepted their fate, but the Acadians, who had come to Louisiana specifically for reunification with their kinsmen, were clearly distressed. Permanent residence at Natchitoches would inevitably result in the loss of their cultural identity which they had long struggled to maintain. In an effort to pacify the disgruntled settlers, Athanase Demezières, commandant of the Natchitoches post, gave them generous quantities of scarce provisions and seed grain. They were also provided "hogs, cows, and goats" to be raised on shares, title to "very rich lands," and tools to clear their concessions. Demezières justified such heavy expenditures by noting the Acadians' prowess as farmers. In a post populated principally by transient fur traders, the exiles' presence would make the area more economically self-sufficient. It would also reduce the constant threat of famine which had become particularly serious in winter and spring of 1770.[21]

The Acadians were initially overwhelmed by Demezières' generosity and some of the exiles seemed interested in remaining at Natchitoches. But, by mid-March 1770, they had rejected the proferred assistance and had closed ranks behind a demand that they be settled among their relatives along the Mississippi River at St. Gabriel in the Iberville district. Demezières did

Administrative Districts, Spanish Louisiana.
Carl Brasseaux

his best to prevent the Acadians from leaving the Natchitoches district, first by procuring offers of additional material assistance from local merchants, and when this effort failed, by refusing to issue intracolonial passports. The commandant's efforts to detain the Acadians only strengthened their determination to go. Indeed, the exiles finally rejected government assistance altogether. They lived on alms in order to deprive Demezières of any pretext for holding them any longer.[22]

Realizing eventually that the Acadians could not be broken, Demeziéres Demezières conceded defeat. Writing to Luis de Unzaga, O'Reilly's successor as governor, on March 22, he reported the impasse, and requested instructions. He sent the letter to New Orleans in the care of an Acadian leader. Unzaga, given the task of reconciling Louisianians to Spanish rule after O'Reilly's brief but harsh regime, capitalized upon this opportunity. He made every effort to satisfy the Acadians' demands, while allowing Demezières to save face. Personally contacting the St. Gabriel Acadians, he



Iberville and St. Gabriel settlements.
Carl Brasseaux

determined that they had previously corresponded with the Acadians now detained at Natchitoches. In 1767, with the encouragement of colonial officials, they had promised lands along the Mississippi River an an inducement for their fellow Acadians to leave Maryland. Unzaga then permitted the Acadians at Natchitoches to join their confréres, though he denied them any governmental assistance, except for small land grants to keep them near the post. [23]

Having cleared the way for an Acadian migration from Natchitoches to the Mississippi River settlements, Unzaga laid the groundwork for the immigrants' settlement at Iberville. On April 10, 1770, Louis Dutisné, commandant of the post, received notification of the decision, instructions on the exiles' disposition, and two weeks later, the governor's selection of the most suitable settlement sites in the western portion of the Iberville district. Finally, the Acadians were permitted to leave Natchitoches in early June 1770, and they reached their new homes shortly thereafter. [24]

Iberville, however, was not the haven the immigrants had sought. Their homesites, located on the west bank of the Mississippi River above the mouth of Bayou Plaquemine, were subject to flooding and were isolated from the existing Acadian settlements. Also, the immigrants' homes faced English settlements on the opposite riverbank. Englishmen had expelled them from their homeland in 1755, and oppressed them during their subsequent passage to the Gulf coast. Thus the Acadians' proximity to English territory was certainly unwelcome. So, they sought the relative safety afforded by the vast, uninhabited prairies of southwestern Louisiana. [25]

The treeless plains of the Opelousas district were particularly appealing to the former *Britain* passengers. Some of their relatives were now well established. The exiles repeatedly petitioned the government for passports to the frontier outpost, but without success. Spanish colonial officials were preoccupied with strategic considerations, not the desires of the Acadians. In the late 1770s five of the nine refugee families (15 of the 32 survivors—one child was born following their departure from Maryland and one immigrant chose to remain at San Agustín) quietly left the Iberville district. Apparently fearing government reprisals, they did not stop until they reached the western periphery of the remote Opelousas post sometime before 1777. [26]

Opelousas Post
Carl Brasseaux

Their settlement in the Opelousas prairies marked the end of the long and painful odyssey of the Acadian passengers on the *Britain*. Their journey was marred by an unnecessarily difficult voyage, detention by Spanish authorities, a long overland trek to Natchitoches, and a disappointing reception by Louisiana's Spanish governor. Throughout the ordeal, these wayfarers maintained their dogged determination to preserve their distinctive cultural and ethnic identity. By isolating themselves in frontier Opelousas, they finally realized that dream. Their ultimate triumph, however, was bought at a terrible price in human suffering.

Notes

[1] Especially noteworthy are the vast collections developed by the Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes, Université de Moncton, Moncton, New Brunswick, and the Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana. Most of the primary (original manuscript) sources used in this study were drawn from microfilm copies of the Audiencia de Santo Domingo Papers and the Papeles Procendentes de Cuba on deposit at the Center for Louisiana Studies.

[2] Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Founding of New Acadia: Reconstruction and Transformation of Acadian Society in Louisiana, 1765-1803," (thése de doctorat, 3e cycle, Université de Paris, 1982), 87-106, and 157-89.

[3] Basil Sollers, ed., "Party of Acadians Who Sailed from the Potomac, Bound for the Mississippi," *Maryland Historical Magazine,* IV (1909), 279; List of the German and Acadian families who sailed to New Orleans aboard an English vessel, October 24, 1769, in the Audiencia de Santo Domingo Papers, legajo 2542, folios 430-432 (hereafter cited as ASD with volume and folio numbers).

[4] Deposition of Honoré Trahan, November 24, 1769, ASD, 2542: 426 (hereafter cited as the Deposition of Honoré Trahan); Deposition of André Reze, November 24, 1769, ASD, 2542:427 (hereafter cited as Deposition of André Reze); Deposition of Étienne Rivet, November 24, 1769, ASD, 2542: 428 (hereafter cited as Deposition of Étienne Rivet).

[5] Depositions of André Honoré Trahan, and Ètienne Rivet; Remonstrance of John Steele, *et al*, November 30, 1976, ASD, 2542:424-35 (hereafter cited as Remonstrance of John Steele).

[6] Depositions of André Reze, Honoré Trahan, and Étienne Rivet.

[7] Deposition of André Reze; John Ferdinand Dalziel Smyth, *A Tour of the United States of America . . . ,* 2 vols. (Dublin, 1784), I, 249.

[8] Deposition of André Reze.

[9] Deposition of André Reze and Étienne Rivet.

[10] Deposition of Étienne Rivet. According to Ford, a horse was slaughtered immediately and consumed raw. Smyth, *A Tour,* 1:249-50.

[11] Depositions of Étienne Rivet and Honoré Trahan; Remonstrance of John Steele.

[12] Deposition of Honoré Trahan; Smyth, *A Tour,* 1:250; Petition of Philip Ford to Elias Durnford, February 28, 1770, in the Archivo General de la Nacion, Seccion de Historia, Mexico City, Mexico, volume 84, expediente 11, folios 338-40 (hereafter cited as AGN, Historia, with volume and folio numbers).

[13] Remonstrance of John Steele; Deposition of Honoré Trahan.

[14] For an excellent description of the trails crossing eastern Texas in this period, as well as a discussion of the dangers posed by local Indian tribes, consult McAdams Sibley, *Travelers in Texas, 1761*-1860 (Austin, 1967), 23-32 and 78; Carlos Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas,* vol. IV, *The Passing of the Missions, 1762*-1782 (1939; reprint ed., New York, 1976), 34, 87-98, and 266-272; Raphael Martinez Pacheco to Granson y Piseros, October 3, 1769, in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, legajo 188A, folio 7/1 (hereafter cited as PPC, with

volume and folio numbers); Lawrence Kinnaird, ed. and trans., "Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-94: Translations of materials from the Spanish Archives in Bancroft Library", *Annual Report of the American Historical Association of the Year 1945*, 3 vols. (Washington, 1946), 1:36-42.

[15] Remonstrance of John Steele; Castañeda, *Catholic Heritage*, 97-98.

[16] Martinez Pacheco to Granson y Piseros, October 3, 1769, PPC, 188A:7/1; Kinnaird, "Spain in the Mississippi Valley", 1:139; Sibley, *Travelers*, 23-32.

[17] Kinnaird, "Spain in the Mississippi Valley", 1:140; Césaire Borme to Alejandro O'Reilly, October 28, 1769, PPC, 187A.

[18] Remonstrance of John Steele; Depositions of André Reze, Honoré Trahan, and Étienne Rivet.

[19] Kinnaird, "Spain in the Mississippi Valley", 1:135; Expediente relative to the foundering of an English vessel on the Texas coast and complaints of ill treatment at the hands of Captain Tovar, 1770, AGN, Historia, 84:333-91.

[20] On O'Reilly's role in quelling the 1768 New Orleans rebellion, see John Preston Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana: The Spanish Occupation, 1766*-1770 (Baton Rouge, 1976); and David Ker Texada, *Alejandro O'Reilly and the New Orleans Rebels* (Lafayette, 1970).

[21] For a detailed list of the goods provided the Acadians, see Kinnaird, "Spain in the Mississippi Valley", 1:142; Demezières to Unzaga, March 22, 1770, PPC, 110:143; Declaration by Borme, Boissoto, and Dupain, March 22, 1770, PPC, 110:87; Herbert E. Bolton, trans. and ed., *Athanase de Mezieres and the Louisiana - Texas Border*, 1768-1770, 2 vols. (Cleveland, 1914), 1:155-56, and 158-59.

[22] Bolton, *Athanese de Mezieres*, 1:155-56, Demezières to Unzaga, March 22, 1770, PPC, 110:143.

[23] Demezières to Unzaga, March 22, 1770, PPC, 110P:143; Unzaga to Demezières, April (?), 1770, PPC, 110:738-39; Unzaga to Demezières, April (?), 1770, PPC, 110:398-99; Unzaga to Demezières, May 15, 1770, PPC, 110:402.

[24] Unzaga to Dutisné, April 10, 1770, PPC, 193B:283-84; Unzaga to Dutisné, April 26, 1770, PPC, 193B:290; Demezières to Unzaga, June 10, 1770, PPC, 110:143;Bolton, trans. and ed., *Athanese de Mezieres*, I, 173-74.

[25] Unzaga to Dutisné, April 26, 1770, PPC, 183B:290-91; Unzaga to Dutisné, April 10, 1770, PPC, 183B:283-84.

[26] The nephew of Oliver Benoit's wife, for example, settled at Opelousas around 1768. Donald J. Hebert, comp., *Southwest Louisiana Records,* 29 vols. (Eunice, 1976-1982), 1:80-81. For additional information on the Opelousas relatives of other former *Britain* passengers, see Dutisné to Unzaga, March 2, 1773, PPC, 189A:358. Dutisné to Galvez, October 12, 1777, PPC, 190:272vo-27-3; Unzaga to Dutisné, February 18, 1774, PPC, 189A:390; Dutisné to Galvez, November 24, 1777, PPC, 190:375; Dutisné to Unzaga, March 2, 1773, PPC, 189A:358; Galvez to Dutisné, November 10, 1777, PPC, 193B:194-95.

