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Gulf South Historical Review

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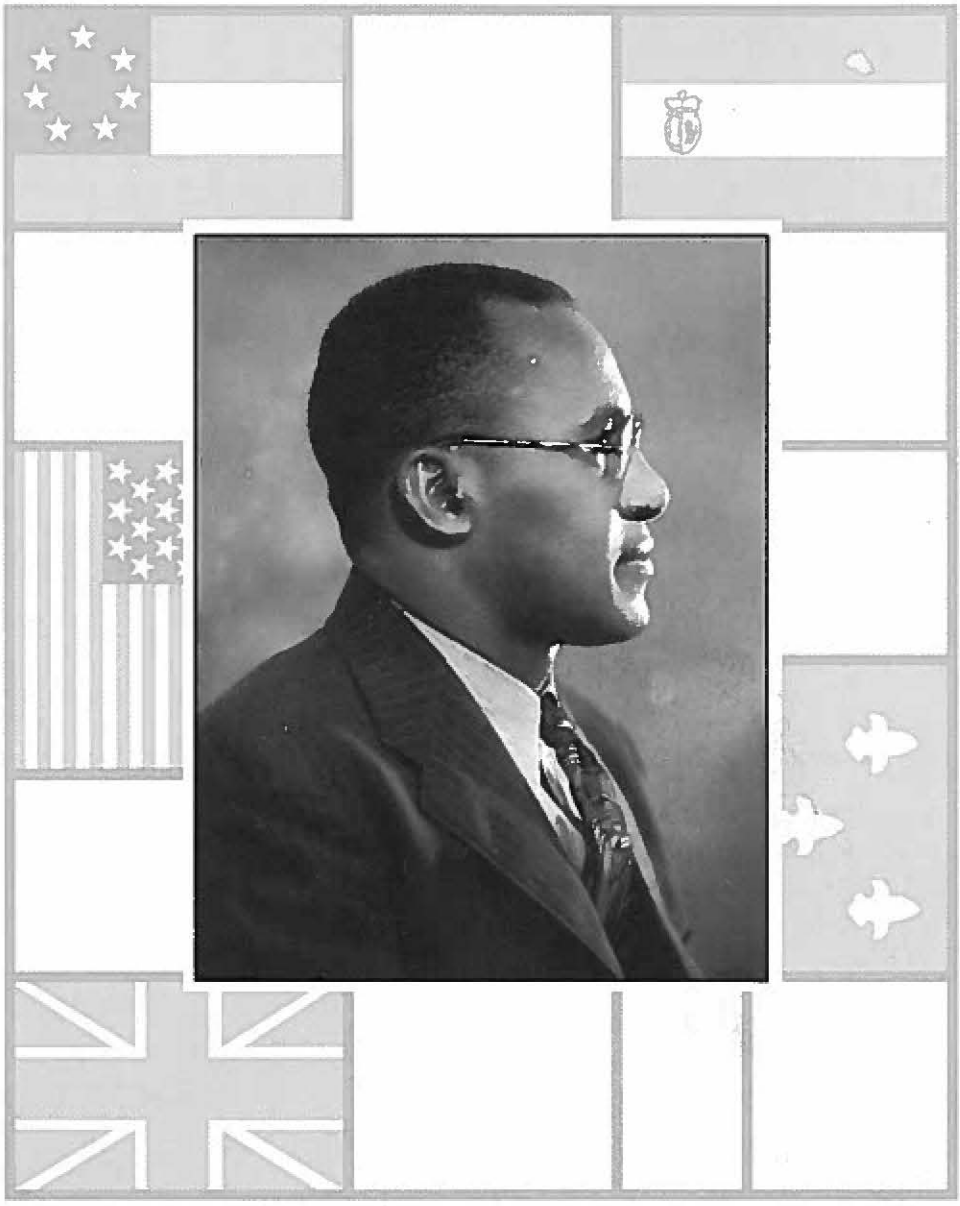

GSHR Gulf South Historical Review

Vol. 15 Fall 1999 No. 1

From the Editor . . .

You will get this issue of the Gulf South Historical Review in time to remind you of the fall meeting of our Association, October 14-16 in Pensacola. We are enclosing a brochure about the meeting and hope you can come. The sessions look very interesting and the Pensacola meetings are always most enjoyable. Also there is a subscription order form with this issue. Please pass it on to someone who might enjoy receiving the journal and being a member of our association. Even better, fill it out and return it to us as a gift subscription. The holidays, as the merchants never fail to remind us, are almost here! A gift subscription will make the recipient happy and also help the GSHR remain solvent. We need subscribers to pay the bills and if you like what we're doing and what the Gulf South Historical Association is all about, help recruit new subscribers/members.

This issue touches on a wide range of themes from the colonial period to the Modern Civil Rights era. We start with a study of Americans in Spanish West Florida two centuries ago and then on to the story of a lighthouse once so important, now largely forgotten. The last articles are an account of labor relations in the New Orleans black community in the 1930s, and an examination of the contributions of John LeFlore to race relations in modern Mobile. The usual group of book reviews follows and then a brief "From the Archives" on the story of the *Clotilda*, a cautionary tale about accepting a legend at face value.

On a sad note we report the death of Dr. Kim Hanger, a young scholar of colonial Louisiana, whose promise and extraordinary achievement were cut short by Leukemia. She will be missed by many, but her pioneering work will be a fitting legacy.

The *Gulf South Historical Review* is the journal of the Gulf South History and Humanities Conference. It is published biannually in the Fall and Spring by the History Department of the University of South Alabama. The subscription price is $20.00 a year with payment to accompany order. Inquiries about subscriptions should be sent to the History Department of the University of South Alabama, HumB 344, Mobile, AL 36688-0002. Manuscripts may be submitted to Dr. Thomason. E-mail communications may be sent to Dr. Thomason at mthomaso@jaguar1.usouthal.edu. Further information about the *GSHR* can be found on the web at *www.southalabama.edu/archives*. Click on publications. Authors should write for the *GSHR* style sheet before submitting a manuscript. All submissions are subject to the blind peer review process. Any claims for lost or missing issues must be made within six months of that issue's publication. The *Gulf South Historical Review* is not responsible for statements or opinion or fact made by its contributors. The *GSHR* is indexed and abstracted in *America: History and Life*. This journal is printed on acid-free paper.

Dr. Kimberly S. Hanger, 1961-1999

Kimberly S. Hanger, a remarkable young historian of Spanish colonial Louisiana, died of complications from leukemia on March 9, 1999, at St. John's Hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She was thirty-seven. A native of Salt Lake City, Utah, Dr. Hanger was the Museum Historian and Director of Research at the Louisiana State Museum from 1990 to 1993, where she developed the Cabildo's permanent exhibit on colonial Louisiana. She was adjunct assistant professor in the department of history at the University of New Orleans from 1992 to 1993. From 1993 until her death she was assistant professor of history at the University of Tulsa. Dr. Hanger received her B.A. and her M.A. from the University of Utah in 1983, and 1985, respectively, and was a member of Phi Alpha Theta and Phi Beta Kappa. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Florida in 1991, where she won the Roger Haigh Latin American History Award. Her book, *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: Free Black Society in Colonial New Orleans, 1769-1803* (1997) received the Kemper and Leila Williams Prize awarded by the Louisiana Historical Association and the Historic New Orleans Collection. It is generally recognized as one of the leading studies of New Orleans and is considered a landmark in the scholarship of its free black community in the Spanish period. Dr. Hanger was also the author of *A Medley of Cultures: Louisiana History at the Cabildo (1996)* and numerous articles and essays, and frequently presented papers at scholarly meetings.

Dr. Hanger was an active officer of the Louisiana Historical Association. She also served as the first President of the Latin American-Caribbean History Section of the Southern Historical Association, 1998-99, president of the Oklahoma Association of Professional Historians, 1998-99, and was a member of the Program Committee of the Conference on Latin American History, and of the Board of Trustees of the Oklahoma Humanities Council.

Dr. Hanger is survived by her husband, Gregory E. Hanger, and by her father, Victor Stuckenschneider.

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Cover Photo: John LeFlore

The Americanization of the Second Spanish Period West Florida Interior

Harry J. Wilson

The latter years of the Second Spanish period in West Florida (1781-1821) witnessed a rapid migration of Anglo-American settlers into present-day Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, particularly after 1817. Historical and archaeological records indicate that a substantial number of these Americans followed the Escambia River south into Spanish West Florida and settled illegally on or near the river valley.[1] The records also indicate that these interlopers came with specific skills and economic interests, established small communities in select environments, and began to exploit the area's natural resources. Their encroachment facilitated the rush of Americans south into West Florida after the United States acquired the region in 1821.

Little is known of these settlers, as their history has been overshadowed by events in Pensacola. However, the scant archival and archaeological data portray a dynamic West Florida interior, occupied by a self-sufficient people who began supplying Pensacola with agricultural products as early as 1820. An 1820 Spanish census of the Escambia River and the 1825 American Land Office Records of West Florida provide most of the cultural data. Early nineteenth-century Spanish and American maps and surveys offer many of the geographic elements of the study.

Although both Spain and Great Britain took measures to promote settlement during the years that each controlled the West Florida region, neither colonial power accomplished this with any lasting effect. It would have been beneficial for either government to establish and maintain a more self-sufficient and productive colony. Greater populations would also have meant a greater deterrent against attack from any neighboring foreign forces. The majority of the early Spanish inhabitants of the area, from 1698 to 1763, lived in close proximity to the initial three settlements on Pensacola Bay and relied more on trade and subsidies from the Crown than on local production.[2] The greatest influx of settlers occurred just before and during the American Revolution when Great Britain controlled the region as Loyalists moved south from northern colonies. Most of these, however, remained only long enough to secure passage to safer locales.[3] Nearly all English inhabitants departed after Spain reclaimed West Florida in 1781.[4] Though the subsequent Spanish administration in West Florida did

attempt to lure American settlers to the region with fewer strict regulations, these attempts were not a priority and had little effect.[5]

The Spanish in Pensacola, the seat of West Florida government and center of military activity in the region, had more pressing problems than promoting legal settlement, most of which involved maintaining their borders against pressures from a newly-formed United States. Through treaty and hostile takeover, Spanish West Florida had contracted into the region east of the Perdido River and south of the thirty-first parallel by 1813. Throughout the early years of the century, the Pensacola administration was ill-equipped to keep the peace or secure enough provisions for the town.[6] The invasions of American forces under Andrew Jackson, a brief British occupation of the city, and fear that Spain would relinquish control of the Floridas led to trade problems in Pensacola. Spanish Governor José Callava became more willing to accept provisions from wherever they came, including supplies that could be had from the hundreds of Americans who had recently settled north of the city.

Anglo-Americans migrated south and west during this time at a rapid rate, most settling within the territories recently acquired by the United States. By 1820 more than five thousand lived north of Pensacola in present day Conecuh County, Alabama.[7] Hundreds more crossed the border into Spanish West Florida and settled illegally along the Escambia River. Their presence met little resistance, and so their numbers continued to increase throughout the period.

In the summer of 1820 Governor Callava undertook a census of the Americans north of Pensacola to assess their worth and possible threat.[8] The administrator of the census traveled throughout the region gathering information such as name, race, origin, age, livestock counts, and rough estimates of land under cultivation. The census, while not completed due to adverse weather, provided interesting data about the composition of the American community. It documented 380 Anglo-Americans and 73 black slaves raising 1,577 oxen and 1,160 hogs, and cultivating roughly 1,264 arpents or approximately 1,075 acres of land. In spite of the large numbers of settlers and disregarding their apparent lawlessness, the governor decided to allow them to stay in West Florida because they provided Pensacola with rice, corn, beans, tobacco, and cotton, thus decreasing the town's dependence on other sources.[9]

Most of these settlers stayed in the area after the United States acquired the Floridas in 1821, petitioning for land in the new territory four years later. In 1824 the United States established special commissions in St. Augustine and Pensacola to investigate and validate Spanish and American land claims in East and West Florida. When this

process began in Pensacola, Commissioners Samuel Overton and Joseph White began reviewing claims.[10] Most of the 148 Anglo-Americans who petitioned for land donations near the city desired land along the Escambia River valley just south of the Alabama state line. Federal regulations required that American claimants prove to the commissioners that they had settled and improved their claim before cession of the Florida territory in 1821. Procedures required the claimants to provide the date of settlement, how long the land had been under cultivation, number of acres cultivated, and a general location of their farms. Witnesses validated the information provided by most claimants.

The 1820 Spanish census and the 1824 land proceedings records provide a wealth of information about the Anglo-Americans. These settlers cultivated a substantial amount of land, raised a considerable number of livestock, and were allowed to do so by the Spanish administration. Most lived along the Escambia River.

The dates of settlement given by the petitioners offer the first evidence of their motives for coming into Spanish West Florida. The overwhelming majority came to the region after the signing of the Adams-Onis Treaty on February 22, 1819. The treaty assured that the Floridas would eventually be passed to the United States. This happened in 1821 after many of the treaty's details had been ratified by the United States and Spain.[11] News of the signing of the Adams–Onis Treaty may have provided the impetus for the rush of Americans into Spanish West Florida.[12] Those seeking donations of land in Florida did so in accordance with a Congressional act regarding settlement which had been administered in other newly admitted territories. Americans who came into Spanish West Florida after news of the Adams Onis Treaty may have realized the possibility of claiming land in the region based on this act. It was decided, however, that only those seventeen Anglo-Americans who settled in West Florida before February 22, 1819, would be given land donations.[13]

Further insight into their motives can be deduced from analyzing the geographic settlement of Americans into West Florida. Claimants along the Escambia drainage gave geographic locations to the commissioners in generic terms, typically in miles or proximity to other American settlers. Figure 1 shows the generic location of seventy-three settlers derived from this geographic information or by cross referencing these claims to later land proceedings and community histories. When related to the landscape, the land claim information depicts a steady flow of settlers down the Escambia drainage from 1817 to 1821. The settlement analysis implies that isolated farmsteads were scattered on land forms adjacent to river tributaries.

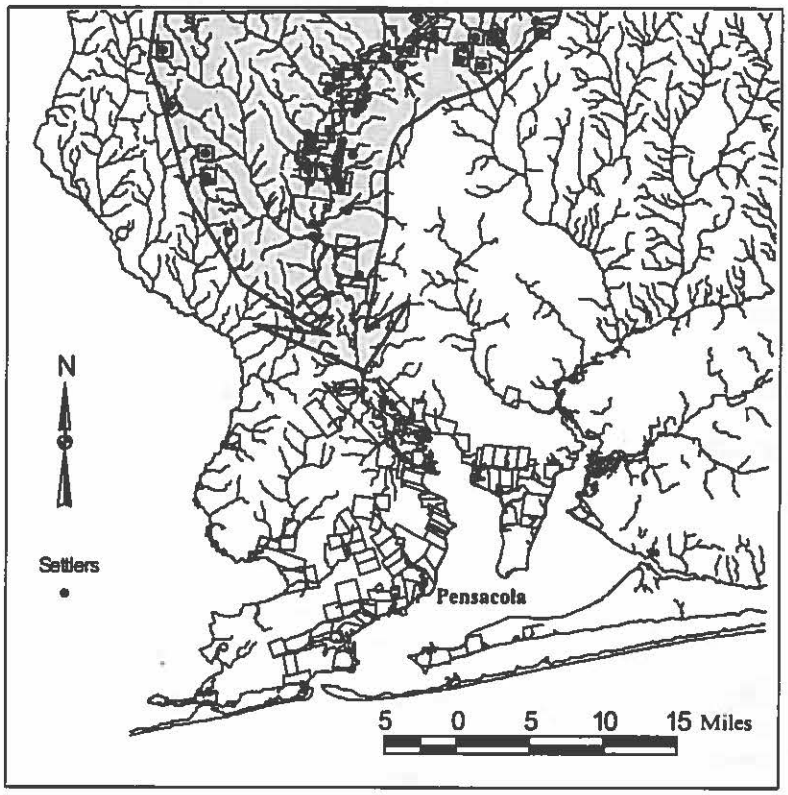


Figure 1. American encroachment into Spanish West Florida 1817-1821.

The pattern of life in West Florida was based on the development of hamlets or loose irregular villages. Living along the Escambia River during this period was very dangerous and difficult, and it was in all settlers' best interests to form cohesive nucleated settlements in order to survive.[14] The Land Commission proceedings indicate that reciprocal relationships fostered by Americans also facilitated the formation of communities. A careful analysis of petitions for land donations indicates that individuals witnessed for each other at the land commission proceedings, cultivated land near lands of their witnesses, and gave generic locations of their households in reference to their witnesses. Therefore, settlers established reciprocal relationships with their neighbors quite early, relationships which facilitated community development.[15]

Kinship was also important in the American settlement of the Escambia drainage. The records reveal at least seven instances where heads of households settled near their kin. In six of these cases, one household of a specific extended family moved into West Florida before others of his kin, suggesting that the earliest established his settlement

and sent for his relatives. In four instances, members of the kin groups witnessed for each other at the land commission proceedings.

Archaeological investigations, though lacking in numbers, provide additional evidence regarding the nature of American settlement in Spanish West Florida. In 1983, the University of West Florida conducted an archaeological survey of the Escambia Bay drainage system.[16] While the focus of the survey was to delineate prehistoric settlement patterns in the drainage system, the investigators did encounter and record historic components which are likely related to these American colonial settlements. For example, the survey identified a cluster of six historic archaeological sites situated on a terrace adjacent to Diamond Creek (Figure 2). These sites yielded artifacts consistent

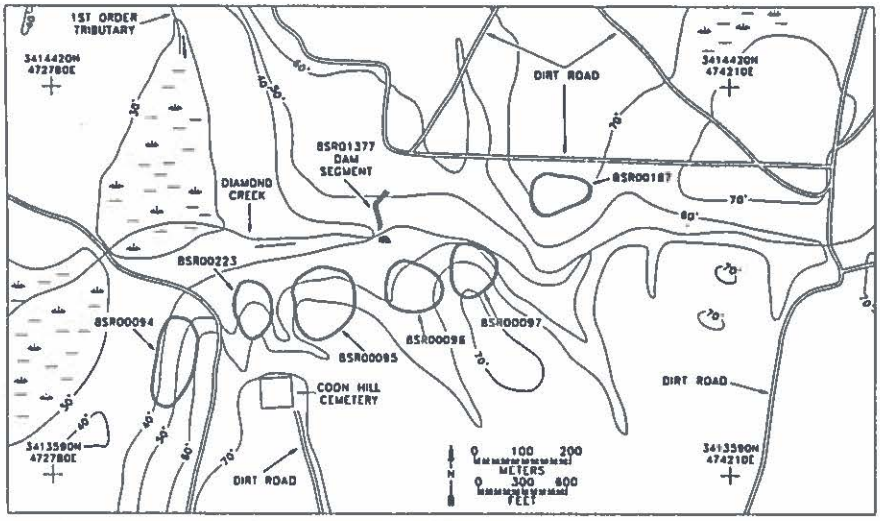


Figure 2. Mill and historic archaeological sites near Diamond Creek.

with the Second Spanish and American Territorial periods. An antebellum cemetery is located nearby, and an old road crosses the creek near the location. In 1996, archaeologist John Phillips recorded what appears to be the community sawmill in the valley below the homesteads.[17]

The archaeological remains of a community long gone are perhaps the best view we currently have of an American hamlet in West Florida from this time period. Though the homesteads have long since disappeared from the landscape, the archaeological record reveals their location, function, and relationship with each other and the environment. Dwellings of the pioneers lined the terraces surrounding the centrally-located mill that cut their boards and ground their grain.

Water-powered mills were essential to community development. The mill stream provided a power supply, and the river offered transportation

and communication links as well as commercial ties to nearby settlements and Pensacola. As settlers cleared the land for cultivation, felled trees were cut into boards and planks which were used for numerous construction projects. Some of this lumber probably also made its way to market in Pensacola. Thus, the Anglo-American settlements relied on an economic base founded in timbering and agriculture and looked for ways to facilitate community development.

Phillips' study of water-powered industry supports this theory, emphasizing the influence of environment on settlement. Phillips' probability model of mill seats suggests that certain "physiographic and cultural attributes are clearly and consistently associated with water-powered industrial sites."[18] His study reveals that colonial millers preferred mill seats on the tributaries along the first terrace of the Escambia River valley. Phillips has been able to predict and test high probability areas for colonial mills based on physiographic conditions such as topography and stream order, and cultural attributes such as proximity to Second Spanish Period land grant borders, and to certain stream crossings near roads, cemeteries, houses, or churches.[19]

According to Phillips, mills facilitated the growth of settlements as communities developed around them. "The water-powered mill was the founding element and economic and social center of the rural community."[20] If this theory is true, then it is very likely that many of the first American settlers in Spanish West Florida were in fact millers. Nine of the seventy-three individuals who petitioned for land donations in 1824 are known to have had water-powered mills in operation during the early years of the American Territorial period, and there are strong indications that many of these mills were constructed during the Second Spanish Period.

During the Land Commission proceedings the commissioners also investigated the validity of Spanish land claims in West Florida. Three of these Spanish claims came under heavy scrutiny when the reported improvements on these lands were found to have been made by Anglo-American settlers.[21] One of these Americans, Abraham Pringle, was known to have participated in a number of timber harvesting endeavors during the American Territorial Period. His improvement was probably a water-powered mill. In this case the Spanish claim was awarded so as not to contain Pringle's improvement. Pringle was given his land donation, which included his improvement, near present-day Bluff Springs. In a similar case, Anglo-American John Gaylor and Spanish citizen Pedro Alba both claimed title to a tract of land near present-day Walnut Hill. Having proven that he made the improvement, Gaylor received the land. Anglo-American David Williams was not so

fortunate. He claimed to have made the improvement on Celestino Gonzales' tract near present-day McDavid, but since he moved into the area after the signing of the Adams-Onis Treaty, Williams did not receive a land donation from the commission. It is probable that both Gaylors' and Williams' improvements were water-powered saw mills.

Milling constituted a specialized skill and was a labor-intensive economic venture which required much foresight. The colonial miller had to be aware of the environmental characteristics needed to establish his operation and identify an existing or future market for his products. Anglo-millers saw the same lumber industry potential in West Florida that had been recognized for years by others. They came to the region specifically to capitalize on this potential, and in the process facilitated American settlement. Further, millers no doubt looked to the cession of West Florida with anticipation, since the event promised an even greater market for their products.

Earlier milling ventures were, for the most part, restricted to areas near Escambia Bay and the lower Escambia River. If the present analysis of American settlement can be linked to milling interests in West Florida, then American mill activity and associated settlement came from the north, closing the gap between previously-established colonial mills near Pensacola and those constructed earlier by Americans in the Alabama Territory. Hence, we would expect the earliest American settlements in West Florida to be along the northern portion of the river. Spanish and American maps and surveys from the early nineteenth century support this. The Spanish procedure for granting land in West Florida required that a survey be done and a plat of each tract generated. After the United States acquired the region, validated Spanish claims retained their borders and were re-measured by American survey teams. Because of this, the oddly-shaped Spanish land grants are still visible on modern maps. More important, any data recorded on these surveys can be correlated to cultural and environmental information on modern maps, allowing us to formulate hypotheses which attempt to explain where and why Anglo-Americans settled during the early nineteenth century.

Some Spanish surveys are more revealing than others. While most give only angles and distances from benchmarks, they sometimes include structures and roads. An analysis of the cultural features depicted on Spanish surveys suggests that there were two areas of concentrated activities: one centered around Pensacola and one along the Escambia River near the Alabama state line. There is strong evidence that the latter cluster of structures represents American homesteads. Some, like those within the eight-hundred-arpent survey of Carlos Baron's grant,

strongly suggest the formation of communities north of Pensacola during this period (Figure 3).[22] This is perhaps our earliest view of what later became the Bluff Springs community.

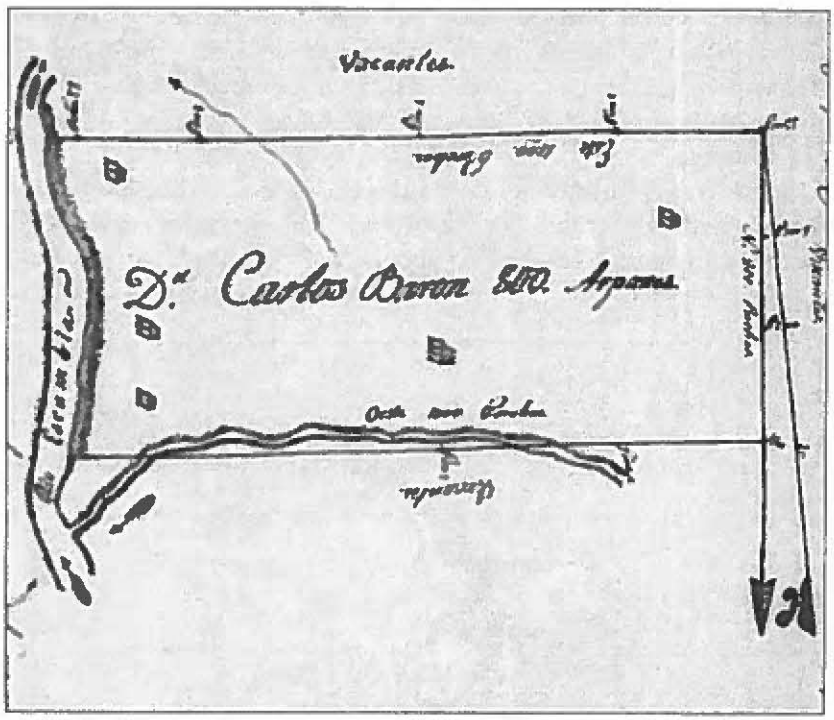


Figure 3. Spanish survey of Carlos Baron grant. Land Commission in West Florida, Pensacola.

