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ORGANIZATION AND EARLY HISTORY
OF YALOBUSHA COUNTY

BY
HIRAM PERCY HATHORN
HIRAM PERCY HATHORN

Approved:

A thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of
the University of Mississippi
in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of History

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July, 1933

Dean of Graduate School...

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ORGANIZATION AND EARLY HISTORY
OF YALOBUSHA COUNTY

BY
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HP Hathorn

Preface

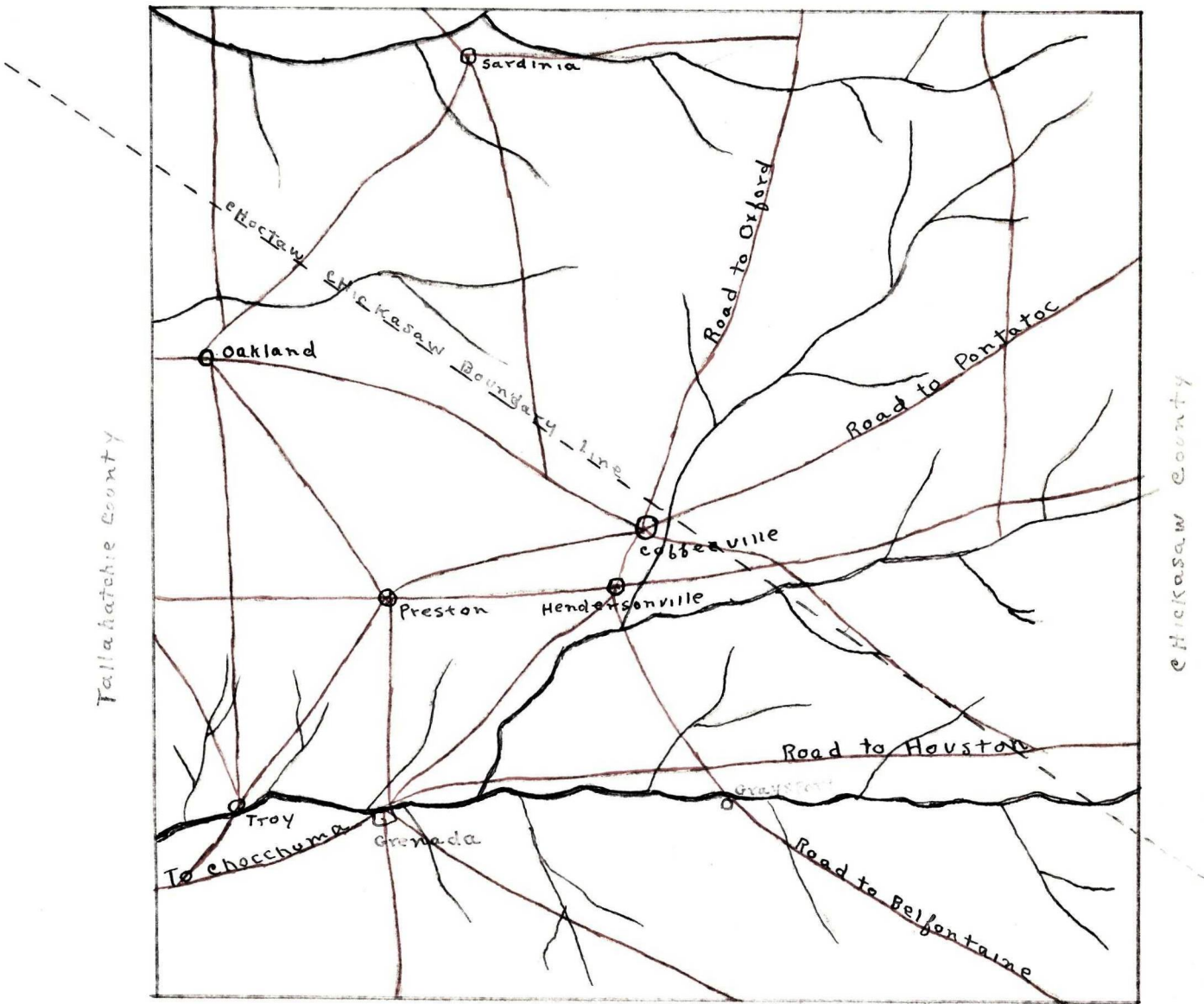
In 1815 America entered a new era. Teeming thousands of people were looking to the west in search of adventure, prosperity and happiness. The rule of wealth and social position was giving way to a new democracy. From 1815 to 1840 settlers swept out of the old states into the lands obtained from the Indians by treaty. Yalobusha County was organized while that tide was at its height, and it was changed from a hunting ground to an agricultural community almost over night. Towns sprang up like mushrooms, some to live and grow, and some to fade and pass away.

This thesis is the story of the organization of that county. Records shall tell their long silent story of a people who carved civilization out of a wilderness and brought government to an ungoverned land.

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Lafayette County



Roads of Yalobusha County

in 1840

The Roads on this map are drawn according to Records of the County Board of Police, The Positions are only approximately correct.