No passports for these Acadian migrants exist among the voluminous records of Louisiana's Spanish archives. All of the nine Acadian families that had sailed aboard the *Britain* are listed in the 1771 census of the Iberville post. The general census of Iberville, taken in 1777, however, lists only three of these families. General census of the Iberville post, 1771, PPC, 188A:267-77; General census of Iberville, March 1, 1777, PPC, 190:240-56.

On the migration to Opelousas, see, *American State Papers,* Public Land Series, II, 545, 817, 850; III, 203, 333; Carl A. Brasseaux and Gertrude C. Taylor, "Land Grants of the Southwestern Opelousas District" (Map) (Lafayette, 1982); and Jacqueline K. Voorhies, comp., *Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians* (Lafayette, 1973), 284-321.

Carl A. Brasseaux, Assistant Director of the Center for Louisiana Studies at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, received his doctorate from the University of Paris in 1982. In addition to scholarly interest in Louisiana's Acadians, Dr. Brasseaux has a personal connection with the people whose harrowing story he tells. His wife is a direct descendant of one of the passengers aboard the *Britain.*

Gainesville And Its *Advocate*: A Year In The Life Of A Mississippi Frontier Town

Lawrence J. Nelson

As a place of commercial significance, Gainesville, Mississippi, had long since flourished and faded when Uncle Sam swallowed it up as part of a proposed rocket testsite two decades ago. In fact, the sleepy little village on a sharp bend on the East Pearl River in south Mississippi got more attention by dying than by living. The poignant human interest stories of people evicted from their homes were like those of hundreds of others in the past who, because they were in the way, yielded to the march of progress.

For a century and a half, moss-draped Gainesville sat on a beautiful bluff across the river from Honey Island Swamp, a forbidding wildlife habitat. Thirty miles above the mouth of the Pearl River, the town found itself in a strategic position as a trading and shipping center, with New Orleans readily accessible. Gainesville and Hancock County, in which it is situated, were struggling to come into their own before the middle of the nineteenth century, when much of the state remained virgin terrain. Joseph Cobb's *Mississippi Scenes* (1851) and Joseph Baldwin's *The Flush Times of Alabama and Mississippi* (1853) underscore the raw-edged character of the state's pioneer heritage, and as Professor Percy Rainwater once suggested, Mississippi "exhibited most, if not all, the aspects by which wilderness conditions are transformed into complex societies." Planters, ruffians, indians, slaves, preachers, and politicians jostled together in the new land. "Youth and hope were there," said Rainwater, "and progress was rapid."

In the bustling decade of the 1840s Hancock County and Gainesville experienced some of the vicissitudes of life shared by other towns on the developing American frontier. Claiming more than 2200 white residents in 1840, the county also counted 1130 non-whites, of whom more than 93 percent were slaves. The population rose more than 9 percent during the decade-much less than the state as a whole, which grew by 61 percent-with the census of 1850 indicating that Gainesville's population totalled several hundred. Although its rival Shieldsborough (later Bay St. Louis), was the county seat, Gainesville seemed poised for leadership when the enterprising George O. Field established his weekly newspaper in the little river town in March 1845.

The arrival of a newspaper, even the four-page variety like Field's *Gainesville Advocate*, marked a milestone in the life of a frontier town. Since few early newspapers have survived and many county records went up in flames in an 1853 courthouse fire, the extant collection of the *Advocate* in 1845-46 provides a rare slice of life, albeit incomplete, in a river community

in the pioneer days of Mississippi's development. Although it changed editorial hands twice in its short life, the *Advocate* maintained an even quality and style.

The *Advocate* resembled its frontier cousins. For example, William H. Lyon, in his fine study of *The Pioneer Editor in Missouri, 1808 — 1860* (1965), describes features of newspaper life which are remarkably similar to the

Gainesville Advocate.

ERWOOD & CO., PUBLISHERS.] BY INDUSTRY AND PERSEVERANCE WE HOPE TO PROSPER. [G. OLCOTT FIELD

Gainesville, Miss., October 25, 1845.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Advocate in the mid - 1840s. Methods of news gathering, format, and types of materials included were largely standardized in the pioneer press.

In the absence of wire services, the frontier editor took whole stories from other newspapers which he received on exchange. Thus, news of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and the world became available to readers on the edge of civilization, though some weeks later. Closer to home, the papers of New Orleans, such as the *Weekly Delta* and the *Picayune,* as well as Mississippi papers, provided substance for the *Advocate*'s columns. For the growing little town on the East Pearl River, the *Advocate* became a window on the world. On rare occasions, news may have come through a friend or friend's friend, but mostly the editor eagerly awaited the steamboats which would bring news and culture from around the world. Into the five-columned pages, Field and his successors would cram stories of medicine, religion, history, education, and agriculture. Readers could learn of Senator Stephen Douglas's plan for a transcontinental railroad, or marvel at some new invention. They could linger over a story of serf labor in Russia, escape into a poem or saccharine novelette, or boil with nationalism over the latest British or Mexican atrocity. And always, in this era of tense international rivalries, there were notices of troop movements. For $2 per year, the subscriber could have it all, along with, of course, New Orleans' market prices, local editorials, advertisements, and political announcements. Few major newsworthy events of the day escaped attention.

Politically, editor Field was scrupulously neutral, a policy followed by his successors. Little or no evidence of internal Mississippi sectionalism could be found, nor did anti-northern sentiment creep into the columns, save for an occasional light jab. Unfortunately, the format of the Gainesville weekly followed that of the pioneer press generally. With straight text, it

Johnson's Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana (c.1850)
Biloxi Public Library

exhibited little imagination in design, with its few drawings basically limited to advertisements. No great headlines reached out to grab the reader's attention, and perhaps responsibly, there was no great sensationalism.

The paper promoted the welfare of the community in ways other than as a disseminator of news and culture. In October 1845, concerned about fire protection, the editors lobbied for the organization of a "Hook and Ladder" company. They also voiced frustration about poor postal service, and about Louisiana's improvement of the West Pearl River and Mississippi's neglect of the East Pearl.

The size of the *Advocate*'s readership is difficult to assess. A few months after he founded the paper, Field advised his readers he would be out of town in "an effort to extend our circulation among the river counties." The paper's "authorised Agents" stood ready to sell subscriptions as far north as Columbia and Monticello (more than eighty miles away), as far south as Shieldsborough, as well as in Holmesville and Hobolochitto. After Field's departure as editor in September 1845, the new editors, T. Batte and J. P. Sherwood, retained an agent in New Orleans. Patron lists were not generally large for pioneer papers and the *Advocate* may have actually had competition from the Jackson press. In any event, Batte and Sherwood sold the paper the following month to C. E. Everitt and T. D. Harper, the latter a local merchant, underscoring William Lyon's assertion that "Requirements for admission into the editorial fraternity were nonexistent."

If the value of the newspaper was clearly demonstrable, the means of delivery were crucial. In fact, the U.S. mail system was the life - line of the frontier editor. Not only did a free - franking system provide exchanges to fill the local paper's columns, but that system, under a postal law effective in July 1845, also provided free delivery within a thirty - mile radius. Shieldsborough, Pearlington, and Hobolochitto fell within the free zone, while delivery to towns up to a hundred miles cost one penny, more than a hundred miles and out of Mississippi, a penny and a half. (Under the new law a half - ounce letter within 300 miles cost a nickel, a one - ounce pamphlet or magazine, two cents.) For general service, Gainesville's residents could expect mail from the north every Sunday evening, with departures for Shieldsborough, New Orleans, Mobile and other destinations that evening. Southern mail returned Wednesday morning. In July 1845, the *Advocate* even shifted its publication from Tuesday to Saturday to accommodate the mail schedule.

Still, the paper frequently chafed at inefficiency in the postal service and nagged for improvement. "It is vexatious to be thus frequently disappointed in receiving but one - fourth or one - third of our exchanges due," lamented the editors in October 1845, "when we fondly anticipate

laying before our readers the important intelligence of — a battle with the Mexicans on the Rio Grande! Glorious victory achieved by the valorous General Taylor! or, the fact that the Electro - Magnetic Telegraph is in successful operation between New Orleans and Mobile; and many other important news articles which we see in perspective; by the negligence of Postmasters." Two main exchange papers, the *New Orleans Weekly Delta* and the *New York Saturday Emporium,* were habitually late; the editors received their "Emporiums by threes and fours, awfully mussed up," they complained, "as though they had been read by the families of all the postmasters between [Gainesville] and New York."

When the mails failed, as in December 1845, the *Advocate* could only apologize "for the barrenness of our columns of news," and urge the public to petition the authorities for a direct Jackson - Gainesville - New Orleans connection. They also called for a post office in the Rigolets along the Gulf Coast, so Mobile - New Orleans packets could deposit mail there instead of at Pass Christian. Unfavorable weather conditions often prevented regular service to Pass Christian, or kept the mail from getting across the Bay of St. Louis to Shieldsborough.

Meanwhile, the New Orleans postmaster and N. L. Mitchell, captain of the steamer *Jacques Dupree,* a regular Gainesville visitor, agreed to twice-weekly mail deliveries between New Orleans and Gainesville, at no profit to the captain. By the spring of 1846, moreover, Congress appeared ready to establish more efficient mail service for Gainesville from Jackson.

Whatever the fate of the mail service, the frontier paper served a varied constituency. In the *Advocate*'s columns one might advertise for the return of a runaway slave, or a lonely bachelor might even seek a wife. John Roach advervised in the *Advocate* as well as in Alabama and Florida, promising $10 for retention in Mississippi, $15 elsewhere, of his runaway slave named July, described as "Lame in the left leg, about fifty or fifty - five years of age...and [who] professes to be a Doctor." Another Hancock County slave, Isaac, of Bayou Le Croix, evidently escaped while on a two - day basket - selling pass in September 1845. The reward was listed as $40 for Isaac's return or $30 for his retention in Mississippi or an adjacent state and the "immediate" notification of the owner.

If the fate of Isaac and July remains unknown, (none of Roach's seven slaves is listed as "Fugitives from the State" in the 1850 slave census) such is not the case of two other slaves, Tony and Peter, part of an unhappy drama that unfolded in Hancock County in 1846. The pair was convicted in circuit court in March of murdering an overseer in the employ of David Wingate, a Hancock County lumberman who, according to the slave census of 1854, owned 84 slaves. Slated for execution on April 20, Tony and Peter

confessed to the deed, but were soon supplied with files, apparently by "some evil-minded person. . .", according to the *Advocate*. When the Shieldsborough jailer opened the cell for their meal, they overpowered him and fled. Their freedom was short-lived. Their near - escape up the West Pearl was thwarted when mechanical trouble on their steamboat forced its return to New Orleans. The affair widened into a scandal when it was learned that they had been arrested in the company of R. G. Stevenson, whom the *Advocate* claimed was "a well known citizen of this county, one who, so far, has enjoyed the reputation of an honest and honorable man." Stevenson protested that he had bought the slaves, whom he called Tom and Harry, at public sale. His protest apparently convinced no one, and the *Advocate* speculated he had planned to sell the slaves further north. "We have not been able to learn what 'respectable citizen' furnished them with the tools with which they filed their irons," said the paper. Exhibiting good ethical and great journalistic style, the editors added that "*Some one's name* was mentioned by the negroes, but as this, so far, is not corroborated by circumstances, we shall be silent." Calling Stevenson's deed an "abominable transa[c]tion," they argued that "If he be guilty - certainly his punishment should be severe; for we conceive the man capable of such a crime, dangerous to the community and as morally guilty as those whom he attempted to rob justice of."