American land surveys are frequently just as informative.[23] While the American surveyors found the existing Spanish claims relatively easy to delineate, since their Spanish predecessors had already measured and recorded each parcel, surveying the donations given to American settlers proved more challenging. For these donations the American surveyors had to establish benchmarks from which to begin. In many cases they began these efforts from the claimant's house and eventually delineated a parcel which placed the house near the center of the tract.

The early nineteenth-century American surveys of land grants and donations also provide some environmental data. Survey teams trudged through the West Florida woods, swamps, and river valleys delineating the oddly-shaped parcels with remarkable precision. In the process they recorded much of the existing environment, frequently including data

on the vegetation, resource potential, settlements, and other cultural features encountered. Surveyors listed angles and distances from one tree to the next along each tangent, as well as any roadways, structures, or fields passed.

When these geographic data are compared to certain environmental information, such as suitability of the soils for agriculture, proximity to fresh water, and distance from transportation corridors, it should be possible to develop more accurate hypotheses regarding settlement patterns. An examination of the soils associated with Anglo-American settlements suggests that certain areas were indeed sought for their agricultural potential. For example, six Anglo-Americans were given land donations near present-day McDavid along the Escambia River. These individuals claimed to have cultivated a total of sixty-three acres. The areas on which they settled within their donations contain soils moderately or highly suitable for agriculture.[24] At least thirteen Anglo-Americans established their homesteads nearby, claiming to cultivate

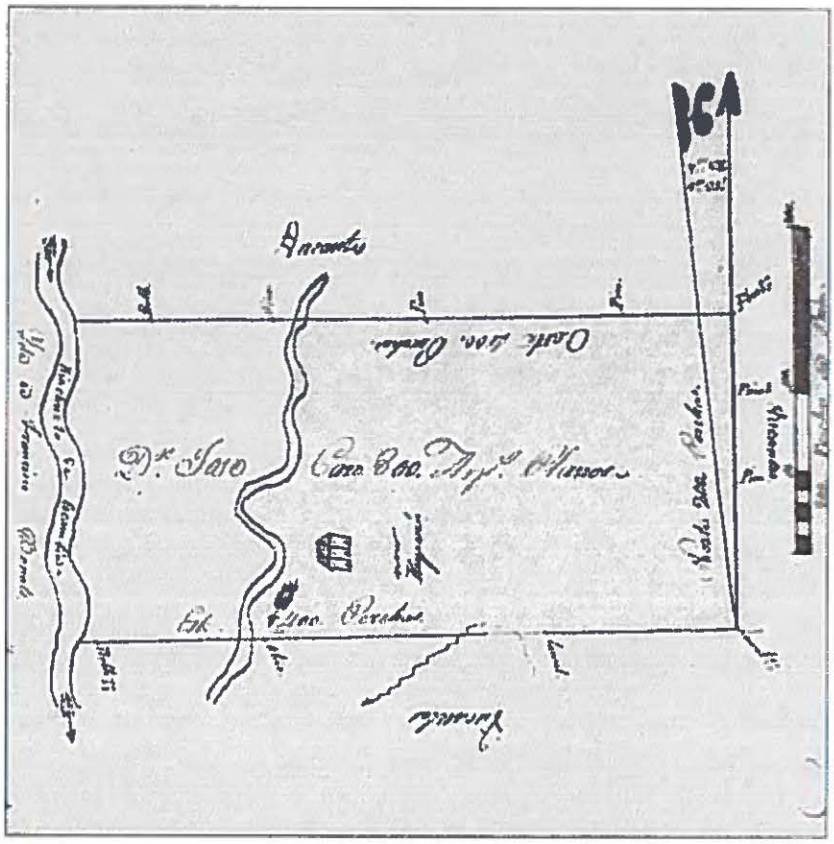


Figure 4. Spanish survey of José Caro grant showing structure. Land Commission in West Florida, Pensacola.

another ninety-five acres. These individuals reported to the Land Commission that they grew corn, sweet and Irish potatoes, turnips, and even fruit trees.[25] This supports Spanish governor Callava's 1820 report that these settlers were growing produce.

Any correlation between the early communities depicted in historical land surveys and environmental conditions shown on modern maps depends on the accuracy of the work of the surveyors and the present researcher. With this in mind an experiment was performed in an effort to test both. An attempt was made to relocate the site of a structure depicted on a Spanish survey and examine the existing environment to determine its suitability for settlement (Figure 4).[26] The house site was chosen for two reasons. First, there was overwhelming evidence suggesting that it was the homestead of an Anglo-American settler. Perhaps more important there was no indication of later habitation or substantial disturbance to the area. The structure appeared only on a Spanish plat drawn in 1818. Although the American resurvey of the claim performed in 1827 mentioned an agricultural field near the Escambia River swamp, there was no indication of a structure.[27] Lack of any subsequent activity suggested that the inhabitants abandoned the location probably during the early years of the Florida Territorial period. For these reasons, it was hoped that the site would be relatively easy to locate. Following preliminary background research, a walk over of the site was performed. Recent clear cutting of the area revealed an above-ground scatter of almost exclusively early nineteenth-century artifacts in its predicted location. The house site lies on a low divide near the confluence of a second order stream and the Escambia River, and includes about a hundred acres of suitable agricultural soils. The fact that locating the site was accomplished with relative ease, and with the help of graphics software and a personal computer, is a testament to the precision of the Spanish and American surveyors. Thus, a study which utilizes these plats and maps should be able to be performed with a high degree of accuracy.

The most plausible Anglo-American settlement model entails places in close proximity to the water-powered mills on which they depended for cut lumber and ground grain. These settlements would have been situated on terraces along the upper Escambia River adjacent to the river's lower order tributaries. Any level well-drained land above the flood plain of the mill seat would have been conducive to settlement, particularly if the soil was suitable for agriculture. These environments, plentiful along the upper Escambia drainage system in West Florida, lured Anglo-American settlers into Spanish West Florida, particularly after 1816.

We know that through the Territorial period, and into statehood, dispersed populations migrated to any number of the small communities

in West Florida. Many still exist to this day in northern Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. The smaller hamlets and irregular villages gave way to towns which formed near the confluence of the Escambia River and its larger tributaries, such as Bluff Springs and McDavid, and to communities which developed at crossroads divides on ridges, such as Jay and Walnut Hill.

It is ironic that we know so little about the Americanization of West Florida. The ancestors of many of the area's established families came to the region during the Second Spanish Period. A Sunday drive through any of the small communities which dot the rural landscape will reveal their legacies on family businesses, road signs, and subdivisions with names like: Cotton, McDavid, Cobb, Simpson, and Campbell. Yet all we really know at this point is that somehow these people came and settled here, and raised their families. More historical, archaeological and ethnographical research is needed to better understand the Anglo-American contribution to the region's development of West Florida. The information is out there, we just have to find it.

Notes

[1]William S. Coker and G. Douglas Inglis, *The Spanish Censuses of Pensacola, 1784-1820: A Genealogical Guide to Spanish Pensacola* (Pensacola, 1980), 127-41; Brian R. Rucker, *Blackwater and Yellow Pine: The Development of Santa Rosa County, 1821-1865* (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1990), 57-58.

[2]The three settlements were all founded by the Spanish on Pensacola Bay. These include the Presidio Santa María de Galve (1698-1721), the Presidio Isla de Santa Rosa, and the Presidio which evolved into what is today Pensacola.

[3]Michael D. Green, "The Creek Confederacy in the American Revolution: Cautious Participants," in *Anglo-Spanish Confrontation on The Gulf Coast During The American Revolution*, ed. William S. Coker and Robert R. Rea (Pensacola, 1982), 55.

[4]Robin F. Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida, 1763-1783* (Tuscaloosa, 1988), 21.

[5]Gilbert C. Din, "The Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miro in Spanish Louisiana," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 73 (1969): 155-75.

[6]Robert Franklin Crider, "The Borderland Floridas, 1815-1821: Spanish Sovereignty Under Siege" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1979), 22-25.

[7]"Alabama Census Returns 1820 and An Abstract of Federal Census of Alabama 1830," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 6 (1944): 336-69.

[8]Coker and Inglis, *Spanish Censuses*, 127.

[9]Ibid.

[10]*Proceedings of the Land Commission in West Florida*, Vol. 2A, 1825, 66-144. Microfilm on file at John C. Pace Special Collections Library, University of West Florida, Pensacola.

[11]Sidney Walter Martin, *Florida During the Territorial Days* (Athens, GA, 1944), 1-14.

[12]*Proceedings*. It should be remembered that these data represent only those Americans who desired land donations upon ceding of West Florida to the United States. No doubt their were others who did not apply as they realized that they did not meet the requirements for donations. The apparent drop in numbers of claimants beginning in 1820 is reflective of these peoples, not in the leveling or dropping off of the population.

[13]*American State Papers*, Public Lands (Washington, D.C., 1861), 4:117.

[14]Rucker, *Blackwater*, 50.

[15]Actually, it appears that groups of neighbors were coming to Pensacola by the boat or wagon load and witnessing for each other at the Commission.

[16]Judith Bense, "Settlement Pattern, Climate, and Marine Ecosystem Evolution Correlations in the Escambia Bay Drainage System in Northwest Florida" (Paper presented at the 40th Southeastern Archaeological Conference, Colombia, South Carolina, 1983).

[17]John C. Phillips, *The Water-Powered Industries of Northwest Florida: An Archaeological Reconnaissance*, Report of Investigations Number 58 (Pensacola, 1996), 132.

[18]John C. Phillips, *Mill Site Reconnaissance in Northwest Florida*, Report of Investigations Number 53 (Pensacola, 1993), 75-76; Phillips, *Water-Powered Industries*, 121.

[19]Phillips, *Water-Powered Industries*, 121.

[20]Ibid., 1.

[21]Harry J. Wilson, "The Americanization of the Spanish West Florida Interior" (Paper presented at the 50th Florida Anthropological Society Conference, Miami, May 1997); *Proceedings*, 82.

[22]*Proceedings*, 93.

[23]Florida Land Office Records, "Private Land Claims," Vol. 2A and 3A, 1825. Microfilm collection on file at John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.

[24]U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Soil Survey; Escambia County, Florida* (Washington, D.C., 1960); U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Soil Survey of Santa Rosa County, Florida* (Washington, D.C., 1980).

[25]*Proceedings*, 66-144.

[26]Ibid., 198.

[27]Florida Land Office Records, "Private Land Claims," 148.

Harry J. Wilson is an archaeologist at the Archaeology Institute of the University of West Florida.

The Calcasieu River Lighthouse. Archives, Frazar Memorial Library, McNeese State University.

The Calcasieu River Lighthouse, 1876-1940

Kathie Bordelon

David Cipra's 1976 pamphlet, *Lighthouses and Lightships of the Northern Gulf of Mexico*, notes that much has been written about lighthouses along the Atlantic seaboard but that "only a few brief notes can be found on Southern lights." He states that prior to his own research, "the records of many lighthouses were buried in dusty files and the lighthouses forgotten....The number of lighthouses still lost in dusty files is unknown."[1] The Calcasieu River Lighthouse in Southwest Louisiana near the Gulf of Mexico was one of these. Its records, which were buried in the files of the National Archives and the United States Coast Guard Historian's office, have been found, and provide enough information to ensure that this southern light will not be forgotten for the part it played in the history of Southwest Louisiana.

"A lighthouse is a beacon at a location that is either important or dangerous to marine shipping. Usually consisting of a bright light atop a tower, it is designed either to guide mariners at sea or to warn them of particular hazards." [2] Lighthouses operated during colonial times, but it was not until 1789 that Congress created the Lighthouse Service. Since then, the control of America's lighthouses has been under various agencies, including the departments of the Treasury and of Commerce. Since 1939 the United States Coast Guard has been responsible for them. The Gulf Coast was organized into the Ninth Lighthouse District in 1852, but split into the Eighth and Ninth after the Civil War. The lights along the Louisiana coast were in the Eighth Lighthouse District by the time the Calcasieu River Lighthouse was finally built.

Efforts to obtain a light to mark the entrance at the mouth of the Calcasieu River at Calcasieu Pass date back to 1854. At that time the Lighthouse Board recommended that a lighthouse be built at the mouth of the river, and $6,000 was appropriated.[3] However, a coast survey, conducted in January 1855 by the United States Navy coast survey steamer *Walker*, disagreed. According to Lieutenant B. F. Sands' report:

> The bar has five and a half feet at low water, shoaling gradually to that depth from three fathoms, and deepening on the inside to twelve and fourteen feet in the river. There is no other danger near for which a lighthouse would be required. The houses mark the entrance sufficiently well for the small craft that can cross the bar, and in a commercial point of view it is of but little importance; I therefore cannot see any necessity for erecting a lighthouse here.[4]

In 1860 funds were again appropriated for a lighthouse at the mouth of the Calcasieu. However, before negotiations for the land could be settled, the Civil War began and all efforts to secure the lighthouse were suspended.[5]

In an April 1863 letter to his commanding officer concerning the battle at the Sabine Pass Lighthouse, W. H. Griffin, Lieutenant-Colonel, Commanding Texas Volunteer Infantry, wrote:

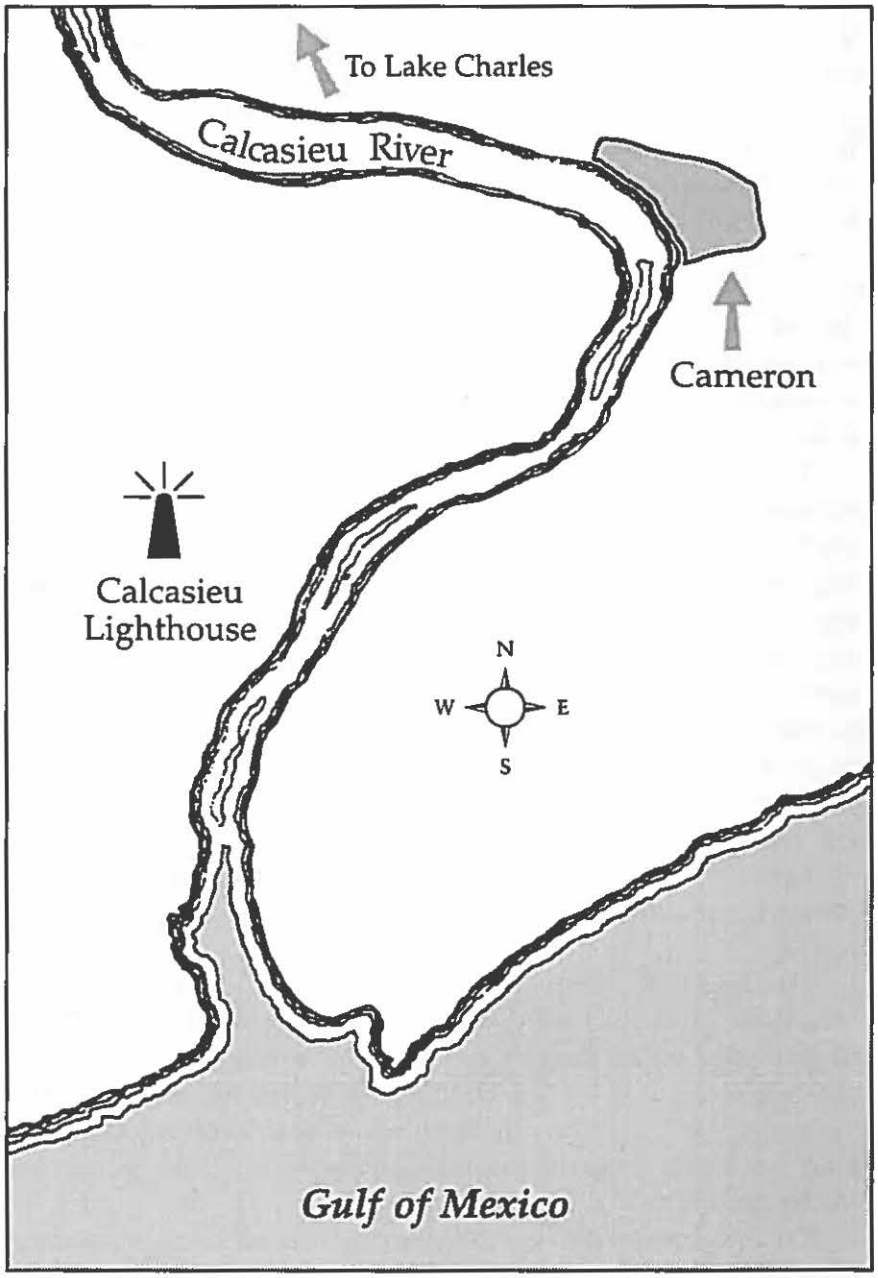
> All the beef, mutton, and pork used on the Federal gunboats are procured on Lake Calcasieu, Calcasieu Parish, La. This country is very remote from the commands of Generals Taylor and Sibley or any other general commanding in Louisiana. It is all-important that these depredations should be stopped. I have already instructed Captain [J.A.] Ware, commanding the cavalry squadrons, to keep scouts on the Louisiana shore and to capture all parties of Federal depredators upon or landing upon the coast.[6]

The "Federal depredators" were not the only ones who found the Calcasieu River area important. According to the report of the Lighthouse Board in 1868, "the bay of Calcasieu, some years before the war, acquired considerable importance on account of the extensive lumber trade carried on in that bay and in the river of the same name. This business has much increased since the close of the war, and bids fair to assume very large proportions."[7]

Petitions continued to be received in Washington for a light to mark the entrance to the river. In addition to the increasing lumber trade, the area had achieved further importance with the discovery of sulphur and coal oil and the development of the salt mines.[8] On May 20, 1874, the Collector of Customs in the Eighth District asked that the erection of the lighthouse at Calcasieu Pass not be postponed any longer. He spoke of the high volume of shipping using the pass. "I feel positive your Board did not know the amount of business at this place or they would not have recommended postponing the erection of the Light."[9]

In 1875 and again in 1876, the Lake Charles *Weekly Echo* reported visits from Lighthouse Service personnel to the area. U.S. Navy Commander Schoonmaker and W. L. Campbell with the Lighthouse Service both passed through Lake Charles on their way to Calcasieu Pass to examine possible sites for the lighthouse. Both assured the interested populace that the lighthouse would soon be constructed.[10]

Despite the now obvious and proven need for a lighthouse, obstacles continued to be thrown into the path of the Lighthouse Board. The annual reports of the Board from 1870 to 1876 included an amount of money appropriated for the lighthouse which, at the end of each fiscal year, reverted to the Treasury.[11] Correspondence flowed between


To Lake Charles
Calcasieu River
Cameron
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Washington, New Orleans, Mobile, Vermillionville (Lafayette), and Opelousas because ownership of the land chosen for the lighthouse on the east side of the river could not be established.[12] No fewer than four individuals claimed ownership at one point. The lighthouse district engineer in New Orleans hired an expert to find the legitimate owner. The matter was turned over to the United States District Attorney for further investigation. All those who claimed ownership demanded exorbitant amounts for the land.[13]

Finally in 1876 the Lighthouse Board had enough. They decided that the land they had initially selected was not the most suitable site after all and chose instead Lot 32, Township 15 South, Range 10 West, on the west side of the river.[14] This land was already owned by the government and was immediately reserved for lighthouse purposes by the Department of the Interior and President Ulysses S. Grant.[15]

The type of lighthouse to be constructed had already been determined by the board. When lighthouses were first built along the Gulf Coast, lighthouse engineers copied some of the massive towers which had proven so successful along the Atlantic. It did not take them long to realize, however, that these would not work in the softer soil along the Gulf. What did work was a lightweight, hollow, cast iron screwpile substructure which was turned into the ground rather than pounded in.[16] This type of foundation offered the stability to withstand "the great and sudden rise of the tide during equinoctial and other heavy storms on this part of the Gulf Coast, which in many instances have been known to destroy nearly every building within many miles and cause great loss of life." It was therefore considered that "nothing but a screwpile structure can insure a proper degree of safety to life and property."[17]

The lighthouse tower the engineers decided to use had been prefabricated in a locomotive factory in Portland, Maine, in 1872 and was in storage at the Head of Passes Depot in New Orleans.[18] It must have been a source of some pride when the Lighthouse Board was able to report in 1877 that "the new lighthouse at this station was completed during the month of November, and the light was exhibited for the first time on the evening of December 9, 1876."[19]

The black, pyramidal tower sheathed in boiler-plate iron, surmounted by a cast-iron cornice and lantern and rising fifty-three feet above the marsh,[20] must have been an awesome sight to the cattle-drivers who rode along the banks and the sailors and boat passengers who sailed on the nearby Calcasieu River. The lower platform of the lighthouse was raised several feet off the ground and was reached by straight steps up the side. There was a round four-thousand-gallon cistern underneath the main

structure and the kitchen was attached to the lighthouse via a breezeway.[21] Even though the lighthouse exterior was covered by sheets of iron painted black, the Eighth District Lighthouse Engineer's office turned aside objections that the "quarters within this kind of house would be insufferably warm" by recommending that the interior walls be lined with wood.[22]

According to the floor plan found in the National Archives, the lighthouse had a living room, a store room, a fuel room, and water tanks on the first floor. A bedroom was located on the second floor. The third floor watch room housed extra oil and supplies for the lantern. The lantern, which had an iron balustrade and outside gallery circling it, was reached by a trap door from the watch room. An iron spiral stairway led from the first level to the upper floors. Each level had windows and the floors were bare wood.[23]

The keeper was required to light the lantern at dusk and to extinguish it at sunrise. The lantern was a fourth order lens incorporating the fresnel system of illumination, which had been developed in Europe and fully implemented in the United States by 1859.[24] Kerosene or coal oil was used for fuel. A silvered copper mirror thirteen inches high and fourteen and a half inches wide reflected the light from its position behind the flame. By 1927 the fixed white light had an intensity of 490 candle power.[25] The keeper had to clean and polish the lantern glass inside and out, using a chamois. It was imperative that the glass be kept spotless in order to keep the light visible and because inspectors came often. The New Orleans *Daily Picayune* reported that "the light is brilliant and strong and reflects for 13 miles in the Gulf."[26]

The keeper's duties included operating, cleaning, and repairing the main lights and a beacon light downriver, maintaining and repairing the buildings on the station reservation, and assisting repair teams sent to the station.[27] Throughout the night the keeper or his assistant had to check on the light atop the lighthouse and on the beacon light at the mouth of the pass.

Insects were a problem in the summer, especially at dusk. Keeper William Hill reported one incident in a letter written in July 1922 to the superintendent of lighthouses in New Orleans:

> I respectfully report that this station–for the last three nights–has been so overrun with various species of bugs and insects that it has been impossible–with constant care–to keep a good light. They settle on the lantern glass so thickly that it is doubtful if the light is visible 3 miles distant. The smaller kind pass through the screens and ventilators and fall in the lamp chimneys, causing smokeups in the lantern. The lantern, which had recently been nicely painted, had to be scoured with soda and other cleansers yesterday, and will be cleaned today. These conditions are liable to continue as long as the westerly winds prevail.[28]

Hill reported another interesting incident in 1923. Five drums of explosives had washed up on the shore by the lighthouse. The drums were marked "T.N.T." and the labels indicated they contained charges for a howitzer. Hill admitted his unfamiliarity with high explosives in a letter to the Superintendent of Lighthouses and asked for assistance in handling the situation. He received an answer from the War Department in Washington. They stated that the drums contained "smokeless powder" and were perfectly safe to handle. They advised the keeper to "open the drums, cut open the bags, and dump the powder in deep water."[29]

The lighthouse reservation had several outbuildings, and a six-foot wide plank wharf led from the boathouse on the bank of the river to the lighthouse over fourteen hundred feet to the southwest.[30] At least three hurricanes or heavy storms occurred during the time the lighthouse existed. Each one destroyed or heavily damaged the outbuildings, the wharf, and the boathouse. The lighthouse sustained some damage in each storm, but due to its construction, it stood firm.[31] This was good news to area residents.