$40 REWARD!

RUNAWAY from the subscriber, the Negro Man *ISAAC*, aged 25 years stoutly made, black and full faced, has two marks, one on each wrist, cut by a hatchet; about 5 feet 9 or 10 inches in height. The above negro had on a pair of cottonade pants, check shirt and old straw hat; had a pass for two days —20th and 21st ult.—to sell baskets. Any person taking up and delivering the said negro to the subscriber, will receive the above reward, or $30 for the confinement of said negro in any jail in this or an adjoining State, and giving immediate notice to the undersigned at this place.

N. B.—The "Southern Journal," will please give the above two consecutive insertions, and forward bill to this office for payment.

A. E. L. DE BRETTON,
Bayou Le Croix, Hancock county, Mississippi, Oct. 11, 1845.
Gainesville, Oct. 8, 1845. 23tf

Advocate
Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Meanwhile, Tony and Peter, in the custody of the Hancock County Sheriff, passed through Gainesville aboard the steamer *Mad Anthony* on their return to Shieldsborough. There, as originally scheduled, they went on the scaffold.

As in most of the antebellum South, issues of racial caste were clearly understood. Few indigenous challenges to the slave system appeared. That system formed an integral part of Hancock County's social and economic fabric, slaves comprising about one - third of the country's population during the decade (slightly more than one - half state - wide). Manisfestations of subtle and overt racism, common in the Old and New South, and in the North as well, nevertheless bring a twinge to the modern observer. The *Advocate* published an exchange piece, "Hints on the

Management of Slaves," in April 1845, which declared blacks untrustworthy mental inferiors who "act from feeling and impulse more than from reason." The writer argued that since the black man was "sadly deficient in conscientiousness, *The way to keep him honest is therefore not to trust him.*

Aside from advice on managing slaves or advertising for the return of those that ran away, the frontier newspaper could also be a refuge for a lonely bachelor seeking matrimony. One such Gainesville gentleman, "L.S.B.," "desirous of changing his present lonely situation. . ." hoped to find "any young lady, old maid, or widow" who might meet his qualifications and be willing to "embark with him on the tempestous sea of matrimony. . . ." His requirements may have partly explained his bachelor status. Applicants, he said, had to be "between the ages of 18 and 30, of amiable disposition, florid complexion, not above ordinary height, blue or black eyes, and of elastic carriage." Said females would have "to put up with my many whims, as is always the case with those in my situation." In return, he assured potential applicants that he was sufficiently well off "to make one comfortable." And though he disliked children he admitted that "as custom can habituate a man to any thing, I may be reconsiled [sic] to a *few* of them."

Whether "L.S.B." found any takers remains unclear, but had he found a mate, the wedding could have been a beautiful social event. The Gainesville editor attended the December nuptials of Mary Agnes Daniels, daughter of Hancock County Judge L. Daniels, and Captain Lillard, of New Orleans. The editor reflected:

> It has seldom been our lot to witness a scene of such unalloyed happiness. As we looked around upon the young, blooming and blushing virgins who were present to lend enchantment to the vision, beauty to the scene, and witchery to the hour, by the magic of their fair faces, perpetually wrought into sweet smiles, we could not help thinking, how soon, perhaps, some one of them might be called upon to occupy the proud position of the bride. We expect to have many a pleasant dream on the precious piece of wedding cake which now graces our sanctum.

Some of Gainesville's fair maidens, and other unattached females, might have selected a mate from among the plethora of the town's aging single men. "We have in Gainesville, three dozen old bachelors - assorted - all candidates for matrimony" delcared the *Advocate,* tongue - in - cheek, in February 1846. "They will be disposed of in lots to suit bidders. Any number of young ladies, old maids, or widows, having a small capital on hand, wishing partners for life, will have their orders promptly attended to by addressing 'Old Bachelors,' Gainesville, Miss. For further particulars enquire at this office."

There seems little evidence that any Gainesville females challenged the

male culture of the nineteenth century. The *Advocate* probably told the truth when it joked that the old bachelors "like an even tempered, obsequious and docile woman. . . ." They described *"The Mississippi Woman"* in September 1845 as

> generally graceful in her figure, slow in gait, mild in her looks, proud in mein, engaging in her conversation, quick at blushing, chaste in her manners, improvising on acquaintance, generous to a fault, ready to weep with one in distress, solicitous for the poor, eminently humane, constant in her attachment, a fond wife, a tender mother, tenacious of her word, jealous of her honor, prudent in her conduct, circumspect in her house, but what is very natural, cannot keep a secret.

Such sexist generalizations should not obscure the reality of family life in 1840s Gainesville. The work was hard, the reward low, childbearing dangerous, and infant mortality high. In that, Gainesville was like the rest of America in the mid - nineteenth century.

There were other reminders of the harshness of pioneer life. One Hancock County farmer and stockman, having sold his hogs in New Orleans, probably tried to save money by returning home on foot. In or near the Honey Island Swamp, long notorious for harboring evil-doers and lawbreakers, he was assaulted by five robbers, two of them armed with pistols, who relieved him of his hard - earned $105 and left "him with pockets turned wrong - side out, . . ." The highway robbery brought a warning from the *Advocate*: "The city police of New Orleans are very vigilant, we admit, but persons traveling out of the corporate limits of the city should be on their guard, and either travel the route in company with friends or otherwise prepared to act in self defense."

Bears constituted another hazard, although a natural one. In June 1845 George Field reported seeing one weighing about 500 pounds. Honey Islanders, living about 4 - 10 miles from Gainesville, were continually harassed by bears that spring; one or more came within 60 feet of one resident's house, boldly carrying off a mature hog, despite the owner's attempts to stop it. That fall, after enduring destruction of corn and loss of hogs, several Gainesville residents engaged in the "Famous Bear Hunt," both serious business and frontier humor ("Whar's the use . . . of raisin' hogs," asked one, "to have them ete up jest when they's 'ginnin to git fat?") Determined "to immortalize ourselves as hunters," an amply supplied group set out to get "old Bruin." The town waited in anticipation. After a miserable night in the wild, and making fools of themselves, the big-game hunters returned, confessing to having treed only a possum. In a report of the fiasco in the *Advocate,* the hunters' spokesman concluded: "It is impossible to tell you the many questions that were put to us on arriving; even you, Mr. Editor, annoyed us with your 'Well, what luck, how many did

you kill?' So to avoid equivocal answers, and to satisfy all interested in the 'famous Bear hunt,' I have made *bare* the particulars."

Even in the land of bears and robbers, there were signs of growing sophistication. In 1846, Gainesville residents could send their youngsters of both sexes to a dancing school, or at least that was what Olmstead Haynes contemplated as soon as a requisite number enrolled. That same year, one of the wonders of the age arrived in the frontier river town. Residents could obtain a daguerreotype from a Mr. Shaw, who set up his trade in the Gainesville Hotel on the town square. Although the daguerreotype soon succumbed to more sophisticated methods, in 1846 it was the rage in photography. The *Advocate*'s editors were quite taken with the results of the contraption. They noted:

> It is curious to observe in these portraits the variety of expressions assumed by the subjects as they sit for their likeness. In one you perceive self love stamped upon the portrait — the emotion which the subject was under at the time of setting — in another hauteur and pride; in another vanity; some are stamped with sternness; some with pleasantry; and in some of those which nature makes by the gross and sets no mark upon them, you perceive nothing at all. We recommend those who wish to hand themselves down to posterity, to give Mr. Shaw a call for a minute — that is sufficient to make an immortal impression.

Frontier entertainment in Gainesville was both imported and home-grown. A traveling troup planned a two-night stand in the community in June 1845, providing the home folk a respite from summertime activities. Their "tricks, transformation, feats, &c. have elicited, we understand," said George Field, "the admiration and wonder of thousands in the principal cities of the north and south. . ." proving they were not of the often seen fraudulent variety. Field urged residents to "go and see them, and enjoy a hearty laugh."

Holidays also provided festive occasions. Christmas 1845 in Gainesville was, as one might expect, "a day of gladness and rejoicing. . . ." The *Advocate* observed "the style of our celebration was very simple and rustic, appropriate to our condition; but there were some things thrown into it which served to fill many an aching void in the heart, and make it merry." Gainesville was alive with business during the holiday, the market amply stocked with venison, wild turkeys, bear meat, and the like. A good crowd watched Mr. Folsom's nag, Black Hawk, beat the sorrel mare, Olympia, in the feature of the Gainesville Races; that and the slower bob - tail races entertained the crowd "with excitement great and betting high."

In terms of community involvement, however, no holiday was greater than the Fourth of July. In 1845, a popularly-appointed Committee of Arrangements delegated tasks to ensure a good celebration. One person was

to collect sufficient money for requisite purchases, others were to oversee erection of the Liberty Pole, "aid and assist in the preparations for the dinner, the building of sheds, etc. etc.," while others were assigned to read the Declaration of Independence, prepare a temperance speech, or be "Marshall of the Day." The arrangements committee also resolved, reflecting true Southern hospitality, "That the citizens of Hancock county are invited to participate - and that the dinner be gratuitous."

The committee made no greater assignment, however, than the one for the Oration. In her book, *Stump, Bar, and Pulpit: Speechmaking on the Missouri Frontier* (1969), Frances L. McCurdy suggested that "the pioneer considered that a historic event was not properly marked unless an orator had spoken." For this particular July 4th, the honor went to W. B. Shipp, Esq., who must have already established himself in the tradition of nineteenth century oratory. Shipp delivered an oration of eloquence and grace, by the era's standards, and so impressed his listeners that the public appetite could be satiated only by its publication. Change the location and the orator's name, and the speech could have been given anywhere on the American frontier that year. In some form, in fact, it probably was. In more than 3500 words Shipp ranged over the history of human culture, the rise and fall of civilizations, and the aspirations of the oppressed. He recalled the glory of Greece, the greatness of Rome, evoked the names of Demosthenes, Babylon, Egypt, Israel, the Papacy and Louis XIV. In it all he placed the American experience, and the indignities the forefathers endured under colonial oppression. To these shores "they brought no weapons but reason —no shield but justice, they sought but a sanctuary to dedicate to the deity of their adoration – a refuge from the powers of oppression — a land of liberty." It was, he declared, a new "Eden." When we contemplate the future, he envisioned, "we are lost in the grandeur and sublimity of the conception." The invincible Republican tide and attendant virtues rolled ever onward. "Guard well the sacred trust that has been committed to you," he charged,

let no sacrilegious hand pollute it with unhallowed touch. . .

> But onward carried in your conquering van,
> Columbia's treasure, and her talisman,
> Still, 'mid the gloom of threat'ning storms appear,
> The star of hope in freedom's bright career.

It was all axiomatically sound nineteenth century doctrine and as entertainment it was great sport. Gainesville loved it.

The nationalism of the July 4th oratory, though couched in big words and enough of them, was not limited to Independence Day rhetoric. The *Advocate* felt keenly about liberty and the expansion of the American nation. The time was right. A young nation was bursting its borders in the 1840s and few questioned its Manifest Destiny to do so. Rumblings with

Britain over Oregon, hostilities with Mexico, and the annexation of Texas, all reverberated through the newspaper's columns.

On the Oregon question all seemed clear. The *Advocate* carried a quote from General Lewis Cass that it was "better to fight in defence of the *first* foot of land than the *last*." But to the *Advocate*, the issue was broader than just Oregon. "The progressive extension of American democracy, is galling the pride of the hoary monarchies of Europe," it suggested. "The contest must come when democracy will contend despotism for the supremacy." There was, of course, no doubt as to the outcome. "'Men love thraldom,' but the democratic sentiment is one which will prevail whenever it is promulgated," it prophesied:

> In the late negotiations for Oregon, the unrobbed reason of American statesmen, has been pitted against the wisdom and philosophy of the 'gowned professors' of England. Their efforts at compromise have proved fruitless. — The next resort is to arms. Let it come: the crises fast approach when the sun will never set on the 'land of the free and the home of the brave.'

When war seemed imminent in the spring of 1846, the editors retained their brashness, the same brashness duplicated across America. "Every true American" would support President James K. Polk's military preparations as well as his effort to grab all of Oregon, said the *Advocate*. "Whether title [to Oregon] be good or bad, policy and expediency demand that we should hold it — right or wrong. It had better be an asylum in the hands of Americans for the famished populations of Europe, than another resting-place for monarchy to perch upon." And so it was.

If the *Advocate* offered advice on international politics, it never neglected the daily life of its own community. In June 1845, George Field declared the town's Public Square "a beautiful scite [sic] " but in need of trees and enclosure. On the Square's north side stood Mr. T. Batte's Gainesville Hotel, a commodious facility (built onto his house) where one could find board and lodging for $1 a day, $12 for a month. A meal for a man or his horse cost the same: 25¢. In the summer of 1845, Batte opened a Coffee House nearby at Centre and Water Streets where one might get a stronger brew than coffee. The upper floor of the Coffee House was also used as a ballroom or a place for public exhibits.

Gainesville offered a beautiful appearance for travellers arriving on the Pearl. In the late summer of 1845 a visitor from New Orleans toured the community and vicinity, later providing a detailed analysis. Arriving by boat late one evening, "the number of persons collected on the wharf at that time of night," he noted, "and the number of white houses, magnified by the moon's misty light, led me to imagine [Gainesville] more populous and much larger than it really was. . . ."

GAINESVILLE

HOTEL,

BY T. BATTE.

[North side of Public Square.]

THE proprietor having built an addition to his house, is now prepared to receive boarders, and accommodate travelers and all those who may be pleased to give him a call. His table will always be furnished with the best the market affords. His stables will be well supplied with provinder, and he flatters himself that by strict attention to the wants of his friends and the traveling community, to merit a liberal share of public patronage. The terms of the Hotel are as follows, to wit:—

Board per month, - -	$9 00
" and lodging, per month, -	12 00
" and lodging per day,	1 00
Single meal, each, - -	25
Man and horse, per day, - -	1 50
" " night, - -	1 25
Keeping horse per month, -	12 00
" " day, - -	50
Single meal for horse, - -	25

☞ All boarding to be paid in advance, if required by the proprietor.

☞ In addition to the above, the proprietor has opened a COFFEE HOUSE on the corner of Centre and Water Streets, where he will keep a general assortment of spirituous and vinous liquors, at which establishment he hopes to share a liberal patronage.

Gainesville, Mi., Aug. 1, 1845.

aug 2:17tf

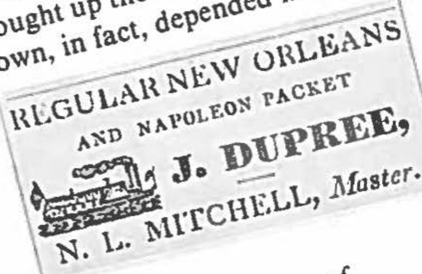
Advocate
Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Although the visitor found improvement and life in Gainesville, he was horrified to discover a cemetery within a town — "a town of the dead in a town of the living. . ." The adjacent property was virtually without value, he thought, and worse, the cemetery's location would retard the sale of summer homes to those wishing to escape the "heat, filth, and sickness of the Great City [New Orleans]." About half a mile away he discovered a noisy sawmill, "the engine. . .puffing away, and saws rattling in a most obstreperous manner, that awakened the solitude of the surrounding forest with quite a business sound. Every thing around looked like active energetic employment." Noting present and contemplated boat building on the Pearl, he declared: "Such enterprise speaks favorably for your town, you are right, 'go ahead.' The city continues healthy, no appearance of yellow fever, citizens continue to return. Business will begin brisk and early this season."

In the mid-forties Gainesville's business climate continued to prosper. The Gainesville Hotel, which had added a new facility to accommodate anticipated courthouse traffic, found competition from the "Pearl River House" on the opposite side of the Square. The new hotel sported "a Ten Pin Alley," bar and grocery. Such competition suggested community growth, as did the mercantile establishments which continually hawked their wares in the columns of the *Advocate*. Regularly scheduled steam powered packets plied the East Pearl, disgorging their contents on Gainesville's busy wharf. Even luxury items such as kid gloves and imported silk reached this frontier town. All manner of cutlery and hardware could be had at local stores, as could shoes, polish, combs, and dry goods of every description. "The cotton and country produce transactions increase daily, and our streets begin to assume the appearance of lively fall and winter trade," boasted the *Advocate* in November 1845. "Our stores are generally well stocked with goods, and the merchants evince a determination not to be outdone in Mississippi, in

ity, price, or variety of goods."

Gainesville thrived as a trading point. In la... ne success in momentarily, on a trial basis, grabbing ... the cotton trade from a planter in Covington County. Local ... ought up the cotton and the planter was satisfied with the exchange. The town, in fact, depended heavily on cotton shipments. For example, in the first two weeks of February 1846 nearly two thousand cotton bales, dumped on Gainesville by up-river flatboats, had been shipped out by steam packets. Between January 31 and February 7, Gainesville hosted six steamer arrivals, one each from Mobile and Pearltown, the rest from New Orleans. Departures in the same period included the New Orleans - bound steamers *Undine*, *Jacques Dupree*, and *Mad Anthony* (twice), all burdened with cotton, and the likewise New Orleans-bound sloop *Splendid*, loaded with wood. Also casting off from Gainesville's wharf, northbound for Monticello, George-town, and Jackson, was the river queen *Mentoria*, a Cincinnati built craf designed specifically for the Pearl, and commanded by the highly - regarde Captain Boardman.


REGULAR NEW ORLEANS
AND NAPOLEON PACKET
J. DUPREE,
N. L. MITCHELL, *Master.*

Advocate
Mississippi Department of Archives and History

In the spring, the fleet was joined by the *Victoria*, a "fine and spler steamer" which was "perhaps the largest and most commodious boat has yet appeared on our wharf." For $1.50 one could travel to New Or! or with a day's notice, *Victoria* could be chartered on Sunday Mondays "for pleasure and hunting excursions to Pass Ch Shieldsborough, or any other point on the lake. . . ."

Gainesville also boasted a small ship - building industry locat three - quarters of a mile north of town. In fact the facility pro *Mad Anthony* in 1845 and later that year the town gave a perr worthy and enterprising citizen, W. J. Poitivent," to construct a city property. The *Advocate*, pleased by the business prosp "upon this as a work of great public utility, ... " Many boats Gainesville to New Orleans "during the sickly season," decla "Here they may enjoy good health, building materials in a everything else for their purposes, as cheap as in the city."

The growth and importance of the bustling town le move to capture the coveted county seat. According to area's legislative representative was justified in introd

... government away from Shieldsboro
...was better than the present seat, the paper reason[ed].

... citizens have suffered long enough under the inconvenience of having to travel 25 or 30 miles further than there is any necessity for, and that over a bad road. — The greater portion of the citizens of the county transact all their business (that is such as purchasing goods and disposing of their produce) in Gainesville; — they therefore can, when compelled to come to court, attend to their business and not lose time.

The legislature and governor agreed to the change in February 1846, accepting as part of the bill property donated by Charles H. Frazer, and requiring erection of brick facilities for county business, one third of the cost being borne by the county. The following month Gainesville was legally incorporated, elected a president, J. P. Sherwood, and four selectmen, and ...n April awaited the arrival of document - laden county officers from ...hieldsborough. The *Advocate* was jubilant. "Gainesville," proclaimed the ...ditors, "if improvement, — the erection of new building — increase in ...pulation — denote prosperity in a place, is by far the most thriving village ... East Mississippi."

If Gainesville was thriving its *Advocate* was not. Financial crisis, the ...ne of the frontier editor, evidently forced its rapid demise after less than ...rteen months of operation. It would fall to other papers, issued ...radically, to chronicle the life of the river town. In their last issue, May 9, ..., the *Advocate*'s editors, despite their own apparent financial distress, ...othing but promise for their region. "This is a section of Mississippi ... has been much overlooked and greatly underrated. . .", they argued. ...rue, of course, that the area had not yet really come into its own. Yet ...n experiments with sugar cane, rice, tobacco and sea-island cotton ... future rewards. Peaches, lemons, oranges, and figs were likewise ...cash crops. While the editors saw the lumber industry stretching ... ("the quantity of timber is almost inexhaustible"), the county's ...urce of wealth," they believed, lay in the unexploited turpentine ...stry. Further, because of conflicting claims, Honey Island ...in development. The future seemed bright indeed! And ...ting "on one of the beautiful bluffs of Pearl river. . ." was ...e qualities which give character and importance to a town ...me tokens of promise of its future greatness. Here amid our ...d luscious fruits," the editors boasted, New Orleans ...l in the beauties of nature, and drink in pure and fresh the ...r, oppressed with perfume."'

Gray's Atlas Map of Mississippi, c. 1874
Biloxi Public Library

Unfortunately, the perfume lost its fragrance. Undetected by it residents, Gainesville had almost peaked in importance. Whateve checkered success the region would enjoy, however close the river tow would come to grabbing the fabled brass ring, its glory days eventuall passed. It was already an old lesson of frontier pragmatism: whatever lose utility or is superseded is soon abandoned. As the Natchez Trace and othe primitive trails were eclipsed by greater sophistication, so also the railroad shifted population settlement and diverted traffic from the rivers. Gainesville lost its courthouse to fire in 1853, and reflecting its relative decline, even its county seat to old rival Shieldsborough after the Civil War, if not sooner. In the 1880s the railroad sealed its doom by by - passing the town altogether. The once - lively river community eventually receded into a sleepy village, suffering the ultimate indignity in 1918 when it lost its post office. It was soon moribund. Reflected a WPA researcher in the 1930s: "The little town that played such an important part in the upbuilding of this county . . . is now truly a 'deserted village.' "

Perhaps a lesson lurks somewhere in the vicissitudes of this vanished river town. In their farewell, the *Advocate*'s editors reflected on their own task. "Mozart," they said, "when on the brink of the grave, is reported to have said. . .that he began to discover what might be done in music. A similar feeling, it is said, attached to every one who has just concluded a literary work upon which he has been engaged: he begins to discover what he might have made out of his subject, had he done it more justice."