In a letter to the lighthouse inspector in New Orleans about a hurricane in 1877, the lighthouse keeper, Charles F. Crossman, reported, "All the people living above this station on this side arrived here for safety, for the water and wind began to make it dangerous for them to remain in their dwellings." Crossman went on to report further adventures at the lighthouse during what must have been a frightening experience for all concerned. The wind was "blowing so hard that a man cannot stand up on the walk." There were twenty-five men, women, and children sheltered in the lighthouse. Crossman said, "My wife and I done all in our power to make them comfortable, but the rain water beat through doors and windows." The water rose more than five feet above the ordinary tide mark. "The tower shook a little up in the lantern but was firm at the base."[32] Keeper William Hill received commendation for maintaining the light and making the effort to save government property during the 1916 hurricane. Hill reported at least one family in the 1919 hurricane who had to take shelter in the lighthouse when their home was destroyed.[33] Records show only three lighthouse keepers were employed at the Calcasieu River Lighthouse during its sixty-four-year history. The first was Charles F. Crossman, who kept the lighthouse from its first lighting in 1876 to about 1913. William Hill, assisted by his brother, Phillip, kept the light until 1929. E. A. Malone was the last keeper; he was there at least until 1939.[34] One local publication stated, "A Mr. Hill served as the lighthouse keeper and after him came Mr. and Mrs. Malone. They stayed here a long time and are remembered by many Cameron people."[35]

Mrs. Grace Clausen Reeves, currently residing in Nederland, Texas, lived in the Calcasieu River Lighthouse as a child. Raised in a family where several relatives were members of the lighthouse service, Mrs. Reeves remembers visiting the lighthouse as a child and living there for a time.

In the 1910 census for Cameron Parish there were two listings for lighthouse keepers.[36] One was Stephen Hill with his brother, William Hill, as assistant. The other was Charles F. Crossman. By the 1920 census, William Hill, assisted by his brother Phillip, had been assigned to the Calcasieu River Lighthouse.[37] William and Phillip were Mrs. Reeves' great-uncles and brothers to Stephen Hill. Mrs. Reeves lived at the lighthouse with the Hills off and on from the time she was five years old until she was seven.

According to Mrs. Reeves, across the river was the old abandoned building which had housed the Gulf Biological Station. Downriver, also on the west bank with the lighthouse and on the coast, was the Rogers' Gulf Hotel. The town of Cameron (Leesburg) was north of the lighthouse, and the *Borealis Rex* landing was located near it. A launch from the hotel picked up guests at that landing and took them downriver to the hotel and the beach. The lighthouse keepers had a rowboat that they used to go upriver to Cameron or downriver to the hotel and to the jetties. There was also a walking trail along the river. Near the jetties was the beacon light that had to be lit at dusk. William or Phillip Hill would row or walk along the trail to the jetties each morning and evening. Mrs. Reeves would sometimes accompany them on these trips in order to play on the jetties. The beacon light was close to the Gulf Hotel. A boardwalk had been extended southward from the hotel to the beacon light to accommodate the lighthouse keepers in their duties.[38]

Mrs. Reeves recalls the rowboat being kept in a boathouse built along the shore. From that boathouse a long wooden wharf ran back west to the lighthouse. The wharf was high enough off the ground for cattle and men on horseback to go under it. There was a fence around the lighthouse reservation enclosing the lighthouse and the outbuildings, which included a hen house, a cattle pen, a privy, and storage buildings. There was also a small family cemetery at the end of the wharf by the boathouse. Mrs. Reeves remembers it as having several grave markers. Other sources also mentioned the cemetery. The "Cameron Parish Successions, 1870-1900" notes an "old cemetery on the site of the U.S. Coast Guard Station, one grave marker: it reads 'Ada, wife of C. T. Crossman.'" [39]

The Calcasieu River Lighthouse showing wharf and out buildings.
Frazar Library, McNeese State University.

Mrs. Reeves confirmed that everything outside of the lighthouse was painted black, including the railings and stairs. The lighthouse proper was elevated fifteen feet off the ground. The lighthouse provided living quarters for the keepers and their families. Although they remained bachelors, William and Phillip Hill welcomed members of their large family to the lighthouse. Mrs. Reeves said that there were always people there beside the keepers' family. Inspectors would come frequently, and while there, share meals with the family and stay the night either at the lighthouse or at the hotel. Passing cowboys were also frequent guests, as were laborers hired to do work around the reservation.

Mrs. Reeves and her mother, Florence Clausen, slept on the first floor of the lighthouse when they were visiting. William kept his desk in an office on the same floor. The keepers slept on the second level. All the floors remained bare wood while the interior walls were paneled in beaver board connected with wooden strips. Coal oil lamps and kerosene stoves were used for light and cooking. Mrs. Reeves's great-uncles kept crates on the lower gallery and would sit on them while smoking their pipes.

Mrs. Reeves's mother kept the tide records for the Coast Guard. The gauge was attached to the boathouse and Mrs. Clausen would take

the readings and record them three times a day. William and Phillip Hill stayed busy with lighthouse duties. Their primary responsibility, of course, was to keep the lanterns in perfect working order. Keeping the glass surrounding the lanterns clean was not an easy task. In the summer months the insects that had hit the glass while swarming around the light had to be washed off. In the winter months migrating ducks and geese would hit the main lantern and fall to the floor around it. Sometimes there would be piles of carcasses which had to be taken away and buried.[40]

The lighthouse keepers wore regulation uniforms. Navy blue cloth was used for the coat, trousers, vest, and overcoat. The coat was double-breasted with gilt buttons.[41] Mrs. Reeves remembers William wearing a uniform of dark serge with gold buttons, white shirt, necktie, and a hat with a visor. He wore the same uniform year round and was responsible for keeping it clean. In hot weather regulation uniform was white single-breasted linen or duck cloth, but Mrs. Reeves does not remember her great-uncle wearing anything but the blue. The keepers were allowed to wear old clothes, such as an old uniform, when painting, repairing and cleaning machinery, or doing other dirty work. Phillip did not wear a uniform, but usually dressed in khaki trousers.[42] Rain water, drained from the roof, was stored in a covered and screened cypress wood cistern. A pump in the kitchen brought water up for cooking and baths while clothes were washed under the lighthouse in a tub with a washboard.[43]

According to the lighthouse historian, David Cipra, "the words most often used to describe life as a lighthouse keeper are 'lonely' and 'monotonous.'"[44] Not so at the Calcasieu River Lighthouse, according to Mrs. Reeves, thanks to inspectors who came frequently and cattle-drivers who drove their cattle across the lighthouse reservation. Three times a week the steamer *Borealis Rex* made its trip to Cameron to deliver mail and supplies. Excursionists would visit the lighthouse as one of the highlights of the trip, and stop by the Gulf Hotel where they "disported themselves in the salty waters of the gulf" and "gathered sea shells and jelly fish."[45] The frequent guests at the lighthouse provided diversion and entertainment for the Hills. William had a phonograph that played wax cylinder recordings. Mrs. Reeves and her mother would dress up when they exchanged visits with the Rogers daughters from the Gulf Hotel. On Sundays, the keepers held religious services at the lighthouse. Guests staying with them would participate in the service, which usually included prayer and scripture reading. Mrs. Reeves, now eighty-two, also nostalgically remembers playing along the jetties, underneath

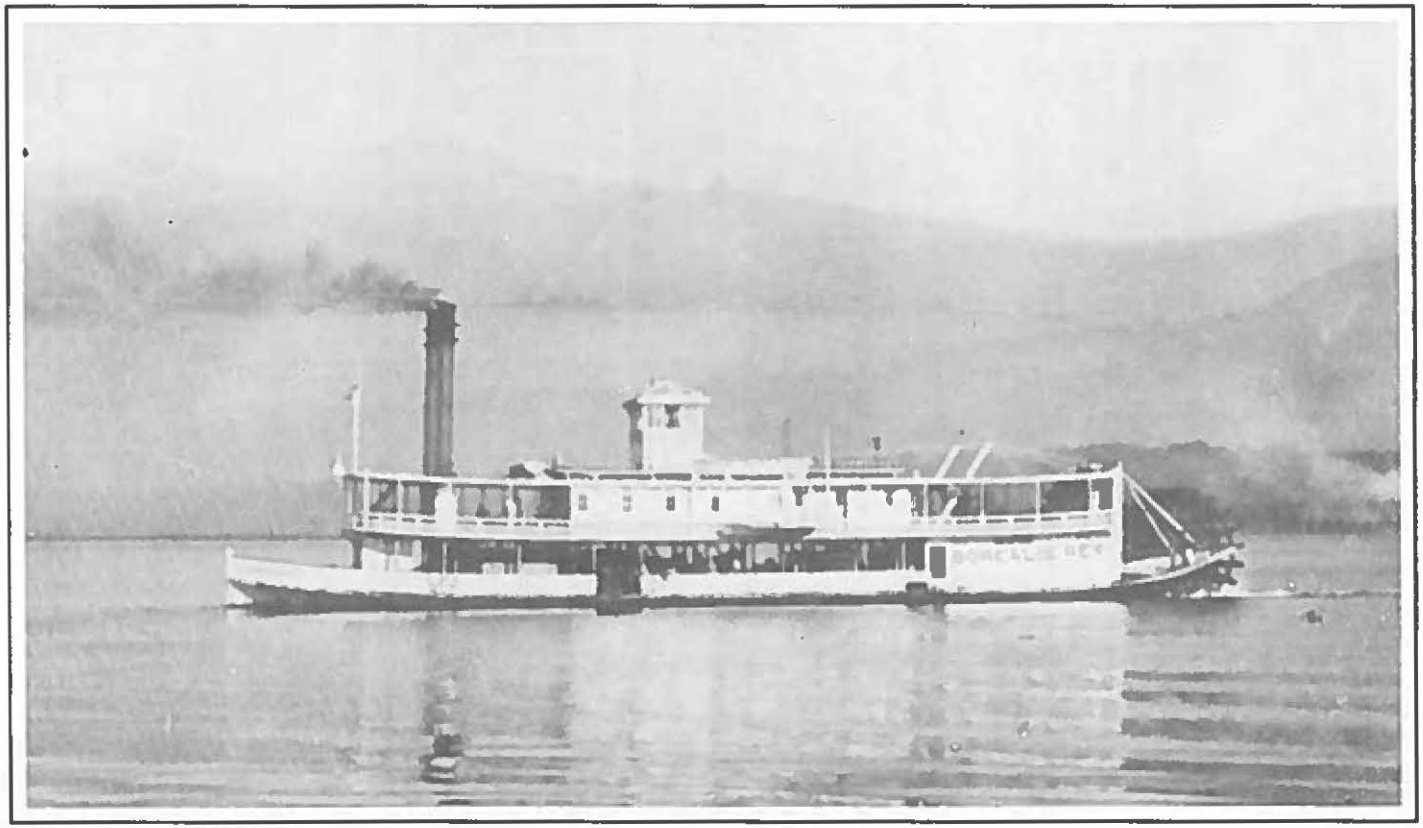
the lighthouse, and on the wharf. She was not allowed in the lantern area at the top but played on the lower gallery. Her memories of that time and the people she shared it with are still vivid.[46]

The Louisiana Highway Commission was granted a license in 1928 to construct a highway through the Calcasieu Range Lighthouse Reservation. In 1933 the Highway Commission sought an extension of the license. According to its terms, the highway would be 730 feet from the lighthouse. It also stated that the highway would be "beneficial to the light station and the construction of a portion of the highway within the limits of the reservation will not be detrimental to the Lighthouse Service."[47] The Highway Department gave assurances that crossings would be constructed so that the lighthouse keepers would be able to reach the beach without any inconvenience.[48] In earlier communications between E. S. Lanphier, Superintendent of Lighthouses in New Orleans, and the Lighthouse Service in Washington, D.C., Lanphier wrote:

> The keeper of the light station is backward so far as modern highway improvements are concerned and is opposed to the road in the location proposed. There is a plank walk shown on the survey from the light station to the Calcasieu Pass. The keeper is fearful that, in cold northers, cattle will drift before the wind until they get under the lee of the road embankment and that many of them will die on the reservation. He states that this occurs in the southern part of the parish, or county, in which the station is located whenever excessively cold northers prevail. In the opinion of this office, however, this is not a sound reason for refusing to grant the right-of-way across the reservation.[49]

Floyd Hamilton, District Engineer of the Louisiana State Highway Commission, often noted in his personal diaries that he traveled to Cameron on the *Borealis Rex* to attend to business concerning the proposed roadway. He regularly stayed overnight at the Gulf Hotel and once was "caught in big rain at lighthouse." The roadway, Highway 292, was finally completed in 1930.[50]

In 1936 the keeper reported to the Superintendent of Lighthouses in New Orleans that a survey party had visited the lighthouse in order to survey a "possible route for a dredged channel from the jetties at Calcasieu Pass to the Calcasieu River." In his subsequent report to the Commissioner, the Superintendent wrote, "For a number of years there has been agitation on the part of Lake Charles, Louisiana, to secure an independent outlet to the sea either through Calcasieu Pass or in that vicinity." Such a channel would necessitate the removal of the lighthouse.[51] At first, efforts were made to save the lighthouse by either modifying the channel location or by dismantling the structure and



Borealis Rex. Frazar Library, McNeese State University.

moving it to another location. By 1937, however, reports indicated that the "tower is old and it would not be practicable to take it down and again use the old parts. If the channel is run as proposed it would be preferable to remove the tower...."[52] After much consideration, the Department of Commerce decided in favor of removing the lighthouse. In his letter of May 2, 1938, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce wrote the Secretary of War:

> In as much as the alignment of the proposed channel through the lighthouse reservation will require removal and relocation of the present Lighthouse Service facilities thereon, this Department would appreciate being given at least six months' notice of the date the lighthouse is required to be removed, and if possible, it would also be desirable for your Department to remove the screwpiles on which the lighthouse is built and place them on the reservation for further use or for disposal by the Lighthouse Service.[53]

The last letter referring to the proposed channel and the removal of the lighthouse stated, "As requested, six months' notice of the date that removal of the Lighthouse Service facilities will be required will be given to your Department. It is anticipated that such removal will be required during the fiscal year 1940."[54] *Light Lists* issued by the Lighthouse Service include the Calcasieu River Lighthouse through 1939. It was not mentioned in the *Light List* of 1940. The channel was completed through Calcasieu Pass in 1941.[55]

David Cipra included a chapter on the Calcasieu River Lighthouse in his recent book, *Lighthouses, Lightships, and the Gulf of Mexico*. He wrote, "the tower was dismantled easily, but the screwpile foundation had to be blasted out."[56] The site of the lighthouse is now located approximately in the center of the modern ship channel. Its history was short by many standards, and insignificant by some, but as an aid to navigation from the Gulf of Mexico through Calcasieu Pass it was important to the people of Southwest Louisiana for more than sixty years.

Notes

[1]David L. Cipra, *Lighthouses and Lightships of the Northern Gulf of Mexico* (New Orleans, 1976), 3.

[2]T. Lindsay Baker, *Lighthouses of Texas* (College Station, TX, 1991), 3.

[3]U.S. Department of the Treasury, Lighthouse Service, Lighthouse Board, *Laws of the United States Relating to the Establishment, Support, and Management of the Lighthouses, Light-Vessels, Monuments, Beacons, Spindles, Buoys, and Public Piers*

of the United States from August 7, 1789, to March 3, 1855 (Washington, D. C., 1855), 192; U.S. Department of the Treasury, Lighthouse Service, Lighthouse Board, "Report of the Lighthouse Board...October 31, 1855," in *Report of the Secretary of the Treasury...1855* (Washington, D.C., 1856), 286. (Subsequent Lighthouse Board reports, including those issued by both the U.S. Dept. of the Treasury and the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, are cited Annual Report, year, page.)

[4]U.S. Congress, Senate, *Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey, Showing the Progress of the Survey during the Year 1855*, 34th Cong., 1st sess., Ex. Doc. no. 22 (Washington, D.C., 1856), 413-14; Annual Report, 1855, 286; U. S. Coast Survey, *Reconnaissance of the Entrances to Vermilion Bay and Calcasieu River, Louisiana*, 1855.

[5]U.S. Department of the Treasury, *Statement of Appropriations and Expenditures for Public Buildings, Rivers and Harbors, Forts, Arsenals, Armories, and Other Public Works, from March 4, 1789, to June 30, 1882* (Washington, D.C., 1882), 373.

[6]U.S. Department of the Navy, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion, West Gulf Blockading Squadron from March 15 to December 31, 1863*, series 1, vol. 20 (Washington, D.C., 1905), 152-53. (One year later the Battle of Calcasieu Pass, which involved the Union gunboats the *Wave* and *Granite City*, took place on May 6, 1864, at this site.)

[7]Annual Report, 1868, 63.

[8]Annual Report, 1870, 51.

[9]P.B. Darrall to Prof. Jos. Henry (Chairman Lighthouse Board), May 20, 1874, RG 26, P.B. Darrell to Prof. Jos. Henry (Chairman Lighthouse Board), May 20, 1874, p. 230, Letter Book 352, Entry 24, Letters Received from District Inspectors and Engineers, 1853-1900, RG 26, National Archives (NA).

[10]*Lake Charles Weekly Echo*, October 14, 1875; March 23, 1876.

[11]Annual Report, 1870, 51; 1871, 45; 1872, 527; 1873, 66; 1874, 63-64; 1875, 59; 1876, 46.

[12]Annual Report, 1871, 45.

[13]Annual Report, 1872, 527; 1874, 63-64; 1875, 59.

[14]Annual Report, 1876, 46. Entrance to Calcasieu River, LA, showing proposed site for new lighthouse, survey of March 18, 1876, Office L. H. Engineer Eighth District, Mobile, AL, April 10, 1876. Tracing submitted to Office L. H. Board with letter of this date (Site Plan 13, shows lighthouse reservation, Lot 32, proposed site for new lighthouse, front range, east beacon, rear range).

[15]E.S. Lanphier (Superintendent of Lighthouses), Questionnaire Covering Real Estate Owned by the United States, April 1, 1930; Chas. F. Conant (Acting Secretary, Treasury Department) to Professor Joseph Henry (Chairman Lighthouse Board) March 8, 1876; Chas. F. Conant (Acting Secretary, Treasury Department) to Professor Joseph Henry (Chairman Lighthouse Board) March 8, 1876, p. 583, Letter Book 393, Entry 24, Letters Received from District Inspectors and Engineers, 1853-1900, RG 26, NA.

[16]Cipra, *Lighthouses*, 3-4.

[17]Annual Report, 1870, 51.

[18]George F. Morse to Major George H. Elliot, August 29, 1872, p. 112, Letter Book 315; George F. Morse to Major George H. Elliot, October 26, 1872, p. 117, Letter Book 315, Entry 25, Letters Received from District Inspectors and Engineers, 1853-1900, RG, 26, NA; Annual Report, 1873, 66; 1874, 63-64; Cipra, *Lighthouses*, 45.

[19]Annual Report, 1887, 38.

[20]U.S. Department of the Treasury, U.S. Lighthouse Board, *List of Lighthouses, Lighted Beacons, and Floating Lights of the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific Coasts of the United States, Corrected to January 1, 1880* (Washington, D.C. 1880), 78-79.

[21]Grace Clausen Reeves, interview by author, June 16, 1998, Nederland, TX, tape recording and transcript McNeese State University, Frazar Memorial Library, Archives and Special Collections Department, Lake Charles, LA; Annual Report, 1900, 130-31.

[22]Eighth District Engineer (Mobile, AL) to Prof. Jos. Henry (Chairman Lighthouse Board), February 8, 1872.

[23]Fourth Order L.H. for Calcasieu, LA. Eighth District, Office of L.H. Board, August 1872, Paul J. Pelz, Chief Draughtsman, (George H. Elliot?) Major of Engineers U.S.A., Engr. Sec. of the L.H. Board (Building Plan 3, shows cutaway•view of lighthouse constructed with lantern on top and galleries, lighthouse keeper standing on gallery, floor plan of living room, bedroom, watch room, plan of substructure, enlarged view of screwpile, and below ground screwpile foundation).

[24]Light Lists, 1880, 78-79; Baker, *Lighthouses of Texas*, 4; George Weiss, *The Lighthouse Service: Its History, Activities and Organization*, Institute for Government Research, Service Monographs of the United States Government, no. 40 (Baltimore, MD, 1926), 34.

[25]E. S. Lanphier, *Description of Calcasieu L.H. Light Station Louisiana*, August 29, 1927, 3.

[26]Reeves interview, June 16, 1998. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 26, 1892.

[27]Weiss, *The Lighthouse Service*, 63.

[28]"Insects Cause Serious Difficulty at a Light Station," *Lighthouse Service Bulletin* 2, no. 56 (August 1, 1922): 237; Wm. Hill to Superintendent of Lighthouses, July 28, 1922.

[29]Wm. Hill to Superintendent of Lighthouses, September 14, 1923; C.H. Morgan (Assistant, War Department, Office of the Chief of Ordnance) to Commissioner of Lighthouses, Department of Commerce, September 26, 1923.

[30]Calcasieu Light Station, Buildings surveyed September 20, 1886, by Thos. L. Raymond, Asst. Engr. Office of Light House Engineer, October 14, 1886, (Building Plan 10, shows keeper's dwelling–lighthouse–calf pen, hen house, privy, cattle pen, elevated walk).

[31]Annual Report, 1887, 74; 1916, 59; 1919, 54; "August Hurricane on Gulf Coast," *Lighthouse Service Bulletin* no. 46 (October 1915): 181.

[32]Charles F. Crossman to Commander C.M. Schoonmaker, September 19, 1877.

[33]Annual Report, 1916, 59; 1919, 54.

[34]1880 U.S. Census, Cameron Parish, LA, Population Schedule, Town of Cameron, Dwelling 99, Family 106; Enumeration District 5, sheet 16, page 100B. (5th Ward-Crossman) National Archives micropublication, T9-Roll 450. U.S. Department of the Interior, *Official Register of the United States Containing a List of the Officers and Employees in the Civil, Military, and Naval Service, Together With a List of Vessels Belonging to the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1877, 1897, 1909); Reeves interview, June 16, 1998; E.C. Merrill (Superintendent of Lighthouses, Bureau of Lighthouses, to Commissioner of Lighthouses (Lighthouse Service, Department of Commerce) February 18, 1939, Entry 50, Correspondence of the Bureau of Lighthouses, 1911-1939, File 678E. RG 26, NA.

[35]Cameron Parish Home Demonstration Council, *Homemakers Tour Itinerary: Leesburg 1870 to Cameron 1970* (Cameron, LA, 1970), 26-27.

[36]1910 U.S. Census, Cameron Parish, LA, Population Schedule, Town of Leesburg, Dwelling 237, Family 237, Enumeration District 56, sheet 14B, page 31B and sheet 15A, page 32A (3rd Ward); Dwelling 18, Family 18, Enumeration District 58, sheet 2A, page 47A (5th Ward), National Archives Micropublication, T624-Roll 512. (There exists some confusion resulting from the census records since during the operation of the Calcasieu River Lighthouse, 1876-1940, there were two lighthouses operating in Cameron Parish. The census records make the distinction by ward numbers, but the records are almost illegible. We assume that Crossman was still at the Calcasieu River Lighthouse in 1910 and that Hill was at the Sabine Pass Lighthouse. This confusion has resulted in one publication stating that there was a lighthouse in Cameron in 1860 kept by George Plummer (*Homemakers Tour Itinerary*, 26). Plummer kept the lighthouse at Sabine Pass, located in Cameron Parish on the east bank of the Sabine River, but not a lighthouse on the Calcasieu River. Baker, *Lighthouses of Texas*, 73.

[37]1920 U.S. Census, Cameron Parish, LA, Population Schedule, Town of Cameron, Dwelling 138, Family 138, Enumeration District 58, sheet 8A, page 256A (3rd Ward), National Archives Micropublication, T625-Roll 604.

[38]*Homemakers Tour Itinerary*, 25.

[39]Ibid., 26. Southwest Louisiana Genealogical Society, "Cameron Parish Successions, 1870-1900," *Kinfolks* 15 (1991): 130. Note that one source says C.F. Crossman, the other C.T. Crossman. The United States Coast Guard Station mentioned was not built until 1942. *Homemakers Tour Itinerary*, 26.

[40]Reeves interview. Mrs. Reeves stated that, for reasons unknown to her, these ducks were never used for food.

[41]U.S. Department of Commerce, *Regulations for Uniforms, 1928* (Washington, D.C., 1928), 1.

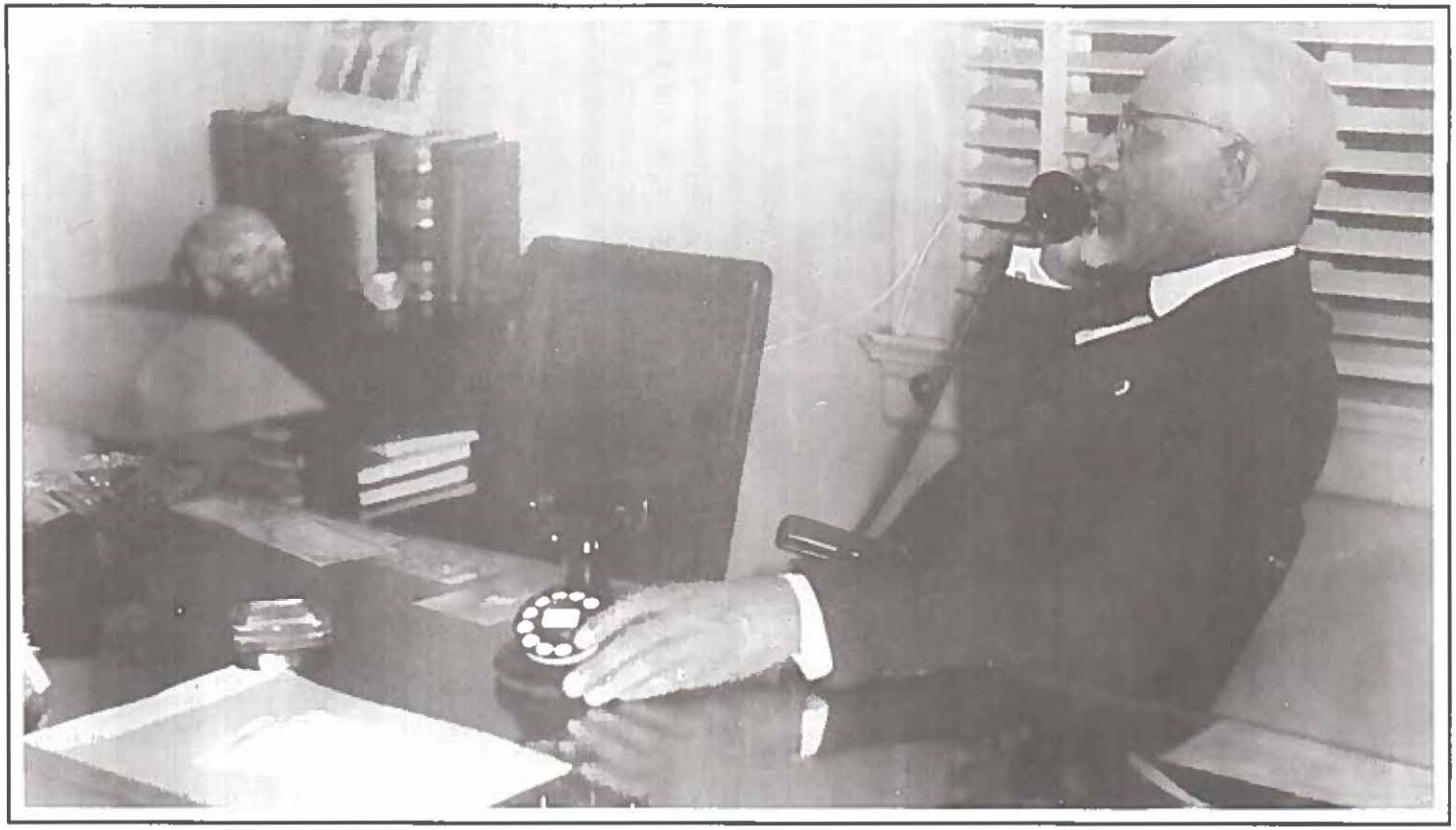
[42]Ibid., 1928, 3. Reeves interview.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Cipra, *Lighthouses*, 3.

[45]*Lake Charles Weekly American Press*, May 26, 1911.

[46]Reeves interview.



Dr. Rivers Frederick. Amistad Research Center at Tulane University.

Negro benevolent societies, which had furnished a measure of medical and death coverage for its members, in providing insurance for African Americans. For a small weekly premium, industrial insurance companies afforded their clients limited benefits for sickness, accidents, and death. The rates for industrial insurance were usually higher than those of ordinary insurance, as there was a greater expense involved in the weekly collection of premiums, and because industrial insurance companies insured those with higher mortality rates than did regular insurance companies. However, as African Americans were usually unable to afford ordinary life and health insurance policies and white companies were unwilling to insure them at the same rates as whites, the industrial insurance industry created an opportunity for black entrepreneurs in the South. These industrial insurance companies were also meaningful to the black community because they were a rare provider of white-collar employment for educated blacks. In an era of few black-owned businesses in the South and few black professionals or semi-professionals, the significance of both the owners and agents of the industrial insurance agencies as a source of racial pride was also important.[3]

In an attempt to differentiate between benevolent societies and insurance companies, the State of Louisiana passed a law in 1906 defining insurance companies as organizations that issued a policy contract and employed agents to collect weekly premiums. Groups that assembled in halls and required members to attend meetings were labeled benevolent societies. As of 1906, in order to be classified as an insurance company, a five thousand dollar deposit had to be placed with the state. Under this law, the first black industrial insurance company in Louisiana was the Unity Industrial Life Insurance Company, which was formed out of the merger of three benevolent societies under Dr. P. H. V. Dejoie. Dejoie would later head one of the city's other black insurance agencies, the Lincoln Life Insurance Company, in tandem with the Unity.[4] Dr. Rivers Frederick became involved in the insurance industry in 1923 when he was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Louisiana Industrial Life Insurance Company, making him one of four black New Orleans doctors on its board. Dr. Frederick eventually became the president and principal stockholder in the Louisiana, which, by the 1940s, was the third largest black-owned enterprise in the state and the largest black insurance agency in the South. It was as an insurance executive, not as a surgeon, that he amassed the bulk of his 1.5 million dollar fortune.[5]

Rivers Frederick was born in 1874, the fair-skinned son of a Creole sharecropper. In 1890 he left the Drouillard Plantation in Pointe Coupée

SUPPOSE YOU DIE TODAY?
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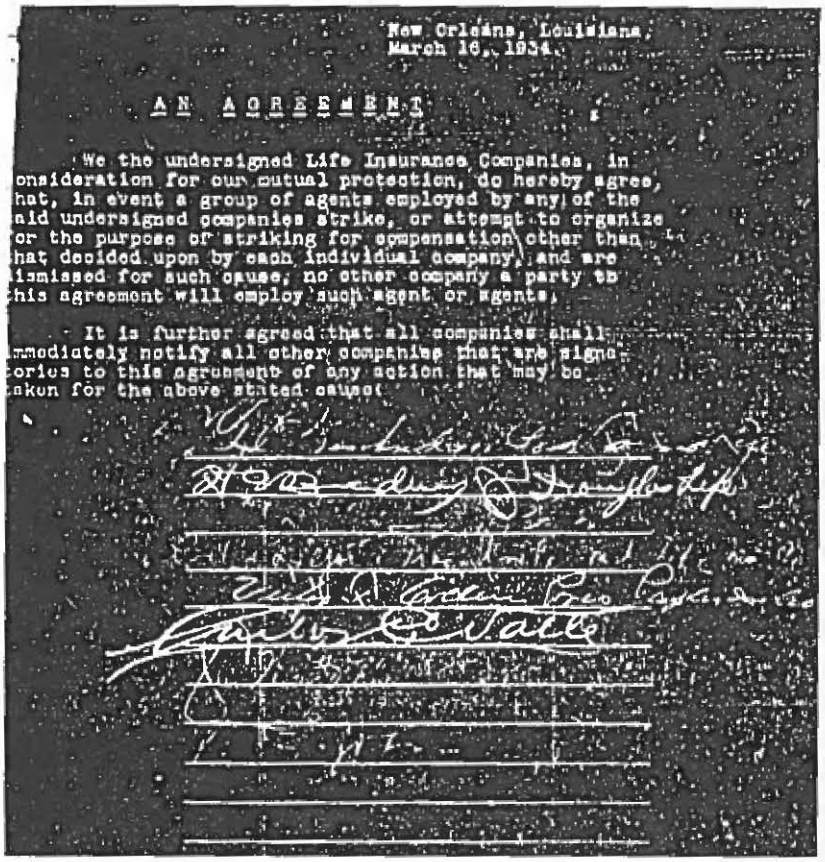
Woods Directory. Amistad Research Center at Tulane University.

for New Orleans where he enrolled at Straight University. He graduated from Straight in 1894 and then enrolled at the New Orleans Medical College, which was founded in 1889 for the education of black physicians. Frederick did not complete his medical education in New Orleans; instead, he left for Chicago in 1896 and he enrolled at the College of Physicians and Surgeons (now the University of Illinois at Chicago Medical School). In Chicago he received clinical training at Cook County Hospital, located right across the street from the medical school. If he had stayed in New Orleans he would not have been able to receive practical training in any of the city's hospitals because of his race. Dr. Frederick was awarded his M.D. from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1897, becoming the first African-American graduate of the institution. He then served a two-year internship at the John B. Murphy surgical clinics in Chicago before returning to Louisiana in 1899. Dr. Frederick stated later in life that he came back to the South, despite the increased racial tensions of the period, because of his "growing desire to return to the place of my birth in order to help train young Negroes for adequate service in the growing field of medical practice, badly needed among our people."[6]

Dr. Frederick's return to Louisiana was not long lasting, however. After assuming the practice of Pointe Coupée's white physician who had moved to another parish, Dr. Frederick was initially well received in his hometown and established a multi-racial clientele in 1899 despite the imposition of legal Jim Crow in Louisiana. While the racial code did not prevent Frederick from practicing medicine in the rural parish, his marriage to a poor white girl overstepped the heightened racial caste system of the turn-of-the-century South and he was forced to leave town. Dr. Frederick fled first for New Orleans, and then Central America, where from 1901 to 1904 he served as the surgeon-in-charge of the Government Hospital in Spanish Honduras. Joined by his wife in Honduras, he retired to private practice there in 1904 and became quite wealthy as a cattle rancher. However, revolution in Honduras forced Dr. Frederick and his family to flee to Belize, where he contracted malaria and decided to go back to the United States for treatment. Returning to New Orleans in 1908 after his Latin-American exile, Dr. Frederick established a private practice in his home and was soon appointed to both the faculty of the Flint Medical College as a professor of surgery and to the staff of the Sarah Goodridge Hospital, the one hospital in the city which permitted black physicians to treat their patients. It was after he established himself as one of New Orleans's leading black physicians that Dr. Frederick was invited to become a member of the board at one of the state's black-owned industrial insurance companies, Louisiana Life.[7]

By 1930 there were nine major life insurance companies operated by African Americans in New Orleans, which employed 72 percent of the city's black office workers. A number of these insurance companies employed between two and three hundred black workers, making them vital to the local black economy in the city. In the 1930s seven of these insurance companies formed the Executive Insurance Council, headed by Dr. Frederick's Louisiana Life. In September 1940 agents of four of these companies (Louisiana Life, Good Citizen's Insurance Company, Douglas Life, and Unity Life) formed a branch of the United Office and Professional Workers-CIO and struck for better working conditions and a higher percentage of their debit collections after accusing the Executive Insurance Council of conspiring to keep the wages of its agents low. This charge was levied against the companies when an agent discovered a memo which illustrated an agreement between the directors of the insurance companies to prevent any labor organization among their agents. The memo, dated March 16, 1934, was an agreement among seven of the state's black insurance companies, "in consideration for our mutual protection," to dismiss any agents who attempted to organize or strike and for the insurance executives to inform each other of any information they received about any union activity among their agents. In response to this revelation of collusion, the agents went on strike in the fall of 1940. Led by New Orleans civic worker Ernest Wright, the agents' union canvassed the black community, enlisting support for the strike and denouncing the unfair practices and "lavish lifestyles" of the insurance executives.[8]

Ernest "Whirlwind" Wright was born in a small Louisiana town in 1910 but grew up in New Orleans where his father worked as a longshoreman. Wright attended New Orleans public schools and Xavier University before leaving Louisiana to pursue a graduate degree in social work at the University of Michigan. He later recalled that he went into social work to "help my people, I mean the masses, the laboring people, the common man. That's why I wanted to become a social worker." After graduating from Michigan, Wright did social work in Detroit and Cincinnati before returning to New Orleans in the 1930s. He soon got involved in both civic and labor organizing in his hometown, which culminated with the organization of New Orleans' black insurance agents into the United Office and Professional Workers-CIO, one of the first white-collar locals in the South. Wright attracted large crowds to hear him and other strike leaders speak in Shakespeare Park, the city's one public park open to blacks. At one rally, Louisiana Life Insurance agent Daniel Byrd defended both the union and the strike to the crowd,



New Orleans, Louisiana,
March 16, 1934.

AN AGREEMENT

We the undersigned Life Insurance Companies, in consideration for our mutual protection, do hereby agree, that, in event a group of agents employed by any of the said undersigned companies strike, or attempt to organize for the purpose of striking for compensation other than that decided upon by each individual company, and are dismissed for such cause, no other company a party to this agreement will employ such agent or agents.

It is further agreed that all companies shall immediately notify all other companies that are signatories to this agreement of any action that may be taken for the above stated cause.

Agents claimed the agreement showed insurance company collusion against them. The Louisiana Weekly, September 28, 1940.

arguing that "the companies found it necessary to organize...for self protection. How much more necessary is it that the agents organize?" Reverend Jacob Spears, president of the Agents' Union, told his supporters that "the sacrifices that we are making and will continue making will become harder as time goes on, but we must stick it out at any price."[9]

Like many white businessmen in the South, the black owners of the industrial insurance companies refused to negotiate with unions. The owners were led by Dr. Rivers Frederick, who stated that "we have always dealt with [the agents] in a square manner. Let them state their grievances, and we shall consider them, but not the CIO." Many owners grumbled that their insurance agents were among the best paid, and most respected, black workers in the city, and therefore had little to complain about. "Agents at the Louisiana Insurance Company have always been

treated fairly and have made sufficient money to maintain a high standard of living," Dr. Fredrick told *The Louisiana Weekly*, New Orleans' black-run newspaper. "They are now circulating information that they hope will create sympathy for them; they have falsified about their salaries, which are comparable to other white collar incomes." The agents responded that they were not treated fairly, as any agent who submitted a grievance or joined the union was threatened with dismissal from his company.[10]

The strike soon turned into a battle for the hearts and minds of the New Orleans' black community, with the owners employing sound trucks, leaflets, and newspapers (many of which were owned by the same insurance executives) to discredit the strikers among the black public, while the union canvassed the black neighborhoods and rallied in Shakespeare Park, with Wright speaking over a loudspeaker to large crowds every Sunday afternoon. Striking agents took their cause directly to the black citizens of New Orleans, talking with the public at the city's churches and labor halls, telling listeners of the "hardships that [they] endure in dealing with members of high positions in their own group." The strike soon opened up class divisions in New Orleans' black community, especially when the owners brought in agents from other parts of the state to handle the struck routes and armed them with pistols to protect themselves from attacks by the union men. The insurance executives caused further resentment within the black community when they enlisted white "toughs" to protect the scabs from the striking agents and to intimidate the strikers. The union countered by hiring thugs of its own, black dock workers and even a local prizefighter, known as "Battling Siki," all of whom were more willing to resort to violence than were the college educated insurance agents. As a result, there were a number of violent incidents against both strikers and scabs. Two strikers were beaten up at gunpoint by six hired men and an insurance manager was shot at while going to work.[11]

The insurance strike of 1940 was not the first time that Wright and Fredrick had clashed swords. The New Orleans Branch of the NAACP, founded in 1915 by Dr. Frederick and other medical men, was dominated during this era by black elites from the professional classes. In his study of civil rights in Louisiana, historian Adam Fairclough writes that during the 1930s, "the executive committee of the New Orleans Branch of the NAACP read like a who's who of the black bourgeoisie." Fairclough went on to say that the "social gulf...[that] separated the leaders of the New Orleans branch from the black lower classes, [inhibited] the NAACP's ability to attract popular support."[12] The

fact that wealthy men like Dr. Frederick were prominent in the NAACP made the organization a rather exclusive society in the eyes of the black masses and made it difficult for the organization to sustain a large membership.[13]

A year before the insurance strike, a faction within the New Orleans NAACP called THE GROUP, made up of thirty-eight truck drivers, insurance agents, postal workers, and other working-class blacks, challenged the upper-class leadership of the local NAACP. For years the New Orleans NAACP had been notorious for its "uptown-downtown" divisions, and in 1939 Ernest Wright and the other members of THE GROUP sought to rescue the local NAACP office from what they described as the "purveyors of prestige." THE GROUP even enlisted the advice of national NAACP leaders Thurgood Marshall and Walter White for their planned coup. The old guard responded to this insurgency by creating their own "Progressive" ticket, headed by pharmacist J. Edwin Wilkins but backed by Rivers Frederick, who promised Wilkins an office at the Louisiana Life Insurance Building and his own secretary if he won the election. The Frederick-backed ticket defeated the insurgents in 1939 by thirty votes and created a deeply divided branch, with THE GROUP asserting that Dr. Frederick had put together a slate of wealthy "big shots" for the purpose of excluding them from power. They also pointed to the "insurance vote" as vital to their loss, as Frederick's Louisiana Life Insurance Company had forty-seven NAACP members on its staff.[14]

The class bias within the New Orleans NAACP was still evident during the 1940 insurance strike. The insurance agents made numerous attempts to have the local NAACP chapter support their strike, but to no avail. Agents claimed that the NAACP refused to support them because chapter president J. Edwin Wilkins was "tied-up" with Dr. Rivers Frederick, who helped get him elected. Instead of supporting the strikers, the board of directors of the New Orleans NAACP, which included Dr. Frederick and other insurance executives, threw the official support of the organization behind the insurance companies and advised all NAACP members in New Orleans to do the same. This action drew criticism from the NAACP's national office, which formally rebuked the New Orleans chapter for opposing the insurance agents' right to collective bargaining, a major initiative of the NAACP.[15]

Another area of resentment between the strikers and the insurance executives concerned the ties that many of the insurance executives had to the local white power structure. In his study of the black leadership class in New Orleans, Daniel Thompson found that "professional leaders

"We'll Fight to the Finish", Says Jacob Spears, Agent Union Prexy; Companies Stand Pat on Position

The Louisiana Weekly, October 26, 1940.

are frequently accepted as spokesmen for the Negro people" by leading whites. Because of their education, wealth, and prestige, prominent professionals like Dr. Frederick established contacts with white leaders, which allowed them to improve conditions for both themselves and their community. Dr. Frederick was routinely asked by Louisiana governors and mayors of New Orleans for his advice on racial issues, and he sat on numerous interracial councils for the city and state. For example, Dr. Frederick served on the Mayor's Committee to Study Housing Rehabilitation and the Advisory Council on Civil Defense to the Governor. However, according to Thompson, the relationships that prominent blacks had with leading whites often hurt their standing in their own community, as there was often a suspicion, especially among other black leaders, that they would "sell out to white people."[16]

The agents initially made a great deal of headway in their strike against the insurance agencies. Thirty of Louisiana Life's thirty-four New Orleans agents joined the strike, and the company lost over six hundred dollars a week in uncollected premiums. Two weeks into the strike the Good Citizens Insurance Company broke with the other companies and settled with its agents, giving the remaining strikers confidence that they would soon achieve a total victory. However, as the strike dragged on into October, union leaders including Ernest Wright were arrested on assault charges after numerous violent clashes between strikers and scabs. At his trial Wright was led to believe that in exchange for a guilty plea he would receive probation, but he was instead sentenced to sixty days in the Orleans Parish Prison. Ernest Wright insisted that his imprisonment was a result of the "monied interests" led by Dr. Frederick, who sought to discredit Wright's growing influence in the black community, and accused Dr. Frederick of using his ties to the city's white government to have him and other strike leaders imprisoned. With Wright and other union leaders in jail the strike began to crumble

Rebuke La. NAACP Officer for Opposing Organization of Labor

Amistad Research Center at Tulane University.

and was eventually settled in November 1940 in the owners' favor. Despite the failure of the strike, Wright was hailed as a hero by the city's working class blacks. Upon his release from jail, he was greeted by a throng of five thousand people who then held a victory parade down Canal Street carrying a sign which read, "Down with Rivers Frederick and His Gang of Traitors." Wright told the crowd assembled at Shakespeare Park that he was the victim of persons with money who had him jailed, but he was now willing to fight the battle of the people "until hell freezes over."[17] Ernest Wright made good on his pledge, working as a civic and labor leader in New Orleans for the rest of his life.

The insurance strike of 1940 was one of the most distinctive examples of class division within New Orleans' black community during the segregation era. The black upper class in Jim Crow New Orleans, made up mainly of businessmen and professionals like Dr. Frederick, occupied a delicate space in the city's class and race dichotomy. As they were dependent upon a black clientele for their economic success, most were vocal advocates of racial pride and racial solidarity. This was especially true of black physicians, who were constantly in competition with white doctors for the relatively small number of paying black patients in the city. However, while prominent men like Dr. Frederick continually advocated that the African-American community patronize black businesses, shops, doctors, and lawyers, they were also usually very conservative in their actions in regards to attacking segregation directly. In part this was a result of having "made it," both economically and socially; they simply did not wish to jeopardize all that they had gained. As one New Orleans black civic leader told Daniel Thompson, the black elite did not need to fight for civil rights because they already "live like white people."[18] Perhaps another reason for their conservative attitudes was that they made their fortunes within a segregated system,

and therefore stood to lose such fortunes if the Jim Crow system crumbled. The insurance business was one of the best examples of this. If black consumers could get policies from white firms at lower rates than the black industrial insurance companies charged, black insurance executives would lose their client base. Therefore, many upper-class blacks had a vested interest in maintaining segregation, at least in some form. In short, their class interests could outweigh their rhetoric of racial solidarity, as illustrated in the insurance strike of 1940.

This is not to say, however, that racial solidarity among the black classes did not exist at all. An interesting conclusion to the Rivers Frederick-Ernest Wright story illustrates that certain events could inspire racial solidarity among even among sworn enemies. In 1947 Milton Wilson was convicted of murdering a white couple, after raping the woman, in St. Charles Parish. The case drew widespread condemnation from the black community because it was rumored that Wilson had been tortured by police until he confessed to the crimes. In light of this denial of basic constitutional rights, Rivers Frederick joined with his old nemesis Ernest Wright in forming a Milton Wilson Defense Committee. This group was successful in having the Louisiana State Supreme Court order another trial, but Wilson was again convicted and executed in 1951.[19]

Amistad Research Center at Tulane University.

Notes

[1]Willard Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990), 7-8.

[2]Louise Gordon, *Caste & Class: The Black Experience in Arkansas, 1880-1920* (Athens, GA, and London, 1995), *xi-xii.*

[3]Joseph Hardin Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana; A. P. Tureaud and C. C. Haydel, "The Negro in Medicine in Louisiana," Souvenir Program, 41st Annual Session of the National Medical Association," August 11-17, 1935, Amistad Research Center; "Negro Businessmen of New Orleans," *Fortune* (November 1949):184; Encyclopedia Britannica Library Research Service, Confidential Report for J.O. Sheffield, in Dr. Jessie Olin Sheffield Papers, Amistad Research Center; Adam Fairclough, *Race & Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972* (Athens, GA and London, 1995), 18-19.

[4]Claude Jacobs, "Benevolent Societies of New Orleans Blacks During the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Louisiana History* 29 (Winter 1988): 51-52; Donald E. Devore, "The Rise from the Nadir: Black New Orleans Between the Wars, 1920-1940," (M.A. thesis, University of New Orleans, 1983), 54; *Woods Directory* (1913).

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[6]"Biographical Sketch of Rivers Frederick," (1951), in Rivers Frederick Papers, Box 1, folder 13, Amistad Research Center; Patricia Spain Ward, "Rivers Frederick: UIC's First Black M.D.?" (unpublished manuscript, 1989), Rivers Frederick Papers, Box 1, folder 25; Vital, "Dr. Rivers Frederick," 8-9, 13-14, 24-26, 48.

[7]"Biographical Sketch of Rivers Frederick," in Rivers Fredrick Papers; Vital, "Dr. Rivers Frederick," 41-45.

[8]Keith Weldon Medley, "Ernest Wright: 'People's Champion," *Southern Exposure* (May/June 1984): 53-54; *Louisiana Weekly*, September 7, 28, 1940.

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[10]*Louisiana Weekly*, September 14, 21, 1940.

[11]Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*, 54-55; *Louisiana Weekly*, September 14, October 12, 1940.

[12]Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*, 48-49.

[13]*Cleveland (OH) Gazette*, August 8, 1936.

[14]Papers of the NAACP, Part 12, Group 1, Box G 83, UPA microfilm; Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*, 58-58, 61.

[15]*Louisiana Weekly*, September 21, October 26, 1940.

[16]Daniel C. Thompson, *The Negro Leadership Class* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1963) 54, 70; Hardin Papers; Frederick Papers.

[17]*Louisiana Weekly*, September 14, 21, 1940; Marcus Christian, *A Black History of Louisiana* (Unpublished manuscript, 1980), Marcus Christian Collection, Accession 11, Box 26, Chapter 40, 11, Archives and Special Collections, Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans; DeVore, "The Rise from the Nadir: Black New Orleans Between the Wars, 1920-1940" (Master's thesis, University of New Orleans, 1983), 42, 57; Medley, "Ernest Wright: 'People's Champion,'" 52-55; Keith Weldon Medley, "Remembering Ernest Wright," New Orleans Tribune 2 (February 1986): 13-14; *Louisiana Weekly*, September 14, 1940.

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[19]Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*, 120.