We wonder, too, not how able they were as journalists, but rather what their continuing comments would have been about life in a nineteenth century river town, and about the great national issues that lay just on the horizon. The *Advocate*'s last issue carried an exchange piece on the coming war with Mexico, a war that would enlarge the debate about whether new

rritories would enter the union slave or free. Had their paper survived, we ight have learned their views on the Wilmot Proviso of August 1846 which vided North and South. We might also have looked over their shoulder at ıe Compromise of 1850, the Kansas - Nebraska Act of 1854, Dred Scott, tephen Douglas, Lincoln, Secession, War, and a host of other issues that ɔnfounded what historian James G. Randall once called "The Blundering ıeneration." And equally important, how would they have interpreted ıeir own town's recession into obscurity?

The citizens of Gainesville were much like anyone else of their time and ɔndition. Like most people in history, they sought improvement while orking with what they had. They also possessed a quality of life one might ot have expected. Perhaps that leads to the lesson of Gainesville, a lesson oth simple and profound. Historian Arthur Marwick, who doubtless ever heard of Gainesville, once spoke of the human condition when he ɾrote that history

> is. . .*poetic*, in the sense of wonder about the past, an awareness, as G. M. Trevelyan has put it, of 'the quasi - miraculous fact that once, on this earth. ..walked other men and women, as actual as we are today, thinking their own thoughts, swayed by their own passions, but now all gone, one generation vanishing after another, gone as utterly as we ourselves shall shortly be gone. . . .' There exists in the human imagination an 'instinctive wish to break down the barriers of time and mortality and so to extend the limits of human consciousness beyond the span of a single life.'

Gainesville provides a microcosm of the competitiveness and fragility of a town's life — and the mortality of its inhabitants. It remains an example of the ruthless pragmatism of town building in nineteenth century America. But Marwick and Trevelyan remind us that there is more. In Gainesville's flower and failure, we discover that our own mortality is as certain as that of one vanished town on the Southern frontier.

Bibliographic Essay

Among published sources of life in frontier Mississippi one should consult J. F. H. Claiborne's classic *Mississippi, As a Province, Territory and State, With Biographical Notices of Eminent Citizens*, 3 vols. (Jackson, 1880, reprinted Baton Rouge, 1964); and relevant articles in volume I of Richard A. McLemore (ed.), *History of Mississippi*, 2 vols. (Hattiesburg, 1973). For first hand accounts of pioneer life prior to the Civil War, see Horace S. Fulkerson, *Random Recollections of Early Days in Mississippi* (originally published Vicksburg, 1885, reprinted Baton Rouge, 1937, with

Introduction, etc. by Percy Rainwater; the quotes from Rainwater are taken from his Introduction); Joseph B. Cobb, *Mississippi Scenes; Or Sketches of Southern and Western Life and Adventure, Humorous, Satiricial, and Descriptive, Including the Legend of Black Creek* (originally published Philadelphia, 1851, republished Upper Saddle River, N.J., 1970); Reuben Davis, *Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians* (originally published 1889; revised edition with a New Introduction by William D. McCain, n.p., 1972); and Joseph G. Baldwin, *The Flush Times of Alabama and Mississippi: A Series of Sketches* (originally published 1853, republished with an introduction by William D. Owens, New York 1957). Baldwin reveals something of the raw nature of the Southern frontier, as well as his own sense of humor, when he wrote that as a young lawyer in 1836, he headed for the old Southwest of Alabama and Mississippi "because magnificent accounts came from that sunny land of most cheering and exhilarating prospects of fussing, quarrelling, murdering, violation of contracts, and the whole catalogue of *crimen falsi*. . . It was extolled as a legal Utopia,. . ."

Frontier experiences may also be compared with those described in Francis McCurdy, *Stump, Bar, and Pulpit: Speechmaking on the Missouri Frontier* (Columbia, 1969); and William Lyon, *The Pioneer Editor in Missouri, 1800 - 1860* (Columbia, 1965).

Published and unpublished sources of Gainesville prior to the Civil War are fragmentary. Probably most early county documents were destroyed in the courthouse fire in 1853. Copies of the Gainesville *Advocate* on microfilm can be found in the Margaret Reed Crosby Memorial Library in Picayune, Mississippi, and in the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson. The archives possess perhaps the only extant hard copy of the ephemeral newspaper. Both the Crosby Library and the state archives have newspaper clippings relative to Gaineville's obliteration in the 1960s when the federal government designated the area as a rocket testsite. Nineteenth century census material on Hancock County may also be found in both places, while unpublished Works Progress Administration research material relative to Gainesville may be found in the state archives and in the City-County Public Library in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi (the WPA quote is from the latter). Police jury records beginning in the 1860s, which indicate the return of the county seat to Shieldsborough (Bay St. Louis) no later than the 1860s, are held in the Hancock County Courthouse, Bay St. Louis.

When used with care, also valuable as local history, collections of legend, folklore, and sundry apocrypha, are the privately printed works of Samuel Grady Thigpen, Sr. His *Pearl River: Highway to Glory Land* (1965); *A Boy in Rural Mississippi & Other Stories* (1966); *Old Days and*

Old Ways (1975); *Work and Play in Grandpa's Day* (1960); and *Next Door to Heaven* (1965), bristle with nostalgia, local color, and homespun values. In the latter volume, Thigpen notes the burning of the courthouse in Gainesville in 1853 and claims that it lost its county seat as early as 1857. He argues that the Louisville & Nashville Railroad shifted the majority of the population of Hancock County to that area so that by 1857 Gainesville lost out as county seat. In his *Pearl River,* he provides evidence of several Gainesville newspapers, including the Gainesville *Star*, the *Little Picayune,* and the *Pine Knot,* the latter of which he had actually seen (a single facsimile copy is in the Crosby Library). He also claims in *Pearl River* that "Gainesville was at one time listed as one of the three most important towns in South Mississippi. Though there was no railroad there, there was in Gainesville for many years a full time telegraph office, showing the importance of Gainesville as a commercial and business town." See also John H. Napier's three-part series on Gainesville, as gleaned from the *Advocate* in 1845-46, in the Picayune *Item,* June 11, 18, 25, 1953. For more on David Wingate, the Hancock County slaveowner, and other matters relative to Pearl River and Hancock Counties, see also Napier, *Lower Pearl River's Piney Woods: Its Land and People* (Oxford, MS, 1985).

The quote from Arthur Marwick is from *The Nature of History* (New York, 1971) while James G. Randall's essay "The Blundering Generation," appeared in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* 27 (June 1940), 3-28.

Lawrence J. Nelson is Associate Professor of History at the University of North Alabama, Florence. He completed an early version of this essay while serving the Pearl River County Library System in Mississippi under a Scholar-in-Residence grant from the Mississippi Committee for the Humanities. Portions of an early draft was presented to a meeting of a genealogical society in Pearl River County, Mississippi, and the early version appeared as a series in the Picayune (MS) *Item* and the Poplarville (MS) *Democrat,* and is used here by permission of the MCH, the library, and both newspapers.

Beauvoir: Jefferson Davis' Home and Biloxi's Confederate Museum

Text and photographs by Michael Thomason

Beauvoir, the antebellum mansion which became Jefferson Davis' home for the last two decades of his life, certainly lives up to its French name, "beautiful view." Although it is now separated from the Mississippi Sound by busy U.S. 90 and encircled by Biloxi-Gulfport's urban sprawl, Beauvoir still retains a large measure of its antebellum charm. As one stands on its high front porch and looks south across the Sound it is easy to understand the appeal of the place for Davis after his years of imprisonment and rootless wandering. In 1877 the house was almost a quarter century old when the former president of the Confederacy came to visit its owner and his old friend Mrs. Sarah Dorsey. Eventually he arranged to purchase the estate from Mrs. Dorsey, and here he wrote two books justifying the "Lost Cause," *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government* and *A Short History of the Confederate States of America.*

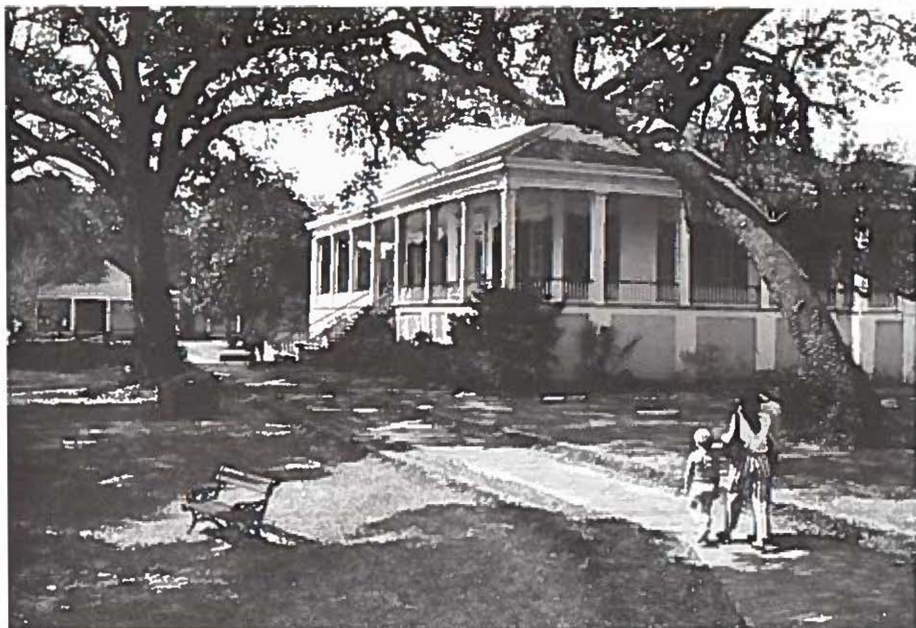
After Davis' death in 1889 his wife and daughter continued to live at Beauvoir until Mrs. Davis finally sold it in 1903 to The Mississippi Division United Sons of Confederate Veterans for much less than its market value. For many years thereafter it was a home for Confederate veterans and their wives or widows. In 1924 a hospital for the veterans was constructed east of the main buildings and today it houses an eclectic collection of memorabilia commemorating the Civil War.

Since 1941 the mansion and its grounds have been open to the general public. Over the years many original pieces of furniture have been found and returned to Beauvoir and extensive renovation of the house and grounds have been undertaken.