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A City Too Respectable to Hate: Mobile During the Era of Desegregation, 1961-1965

Nahfiza Ahmed

In July 1963 the *Wall Street Journal* described the city of Mobile as "an island of tranquillity [*sic*]...in a region seething with racial unrest."[1] This compliment from a leading business publication coincided with the climax of the southern civil rights movement in Alabama where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), with the help of Birmingham's Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR), led by the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, waged a successful strategy of non-violent direct action to promote the integration of America's most segregated city. In so doing they invoked violent reaction from whites and ended federal inaction in the field of civil rights, with the long-term result being the 1964 Civil Rights Act. A similar occurrence took place in Selma in 1965 when King led an SCLC march in the city that led to President Johnson signing the historic Voting Rights Bill.[2] Previously, in 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) had targeted the Magic City for its "Freedom Rides" designed to integrate bus terminals, an occasion which also invoked white violence but led to a successful result.[3]

CORE, the SCLC, and King's brand of non-violent resistance to unjust laws were noticeably absent in Mobile–Alabama's oldest city, only seaport, and second largest metropolitan area. This article seeks to explain why Mobile did not succumb to the forces of radicalism and reaction that besieged other parts of Alabama during the 1960s. Black protest and municipal leadership in Mobile retained a remarkable degree of continuity with the spirit of post-World War II liberalism throughout this period. The city had two leaders whose public careers typified the New Deal-influenced liberal alliance in the South forged during the 1930s. They believed that black and white Southerners shared a common destiny in promoting regional progress and were instrumental in keeping Mobile "respectable" during the climax of the civil rights movement in Alabama.

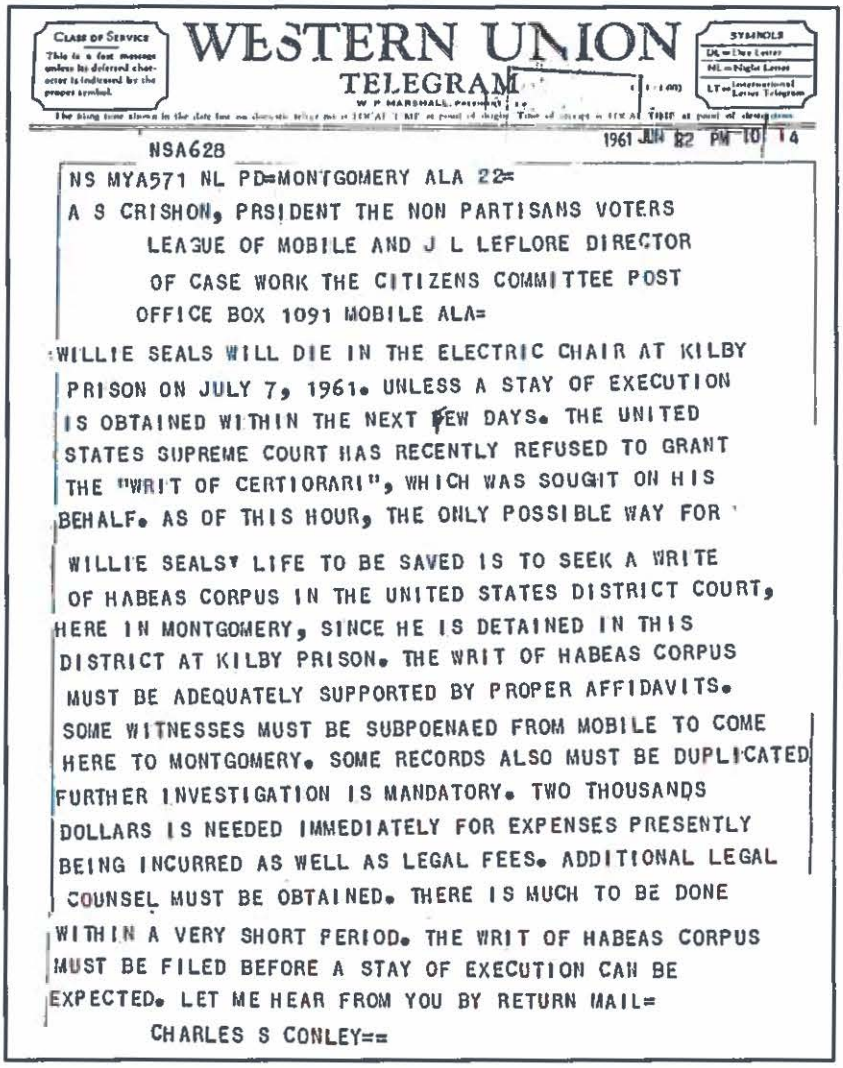
That common destiny included the goal of economic progress and honest, efficient government underpinned by the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in the American democratic system. World War II brought spectacular changes to Mobile, which ultimately propelled the city along a new path. While many deliberated over the validity of racial segregation in a country fighting a war against fascism and Nazism abroad, Mobile reaped the benefits of wartime economic mobilization. At

John LeFlore, c. 1945. Erik Overbey Collection, University of South Alabama Archives.

Black workers at ADDSCO. ADDSCO Collection, USA Archives.

the same time, the historic port city was suddenly confronted with massive economic and social problems. The unexpected growth of the metropolitan population from 78,720 inhabitants in 1940 to approximately 125,000 in 1944 revealed more clearly than ever the inequities of segregation. The black population rose from 29,114 to 36,610 in the same period and in 1950 numbered 66,068 out of a total population of 182,963.[4] The majority of these blacks found that lack of access to skilled jobs, housing, and certain municipal services prevented them from fully enjoying the boom in the local economy that resulted from war production. Segregated provisions on public transit and in the newly-created military base, Brookley Field, were sites of rising interracial tension and violence. Attempts by the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice (FEPC) to open up skilled shipyard employment to African Americans were bitterly resisted by white staff at the Alabama Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Company (ADDSCO) during the bloody race riot of May 1943 which left over fifty persons injured, most of them black.[5]

Typical black housing in the Davis Avenue area in the postwar era. Mobile Housing Board Records, USA Archives.



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NS MYA571 NL PD=MONTGOMERY ALA 22=
A S CRISHON, PRSIDENT THE NON PARTISANS VOTERS
LEAGUE OF MOBILE AND J L LEFLORE DIRECTOR
OF CASE WORK THE CITIZENS COMMITTEE POST
OFFICE BOX 1091 MOBILE ALA=
WILLIE SEALS WILL DIE IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR AT KILBY
PRISON ON JULY 7, 1961. UNLESS A STAY OF EXECUTION
IS OBTAINED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. THE UNITED
STATES SUPREME COURT HAS RECENTLY REFUSED TO GRANT
THE "WRIT OF CERTIORARI", WHICH WAS SOUGHT ON HIS
BEHALF. AS OF THIS HOUR, THE ONLY POSSIBLE WAY FOR
WILLIE SEALS' LIFE TO BE SAVED IS TO SEEK A WRITE
OF HABEAS CORPUS IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT,
HERE IN MONTGOMERY, SINCE HE IS DETAINED IN THIS
DISTRICT AT KILBY PRISON. THE WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS
MUST BE ADEQUATELY SUPPORTED BY PROPER AFFIDAVITS.
SOME WITNESSES MUST BE SUBPOENAED FROM MOBILE TO COME
HERE TO MONTGOMERY. SOME RECORDS ALSO MUST BE DUPLICATED
FURTHER INVESTIGATION IS MANDATORY. TWO THOUSANDS
DOLLARS IS NEEDED IMMEDIATELY FOR EXPENSES PRESENTLY
BEING INCURRED AS WELL AS LEGAL FEES. ADDITIONAL LEGAL
COUNSEL MUST BE OBTAINED. THERE IS MUCH TO BE DONE
WITHIN A VERY SHORT PERIOD. THE WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS
MUST BE FILED BEFORE A STAY OF EXECUTION CAN BE
EXPECTED. LET ME HEAR FROM YOU BY RETURN MAIL=
CHARLES S CONLEY==

Non-Partisan Voter's League Records, USA Archives.

concluded a case that had cost over $11,000 by proving that an all-white jury system which systematically excluded blacks from the rolls could not deliver equal protection of the laws under the Fourteenth Amendment. This victory eventually led to the appointment of African Americans to juries across the South.[16] Other cases of long-term importance financed and organized by the NPVL included the 1963

class-action suit designed to force the integration of the public schools following seven years of non-compliance in the county. In *Birdie Mae Davis et al. v. the Board of School Commissioners of Mobile County*, the court ordered the school board to begin steps towards integration without further delay. Murphy High School in Mobile then became the first all-white public school in the state to be integrated that year.[17] LeFlore's expertise in handling such cases also brought the NPVL success in integrating the police and fire departments, the Alabama National Guard, and in sending Vivian Malone to integrate the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. That was the occasion for Governor Wallace's infamous "Stand in the Schoolhouse Door" speech.[18] Yet it was in the political sphere and, to a lesser extent, in the League's handling of desegregating public accommodations that black protest in Mobile truly demonstrated the strength of the alliance LeFlore had forged during the 1940s and 1950s with the liberal establishment in a city that prided itself on a long tradition of racial harmony.[19]

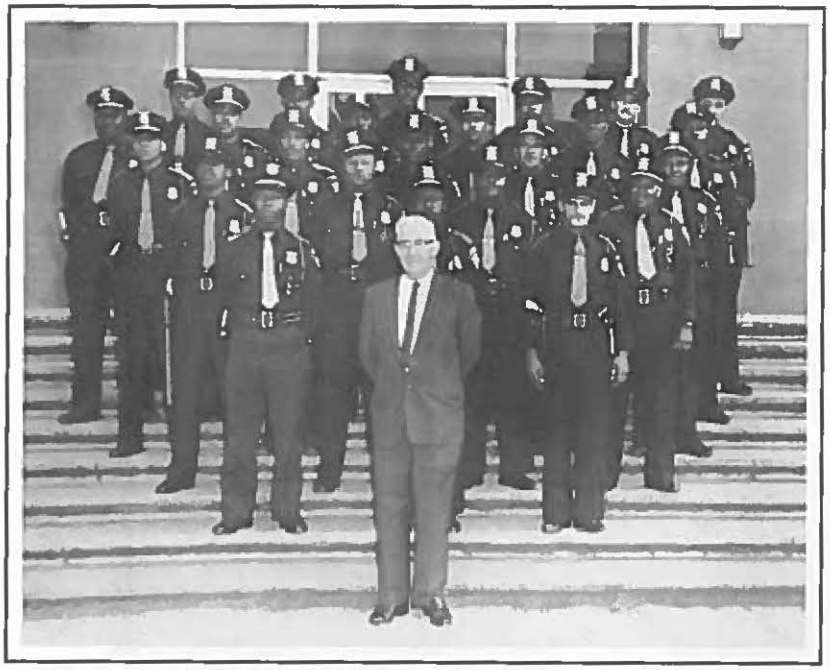
A prime mover in Mobile politics after 1946 was Joe Langan, an Alabamian of Irish descent whose Catholic childhood was shaped by growing up in a lower-middle class, racially-mixed neighborhood. Like his counterparts elsewhere in the South, he grew into adulthood within a society that regarded blacks as inferior to whites. His military experiences while stationed in Arizona, however, transformed his attitudes toward his country and its black citizens. On return from service, he wrote a controversial letter to the *Mobile Press Register* condemning the unequal treatment afforded to African Americans in the city, claiming that it echoed the world of Hitler and the Nazis.[20] One year later, he won the Mobile County state senate seat supporting the Folsom administration. In 1953 he was elected to the three-man Mobile city commission with the help of votes from the predominantly black wards and later announced that he was "happy to accept the vote of any man."[21] He was then re-elected in 1957 with the help of the NPVL's official endorsement of his campaign in Mobile's predominately black Ward 7.[22]

A major reason for Langan's support from newly-registered black voters was that in 1949 he had aided LeFlore's successful efforts to persuade the Mobile County School Board to equalize black and white teachers' salaries by threatening to withdraw school revenue from a new 1 percent tax on cigarettes. In 1946 Langan had made another very important gesture to the black community by pledging his support of the newly-formed Negro Veterans' and Voters' League of Mobile. Three years later, that group successfully invalidated the Boswell Amendment to the Alabama constitution designed to block, through literacy tests and other means, blacks registering to vote in the wake of *Smith v*

Joe Langan. Museum of Mobile.

Allwright. Langan provided funds and an office for the league. He was motivated at the time by a desire to see that America lived up to its democratic creed both at home and abroad. This motivation continued throughout his entire political career and even after his defeat in the 1968 municipal elections.[23]

During Langan's tenure in office, he ran one of the most honest and efficient municipal governments in the state, launching several key capital projects designed to modernize the city and improve services for poorer citizens. A major annexation in 1956 enlarged Mobile's geographic size from thirty to ninety-two square miles, thereby increasing the population by twenty-five thousand. Procuring approximately $2.5

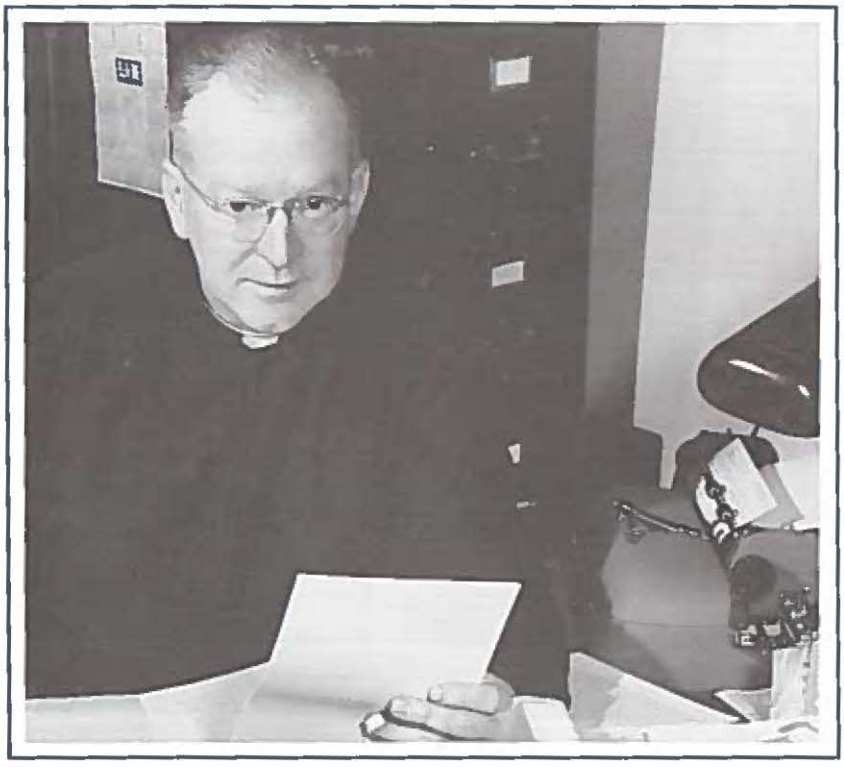


Mobile Police Chief Dudley McFadyen with black officers, 1960.
John LeFlore Papers, USA Archives.

million in federal funds through the 1949 Housing Act, the city commission launched a major urban renewal program in run-down black neighborhoods (largely completed during the early 1960s). In 1953 Mobile became the first city in Alabama to hire black police officers under Langan's influence. Such moves rapidly bestowed upon him the dangerous political label of racial liberal. Not surprisingly, he then became the target of the White Citizen's Council and the Ku Klux Klan. The latter group burned a cross in his front yard in 1956. Despite such opposition Langan continued to work to improve the status of black Mobilians. When the new municipal auditorium opened in the summer of 1964, it was to an integrated audience of six thousand, an event that was accompanied by little hostility from white citizens.[24]

Respect for American political institutions and values united LeFlore and Langan throughout the postwar era. LeFlore sought integration as the means to achieve first-class citizenship for African Americans, a goal widely espoused by the NAACP national leadership. Though not of a ministerial background himself, he pursued the accommodationist policies of the more conservative elements of the southern black civil rights leadership. A key feature of the League's political agenda included canvassing the minority bloc vote in support of racial liberals during

municipal elections through its official endorsement sheets. On account of the NPVL's voter registration efforts, the number of blacks in the county registered to vote had risen from 543 in 1946 to 11,366 in 1963. The city of Mobile itself had 7,651 black registered voters in that year.[25] LeFlore tactically used Mobile's black percentage of the vote to re-elect Joe Langan as city commissioner. Sharing an ideological faith in the funding principles of the American nation, LeFlore and Langan led the desegregation era with an inter-racial spirit that was combined with a sense of moral guardianship of the masses. Both characteristics can be found in the Special Advisory Commission (SAC), established in 1963 and the NPVL's efforts to integrate public accommodations between 1960 and 1964.[26]



Fr. Albert J. Foley. Museum of Mobile.

By the summer of 1963 Langan had become very conscious of developments in Birmingham and began working closely with LeFlore and Father Albert Foley, a member of the faculty of Spring Hill College in Mobile. Foley was tutor in Theology in the Jesuit-founded Catholic college, one of the oldest educational institutions in the state, which had voluntarily integrated its student body one year after the Supreme Court

ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).[27] Langan's aim was to create a new local forum "to provide the City Commission with a readily accessible group of informed citizens to which the Commission may refer for discussion, advice, and recommendations concerning the problems of general public concerns."[28]

The precursor to the SAC had been the Bi-racial commission of 1956, created by Langan in response to the white backlash that had accompanied the *Brown* cases. That exercise had assembled several leading whites and blacks to a voluntary commission entrusted to investigate problems facing the community in the wake of court-ordered school desegregation. It was quickly disbanded when rising Klan activity in the city and Patterson's anti-NAACP stance made it politically dangerous for Langan to support a commission on which blacks served. Yet the principle of a bi-racial forum supported by the mayor and city commission was the key factor that successfully spared Mobile from a legacy of confrontational politics and a direct-action movement.[29]

Langan's 1963 commission was a novel experiment for Mobile. Against the wishes of his two colleagues at city hall, Charles S. Trimmier and George E. McNally, it was established via a municipal ordinance that authorized the use of public funds to support the running of fortnightly meetings and other miscellaneous expenses. Members were expected to serve on a voluntary basis. Langan personally contacted a number of potential candidates and eventually gathered a range of civic-minded members from Mobile's middle-to-upper class society. Persons from business, the clergy, women's groups, labor organizations, and other professions were chosen on the basis of their "sober-mindedness." Subcommittees on housing, welfare, and employment were also established to bring together representatives from Mobile's black and white communities to discuss specific problems.[30]

Black clergymen appointed to the SAC included Bishop W. T. Smith and the Reverend Charles A. Tunstall. Eminent white citizens included George Denniston, vice-chairman of Mobile's American National Bank, Alfred Delchamps, owner of a large local grocery chain, and Martin Johnson of the District Social Security Office. Denniston provided a meeting place in the downtown offices of First National free of charge. Langan was appointed Secretary, and although LeFlore did not officially serve on the SAC, he was nonetheless consulted behind the scenes. Minutes of meetings were kept but the local press was prevented from reporting activities too closely for fear of Klan reprisals. Within the context of the social turmoil faced by Alabamians in other urban areas during the 1960s, Langan's move certainly contrasted sharply with that of Bull Connor in Birmingham and Jim Clark in Selma. The existence

of the SAC also gave Mobile a positive media image on the issue of race which further validated the respectable course of black protest in the city since the war.[31]

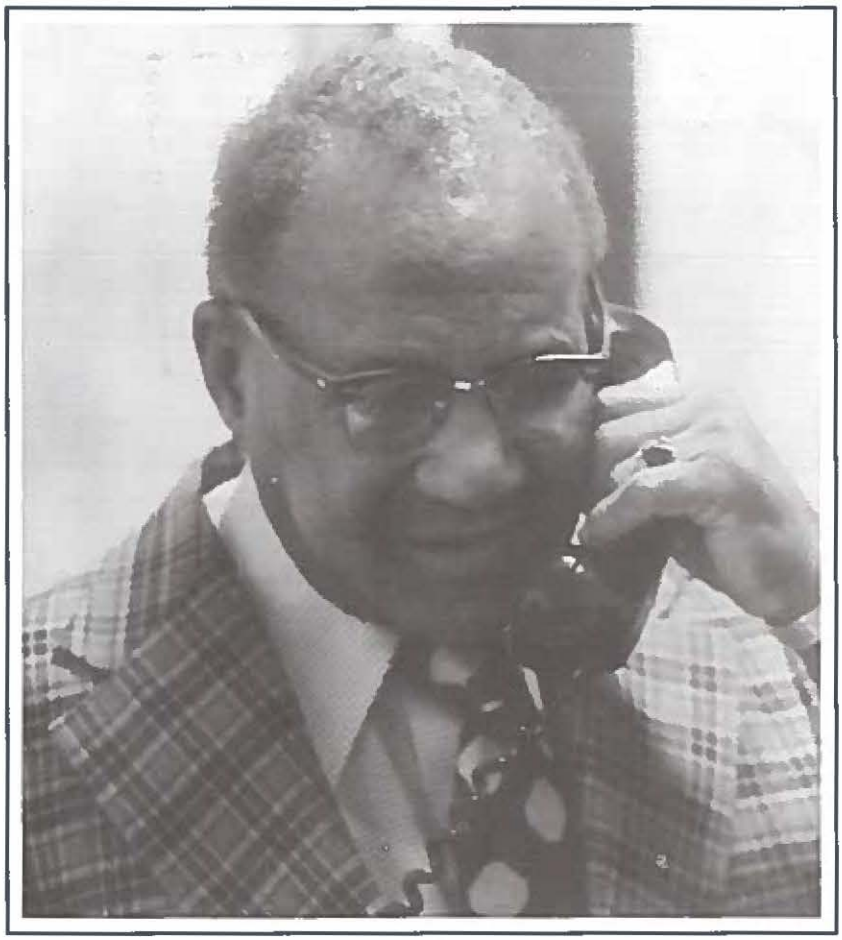
Bishop Smith, a well-regarded member of the black community, typified ministerial support for Langan by claiming that "in comparison with Birmingham and Montgomery, Mobile stands out as a beacon light."[32] However, it soon became embarrassingly obvious that an interracial commission with no enforcement powers was ill-equipped to break down decades of institutional and customary racial discrimination in Mobile. By 1966 the SAC had achieved minimal progress in aiding the employment of blacks in skilled and service jobs involving face-to-face contact with whites, except for a few positions at the telephone agreed company and at the American National Bank where Denniston had agreed to hire Mobile's first female African-American bank teller.[33]

Lack of progress in public school integration and access to skilled employment for backs continued to be a long-standing problem in Mobile well into the 1970s. This severely blighted the optimism that had accompanied the legislative successes of the civil rights era. Fifty percent of Mobilians reported as unemployed in 1960 were African Americans. Housing conditions on Davis Avenue, the heart of the black community, reflected the poverty of the people, although it must be stated that they were relatively better off than those that lived in the rural Black Belt counties. Sixty-five percent of African-American homes lacked adequate plumbing and families were crowded into three-room, one-story dwelling units.[34] In the previous year, Martin Johnson, chairman of the SAC, had warned Langan that the black ministers were reporting a rise in demands from the community for boycotts and demonstrations to speed up integration. Also high on the agenda was the need for Langan to appoint blacks to municipal agencies such as the Mobile Housing Board, an issue that had already been raised by NPVL board member, the Reverend John E. Lowery, with Langan in 1960. Responding to mounting criticism, Langan took the bold step of appointing LeFlore to the Housing Board in 1966. He was the first black ever to serve in such a capacity.[35]

However, it was quite unlikely that LeFlore and the NPVL board members were going to relinquish their hard-won respectability in the city by opting to joining the militant wing of the southern civil rights movement, the model for which was provided by the Greensboro student sit-ins of 1960. The radicalization of black protest in the mid-1950s and early 1960s largely failed to make an impact in Mobile. There was no "Mobile Bus Boycott of 1955" to secure for the city an historic role in the local and national civil rights movements. Black protest had been

Groundbreaking ceremony for the Water Street right-of-way. Left to right: James Alexander, John LeFlore, Joe Langan, and other city officials. Mobile Housing Board Records, USA Archives.

dominated by a middle-class elite consisting mainly of clergymen and other persons of the professional class committed to supporting Langan and keeping their community respectable. The example of NPVL efforts to integrate public accommodations typified this conservative approach. Through a specially-commissioned Junior Civic League, black dentist Dr.



John LeFlore was often on the phone in his work. John LeFlore Papers, USA Archives.

Richard Gailliard, a member of the SAC and the League, along with his wife, accompanied young blacks to establishments in downtown Mobile and politely requested service under the terms of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.[36] Before the passage of the act, LeFlore had personally contacted the regional headquarters of F. W. Woolworth and S. H. Kress, leading dime store operators in the city, requesting that they integrate their lunch counters to avoid a sit-in confrontation like Greensboro. With Langan's

help, local managers agreed to meet with LeFlore, and this led to integration of lunch counters, including the first full menu and sit-down service for blacks. Such a paternalistic handling of a delicate issue made mass direct action seem unnecessary and placed Mobile at the forefront of progress in public accommodation desegregation in the state.[37]

An alliance forged during a post-war political climate when regional progress and liberal attitudes towards race had gained a brief foothold in Alabama, lay at the root of Mobile's social and political stability during the turbulent 1960s. The historic opening of the Democratic primary fueled an unprecedented rise in African-American political participation in municipal elections across the urban South. Both of these trends aided the careers of two key personalities in Mobile who wanted to secure for all American citizens, regardless of race, the right to participate in a democratic government. Faithful to this goal, Langan and LeFlore ensured that Mobilians did not resort to the violence and heated racial confrontations that caused a breakdown in civil order in Birmingham in 1963 and in Selma in 1965. While the city of Mobile remained respectable during this period, the long-term political costs of racial peace became painfully clear to many black Mobilians during the post-revolutionary (late sixties and after) period of the Second Reconstruction.

Notes

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[2]William W. Rogers, David Ward, Leah R. Atkins and Wayne Flynt, *Alabama:The History of a Deep South State* (Tuscaloosa, 1995), 557-65.

[3]Glenn T. Eskew, "The Freedom Ride Riot and Political Reform in Birmingham, 1961-1963," *Alabama Review* 49 (July 1996), 181; "Pushing the Limits: Joe Langan's Mobile," *Mobile Register*, September 15, 1997, sec. 1-A.

[4]*Final Population Figures for the Area and its Constituent Parts, Mobile Congested Production Area*, March 1944, Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, Series CA-1 No. 1, Washington, D.C. 1; *1950 Census: Population*, vol. 2, part 2, 2-49 and 2-59.

[5]The best coverage of the economic and social impact of the war in Mobile is Bruce Nelson, "Organized Labor and the Struggle for Black Equality in Mobile During World War II," *Journal of American History* 80 (December 1993): 952-88. Also useful are Melton A. McLaurin and Michael Thomason, *Mobile:The Life and Times of a Great Southern City* (Northridge, CA, 1981), 123-28; Melton A. McLaurin, "Mobile, Blacks and World War II: The Development of a Political Consciousness," in *Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference Proceedings* 4 (Pensacola, 1972): 1; Bernadette K. Loftin, "A Social History of the Mid-Gulf South, Panama City-

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[6]Patsy Busby Dow, "Joseph N. Langan: Mobile's Racial Diplomat" (Master's thesis, University of South Alabama, 1993), 5.

[7]Carl Grafton, "James E. Folsom and Civil Liberties in Alabama," *Alabama Review* 32 (January 1979): 5.

[8]Dorothy A. Autrey, "'Can These Bones Live?' The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Alabama, 1918-1930," *Journal of Negro History* 82 (January 1979): 1.

[9]Nelson, "Mobile During World War II," 963.

[10]Autrey, "'Can These Bones Live?'" 9; Elisa Baldwin, Chronology of John L. LeFlore, *Guide to the Papers of John L. LeFlore, 1926-1976* (University of South Alabama Archives, 1996), 3.

[11]McLaurin, "Mobile Blacks and World War II," 49-51.

[12]Keith Nicholls, "The Non-Partisan Voters' League of Mobile, Alabama: Its Founding and Major Accomplishments." *Gulf Coast Historical Review* 8 (Spring 1993): 74-80, and "The NAACP outlawed in Alabama, 1956-1964," speech delivered at the Alabama Department of Archives and History Alabama Studies Symposium, Montgomery, August 7-9, 1992, 4; Rogers et al., *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State*, 568-71.

[13]Everett Carll Ladd, Jr., *Southern Negro Political Leadership* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1966), 43-47.

[14]"Constitutions and Bylaws," undated, and "Constitutions and Amendments, 1956-59," Non-Partisan Voters' League Records, University of South Alabama Archives, Mobile, Alabama, hereafter cited as NPVL Records; Glenn T. Eskew, *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Struggles in the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill, 1997), 121.

[15]Nicholls, "The Non-Partisan Voters' League," 83-4.

[16]*Martin J. Wiman v. Willie Seals, Jr.*, 372-US 915 (1963), "Southern Jury Boxes Facing a Shake-Up," *Montgomery Advertiser-Journal*, March 10, 1963.

[17]Chamber of Commerce of the Mobile Area, City of Mobile, County of Mobile, Mobile United, University of South Alabama, *Mobile Civic Index, 1960-1994* (September 1994), 23.

[18]"Along the Non-Partisan Voters' League - Citizen's Committee Civil Rights Front," undated, NPVL Records; Nicholls, "The Non-Partisan Voters' League"; *Birdie Mae Davis et. al. v. Mobile County Board of School Commissioners*, Civil Action No. 10383 (1963).

[19]William Graves, "Mobile: Alabama's City in Motion," *National Geographic* (March 1968): 383.

[20]*Mobile Press Register*, November 19, 1945, sec. A.

[21]Dow, "Langan: Mobile's Racial Diplomat," 9-10.

[22]A.S. Crishon, Preston G. Williams, Conrad Deane, Rev. J.E. Lowery and Fletcher McArthur, "Citizen's Committee of the NPVL to all Voters and Fellow Citizens," September 4, 1957, NPVL Records.

[23]*Mobile Press*, April 20, 1949, sec. A.; Dow, "Langan: Mobile's Racial Diplomat," 12-14; McLaurin, "Mobile Blacks and World War II," 53; *Mobile Register*, September 15, 1997. In 1975, Langan testified at an NPVL court hearing involving a suit charging that the city's at-large method of electing its mayors diluted the voting strength of the majority black wards, *Wiley L. Bolden, et al. v. the City of Mobile*, Civil Action No. 75-297-P (1975).

[24]Dow, "Langan: Mobile's Racial Diplomat," 2-26, 31, 45; *Mobile Register*, November 18, 1953.

[25]"Black Voting Strength in Mobile County as of April 8, 1946," Mobile NAACP Branch, LeFlore Papers, USA Archives; Probate Qualified Voter Figures as of June 1, 1963, NPVL Records, USA Archives.

[26]Joseph N. Langan, former mayor of Mobile, interview in John LeFlore Oral History Project, 1996, University of South Alabama Archives; Dow, "Langan: Mobile's Racial Diplomat," 40.

[27]A. S. Foley, "Stages in the Desegregation Progress at Spring Hill College, Mobile, Ala., 1955," 1, Albert Foley Papers, Spring Hill College Archives, Mobile.

[28]Suggested Operating Rules for the Special Advisory Committee, Ordinance 03-259, 1963, Joseph Langan Papers, Mobile Municipal Archives.

[29]A. S. Foley, "The KKK in Mobile, Ala.," *America*, December 8, 1956, 298; *Mobile Beacon*, March 10, 1956, 1.

[30]Suggested Operating Rules for the Special Advisory Committee, Langan Papers; Dow, "Mobile's Racial Diplomat," 40-45.

[31]*Mobile Register*, September 1997, 4-A; *New York Times*, July 12, 1964, 1.

[32]Dow, "Mobile's Racial Diplomat," 45.

[33]Ibid., 42.

[34]Minutes of the Special Advisory Commission, May 2, 1965, Langan Papers; *Censuses of Population and Housing: 1960 Census Tracts, Final Report PHC (1)-94, Mobile, Al. Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area* (Washington, D.C.), 1961, 13, 28.

[35]Martin Johnson to the Mobile City Commissioners, March 24, 1965 and J.E. Lowery to the Mobile Board of Commissioners, August 15, 1960, Langan Papers.

[36]O. B. Purifoy, former treasurer of the NPVL, interview in LeFlore Oral History Project.

[37]LeFlore to F. W. Woolworth and Company, June 28, 1960, and to S. H. Kress and Company, June 29, 1960, Langan Papers; Dow, "Mobile's Racial Diplomat," 41.

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Book Reviews

Christina Vella. *Intimate Enemies: The Two Worlds of the Baroness de Pontalba*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997, *xiii*, pp. 416. $29.95. ISBN 0-8071-2144-4

Visitors to the French Quarter of New Orleans always admire the red brick apartment buildings with their lacy iron balconies, confronting each other across Jackson square in the heart of the old city. Behind those Pontalba apartments lurks, or course, a vivid true story told with verve and distinction by Christina Vella. She knows everything there is to know about the astonishing woman who, a century and half ago, did it all.

Micaela Almonester (called "Micael" in the text) was born in 1795 in New Orleans, then a very primitive city. Vella's descriptions of the stench and offal in the streets are grossly unforgettable. Micael's Spanish-born father, who died when she was not yet three, was a self-made man and philanthropist who built the St. Louis Cathedral and designed the Presbytere and Cabildo that still stand. His genius for building seems to have passed through his genes to his daughter, while from her mother, a French Creole, Micael got her self-sufficiency, her restlenessness, her intelligence, and her ambition.

At fifteen Micael married, by arrangement, Cèlestin de Pontalba, a distant French cousin. At their wedding in the St. Louis Cathedral, everyone noted that the groom was beautiful and the bride rich. They sailed for France, where the Pontalbas isolated the teenaged heiress, Micael, in a boring, creaky country estate and tried to harass and trick her out of her family money. She fought back however she could.

But after fourteen years and three sons, Cèlestin officially abandoned Micael–who then escaped to New Orleans, where divorce was possible, though rare. "Among the Creoles it was more common to hear of a woman killing her husband than divorcing him," Vella noted. There never was a divorce, but lawsuits, threats, and ploys kept officials busy, and local scandalmongers amused, for years. Micael, meanwhile, found herself another man, with whom she blithely vacationed in Cuba–although under French law, a wife's adultery meant a mandatory prison term. Her French father-in-law lost control of his emotions. Lying in wait one night, he shot Micael in the chest, blowing off two of her fingers, destroying one lung, and leaving her maimed for life. Then he turned the gun on himself. Micael survived, but the two balls stayed lodged in her chest for the rest of her days–nearly forty years.

The first part of Micael's life was obviously passionate and lurid, and an easy story to tell well. But Christina Vella is a genius at making everything interesting. When Micael, safely separated from the Pontalbas, decided to build an exquisite, enormous new house in Paris, her quarrels with architects and contractors were legendary. They were documented in thousands of pieces of paper that Vella combed through and made fascinating. The final product was a well-made, elegant house on the rue St. Honoré, which still has the glossy dance floor that was Micael's original construction. Since 1977, the building has been the American Embassy in Paris.

Even more intriguing is the story of the Pontalba apartments in New Orleans, the first apartment buildings in North America. Vella gives us the personalities, the lawsuits, and the intricacies of design so that we can recognize the subtle features (certain gentle projections, all Micael's ideas) that keep a long, rectangular building from seeming dull and stolid. The Pontalba buildings were also the first in the French Quarter to sport the lacy, cast-iron decorative balconies that now symbolize old New Orleans. Micael was the one who chose that iron lace, and ordered it–along with virtually everything else for the apartments–from a catalogue.

Her buildings are mail-order monuments to the taste and tenacity of a woman who, after she finished them, left New Orleans for France in 1851 and never returned. The Civil War did not damage the buildings (New Orleans surrendered almost immediately), but postwar poverty left the apartments mostly vacant. Chickens scratched around in the courtyards, and by 1915, one corner had become a homeless shelter until writers and preservationists created a French Quarter renaissance.

Christina Vella has researched everything in at least three languages (English, French, and Spanish), translated what needed to be put in English, and organized everything into a smooth, sweeping story in which even the minutiae of architecture, wills, and colonial Louisiana politics become great stories. She combines the rare ability to research endlessly but also to tell a story that is clear, coherent, and engaging.

Vella knows Louisiana enough to make little jests about our eccentric, hopelessly corrupt politics. She knows women's lives enough to point out that in her seventies, Micael wisely cared not at all what anyone thought, especially about her lack of interest in fashion. When she died in 1874, she had inherited everyone's money, but was still responsible for one wastrel son and her senile, estranged husband. The inventory of her property shows that Micael owned only a few cheap dresses, one pair of shoes, and no books or underpants at all.

From the grand to the intimate, through sewers and goats and yellow fever and every other ill and delight, *Intimate Enemies* is a book for those who want to understand New Orleans, or Louisiana History or women's history or, best of all, for readers who simply want a great story, grandly told. It is a gem.

Emily Toth Louisiana State University

Charles S. Aiken. *The Cotton Plantation South since the Civil War.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, pp. 452. Cloth, $45.00. ISBN 0-8018-5679-5

Thoroughly researched and supported by an abundance of excellent maps and illustrations, this finely crafted and cogently argued study illustrates dramatically the value of examining a long standing historical problem from a geographical perspective. Exploring much of the same material that has been mined previously by historians, Charles S. Aiken, a professor of geography at the university of Tennessee, makes a fresh contribution to contemporary scholarship by framing the debate spatially around the concept of landscape. Aiken focuses on two dramatic spatial reorganizations of the plantation landscape: the first occurred during the transformation from slavery to tenancy after the Civil War; the second accompanied the demise of traditional tenancy beginning with the Great Depression.

In addition to mapping changes in the overall contours of the physical landscape, Aiken traces the shifting relationship of African Americans to plantation agriculture, focusing in particular on the cultural changes wrought in rural communities by the Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty. Adopting the concept of "neo-plantation" pioneered by his mentor, Merle C. Runty Jr., in the mid-1950s, Aiken challenges those who posit the death of the region's historically dominant agricultural system following mechanization. While the plantation is no longer ubiquitous in the South, the "great farm" persists in select regions in "modern geographical forms."

At his best while discussing the New South transformation of the cotton plantation landscape, Aiken makes a convincing case that centrally located community cotton gins rather than furnish-merchant stores were the lynchpin of the commercial agricultural production system that reached its peak in the early twentieth century. In the author's words: "Ownership of a store did not necessarily identify an individual or family as prominent in a plantation community, but ownership of a cotton gin meant command of a small domain." Management exercised financial control through the company store, day-

to-day supervision of labor through allocation of work stock and farm implements, and command of marketing through the ginnery. Such an argument accords well with the work of recent scholars such as Edward L. Ayers and emphasizes the commercial rise of the small town in the late nineteenth century.

Aiken dismisses traditional explanations for the demise of plantation agriculture such as farm tenancy, soil erosion, and the boll weevil as symptoms rather than causes of decay. He attributes the demise of plantation agriculture in older regions such as the lower Georgia Piedmont and Alabama Black Belt, and its survival in the alluvial Mississippi Valley and Yazoo Delta, to management's ability or inability to respond correspondingly to changing conditions. The litter of "cultural relics and fossils" amid the pine thickets and sedge fields stand in mute testimony to the inability of the vast majority of plantations on the lower Georgia Piedmont to make the successful transformation to the Modern South. Structures such as big houses, tenant shacks, and furnish-merchant stores were more likely to be displaced by more utilitarian structures in those regions where large-scale commercial farming remained viable.

Aiken also summarized the debate regarding the relationship between mechanization and regional out-migration. Were southern tenant farmers driven from the land, or were planters compelled to modernize in response to the labor vacuum created by out-migration? Regardless of the push and pull factors involved in out-migration, the relocation of many tenants to nearby towns and cities provided an abundant pool of cheap seasonal labor during the gradual movement toward "tractor farming." The development of new types of spatial linkages such as hard-surfaced roads between rural and urban areas illustrates further the transformations in the rural landscape that accompanied the transition from the New South to the Modern South.

Linking the Civil Rights Movement, the War on Poverty, and the acquisition of political power by Africa Americans to the transformation of the cultural and physical landscape, Aiken also sketches in broad relief the story of former tenants who remained in the southern countryside after the mechanization of agriculture. In spite of all of the gains achieved by African Americans, poverty and under-development remain pervasive throughout much of the region. Tragically, the new racial dynamics in extinct and surviving plantation regions alike have resulted in the creation of black ghetto towns and communities, an emerging nucleated settlement pattern that Aiken interprets as "an expression of a newly augmented, but in certain respects a still restricted, freedom."

The Cotton Plantation South since the Civil War is a meaty volume that one cannot do full justice to in a short review. This is not to say, however, that the book is flawless. Most troublesome, the dry social science tone of the narrative denies the revolutionary transformation of the rural South its human drama. One suspects that the author's reliance on a top-heavy analytical model that stresses managerial themes caused him to downplay the agency of everyday people. Such quibbles aside, the depth of Professor Aiken's understanding of the transformation of the landscape of the rural South is unmatched. This is a *magnificent* book that will be read for a long time.

Michael E. Price Armstrong Atlantic State University

Barnes, Margaret Anne. *The Tragedy and Triumph of Phenix City, Alabama*. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1998, pp. 319. $24.95. ISBN 0-86554-613-4

Stories of organized crime in American cities have received increased attention in a number of recent works examining illegal gambling, prostitution, and the subornation of law enforcement agencies. They include Gary W. Porter, *Criminal Organizations: Vice, Racketeering, and Politics in an American City* (Waveland Press, 1993); Robert Rudolph, *The Boys from New Jersey: How the Mob Beat the Feds* (Rutgers University Press, 1995); and Ronald A. Ferrell, *The Black Book and the Mob: The Untold Story of the Control of Nevada's Casinos* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1995). Margaret Anne Barnes, a novelist and screen writer, has contributed a noteworthy addition to this list by skillfully weaving together the story of the rise and fall of organized crime in a southern town. For over four decades gambling and prostitution in Phenix City, Alabama, lured GIs across the Chattahoochee River from the U.S. Army Infantry base at Fort Benning, Georgia.

The Tragedy and Triumph of Phenix City, Alabama tells the story of citizens who for years winked at the activities in the red-light district near the river. They appeared to cause no great harm to the rest of the community, which was isolated on the hill above the river. As Edmund Burke once noted, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing." Most assuredly, evil had gained the upper hand in Phenix City. It was not until Hugh Bentley, one of those who had looked the other way at reports of illegal activities from downtown, learned the truth about his own home town that the transformation of Phenix City civic leadership began. Bentley's epiphany came at a sporting goods convention in Chicago where a fellow conventioneer drew

his ire by loudly proclaiming that he had never seen a "place so wide open and wicked as Phenix City...not Algiers...Rome...Paris...Berlin...no place could hold a candle to the sin in Phenix City." Bentley defended his town against attack by asserting that what was said about Phenix City "simply is not so. I live there." According to Bentley, "a smirk settled on the man's face. Then you'd better go back and take a closer look." According to Margaret Anne Barnes, the real story of the clean-up of Phenix City started when Hugh Bentley did "take a closer look." Having investigated the corruption in Phenix City, he and other civic leaders formed the Citizens Committee to promote municipal reform. This began a long, hard struggle against entrenched gambling interests supported by crooked law enforcement agencies. The fight culminated in the governor's declaration of martial law. This prompted the impaneling of a special Blue Ribbon Grand Jury with new judicial oversight led by Montgomery judge Walter B. Jones that eventually handed down 559 indictments leading to hundreds of convictions in Phenix City's clean-up effort.

The author has told a delightful story of good triumphing over evil when a few good citizens fought to redeem their hometown. The book is fast-paced and highly entertaining. However, it falls considerably short of reflective and unbiased historical investigation. Although she uses extensive interviews with the participants and hundreds of newspaper articles as primary sources, she fails to cite individual sources. Barnes has written a history of one of the more controversial episodes in Alabama history without a footnote. While this practice might be acceptable for historical novels, it leaves serious historians seeking more information about this episode without guidance through the sources and significantly jeopardizes the author's factual analysis. Without footnotes or specific citations, knowledgeable readers will be skeptical about her interpretation.

In the forward to the book, Ms. Barnes acknowledges her indebtedness to Hugh Bentley and General Walter J. Hanna for their interviews and access to their personal papers. As primary sources, these interviews undoubtedly are invaluable, but Ms. Barnes has accepted their version of certain events without critical analysis. One example that stands out vividly in this respect is her dramatic story of Alabama National Guard Commandant General Walter J. Hanna's hurried trip to Phenix City after the murder of Albert Patterson on June 18, 1954. According to Ms. Barnes, "Arriving in Phenix City less than an hour after leaving Birmingham, General Hanna looked at his watch and tapped his son on the shoulder, 'Good work, Pete.'" In this scenario, Hanna's seventeen-year-old son had driven the general over two-lane

Louisiana" by Nicholas R. Spitzer, "Zydeco/Zarico: The Term and the Tradition" by Barry Jean Ancelet, "The Place of Louisiana Creole among New World French Creoles" by Albert Valdman, and "Ethnicity and Identity: Creoles of Color in Twentieth-Century South Louisiana" by James H. Dormon.

James Dormon's fine preface includes an even-handed discussion of the etymology of the term "Creole" and its varied racial implications, stating that "the term has been used historically in an enormous variety of ways and has taken on a protean quality that can lead to great confusion." As he correctly points out, words and their meanings are never static.

This volume is dedicated to Ulysses S. Ricard, Jr., a talented historian and archivist whose family roots were in the colored Creole community. His untimely death cut short a very promising career in history (with a particular affinity for genealogy) and prevented him from completing his intended essay.

Creoles of Color of the Gulf South begins with Kimberly Hanger's careful analysis of the importance of Spain, rather than France, in the creation of a large and culturally cohesive community of free persons of color in colonial Louisiana. This essay identifies some of the legal and social factors in the Spanish world that permitted the marked increase in the number of free blacks during the Spanish colonial period and the development of their society. The same process is described in much greater detail in her important study, *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places*, the winner of the 1997 Kemper and Leila Williams Prize for Louisiana history.

James Dormon concludes with a thoughtful discussion of the future identity of Creoles of color–whether they will be absorbed by larger ethnic groups, either black or white, or be able (or willing) to maintain their own community as they have for more than two hundred years.

Although meant primarily for scholars, this book also has the potential for a wider popular appeal. With its short, well-written essays, it brings together a great deal of absorbing historical and cultural information in a very accessible form. For general readers interested in the life of the Gulf Coast, it has many charms. It should be particularly useful to people of color from around the country with roots in the lower South who are returning to trace their African and European heritage, providing a good starting point for their investigations.

These essays by leaders in the study of free people of color will surely become one of the basic sources for the study of the Gulf South. It makes obvious the international dimensions of the field, placing the history of the Gulf Coast in its circum-Caribbean reality. This is clearly

not the history of the Anglo-American South, looking toward the Atlantic and England. Here are brought together the strains of Spain and France, their Caribbean colonies, and Africa. It is a heady mix, and this book does it justice.

Patricia Brady The Historic New Orleans Society

Glenn T. Eskew. *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997, *xi*, pp. 434. $19.95. ISBN 0-078-2363-5

The battle for racial equality was this nation's most important initiative in the 1960s. The effort to provide justice and equality for blacks was a difficult commitment for the nation, and it produced severe strains in American society. Birmingham, Alabama, will forever be remembered for its role in the movement. It has been over thirty years since the first pictures were flashed across the country depicting the now infamous fire hoses, police dogs, and bombings taking place in the "Magic City." Even today, Birmingham is rarely mentioned on the airwaves without some reference to its dark past.

Over the years, there have been books and articles on the events in Birmingham, but none have been as clearly written as the latest release by historian Glenn T. Eskew. In his book, *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle*, Eskew gives a detailed and comprehensive account of the civil rights movement from its beginning through 1963. He shows the changes that took place from the "politics of accommodation" practices by the city's black middle class in the 1950s to local religious leader Fred L. Shuttlesworth's use of non-violent direct action to challenge segregation.

Birmingham, according to Eskew, was targeted by national civil rights activists because of the strength of its local movement. Eskew discusses Martin Luther King's coming to Birmingham and the hopes that it raised in Shuttlesworth that his presence would pressure the "white power structure" of local corporate executives and civic leaders "to dismantle institutionalized racial discrimination" Because of this, King designed a campaign to break the deadlock in race relations in the city. His plan was to focus on discrimination in the marketplace, but with limited confrontation. At first, this strategy seemed to be blocked by poor planning, open hostility from the black middle class, and non-violent police resistance. King's letter from the Birmingham jail justified non-violent, direct action while expressing the righteousness of the civil rights movement. Shuttlesworth and other movement leaders organized

demonstrations to attract national attention to the racial problems in Birmingham in order to pressure white businessmen to support ending "whites only" jobs. The NAACP also became involved by organizing protest through petitions and lawsuits. Racial discrimination, according to Eskew, "prevented black people from experiencing the American dream."

This all changed when police commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor personally supervised the brutal breakup of the non-violent marches. He arrested hundreds of demonstrators and, using dogs, tear gas, and fire hoses, brought national attention to his city. By the end of the summer of 1963, Birmingham had joined other cities around the nation in responding to civil rights pressure violently. The later march on Washington was simply a celebration of the victory in Birmingham. The events in Birmingham also forced President Kennedy to push for legislation that would later become the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

One of the strengths of the book is its final chapters, in which Eskew demonstrates that Birmingham is still burning over these issues and is not a haven of saints. He shows that in the 1970s and 1980s the size of the white population declined, which in turn allowed the sizeable black community to elect Richard Arrington as the first and only black mayor of Birmingham. However, Eskew argues that in the long run, this victory did not bring resolution to the struggles the black people faced: "Even achieving black political power did not solve the problems of many people within Birmingham's black community."

In making his point, Eskew addresses two issues. The first is the changing structure of Birmingham from an industrial to a service-oriented economy, and the second is a "paternalistic federal government" which created "black dependency through welfare for the indigent and working poor and affirmative action for the middle class."

Even though the black middle class had joined many white people in the system, Eskew states that not all blacks have benefitted from "black political empowerment, equal access as consumers, and equal employment opportunities." This was demonstrated recently when the Shoal Creek Country Club refused to accept black members and once again drew national attention to Birmingham.