The Jefferson Davis Shrine (Beauvoir's official name) is open to the public every day, except Christmas, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission charge is $3.75 for adults, with reduced rates for children, military personnel and retirees. The charge admits visitors not only to the main house and its outlying buildings, including the library pavillion where Davis wrote his books, but also to the acres of parkland and picnic areas which adjoin it. There is enough space for children, cooped up in a car after a long trip, to run off a little steam, a number of nice picnic spots and several nature trails. A short stroll back of the main house is a small Confederate cemetery and adjoining it, the tomb of the unknown soldier of the Confederate States which stands alone in a field. This tomb has a disturbingly unfinished air about it. It is as if few care any more about the issues which once so passionately divided our ancestors and the tomb has

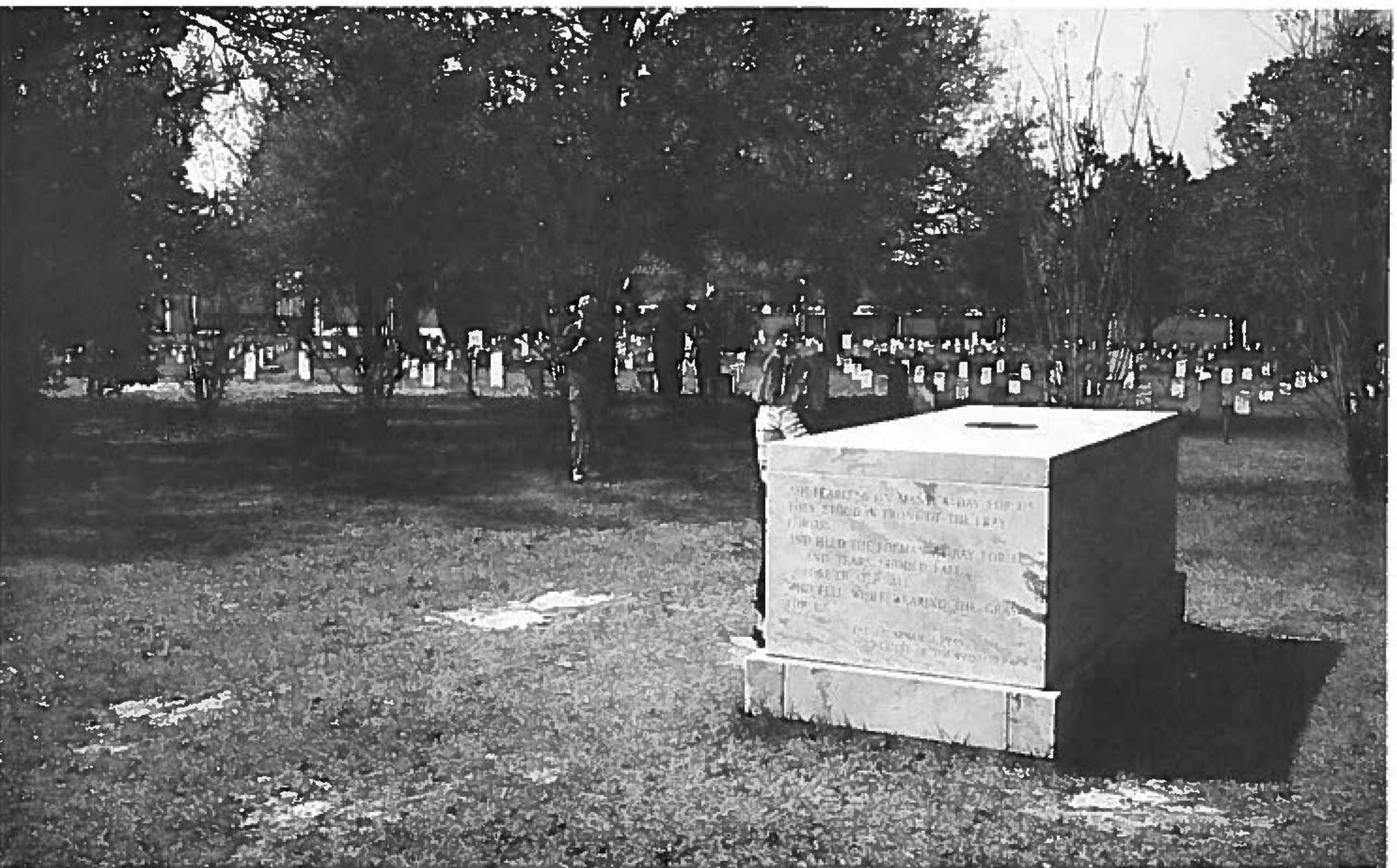
become almost an anachronism. But the man who lived out the last years of his life here cared, and for nearly a hundred years his family, friends and the descendants of his followers have cared enough to make Beauvoir the show place of the old South it was built to be. For those of us who are Civil War buffs, it is a "must see" and there is something for everyone in either the Confederate Museum (in the old hospital), or the Davis Family museum (in the basement of Beauvoir). For those who like old houses, Beauvoir is an architectural delight, built in another age for gracious living on the Gulf. Its furniture and decorations are outstanding and the structure and its contents are well maintained.

Beauvoir is a nice place to go and think; think about who we were, and who we are now, and how we have changed, and how we have not. But what would Jefferson Davis think of the crowded beaches and the modern metropolitan area which now surround his Old South refuge? He might wonder indeed who had won the war!



Beauvoir from the library pavilion

Beauvoir's front parlor and music room



Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Confederate States of America

Clio's Notes

This column is designed to note events and activities along the Gulf Coast which are important to historians. Clio in this case is performing in her traditional role as the ancient Greek muse of history but like Rome's Janus she is looking both to past and future events. The editors solicit your help in preparing this column in the future. Please send us information about scholarly meetings, speakers and notable events in your area.

On February 8-9, 1985, the Alabama Association of Historians met in Mobile. Over a hundred historians gathered at the Riverview Hotel in downtown Mobile to hear papers on a variety of topics and to sample the coastal cuisine. Dr. Russel Nye came from the University of South Florida in Tampa to describe that institution's interdisciplinary Ybor City project. The AAH meeting, co- hosted by Spring Hill College and the University of South Alabama, was a complete success, both in academic and social terms. Friday night's reception in the lobby of the historic LaClede Hotel on Government Street, as well as the Order of Inca parade added quite a bit of local color to the occasion. As the floats passed well known scholars were seen diving for dubloons and moon pies as if born to do it.

On April 12-13, 1985, The Mississippi Folklore Society, in conjunction with the Society for Ethnomusicology, met in Biloxi. A wide variety of subjects were discussed, from the story of the Public Health nurse in rural Mississippi, to studies of music as a component in black culture. Meeting arrangements were made by James C. Downey, member of the *GCHR* Editorial Advisory Board, who included an introduction to our new journal as part of Saturday's combined MFS/SEM session.

From October 31 - November 3, 1985, the annual meeting of the Oral History Association will be held in Pensacola at the Hilton Hotel. This is a national meeting which will focus on oral history in the Southeastern U.S. and the Caribbean basin. An important part of the four day gathering will be workshops on technique and methodology. There will also be panel discussions, as well as papers and speakers on a wide variety of oral history topics. For more information on this conference write Ronald Marcello, Oral History Association, NT Box 13734, Denton, Texas 76203.

Also in Pensacola, the Eleventh Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference is scheduled for March 6-8, 1986. This year's Conference theme will be "Civil War and Reconstruction on the Gulf Coast". As in previous years, the proceedings of the Conference will be published. For more information or to submit papers for consideration write to Dr. Grace Earnest, Pensacola Junior College, Pensacola, FL, 32504.

From April 24-26, 1986, the Alabama Historical Association will hold

its annual meeting in Alabama's port city. Arrangements for that event are being coordinated by Mrs. Charles T. Hartwell, Executive Director of the Historic Mobile Preservation Society and Mr. Caldwell Delaney, Director of the Museums of the City of Mobile. For more information contact Mr. Delaney at The Museums of the City of Mobile, 355 Government Street, Mobile, AL 36602. Professors and students in the history departments of the University of South Alabama and Spring Hill College will help host the meeting and make our visitors feel welcome.

If we have neglected to mention your organization's activities in this issue's "Clio's Notes," we offer our apologies. Let us know what we are missing by dropping us a line. The address is at the end of this column.

As one scholar recently noted: "Suddenly, the Coast is bursting into print!" Indeed this fall we find a marvelous variety of new publications on regional history. Look for complete reviews of these and other volumes in future *GCHR*'s, but here is a quick list for those who cannot wait. Heading the list is Harriet Amos' *Cotton City: Urban Development in Ante - Bellum Mobile* from The University of Alabama Press. Its first chapter is the basis for this issue's lead article. Also from that press comes James R. *McGovern's Black Eagle: General Daniel "Chappie" James, Jr.*, and Michael Thomason's *Trying Times: Alabama Photographs 1917 - 1945*. In Mississippi John H. Napier's *Lower Pearl River's Piney Woods; Its Land and People* is being published by The Center for the Study of Southern Culture, University of Mississippi. Also available in stores from Mobile to New Orleans is Charles L. Sullivan's *The Mississippi Gulf Coast: Portrait of a People,* published by Windsor Publications, Northridge, CA. Murella Powell collaborated with Sullivan in preparing *The Mississippi Gulf Coast.* This volume joins earlier Windsor histories on New Orleans and Mobile.

In addition to these volumes there are a variety of publications of more local interest which add to our understanding of this region. The *GCHR* also plans to review these in its next issues. If you know of forthcoming publications which would interest *GCHR* readers contact us, or better yet, send us a copy so that we can help publicize them.

Speaking of "bursting into print" there is even a new journal out . . . *The Gulf Coast Historical Review*!

Take Note, Clio!

If you have something you would like to see in Clio's Notes, just write us at: Clio's Notes, *GCHR*, History Department / Humanities 344, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL 36688.

Essay Contest Announcement

As a way of stimulating research and writing on Gulf Coast history, the *Gulf Coast Historical Review* will be conducting an annual essay contest. The contest is open to graduate or undergraduate students and the winner's article - length essay will be published in a forthcoming issue of the *GCHR*. In addition, the winner will receive a $100-prize and a subscription to *GCHR*. Second prize is $50.00 and a subscription. Third prize is a year's subscription. Second and third prize winners' papers may be published at the option of the editors. Contest rules are as follows:

All submissions must be the original work of a graduate or undergraduate student.

The paper must concern itself with some aspect of Gulf Coast history.

The text of the paper must be 15-25 pages long, typewritten, double - spaced. Footnotes and bibliographic material may occupy additional pages.

Deadline for submission for this year's contest is January 1, 1986.

All entrants will be reviewed by a panel of judges whose decisions will be final.

For more information write: Dr. Michael Thomason at the *Gulf Coast Historical Review*.

When Downtowns Were The Thing: On the Streets of Gulf Coast Cities in the "Roaring Twenties"

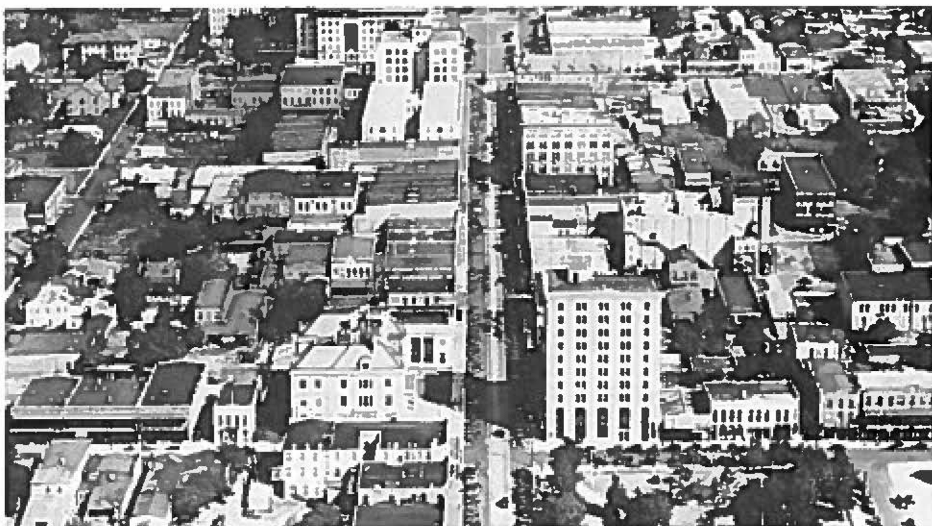
Michael Thomason

What was it like on the streets of Pensacola, Mobile, Biloxi or Gulfport at the end of the Roaring Twenties? In the days before shopping malls or interstate highways, when street cars still lorded it over the upstart motorcars and franchise food was unknown, what was it like to live in a city along the Gulf?