This book is informative and will be used profitably by historians as well as those who enjoy reading about historic events. Four hundred plus pages, Eskew clearly gives a step-by-step approach to the events of the early sixties. His research is extensive, ranging from court cases and government documents, to memoirs, and newspapers. Maps and pictures are included to tell the story. He also interviewed important people who were in the spotlight during that time, including Fred Shuttlesworth, Henry Stanford, and David Vann.

The book is a significant contribution to the work on race relations in the South and should be a welcome addition to civil rights reading lists.

Joe Brayton Free University of South Alabama

Virginia Meacham Gould. *Chained to the Rock of Adversity: To be Free, Black, and Female in the Old South.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998, pp. 96. Cloth, $35.00. ISBN 0-82-3-1996-1; Paper, $17.50. ISBN 0-8203-2083-8.

With the publication of *Chained to the Rock of Adversity: To Be Free, Black, and Female in the Old South,* Virginia Meacham Gould has provided scholars with a unique opportunity to explore the private thoughts of the women in an elite, free, slaveholding family of color–the William T. *(The Barber of Natchez)* and Ann Battles Johnson of Natchez and the Adelia Johnson Millers of New Orleans (1844-99).

These voices have been retrieved from a cache of letters written by the Millers to Ann Johnson, a series of post Civil War letters to and from Ann's daughters, Anna and Catherine, and their relatives and Catherine's diary, which she kept intermittently from 1864 to 1874. The letters to the matriarch, Ann, are striking in their resemblance to the family letters written by elite white women of the same era. They describe courtship, marriage, domestic life (including infidelity), motherhood, sickness and health, social events, religion, and education. In them relatives ask for advice, luxuries (spices), money, the necessities of life (eggs, cloth, and meat), and pass along gossip.

The post-war letters reveal the family's reaction to their particular lost cause, i.e., the loss of their special class and social status as people who were not defined as "the other." Eventually, daughters Anna and Catherine assumed responsibility for investing the family's financial resources and put their educations to work as school teachers of the people they had once owned. Their letters to each other reveal how these daughters of privilege came to grips with the threat of poverty. As Catherine observed, "It seems that we are put into this world to bear the burden of others even though we are sinking under our own." Brother William had to be placed in an insane asylum. Brother Richard fell into his old "bad habits." And brother Bebe was murdered by another free person of color, just as his father had been. As patriarchy ran amuck in this family, as it did in so many others after the war, Catherine observed in a letter to Anna, "I am glad to see that the ladies are not all like us, chained to the rock of adversity–bound there by masculine mismanagement, indolence, not a little mixed with meanness."

Catherine Johnson's diary is regrettably short. The original is only forty-five pages long, covering the period from May 10, 1864 to an undated entry in 1874. In this text scholars have the only known record of the private thoughts of an elite, slaveholding woman of color. Catherine describes her thoughts on love ("I don't love. And hope that I never shall"); her childhood ("My mind goes back to the time when we were *happy thoughtless* children when the earth seemed to be one abode of happiness I grieve to think how quickly the scene has changed"); and her experiences as a teacher in rural Louisiana.

The most startling observation about this collection is how little is said about race. These very private communications deal with family matters and economic concerns as though racial boundaries were not an issue. In fact, *Chained to the Rock of Adversity* confronts scholars with the reality that class and gender affected the lives of women in this elite family of color much more directly than did racial ambiguity.

Dr. Gould's extensive introductory essay is a treasure of information on the context of these documents and contains an excellent analysis of the scholarly literature available on elite free families of color in the nineteenth-century South. Readers should also pay close attention to the extensive footnotes.

Chained to the Rock of Adversity: To Be Free, Black, and Female in the Old South is truly "a window into a previously hidden world."

Kent Anderson Leslie The Afro-Caribbean Oral History Project
Bluefields, Nicaragua

R. Douglas Hurt, ed. *The Rural South Since World War Two.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998, pp. 202. $35.00. ISBN 0-8071-2289-0.

When one thinks of themes of twentieth-century southern history, the experience drawn from urban areas defines the topics. Segregation, for example, was fundamentally an urban and modern phenomenon devised to regulate relatively impersonal race relations. Most of the defining moments of the Civil Rights Movement emerged in urban areas–Montgomery, Albany, Birmingham, Selma. Segregation meant something different in a rural South characterized by "salt-and-pepper" residential configurations, paternalistic race relations, and work environments in which white and black necessarily intermingled. In religion, fundamentalism somehow came to be identified with the rural South, but fundamentalism was in reality an urban phenomenon in its origins.

If developments in urban life define the shape of recent southern history, it is of course rural life that historically has defined most southern lives until World War II. As late as 1943, according to the editor of this volume, 43 percent of the South's population lived on 2.9 million farms in the region, while 65 percent of the people could be classified as living in rural areas. By 1980, cities claimed 75 percent of the South's population. African Americans, in 1900 the most rural segment of the nation's population, now are the most urban, thanks to their great migratory movements in the twentieth century. In politics, "the white suburban middle class [has] replaced the rural county-seat political elite as the foundation of southern consciousness."

These transformations in the South have focused scholarly attention on urban areas and issues. By contrast, this volume sets out to look carefully at those "rural worlds lost" since World War II, without romanticization or condescension, and with scholarly rigor, attention to detail and human complexity, and considerable statistical sophistication.

The essays, all excellent in their own right, fall into two categories. Two of them are deliberately speculative and provocative: Ted Ownby's "Struggling to be Old-Fashioned: Evangelical Religion in the Modern Rural South," and Wayne Parent and Peter Petrakis's "Populism Left and Right: Politics of the Rural South." Ownby deconstructs the myth of a "static" rural southern religion and suggestively explores the reasons behind the incredibly rapid growth of Pentecostalism in the recent South. His argument, to oversimplify, is that Pentecostals have been successful at growing in total numbers while keeping individual churches small, providing the benefits of an enlarged denomination while retaining the attractive virtues of face-to-face community in congregational life. The authors of "Populism Left and Right" summarize the existing literature on Populism and argue that recent southern Republicans have seized on the cultural aspects of the older Populist tradition (boiled down to the catch phrase "family values") while jettisoning the economic critique of large-scale capitalist growth and innovation that characterized the various farmer/labor movements of the nineteenth century. Thus, Newt Gingrich passed himself off as a Populist despite the technocratic fantasies that seemed to excite him most. The authors conclude by questioning how long this faux populism of the new southern Republicans can last: "We learn from the nineteenth-century roots of Populism that it must address the economic as well as social and cultural needs of its followers to remain successful."

The remaining five essays serve as richly informative surveys of their subjects. Donald Winters summarizes developments in southern agriculture since World War II, including the relative decline of cotton and tobacco, the ascendancy of the soybean, the southern enclosure

movement that scattered former tenants and sharecroppers throughout the country introducing corporate agribusiness to the southern countryside and the rise of true scientific farming sponsored by federal subsidies and agricultural colleges. Winters concludes that "farming as a business has...undermined farming as a way of life." Vernon Burton's "Race Relations in the Rural South Since 1945" fruitfully explores the human complexity of how whites and blacks have interacted through the great transformation of the Civil Rights Movement and the migrations of southerners of both races first out of the South and, in more recent times, back to the region. Sally McMillen's narrative of rural southern women since the war emphasizes the degree of struggle and hardship that continues to characterize lives in this region that still holds a disproportionate share of the nation's poor. Her rich portrait is too complex to be briefly summarized. Bill Malone's engagingly written analysis of country music since 1945 stresses the degree to which the country "tradition" is a recent invention driven by commercial imperatives. A form now called "traditional" such as bluegrass, for example, is mostly a post-War musical creation driven by skilled and commercially-motivated innovators such as Bill Monroe. Finally, the authors of "Cultural Distinctiveness in the Face of Structural Transformation" crunch the numbers on polling data for 1972-74, 1984-85, and 1995 to argue that a regional distinctiveness persists in Southerners' "continued emphasis on violence, their political views, and their attitudes toward religious and moral issues and the family and women's roles." Where southern distinctiveness has waned (such as the number of people surveyed who support the right of individuals to carry concealed weapons), this "owes more to a changing non-South than to a transformed southern culture." The authors also, however, find that southern attitudes toward race have moved significantly toward national norms, demonstrating that the Civil Rights Movement has had more impact than "structural change" (urbanization and mechanization, for example) in effecting attitudes.

In a short introduction, R. Douglas Hurt provides a context for the essays and briefly outlines each one. The book would have benefited from a separate essay examining African Americans in the rural South, similar to McMillen's essay on southern women. African-American issues are scattered through the essays, but key themes (such as African-American music) remain considerably under-explored. Still, this is a fine collection, always informative and at times provocative. A terrific collection of photographs graces the middle of the book.

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Harvey H. Jackson III. *Putting "Loafing Streams" to Work: The Building of Lay, Mitchell, Martin, and Jordan Dams, 1910-1929.* Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1997, pp. 230. $24.95. ISBN 0-8173-0889-X

Harvey H. Jackson maintains that the construction of Alabama Power Company's four hydroelectric dams on the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers in east-central Alabama constituted "a turning point" in the state's history: the dams' provision of electricity to the area's farms, towns, and cities thrust Alabama "from the nineteenth into the twentieth century." These four dams–Lay, Mitchell, Martin, and Jordan–were the biggest and most costly engineering projects ever completed in the state at that time. Noting that the history of their design, financing, and construction has been told and retold, Jackson focuses his attention "on the people who actually built the dams, how they worked and how they played, the dangers they faced, and the impact their presence had on residents who lived in the immediate area."

All four dams were constructed in a rugged, thinly-populated section of Alabama which was unable to supply the workforce needed to build these massive projects. Thus, skilled and unskilled workers alike were brought into the region, and company-owned camps sprang up to meet their needs and those of their families. Jackson, who heads the Department of History at Alabama's Jacksonville State University, pays close attention to the labor history of this story, exploring how welfare capitalism shaped the Alabama Power Company's relations with its employees. He also examines white-black relations, which were rigidly set in Alabama during the early twentieth century, but which were potentially threatened by the employment alternatives these sequentially-constructed projects offered to the local black population. Realizing that many landowners feared their grip on sharecroppers and tenant farmers might be loosened, Alabama Power reassured the local white community by strictly enforcing the racial segregation of its workforce both on the job and in their company-operated camps. Whites in the Coosa-Tallapoosa region, nevertheless, found their worries about racial matters less compelling than the personal economic benefits they believed they would reap from the dam construction and subsequent provision of electrical power. Thus, Jackson argues, the hydroelectric projects helped bring about social change in rather subtle and unexpected ways.

Jackson's examination of the public health debates surrounding the construction of the first dam prior to World War I, in which concerns over malaria prompted several lawsuits against the Alabama Power

Company (charging the newly-created reservoir contained an abundance of inlets and sloughs that filled with driftwood and provided ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes), is a telling example of the intersection of medical knowledge, popular beliefs, and sanitary practices. It is also one of the few instances where Jackson focuses on ecological issues. To the detriment of its analysis, *Putting "Loafing Streams" to Work* largely ignores the environmental history of the Coosa and Tallapoosa river valleys themselves.

On the other hand, Jackson does a good job outlining how managerial practices evolved as Alabama Power gained experience building dams. Workers at Mitchell Dam, which was constructed during the early 1920s–some half-dozen years after the completion of the first dam, benefited from a number of changes, such as improved sanitation, increased recreational facilities, and a company-run, on-site hospital. By enhancing the working and living conditions for employees and their families, Alabama Power officials calculated that their company would achieve a lower worker turnover rate, increased labor productivity, and a reduced likelihood that it would be sued for damages.

In his final chapter, Jackson addresses the local legacy of the dams, giving brief coverage of the recreational (largely fishing) uses of the reservoirs and the distribution of electricity. Unfortunately, this segment of his book is exceedingly terse. As a result, Jackson hardly does justice to answering the question, "what difference did the dams make?" While excellent in its internal coverage of the projects' labor history, the book's focus is ultimately narrow, failing to place the construction of Alabama Power Company's dams in a broader context. Little is said, for example, about similar hydroelectric power projects (or other large engineering enterprises) in the South, or in the country as a whole. Thus, we remain uninformed about what was typical and what was unusual about the Coosa and Tallapoosa river dams.

Jackson's approach may reflect the fact that *Putting "Loafing Streams" to Work* was essentially a company history underwritten by Alabama Power. In addition to influencing the book's analytical scope, this sponsorship also shaped its design: not quite a coffee-table book, but edging in that direction, it is a large-format, profusely illustrated publication printed on heavy, coated stock. As this genre of history goes, Jackson has produced a superb work if evaluated solely within its narrow, self-imposed parameters. These limits, however, prevented the author from reaching out and making larger connections. Jackson's research into the records of Alabama Power Company is impressive and results in a richly-textured account of daily life in the work camps and on the construction sites. It should be recognized, however, that he did

not conduct equally thorough research outside the company's archives, which tends to weaken some of his findings. That is, without comparative evidence from other independent sources or from other large construction projects in the South and elsewhere, Jackson is forced to take much of what he found in Alabama Power's records at face value, even as he occasionally explains that much of that material was recorded, collected, and saved for reasons of public relations and/or propaganda.

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Kieran Quinlan. *Walker Percy: The Last Catholic Novelist*. New Orleans: LSU Press, 1996, pp. 242. $11.95. ISBN 0-08071-2298-X

The Christian artist working in the twentieth century is in a double bind. If the artist's beliefs are not detected, then the work is often "misread" by the largely secular audience. However, if the artist's faith is detected, then the work is usually labeled and dismissed as being irrelevant to "enlightened" twentieth-century concerns. This bind has certainly been the fate of one of America's finest novelists, Walker Percy. Quinlan's careful survey of Percy's essays and fiction may guarantee that Percy will never again be misunderstood, but it also endangers Percy's status as a significant contributor to American letters by falsely reducing his entire corpus to a mere apologetic. In this clearly-written and well-documented critical study, Kieran Quinlan's purpose is threefold: to point out the amateur and uninformed nature of Percy's philosophical work, to establish Percy's Catholicism as being limited to the era of the 1940s, and to present all of Percy's fiction and nonfiction as one long defense of the faith.

Those who know Walker Percy only as a novelist will be surprised at how much space is given in this text to his essays on philosophy and language. Entire chapters are dedicated to summarizing Percy's thought and then explaining how ill-informed he was because he had not read all the right scholars. Quinlan correctly and repeatedly points out that Percy was not a professional scholar of linguistics or semiotics and that he primarily hoped that the study of the nature of language would once and for all provide scientific evidence for a Christian view of man that the secular modernist would be forced to accept. However, what Quinlan overlooks is that on his way to this, perhaps, unattainable goal, Percy perpetually delights the reader with fresh and provocative insights regarding the nature of language and of man which always come salted with his unique brand of humor. Percy writes about language more from a love of language itself rather than as a defense of God. Like his

friend Shelby Foote, Percy's nonfiction reminds us that "amateur" scholars provide a needed corrective vision to the studious myopia of the professional scholar.

Percy converted from the classical stoicism of William Alexander (author of *Lanterns on The Levee*) to Roman Catholicism in the 1940s. Quinlan makes a very good case that Percy was deeply influenced by such Catholic writers as Jacques Maritain and Romano Guardini who together represent a portion of the last united voice of traditional Catholicism in North America. Percy to the end of his life (May 10, 1990) continued to reject Vatican II and the other liberalizing influences within the Roman Catholic Church, holding to the traditional Catholic faith. Quinlan's thesis is that "his [Percy's] version of Catholicism continued right up to the end to bear much–though certainly not all–of the ambiance of the era in which he was converted, the 1940s."

Although on the surface this would seem to be true, this thesis does not represent Percy's view of his own faith. Like Flannery O'Conner, his "version" of Catholicism represents the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church since its beginning and not merely the whims of a decade. To reduce Percy's faith as being merely the product of a particular decade is to attempt to rob his faith of its power and to present Percy as being small minded.

Although Quinlan makes valid points regarding Percy's unprofessional status as a philosopher and his refusal to accept the changes in the Church that came with the decades following World War II, he does a grave disservice to Percy's fiction by presenting it as thinly disguised pamphlets for the Catholic faith. Once again, Quinlan is correct in the detail and mistaken in the large picture. Percy was, in fact, a self-confessed proselytizer. As Quinlan quotes, "What I really want to do is to tell people *what they must do and what they must believe if they want to live*" (Percy's emphasis). Although evangelism was certainly what Percy had in mind, a dip anywhere into his six spectacular novels will reveal an entirely different picture. He was too great of an artist to ever stoop to polemics or preaching, and he was too much an honest man of our perplexing times to present things in clear black and white. In his fiction, he embraces complexity, confusion, neurosis, self-contradiction, and ennui with the familiarity of someone who has not only "been there" but "is there." Nowhere in Percy's fiction can one find the message that all our problems would be over if we would just embrace the Catholic faith. If his faith can be clearly seen anywhere, it is in the confidence of his satirical observations of modernity. Percy could be said to be polemical only in the sense of Swift and Voltaire. Like most great satirists, he is so confident in his

own way of seeing that he can risk even the deep jibes of self-criticism.

In his conclusion Quinlan attempts to defend his subtitle that Percy is, in fact, the last Catholic novelist. Since Catholicism (in the Nicean sense) and fiction writing are both alive and well, this thesis is, of course, untenable unless one defines Catholicism as a peculiar belief of certain intellectuals of the 1940s. He justifies his claim as follows:

> A seeker cannot find satisfaction in him [Percy] unless he or she is prepared to cut off questioning at an unacceptable point. Furthermore, because the notion of an 'absolute' truth has been shown to be itself culturally and historically bound, it is unlikely that there can be any more 'Catholic' novelists: there is no such goal toward which an intellectually informed and honest human being can now aspire.

This finally clarifies Quinlan's position: to be Catholic or even to believe in absolute truth is to be narrow minded, uneducated, and dishonest. Ultimately, this seems to be Quinlan's assessment of Walker Percy himself. When one considers that Percy is the closest thing America has produced to a Dostoevsky or a Man, then one must ultimately consider Quinlan's study as unreflective of Percy's stunning achievement as a novelist.

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Henry Clay Lewis. *Odd Leaves from the Life of a Louisiana Swamp.* Introduction by Edwin T. Arnold. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997, pp. 203. Paper, $24.95. ISBN 0-807-2167-3.

This fascinating, sometimes incredible book, published in 1850 by a twenty-five-year-old physician of north Louisiana who drowned a few months later trying to reach a rural patient's home on horseback, was reprinted by the L.S.U. press as part of the Library of Southern Civilization. Author Henry Clay Lewis, M.D. (1825-1850) used the pen name Madison Tensas for his physician narrator. Madison and Tensas are actual river parish names in Louisiana, created in 1838 and 1843 respectively from Concordia parish across the Mississippi River from Natchez and Vicksburg.

In a spritely new introduction, Edwin J. Arnold makes an excellent case for the book being in the first ranks of nineteenth-century southern literature. Arnold considers it serious writing, intended to entertain and inform, in the genre of Mark Twain. This reinforces the book's significance as a window on antebellum United States social history. The

twenty-eight professional adventures convey the interaction of physician, patient, and community as well as the rudimentary, often times shocking, reality of rural mid-nineteenth century medicine.

The author describes daily duties of medical practice in the rural South as well as characters encountered while training in Kentucky and practicing in Louisiana and Mississippi. The specific swamp doctor setting refers to northeast Louisiana's river parishes. But it could just as easily refer to other rivers, streams, or bayous in Louisiana's or other Southern, Midwestern or Western states of that era, since travel and transportation everywhere were so fraught with difficulty and danger.

Like an attorney or minister, the physician practiced in an imperfect rural world. Medical practices of the day were often effective, even though they may appear of dubious value to today's reader. The stories of doctor Madison Tensas, then, are powerful literature, not only because they are sometimes equally humorous and shocking with surprise endings, but also because they arouse our historical imagination with vignettes of rural life.

Prior to medical school Tensas learned a lot about life by being "a printer, a cotton picker, ploughboy, gin-driver, gentleman of leisure, cabin-boy, cook, scullion and runaway." Thus, "within my own person," he illustrated in the course of a few years "the versatility of American pursuits and character." He candidly reflected on the results of his own professional maturation: "The transition from the boy to the man, and from the mischievous student to the grave, serious physician is so gradual and imperceptible that our old and intimate acquaintances do not realize it. And regard us as boys." He first returned to his Mississippi hometown to practice, but patients did not come to his office. So he moved west to the Louisiana swamp lands.

The medical realities facing Madison Tensas were formidable. He expressed human irritation and envy in a chapter comparing his colleagues in urban medical practice to his own rural one. They were "capable of controlling the many adverse circumstances that exert such a pernicious influence upon successful practice." In contrast, rural practice offered "society nearly in its primitive condition." But that did not trouble the doctor. "Never yet did country merit its name as well as it; the whole of the Louisiana bottoms being indiscrimately known as 'the swamp,' and people, male and female, termed 'swampers.'" He judged the country suitable for his practice because "it had the promise of being sickly."

Tensas tells stories of close encounters with many kinds of patients, including "his alligatorship," a bear hunt, a panther scare, a rattlesnake

on a steamboat, a curious widow, the cupping of an Irishman, dental treatment, and horrible instances of animal and human torture. Procedures of his era included cupping, bleeding, purging, and emetics in accordance with conservative medical principles. This was before antisepsis and anesthesia assisted the physician in protecting the patient from certain pain and a stealthy death. Doctor Tensas solved various problems, including hysteria, fits, an overdose of grapes, and the autosuggestive effects of screech owls.

It seems fitting that his last chapter of eleven pages is titled, "*Struggle For Life*," about Tensas' unexpected hand-to-hand combat with a murderer while riding through the thickest swamp. Earlier in the book he described, perhaps with premonition, circumstances similar to his own later drowning (he could not swim): "a long wearisome semi-ride and swim through the swamp."

James Polk Morris Louisiana State Archives-Baton Rouge

John David Smith and Thomas H. Appleton, Jr., eds. *A Mythic Land Apart: Reassessing Southerners and Their History.* Contributions in American History, No. 173. Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1997, pp. 216. $57.95. ISBN 0-313-29304-X

A Mythic Land Apart: Reassessing Southerners and Their History, a collection of essays written in honor of Dr. Charles Roland, explores diverse regional themes marking a South "connected to and distanced from the rest of North America." A majority of the contributors concentrate on a distinctively antebellum or Kentucky regionalism, but the essays are germane to a larger Gulf South, Southern, and an American History.

Jason H. Silverman's "The Immigrant Influence in the Colonial South: The Case of Philip Mazzei" suggests an ethnic focus but reveals the Italian-born medical doctor, merchant, teacher, author, diplomat, and revolutionary as a veritable template of the transatlantic Enlightenment. Involvement in introducing Italian vine and olive cultivation to British Colonial America brought Mazzei to Virginia and into the social circles of Thomas Jefferson. Silverman finds the influence of Mazzei's 1774 article in the *Virginia Gazette* on Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence and argues that lack of any national connection to Great Britain made him an active promoter of a new America justifiably severed from old England. Jefferson's opposition to non-natives

representing the United States probably doomed the Italian-American patriot to relative obscurity in post-war diplomatic circles and, consequently, in the historical record.

In "Medical Education in the South: The Case of Louisville, 1837-1910," Dwayne Cox finds the political-financial agenda of Abraham Flexner's 1910 Carnegie Foundation *Report on Medical Education in the United States and Canada*, arguing for consolidation of southern medical schools, generated a general condemnation of all southern medical education as historically inferior to the national standard. He challenges this invidious assessment of nineteenth-century southern medicine through an examination of antebellum Louisville's Medical Institute. The Kentucky school opened just as new experiments in dissection and chemistry challenged the traditional textbook wisdom of correcting assumed imbalances of the body's "four humors" through a regime of bleedings and purgatives. The pervasive squabble over medical theory should not, Cox argues, negate Louisville's commitment to medical education. The city council erected and furnished a substantial medical facility with ample classroom, office, and laboratory space to attract large enrollments and to graduate doctors under the standard degree requirements of American medicine. While the Civil War and Reconstruction disrupted a campus already at odds internally over conflicting medical practices, twentieth-century medical science destroyed the outmoded beliefs of nineteenth-century, and not exclusively southern, medical quackery.

Melba Porter Hay's entertaining "Compromiser or Conspirator? Henry Clay and the Graves-Cilley Duel" examines the details of a peculiar affair of honor. In 1838 an anonymous New York newspaper editorial accused an unnamed northern senator of financial impropriety. Subsequent debate in the United States House of Representatives led the editor to challenge Congressman Jonathan Cilley of Maine to a duel. Although they were not close friends, the editor asked Congressman William Graves of Kentucky to serve as his second. Neither Cilley nor Graves professed any personal animosity, but disputes over dueling etiquette led Graves, a man unfamiliar with weapons, to challenge Cilley, a crack shot. Intense discussion by numerous political figures and continual intervention by both parties' seconds failed to reach a peaceful compromise. Both men having missed and misfired twice, the duel continued to the third firing and ended in Cilley's death. Washingtonians intensely analyzed the proprieties of the duel in a heated, he-said/he-said, acrimonious exchange surfacing as political fodder in the 1844 presidential election with candidate Henry Clay of Kentucky, one of many minor pre-duel consultants, accused of masterminding Cilley's

"murder." Aficionados of the dirty tricks of both antebellum and post-modern American politics will be intrigued by this obscure duel proving the culture of honor and violence was not distinctly southern.