By American standards three of these cities could boast of ancient lineage. In Florida only St. Augustine was older than Pensacola, while Mobile and Biloxi could trace their heritage to French colonial days, long before there was such a thing as Mississippi or Alabama. Gulfport was the newcomer, having been founded May 3, 1887 by railroad speculators. All the cities claimed importance as resorts or ports of varying size and attraction. Each remembered and cultivated its colonial and/or Southern heritage.

Although relatively close together three of the four metropolitan areas were divided from one another by state boundaries and from other metropolitan areas in their own state by geographic realities. Thus each was isolated in a sense, yet all had much in common as well. Photographs taken in the twenties show us developed urban centers with architecture largely a product of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There is relatively little to suggest colonial times or even the antebellum era in these city scenes. Nor is there a hint of the hard times to come in the Depression, or those already there in slums that were rarely photographed.

The photographs do suggest that there was an ordered and relatively compact quality to the built environment of Gulf Coast cities in the twenties. There is also a feeling of excitement and adventure engendered by Mardi Gras celebrations, beauty pageants, or occasional daredevils scaling tall buildings. The coastal cities were the "bright lights at the end of the road" to farm folks from the interior counties of Alabama, Mississippi and Florida's panhandle. Whether it was the grand movie palaces (how many Saenger Theaters were there?), the sumptuous hotels and restaurants, or the hustle and bustle of the busy commercial streets, downtowns along the Gulf Coast were "the thing," the places where the twenties roared the loudest.



Pensacola was laid out to provide for a commercial district along Palafox Street separated from the residential area by Garden Street. In this aerial view, made in the late twenties, Plaza Ferdinand is in the lower left hand corner, Palafox divides the picture from right to left and Garden is near the top. North of Garden Street, Palafox briefly widened into a broad parkway. With over 30,000 residents Pensacola was second only in size to Mobile among the coastal cities when this picture was taken. (Special Collections, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida)

Like most sizable American metropolitan areas, all the Gulf Coast cities still had street car lines in the twenties. Here the North Hill trolley is shown as it crosses Garden on Palafox traveling north. However, unable to meet the growing competition of buses and private autos, street cars disappeared in Pensacola in the early thirties. (Special Collections, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida)

A crowd gathered outside Pensacola's San Carlos hotel at Palafox and Garden in 1925 as Adelia Rosasco climbed the building to raise money for the Confederate Memorial at Stone Mountain, Georgia. Her efforts were both exciting and successful. (Special Collections, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida)

With over 60,000 citizens Mobile was the largest coastal city between Tampa and New Orleans. It was also a commercial and banking center second only to Birmingham within Alabama. Its prosperity and importance are reflected in this 1929 view of Bienville Square, as the new Merchant's Bank Building was nearing completion. (Erik Overbey/Mobile Public Library Collection, USA Photo Archives)

Mobile, Alabama's port city, has grown up close to the railroad yards, warehouses and waterfront upon which its economic life depends. When this picture was made early in the twenties there was no Alabama State Docks or causeway across the bay, so bay boats, tugs, and ocean going vessels crowded together along the riverside. Near the top of the picture Bienville Square and the city's commercial and retail district are also visible. (Erik Overbey/Mobile Public Library Collection, USA Photo Archives)

Mobile has long claimed the distinction of being "The Mother of Mystics," or founder of Mardi Gras along the Gulf Coast. Bienville Square was the center of Mardi Gras activity as most parades marched around it through crowds gathered to enjoy the elaborate floats and perhaps catch one of the trinkets thrown by the maskers. In this photo the King's float pauses as it approaches the square at the height of a late twenties' carnival. (Erik Overbey/Mobile Public Library Collection, USA Photo Archives)

At the end of the twenties when this photo was made, Biloxi had a population of over 16,000 people. In this picture we are looking west on Howard Street at Lamuse. As in Pensacola, street cars ran in Biloxi until they were replaced by buses in the early thirties. The tracks are visible in this picture. (Erik Overbey/Mobile Public Library Collection, USA Photo Archives)

A mecca for tourists from all over the nation Biloxi looked out on the Mississippi Sound across miles of white beaches. The lure of those beaches is suggested by this aerial view of the city made in 1939. (Biloxi Public Library)

From 1919 to 1934 the Elks in Biloxi sponsored a beauty contest and patriotic celebration every July 4. Known simply as the "Elk Pat" the affair raised money for the Biloxi hospital. The Depression's hard times finally ended the celebration which was held along Beach Boulevard between Main and Lamuse Streets. These pictures were made of an "Elk Pat" late in the twenties at the height of its popularity. (Erik Overbey / Mobile Public Library Collection, USA Photo Archives.)

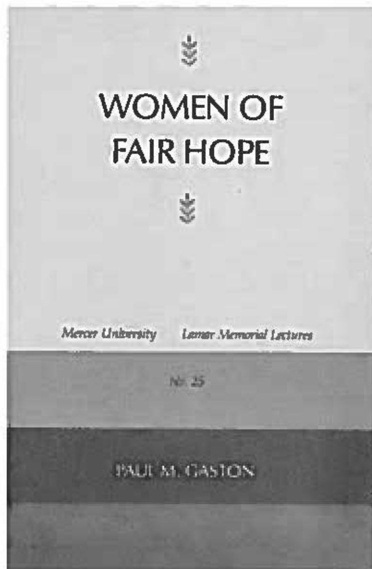
Gulfport, Biloxi's neighbor on the west, had over 14,000 inhabitants at the end of the twenties. Its civic pride was boosted by the construction of the Bank of Gulfport which dominated the city's skyline from its location on 14th Street. This photo was made late in the twenties on 21st Avenue looking east toward 14th Street. (Erik Overbey / Mobile Public Library Collection, USA Photo Archives)

Across the street from the Bank of Gulfport these three young ladies were photographed as they crossed 14th Street in the late twenties. Dressed in the practical fashions of their day, they epitomized the strides toward modernity made in all the Gulf Coast cities during the "prosperity decade." (Jackie Scarborough and Russell Hatten)

Book Reviews

Paul M. Gaston. *Women of Fair Hope.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984, pp. 143. $13.50.

This delightful little book is an expansion of the twenty-fifth Lamar Memorial Lectures at Mercer University which Paul Gaston delivered in 1981. The author, Professor of History at the University of Virginia, is a native of Fairhope, Alabama, and the grandson of Ernest B. Gaston, founder and long time leader of the single-tax colony. Although this work is not a history of Fairhope, its readers will learn a good deal about the nature of the colony and the spirit behind the communitarian experiment launched there in the late eighteen-nineties by followers of Henry George from the middle west.



Gaston writes about three very different women, each of whom made an unusual contribution in her own way to the success of the Fairhope colony. Nancy Lewis, a middle aged black woman, was already living on the site of the utopian experiment when the first colonists arrived in 1895. Nancy, a widow who farmed land belonging to the estate of John Bowen and paid taxes regularly on it, was not willing to give up her home without a fight. Although the single-taxers were anxious to acquire the land, they agreed to compensate her for the improvements she had made on it, and a short time later E. B. Gaston helped acquire a new forty acre tract nearby for Nancy.

It is doubtful if Nancy Lewis ever knew the other two women Gaston writes about - Marie Howland and Marietta Johnson. Marie Howland, a native of New Hampshire, was a well-known communitarian reformer (a disciple of Charles Fourier), feminist, and author when she arrived in Alabama in 1899. Marie soon became deeply involved in many of the community's activities. She directed its library for many years and is especially remembered for her championing of women's liberation. Although once passionately devoted to the idea of a "grand domestic revolution," she modified her views in later years as she became increasingly committed to the single-tax philosophy.

Marietta Johnson is perhaps the best known of these three extraordinary women. A giant in the progressive education movement of the

early twentieth century, she superimposed upon the Fairhope single-tax experiment a laboratory for a new type of education. Her famous organic school, whose progress was carefully watched for many years by the *New York Times*, almost perished in the Depression-ridden thirties. But Minnesota-born Marietta Johnson never gave up hope, and her beloved school survived her. Like her friend, John Dewey, she was concerned with the education of the whole child in a very flexibly structured non-competitive environment. Marietta was not only an indefatigable worker in the development and operation of her organic school in Fairhope, but travelled widely until advanced in age, to deliver her message to others. For many years her school depended on valuable support from northern friends and from the presence of boarding students from outside of Fairhope. Though she was never able to commit significant numbers of educators to what she called "The Fairhope Idea in Education," Marietta Johnson's legacy in progressive education was enormous.

The author, who was educated at the organic school in Fairhope, had access to its records as well as those of the Fairhope Single Tax Colony archives. He was able to interview several former teachers and students of the school, and has also made effective use of the *Fairhope Courier*, which his grandfather edited for many years. Historians of the Gulf Coast, as well as those of utopian communities, will look forward to Paul Gaston's definitive work on Fairhope.

Howard W. Smith — Spring Hill College

Frank Lawrence Owsley, Jr. *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands: The Creek War and the Battle of New Orleans, 1812-1815.* Gainesville: A University of Florida Book, University Presses of Florida, 1981, pp. 255. $20.00.

Few areas of Southern history have received less attention nationally than that of the Gulf Coast, a failure largely explained by preoccupation of historians with slavery and the Civil War and by the difficulty of using sources in the archives of London, Seville, and Paris. Scholars particularly have ignored the significant role of the Old Southwest in events preceding and during the War of 1812. Hence, this book by Professor Frank Lawrence Owsley, Jr. of Auburn University fills a long - existing historiographical void and directs attention to a number of topics deserving more intensive investigation.

Originally, Owsley proposed to write an account of the Creek War, but he wisely recognized the considerable implications of that little - understood confrontation. Fortunately, he broadened his study into an insightful analysis of the interrelationships of that Indian conflict to the War of 1812.

In the process, he explains quite fully the complexities of British and Spanish involvement and the importance of events in the Old Southwest to the nation as a whole. To Owsley, perhaps the most significant developments of the Creek War were the assembly of a trained American army on the Gulf Coast and the emergence of Andrew Jackson as a national hero.

American scholars generally tend to write our history from a one-sided perspective, ignoring the international forces at play. Since this omission is particularly true with reference to developments in the Mississippi Valley and along the Gulf Coast, it is heartening to notice the emphasis which Owsley places on British and Spanish sources. One of the best of his seventeen brief chapters deals with the British and Spanish roles which heretofore have been viewed rather simplistically. Though neither of the nations armed or incited the Indians in the South as extensively or directly as is often assumed, their presence definitely led - or, at times, misled - hostile Indian factions to a greater boldness. Professor Owsley also calls attention to the often ignored British tactic of recruiting black troops from among escaped or captured slaves belonging to the Spanish in Florida as well as Anglo - Americans above and below the thirty - first parallel which divided Spanish Florida from Mississippi Territory. This tactic had a greater impact on contemporary participants than on later chroniclers and historians.

As its subtitle suggests, over half of the book pertains to Andrew Jackson whom the author rates as "probably the ablest general in North America in 1815" (p. 5); Owsley's reliance on British and Spanish sources enables him to place Old Hickory's achievements in proper perspective. Nevertheless, in order to fully understand and appreciate Jackson, the person, one must read along with Owsley's work the first volume of Robert V. Remini's triology, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767 - 1821*. Remini, whom Owsley credits and praises, is able through a biographical style to recreate more closely the mood and emotional climate of historical moments such as those at Fort Jackson and the Battle of New Orleans.