Donald E. Reynolds speculates on the impact of mysterious outbreaks of damaging fires in late antebellum Texas on the volatile southern psyche in "The Slave Insurrection Panic of 1860 and Southern Secession." This article alone, with its clear analysis of the ever-present fear of servile insurrection in a society equating Northerners to Abolitionists and emotionally manipulated by Fire Eaters openly plotting secession, justifies the steep price of the book.

Carol Reardon's "Lessons in Generalship: Robert E. Lee's Military Legacy for the Twenty-First Century" masterfully measures Dr. Roland's judicious assessment of America's favorite general by the standards of modern military concepts of tactics, strategy, operational art, culminating points, and centers of gravity. This essay, with a wonderfully plunderable bibliography, will prove a delight to read and re-read for all students of Civil War history and be mandatory reading for all students of military policy.

John David Smith's "'No negro is upon the program:' Blacks and the Montgomery Race Conference of 1900" examines white Alabama's efforts to disfranchise black Alabamians. Masking racist sentiments as racial reforms, New South whites sought the repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment on the grounds that black participation in politics led to increases in crime, idleness, illegitimacy, and the rape of white women. Smith thoroughly analyzes the Montgomery Race Conference where white wolves in genteel sheep's clothing sponsored a discussion of race without any direct participation by African Americans. Booker T. Washington's wily self-controlled responses are well documented, as is the general black attitude that "any discussion of the negro problem with the negro not a party to the discussion is the play of *Hamlet* with Hamlet left out." While unabashed white racist sentiment is repellent, Smith's focus on the verbally milder but deeper sexual racism is chilling and timely. Unlike the earlier southern reform attempts at controlling alcohol, turn-of-the-century "reform" to control Negroes proved successful. In 1901 Alabamians revised their state's constitution to disfranchise blacks and many poor whites, and by 1903 all of the southern states installed similar political devices. Smith succinctly documents the sad milieu of racism, but deeper comments on the parallel, equally successful and unfair disfranchisement of poor whites by the "better" class of white southerners would have produced a perfect article.

In "Hollywood and the Mythic Land Apart, 1988-1991," Roger A.

Fischer examines popular culture's depiction of the South through critical reviews of a number of "Southern theme" movies. Seeing exploitation of stock stereotypes in *Mississippi Burning*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Paris Trout*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, and *Prince of Tides*, he does not shake an accusatory finger only at Hollywood but finds most of the offending stereotypes have southern pedigrees owing to "a temptation among these myth makers to seek national acclaim and the almighty dollar by pandering to widespread perceptions of the South." Fischer might have made a stronger point on stereotypical manipulation by considering the odious *Dukes of Hazzard* or by observing that even in the cinematic locale of Steven King's macabre Maine, villains usually speak with a southern accent.

The contributors of *A Mythic Land Apart: Reassessing Southerners and Their History* honor the honoree by a uniformly pleasant writing style and consistent use of primary documents. They make their cases individually, without excessively cloying claims to a greater contextual meaning. Aware readers should easily recognize regional similarities within the greater theme of southern history and profitably apply the lessons of this collection to their own regional studies.

Charles N. Elliott Southeastern Louisiana University

Jerry E. Strahan. *Managing Ignatius: The Lunacy of Lucky Dogs and Life in the Quarter*. With a Foreword by Stephen E. Abrose. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998, pp. 264. $24.95. ISBN 0-8071-2241-6

With their red-and-white striped shirts, folded paper hats, and carts that resemble the product they hawk, the Lucky Dog vendors are as much a part of the French Quarter as tipsy tourists and drag queens. For twenty-six years, Jerry Strahan was general manager of the business. Now it is a pretty good bet that when a television program is advertised as wacky, it will not even be mildly amusing. But Mr. Strahan, or as he was known in the quarter, "Jerry, the wienie man," was in command of a band of truly wacky characters. In the preface, he writes that in reflecting on his troops, he considered calling the book, "I'm okay, you're not." The title he chose is a reference to Ignatius Reilly, the Lucky Dog vendor protagonist in John Kennedy Toole's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Confederacy of Dunces*. As bizarre a character as Reilly was, he has plenty of company in this entertaining tale of the kind of people who want to sell hot dogs from a cart–murderers, drug addicts, transvestites, alcoholics, the mentally ill. Jerry has hired them all, and

somehow had to make their accounts balance at the end of each night.

Advancement for the vendors at Lucky Dogs was not only possible, but also could happen with meteoric speed. Anyone who showed up for work on time and was sober for more than five days in a row might find himself promoted to night manager. This undoubtedly explains why on more than one occasion when Jerry came to work, he found the safe empty and the current shift manager long gone. This type of resignation was actually de rigueur for the vendors as well, who sometimes just disappeared forever in the middle of their shift, leaving the cart on whatever corner they'd been assigned.

Once, when the company was considering expansion, Jerry took a cart to the island of Martinique, where Alain, the prospective partner, already operated a clothing store and a general merchandise outlet. Alain also owned a furniture factory in the Dominican Republic, so there was no question that he was a solid choice as a business partner. Jerry left the cart in Martinique for a thirty day trial vending period and returned to the states. Sometime before the trial period ended, Alain's phones were disconnected. Jerry never saw Alain or the cart again. At least in this country the vendors do not take the carts.

My favorite character was Richard Daigle. Each evening, Daigle showed up for work, fiddled around for a couple of hours getting his cart ready, then he would push it to one of the Quarter's great restaurants where he had a leisurely dinner. Most nights by the time he got open for business, the other vendors had been at work for over three hours. Now *that's* style. The fact that he was kept on the payroll gives you some idea how hard vendors were to come by.

I am ashamed to say that although I have written six mystery novels featuring Andy Broussard, the hugely overweight medical examiner for New Orleans, and have spent many hours in the Quarter "doing research" that once even required an interview with one of Jerry's vendors, I have never eaten a Lucky Dog. My reticence in this area stems from a deep-seated concern that consuming items at a push cart might have certain health risks. But in reading this book, particularly the part where Jerry relates that Paul Prudhomme, the famous Cajun chef, would occasionally leave his restaurant and head to Jackson Square for a Lucky Dog, I felt desire building within me. By the time I finished reading, and even now, a week later, I desperately want a Lucky Dog even though I am sure that the day I step up to the cart, I will remember David Overstreet, the vendor who had to be fired for warming his shoes and socks in the bun steamer.

The latter is one of numerous anecdotes Jerry tells in this book. On the surface, the antics of his crew are humorous and entertaining. On a

deeper level, many of them are sad tales about lonely people. To his great credit, Jerry's love and concern for his workers comes through clearly.

Jerry Strahan holds a Master's degree in history and has previously written a respected biography of Andrew Higgins, the man who made the landing craft for D-Day. He has therefore long been a credentialed historian as well as an experienced writer. Drawing on this background, Jerry has documented in great detail and with literary skill the Lucky Dog story, a bit of folklore that is distinctly American. Given my own involvement with New Orleans, I am always pleased to find a book that provides background information on a little known facet of its culture. To discover one written with such authority and flair is a find indeed. Thanks, Jerry.

D. J. Donaldson — Memphis, Tennessee

Thomason, Michael V. R. *To Remember a Vanishing World: D. L. Hightower's Photographs of Barbour County, Alabama, c. 1930-1965.* 1998, pp. 200. $33.95. ISBN 0-945477-11-2

As my father-in-law, John Daniel, ran the high ridge road between Andalusia and Clayton, I watched plowed fields, sagging barns, and cattle pass by the window. We rounded curves at breakneck speed, my mother-in-law, Faye, assuring me, "John knows the way to Barbour County." When John was a teenager, he drove his 1942 Buick from his father's Andalusia planing mill to his Granddaddy, J. E. Daniel's mill and store in Clayton to pick up supplies. On one occasion, as John slid the big Buick around Clayton's square and up to the front of the J. E. Daniel store, the car's brakes failed. He crashed through the big store window. "In those days when we needed mill supplies in Andalusia you could go either to Montgomery or go to Granddaddy's mill in Barbour County," my father-in-law explained. The Daniel family was very much a part of Barbour County from the 1920s to the 1960s, during which D. L. Hightower photographed the county with his favorite Rolleiflex camera or the folding Kodak Duo Six-20. John Daniel lived next door to Mr. Hightower off the town square when John was a boy. "Mr. Hightower's photography wasn't a hobby, it was a vocation," he stated.

Some of the family still live in Clayton. Thomas Dean Beaty, a Clayton native and married to Martha Daniel, remembers Mr. Hightower as a very disciplined man. "He was at work at 6 A.M. and left at 5 P.M....he'd go home and read a book that night! One year he cut a

million dollars worth of timber. When he found out he had to pay $300,000 in taxes, he gave $300,000 in $5000 and $10,000 amounts to all the churches in the county."

Michael Thomason has written a comprehensive introduction to the man, Hightower, and to his work, the photographs of Barbour County. Using collected interviews, a book by Hightower's sister, Mary, *Hightower's Hospitality House* (Pine Bluff, Arkansas, 1992), and other sources, Thomason gives us a thorough profile not only of the photographer but also the people and places of Barbour County.

Unlike many "photograph books," Thomason gives us a literary perspective along with Hightower's visions on film. They have become partners in this book. Thomason also gives not only insight into the man, Hightower, but also into the disappearing world of Barbour County. This applies specifically to Clayton, which sits on a hill in the middle of this southeast Alabama county.

Isolated and rural, Clayton was the home of George C. Wallace, whose grandfather is pictured in the book on a horse riding down a main street. John Daniel remembered that after school in Clayton, "we would pitch a tent across from the school. I would box Tubby Daniel (who later went to West Point) and George Wallace would box anyone who wanted to. You didn't have a lot of entertainment in Clayton!" Wallace and his wife, Lurleen, returned to Clayton after his military service. According to Martha Daniel Beaty, "Lurleen and I learned to knit together at the high school when she first married George. Of course, George wasn't interested in such things...children and all...he was already politicking." Another Barbour resident was Jere Beasley, pictured in the book on the 1949-1950 Clayton High School team. He went on to play a prominent role in Alabama, to quote Thomason's caption, "but not in football." Hightower's photographs record a way of life, not for the sake of documentation, but out of love for the world in which he lived. He recognized that this place in time was special but vanishing. He knew he was the only one who could capture this era.

From photographs of schoolrooms (one featuring my father-in-law in the fourth grade, smiling ear to ear, sitting very straight and proud) to Big Jim Folsom and the Strawberry Pickers Band visit to Clayton's Courthouse where he was greeted by State Senator Clayton, no one was missed by Hightower.

From the picture of his adopted daughter, Martha, dancing at a school dance, to the priceless photos of the log cabins and "dogtrots," some featuring African-American tenant farmers and their families, no class or race was excluded.

This book will become an "Alabama Classic." Why? Because D.

L. Hightower treats Alabamians, despite their adversities, occupations, status, gender, or race, with respect. Hightower's people are satisfied and proud. His landscapes are celebrations and his churches are dignified. Composition similar to that of Walker Evans or Margaret Bourke-White is evident throughout his photography, and Barbour County could be Monroe County or Covington County. *To Remember a Vanishing World* will inspire the reader to search his old family albums, to gather up those dusty black and white photos stored somewhere out of sight, and to retrieve a vanishing world.

Kathy McCoy Monroe County Heritage Museums

C. P. Weaver. *Thank God My Regiment An African One: The Civil War Diary of Colonel Nathan W. Daniels.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998, *xxiii*, pp. 214. Cloth, $26.95. ISBN 0-8071-2242-4

Until recently the contribution of African-Americans soldiers to the Union was effort has been all but ignored. Starting with the film *Glory* in 1989, there has been a surge of interest in this neglected aspect of the Civil War. During the last few years a number of books documenting the service of black soldiers has appeared, and we have learned a great deal more about the black military experience. *Thank God My Regiment an African One* is a welcome addition.

Nathan W. Daniels was in the provost marshal's office when Benjamin F. Butler appointed him to the colonelcy of the 2^{d} Regiment of the Louisiana Native Guards in October 1862. During the next nine months Daniels was directly involved with the Union effort to recruit, train, and deploy African-American soldiers. Consequently, Daniels was in an excellent position to observe the accomplishments and frustration of the first black volunteers to join the United States Army.

The 2^{d} Regiment was posted to Ship Island, twelve miles off the Mississippi Gulf Coast, in January 1863. It was at this point that Daniels began keeping a diary. Over the next four months he wrote entries daily, commenting on a wide range of topics related to his men's service at this inhospitable outpost and providing valuable insights into the constant struggle with prejudice and racism that his men faced.

On April 9, 1863, Daniels led his men on a reconnaissance in force to Pascagoula. With the exception of a brief skirmish in Missouri a few months earlier, this raid on the Mississippi Gulf Coast was the first time during the Civil War that African Americans meet Confederate soldiers in combat. Daniels's account in his diary and the official report he submitted later provide the only information we have concerning this

engagement.

Daniels was abruptly relieved of his command in May 1863 and charged with the misuse of government property. For the next five months he remained in New Orleans, waiting to be court-martialed. Finally, he was given permission to leave New Orleans and to return to New York, ending his military service in Louisiana.

Daniels was a good writer. Articulate and astute, his comments are often incisive and always informative. From the length of the entries, it is clear that he must have spent an hour or more almost every evening recording his observations. Such commitment to the solitary task of keeping a journal is rare and marks this diary as unusual.

But there is a bonus with Daniels's diary: nine photographs. Each of the photographs has been restored and is present in the book, giving us rare glimpses of the men, equipment, buildings, cannon and other accouterments of that war. Until the editor, C. P. Weaver, announced that Daniels had pasted photographs taken on Ship Island in his journal, we had assumed that the earliest pictures of the island had been taken around the turn of the century. Thus, the photographs in Daniels's diary push back the visual history of the Gulf Coast almost forty years.

The book is divided into two parts. Part one is devoted to Daniels's stay on Ship Island from January 12 to April 28, 1863. Part two covers the period from April 29 to September 26, 1863, when he was in New Orleans waiting to be court-martialed. The photographs are interspersed throughout part one. Appendices include a complete roster of the officers and men who served in the 2^{d} Regiment of the Louisiana Native Guards as well as a list of ships and captains who called at Ship Island during Daniels's stay.

C. P. Weaver has done an excellent job editing the diary. With a sharp eye for detail, she provides a comprehensive background of the personalities and events that played a role in shaping the course of the Civil War in Louisiana. Weaver's narrative places the military service of these men in a broader context, linking the personal experiences of this group of black soldiers and their officers with the larger issue of integrating African Americans into the mainstream of the nation's military might.

James G. Hollandsworth, Jr. University of Southern Mississippi

From the Archives: Researching a Legend

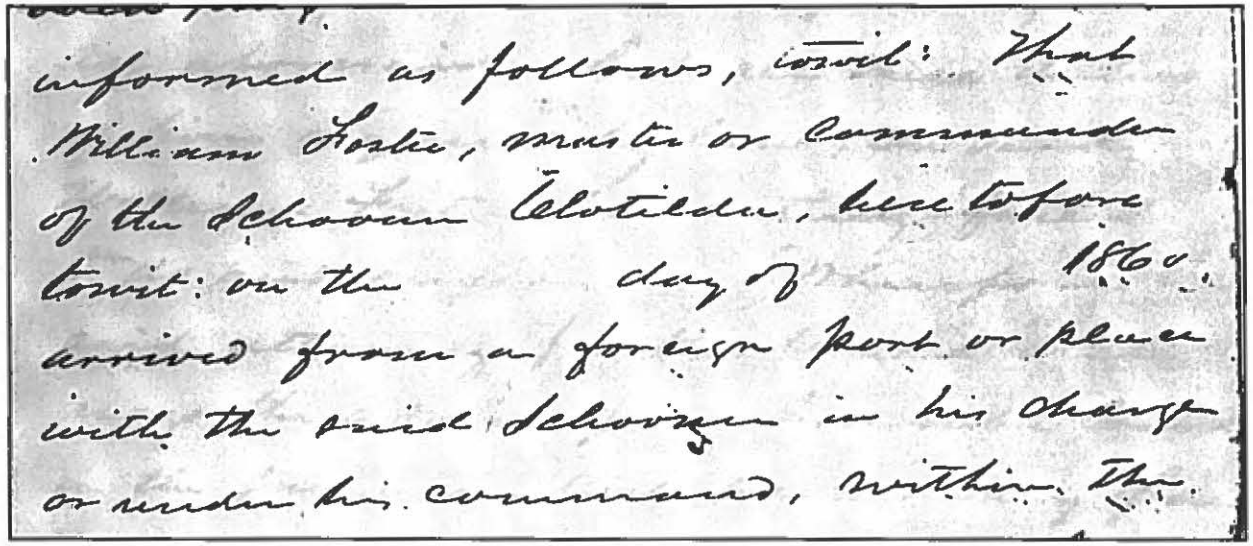
Michael Thomason

For over a century Mobilians have known of the story of the "last slave ship," the *Clotilde*, which brought Africans here illegally in 1859. Various people have written about this story over the years, but most have accepted the account of Emma Langdon Roche contained in her 1914 book, *Historic Sketches of the South*. The last of the survivors, Cudjo Lewis, died in 1935. There are few original sources, oral or written to work with, and a fog of myth has tended to obscure even those.

Recently, Reverend Israel Lewis III, one of Cudjo's descendants has been working on this story. In the course of his research he contacted the National Archives branch at East Point, Georgia. Archivist Mary Ann Hawkins replied that there was "a very limited amount of information" and what there was, was "not very revealing." Nonetheless, Reverend Lewis accepted her offer to photocopy what she had found in the records of the District Courts of the United States, Final Record Book for the Southern District of Alabama, 1859-60 (S-23) 270-74, Box 46, Mobile, Mixed Cases, 1820-1860 (Case No. 2619, *United States v John M. Dabney; United States v Burns Meaher*; Case No. 2621, *United States v William Foster*) and Minutes, 1828-61 (S-130) 398-400, also Box 46, RG 21. When the material arrived, it was very revealing indeed.

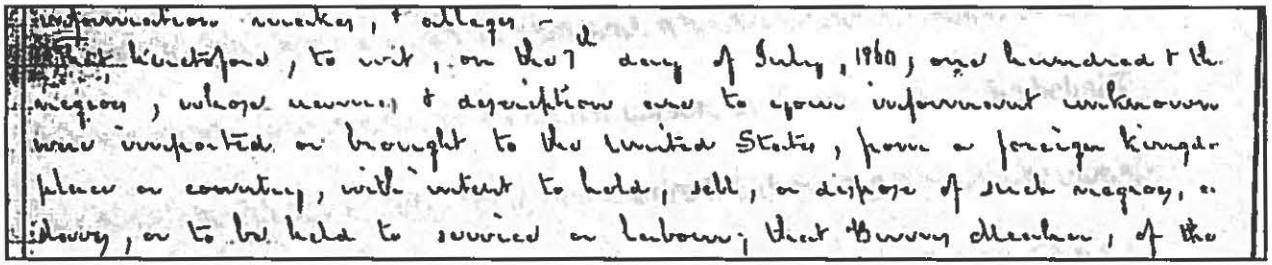
The first thing that jumped out of the record was that the ship had arrived in Mobile in July 1860, not 1859. Secondly, it was named *Clotilda*, not *Clotilde*. Both errors were longstanding, but unsupportable. Also, Captain Foster was originally charged with evading customs, a crime punishable by a $1,000 fine, not slave-trading, a capital offense.

The documents indicated that on July 25, A. J. Requier, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama charged that John M. Dabney and Burns Meaher had illegally acquired some of "one hundred and three negroes, more or less...imported or brought to the United States, from a foreign kingdom, place, or country, with intent to hold, sell, or dispose of such negroes, as slaves or to hold them to service or labor." On August 7, 1860, the same United States attorney charged that William foster as "master or commander of the schooner Clotilda" had arrived in Mobile without reporting to customs or providing a description of is cargo. Unaccountably, no mention was made of the cargo's being human beings, though Requier must have known, as he handled all three cases as though they were connected.



informed as follows, to wit: That
William Foster, master or Commander
of the Schooner Clotilda, before
to wit: on the day of 1860
arrived from a foreign port or place
with the said Schooner in his charge
or under his command, within the

Excerpt from *United States v. William Foster.*



information aforesaid, & alleges -
that heretofore, to wit, on the 7th day of July, 1860, one hundred & fifty
negroes, whose names & description are to your informant unknown
were imported or brought to the United States, from a foreign kingdom
place or country, with intent to hold, sell, or dispose of such negroes, as
slaves, or to be held to service or labour; that Burney Meaher, of the

Excerpt from *United States v. John M. Dabney.*

Foster was not served with the summons issued that day until October 28. Dabney and Meaher were not informed of the court's action until December 17, and on December 20, C. M. Godbold, United States Marshall, reported that he could not find any evidence of the persons described in the July 27 order being in his district. On January 10, 1861, the cases against Dabney and Meaher were dismissed. On January 11, Alabama seceded from the Union. None of the men involved were convicted of anythng, nor was the mastermind behind the whole scheme, Timothy Meaher, Burn's brother. The Africans were kept as slaves until the end of the war when they and other slaves were freed. Many lived out the rest of their lives in a community north of the city of Mobile which came to be known as Africatown. In time, Cudjo Lewis became the best known of the survivors and their unofficial spokesman. None ever returned to Africa, despite their pleas to do so.

There is much more to the story than these court documents can tell, but what they do show is that the events occurred a year later than everyone had thought and that we also had the ship's name wrong all these years. Reverend Lewis's persistence reminds us that accepting legend, no matter how often repeated, can lead us to serious error, and the documents, which seem to be "not very revealing," can be, when no one has looked at them before.

United States	}	**United States of America**
vs	}	**Southern District of Alabama**
William Foster	}	**Southern Court of the United States for said district of the term of the second Monday after the fourth Monday of October, 1860**

To the Hon. Wm G. Jones, Judge of the District court of the United State for the District aforesaid.

Be it remembered that on this day of August A.D. 1860, A. J. Requier, attorney for the United States comes into Cort and in the name [and on the] behalf of the United States gives the said Judge to understand and be informed as follows, to wit: That William Foster, master or commander of the schooner Clotilda, heretofore towit: on the day of 1860 arrived from a foreign port or place with the said Schooner in his charge or under his command, within the harbor of the

Port of Mobile, it being a port in the United States established by law, in the district aforesaid and within the jurisdiction of this Court.

That the said Master wholly failed to report the arrival of the said Schooner Clotilda to the Collector of the said port within the time prescribed by law in such cases made and provided.

That the said Master wholly failed to make the further report in writing to the collector of said district, prescribed by the 30th section of an act entitled "An act to regulate the collection of duties on imports and tonnage." Approved 2nd March 1799, which upon should contain all the particulars required to be inserted in a manifest made under the oath or solemn affirmation of the said Master as to the truth of the said report or manifest as the same ought to be in conformity to the Act aforesaid. But all these duties of him required by law, the said William Foster has entirely failed to do and perform. Wherefore, the said attorney for the United States prays the advice of this honorable Court in the premises, that process may face against the said William Foster requiring him to appear and answer this information, that trial may be had thereon according to law and the rule of the Court and that the said William Foster be adjudged to pay to the United States the sum of One thousand dollars, in conformity to the 30th section of the act aforesaid.

A. J. Requier
U S Atty So. Dist. Ala

United States	**} United States of America**
vs	**} Southern District of Alabama**
John M. Dabney	**} District Court of the United States for said district of the term of the second Monday after the fourth Monday of October, 1860**

To the Hon. Wm. G. Jones, Judge of the district court of the United States for said district.

Information having been lodged with the undersigned, United States [at]torney for the southern district of Alabama, by Cade M. Godbold, that one hundred & three negroes, more or less, have been imported in said district, contrary to the provisions of the Acts in such case made & provided, A. J. Requier, United States attorney of aforesaid, who prosecutes on behalf of the United States, & being present here in court in his proper person, in the name & on the behalf[.] That therefore, to wit, on the 7th day of July, 1860, one hundred & three negroes, whose manner & description are to your informant unknown, were imported or

brought to the United States, from a foreign kingdom, place, or country, with intent to hold, sell, or dispose of such negroes, as slaves, or to hold them to service to labor. That John M. Dabney, of the county of Clarke, State of Alabama, holds a large number of said negroes, to wit, ten men, ten women, ten boys and ten girls, in the district aforesaid, & within the jurisdiction of this court contrary to the provisions of the acts in such case made & provided[.]

Wherefore the said attorney prays for process for the seizure of said negroes, & against the said John M. Dabney, & for the further advice of the court in the premises.

A. J. Requier
U.S. Atty. So. Dist.
Of Ala.