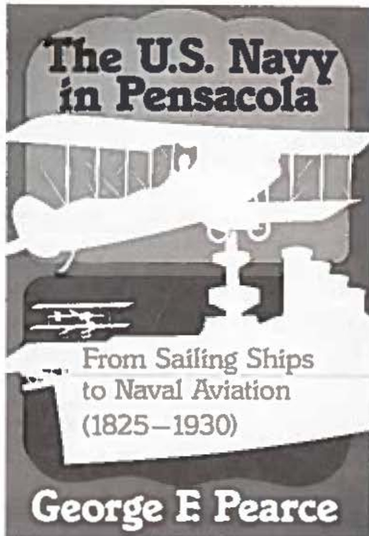
Academicians as well as history buffs who have not kept current in the historiography of the War of 1812 will benefit greatly from this work which brings long overdue attention to the significance of events along the Gulf

Coast. Readers who do not wish to read this book from cover to cover should at least study the historiographical treatment in the "Introduction" and the summary of the significance of the Creek War and the War of 1812 in the final chapter. Colleagues who have worked in many of the same records particularly will appreciate the bibliography in this attractively designed, well-indexed volume containing nine helpful maps. Indeed, Frank Owsley, Jr. has authored a book that should be studied by anyone having an interest in the history of the Gulf Coast, the Indians of the Southeast, or the War of 1812.

John D. W. Guice University of Southern Mississippi

Pearce, George F. *The U.S. Navy in Pensacola: From Sailing Ships to Naval Aviation (1825-1930)*. Pensacola: A University of West Florida Book, University Presses of Florida, 1980, pp. 207. $18.00.

The history of important and long-established United States military installations is a topic greatly neglected by historians. *The U.S. Navy in Pensacola,* by Professor George F. Pearce, of the University of West Florida, partially fills that gap by detailing the history of the Pensacola navy base from its inception in the 1820s until it had already become well-established as the center of naval aviation in the 1920s.



There is much to praise in Professor Pearce's work. It is based almost entirely upon primary sources (government records, diaries, letters, memoirs, interviews and contemporary newspapers). The use of original materials gives the author's work both great credibility and a strong flavor of the times.

Also, Professor Pearce deftly interweaves the story of the naval base with that of the Pensacola area, thereby telling the reader a great deal about local, as well as military, history. This integration of two different branches of history is most praiseworthy.

Finally, the author's style is fluent and clear. Therefore, this book is one that is not only informative, but also pleasant to read.

Dr. Pearce's work is not, however, without flaws. Most importantly, the book ends with an abruptness that is startling. Despite a concluding "Epilogue", after nearly 200 pages of well-researched and well-written

history, the work simply stops for no apparent historical reason.

In addition, *The U.S. Navy in Pensacola* is lacking in maps, the only one appearing on page 76. Further, some of the illustrations that are included are poorly identified. Professor Pearce does not seem to be familiar with aviation. This is occasionally evident in the latter portion of the book, where he has difficulty dealing with the early aircraft in use at Pensacola Naval Air Station. One sees pictures of blimps, while the author speaks of dirigibles - two very different things.

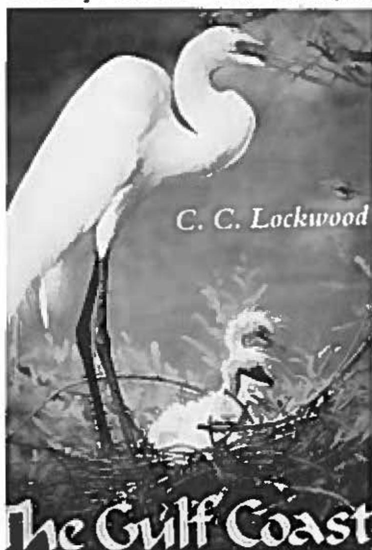
Finally, Dr. Pearce often does not integrate the history of the naval base with national events. This is especially evident in the chapter on the U.S. Civil War, where one would be lost unless he knew the broader context of the material covered in this work.

All in all, however, *The U.S. Navy in Pensacola* is a very good book on a neglected subject. It is to be hoped that Professor Pearce plans a sequel, carrying the history of Pensacola's naval base on to the Vietnam era.

W. Robert Houston — University of South Alabama

C. C. Lockwood. *The Gulf Coast: Where Land Meets Sea.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984, pp. 150. $29.95.

It is a natural question to ask "What's the Gulf Coast?" Unlike some geographical terms its definition is not self evident. Where does it start, and what common bond holds it together? It is fragmented into many political jurisdictions and home to a great diversity of man and beast. The Gulf Coast is everything from Condos to Cajuns and from clear water to brackish swamp. It is the Old South, the "Red Neck Riviera," a sportsman's paradise, a reservoir of petrochemicals and home to one of the nation's largest fishing industries. The Coast has seen all the great European empires come and go, a new nation develop, divide, fight, reunite and eventually grow together. Its riches are many, but its pockets of poverty, however quaint, are undeniable.



But what is the Gulf Coast? Is it simply the sum of the diverse experiences of the various peoples who have passed through or is there a tie that binds us all, past and present? *The Gulf Coast* argues powerfully that there is such a tie and it is our peculiar, fragile, distinctive environment upon which we all ultimately depend. This thesis is hardly unique to Mr. Lockwood's book but

his photographic proof of it is awesome. Even for those of us who believe "roughing it" is black and white TV, Lockwood's pictures offer convincing evidence that we are living in one of the most beautiful areas on the face of the earth.

This is a gorgeous book from first page to last. The quality of Lockwood's photographs ranges from very good to outstanding and the reproductions are excellent. But it is not just a pretty book nor is it a whitewash of the environmental dangers our region faces. In his text Lockwood raises these issues and explains how man's historic intervention in the natural order of things often has caused severe if unanticipated problems. Deltas die, barrier islands are lost, condos crowd out the dunes that best protect the land and everywhere those animals whose home this region is must adapt or die.

The text of *The Gulf Coast* is not long, but it is an interesting account of the author's voyage of discovery which began in Louisiana and took him from Brownsville to Key West. It is a likable text written by a thoughtful person who can learn from what he sees. Best of all he can show us what we need to see to appreciate our common environment.

The term "coffee table book" has come to mean a pretty but unchallenging volume, long on decoration and short on substance. By that definition *The Gulf Coast: Where Land Meets Sea* is not a coffee table book. It does have both visual and narrative substance. It is beautiful but provocative because it makes you realize that who we are is a product of where we are. We must learn to respect and care for this place and Lockwood's book gives us every reason to do just that. Gertrude Stein could never have said that there was "no there there" about this region. *The Gulf Coast* shows us ourselves and the land and sea that has shaped our history and upon which it has been acted out.

This is a fine book. It must be because everyone borrowed my copy, but it is a good book too, because it always was returned with thanks and praise for its beauty and insight.

Michael Thomason — University of South Alabama

Martha H. Swain. *Pat Harrison: The New Deal Years*: Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1978, pp. 316. $15.00

This study of Mississippi Senator Pat Harrison's New Deal years is now seven years old and has already been reviewed in a number of other scholarly publications. Perhaps it is worthy of yet another review and especially in this new journal devoted to the Gulf Coast. After all the Mississippi Gulf Coast was Senator Harrison's home where he frequently

returned from his sojourns in Washington and where he was permanently laid to rest in 1941. This is not an indepth biography of Senator Harrison. Professor Swain summarizes the pre-New Deal years and devotes the book primarily to the years from 1933 to 1941. Swain details the major issues which Harrison confronted during Roosevelt's first two terms and the beginning of his third term and the senator's relationship with the president during those years.

Harrison began his thirty year congressional career in 1911 when Mississippians elected him to the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1918, they elevated him to the U.S. Senate where he served until his death in 1941. As a Democrat Harrison became known as a "Gad-fly" during the 1920s when the Republicans controlled national affairs. With the Democratic victory of 1932 Harrison emerged as one of the most powerful men in Congress. His chairmanship of the Senate Finance Committee gave him control of the purse strings to such an extent that much New Deal legislation became law which without his leadership might well have been lost or seriously diluted. His relationship with the Democratic liberals could never be classified as a real romance, and while he supported New Deal programs because of party loyalty, his distaste for many of them was obvious to careful observers. President Roosevelt recognized Harrison's dilemma and helped defeat him for election as Senate Majority Leader in 1937. This cooled the Harrison-Roosevelt entente which never returned to its pre-1937 level.

Professor Swain has captured the real essence of Harrison as a politician. This book is highly recommended for those who would like to know more about Harrison and the New Deal. It is based upon careful and solid research and is well-written.

William S. Coker — University of West Florida

From the Archives: Cookin' with History . . . an Old South Catsup Recipe

In the nineteenth century, Americans used an extraordinary variety of catsups, or ketchups, a term originally signifying any spicy puree used for flavoring gravies, sauces or soups. A concoction of green walnuts originally vied for popularity with mushroom catsup. The first published recipe for tomato catsup that I have encountered was in Mrs. Randolph's *Virginia Housewife* (1824). Thereafter, the tomato version was featured in all American cookbooks, although as late as 1865, it was not recognized in Mrs. Beeton's authoritative British guide. *The Carolina Housewife* (1847), for example, offered two varieties, along with one each for walnut and mushroom. By 1887, the steward for the White House was offering ten catsup recipes, including walnut, oyster, mushroom, celery, cucumber, gooseberry, plum and three versions of the increasingly popular tomato catsup. [Mrs. F. L. Gillette and Hugo Ziemann, *The White House Cook Book*, (Chicago, 1887)]. By the latter part of the century, "catsup" had come to signify, in the United States, a puree of tomatoes cooked with spices, vinegar, and - in increasing amounts - sugar. Earlier catsups never used sugar and typically used less vinegar than 20th century versions. The following recipe, found in the papers of Mobile's German Relief Association, is reminiscent of the one termed by Ziemann "a valuable Southern recipe." It was probably an old recipe when Oscar E. Teichman, long time secretary of the Association, copied it. Like earlier versions, it contains no sugar and only one-half as much vinegar as commonly called for in cookbooks around 1900 when Teichman probably copied it. It is an excellent recipe which produces a thick puree with natural tomato taste enlivened with a zesty quality from healthy portions of mustard and cayenne. By "mustard" the author undoubtedly intended the dry powder. The best vinegar for this purpose would be the red-wine type. Many Southern recipes, in fact, specified that the vinegar be from Port wine. Try it!

George Daniels

Tomato Catsup –

1 gallon of Tomatoes (that is after they are all boiled down) 4 Tablespoonfuls of Salt, 3 Tablespoonfuls of pepper 3 tablespoonfuls of mustard, 1/2 tablespoonful of allspice 1/2 tablespoonful of ground Cloves. 1 tablespoonful cayenne pepper. – 1 pint of Vinegar – to be simmered for 1 Hour. Scald and skin the tomatoes first and thoroughly boil them (they can scarcely be done to much) before adding the above ingredients. when cold put into old pickle bottles and seal the corks.

German Relief Association Papers,
University of South Alabama Archives and Special Collections

Notes