I

Yalobusha County, Mississippi, lay the boundary line between the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indian nations; south of it were the Choctaws; north of it were the Chickasaws. Both nations together controlled the greatest part of the surrounding region. For a time a tribe of Indians called the Uaschunas inhabited a section of territory from the Yazoo River to the Yalobusha River but this tribe was exterminated many years before the county was created and its name has been forgotten. The Choctaw has been translated to mean "tadpole place" and Chickasaw, who, as Moses and Aaron called the land of the Canaanites, was translated to mean "land of the living water." The Choctaw and Chickasaw, who, as Moses and Aaron called the land of the Canaanites, was translated to mean "land of the living water." The Choctaw and Chickasaw, who, as Moses and Aaron called the land of the Canaanites, was translated to mean "land of the living water."

Yalobusha County, in the State of Mississippi, was created from territory which formed a part of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indian cessions of that state. Its name is derived from the name of a river which drains much of its territory, the Yalobusha River, which, in its turn, bears a name of Indian origin, signifying in the language of the Choctaws "tadpole place." This phrase is in itself a peculiarly fitting description of a territory which lies near the river, is low, and has many sloughs and bayous.

Before the coming of the white man, this territory was inhabited by three Indian nations, the Choctaws, the Chickasaws and the Choctaws, who, as the first settlers of Yalobusha County, should hold a significant place in the annals which describe the creation and organization of that county from land that was for countless years the domain of these powerful and warlike tribes.

Across the northeast corner of what is now

Yalobusha County, Mississippi, lay the boundary line between the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indian nations; south of it were the Choctaws; north of it were the Chickasaws. Both nations together controlled the greatest part of the surrounding region. For a time a tribe of Indians called the Chocchumas inhabited a section of territory from the Yazoo River to the Yalobusha River, but this tribe was exterminated many years before the county was created and settled by the white people.

The Chickasaws and Choctaws had immigrated to Mississippi territory, having lived before their migration somewhere west of the Mississippi River, probably near Mexico. According to tradition these peoples sought relief from the Spanish invaders of Mexico, and wandered north and east under Chahtah and Chickasah, who, as Moses and Aaron of old, led their people from a land of oppression to one of peace. In this great trek they reached the borders of the "Father of Waters" which they named "Misha Sipokui" (Beyond Age); then they continued their travels until they reached Nunih Wai Yah, where, through divine guidance, they settled and continued to live until the coming of the white man, who found them

Robert, H. S., "The Small Indian Tribes of Mississippi," *Transactions of the Mississippi Historical Society* (Jackson, Miss., 1902), vol. V, p. 304.

divided and dwelling in their respective territories.¹

The Choccoma Indians, for whom the land office at Choccoma was later named, were a tribe established in a village on the Yalobusha River before the year 1800. This tribe was first mentioned historically in one of the chronicles of De Soto's expedition. They were a tribe of some celebrity. In 1722 Monsieur De La Harpe, one of the officers of the Louisiana province, made an expedition of exploration up the Yazoo River, proceeding as far as the villages of the Karoos and the Choccomas, where he found every indication of there having been a numerous population, but one which at that time had been reduced by contagious diseases and perpetual war.²

The language of the Chocchumas was the same as that of the Choctaws. Their tribal name, Choccuma, is a corruption of Shakchihomma which signifies "red crawfish."³

¹Cushman, H. B., History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Natchez Indians (Greenville, Texas, 1899), p. 63.

²Claiborne, J. F. H., Mississippi as a Province, Territory and State (Jackson, Miss., 1880), vol. I, p. 39.

³Halbert, H. S., "The Small Indian Tribes of Mississippi," Publications of The Mississippi Historical Society (Oxford, Miss., 1902), vol. V, p. 304.

Theirs had been a wandering life, for according to the historian, Claiborne, the Chocchumas had once lived far down the Yazoo, and were in close alliance with the Natchez Indians. From this location they had immigrated to the Tallahatchie and Yalobusha Rivers, about the time the Choctaws arrived from the West, to a territory between that of the Choctaws and Chickasaws.⁴ These intruders, with their habit of invading the hunting lands of the Choctaws and Chickasaws, quickly brought about the coalition of the two stronger tribes against themselves, and a war to the death ensued.

The decisive battle occurred at Lyons Bluff on the south side of Live Creek, eight miles northeast of Starkville. This bluff was the site of a cemetery of the mound-builders (the Chocchumas). Here the Chocchuma warriors, with many of their wives and children, were posted, and here they were besieged by the Choctaws on the south and in front, while the Chickasaws were in position on the north side of the creek, so there was no outlet for retreat. The siege was one protracted fight, until the last of the Chocchuma warriors fell, and then the women fought until most of them perished.

The last battle was fought six miles west of Bellefontaine, on the old Grenada road, on the land now owned by C. M. Roberts. Chulahoma, "Red Fox," their most renowned warrior, resided there with his followers. He was attacked in his village, and all but a few women and

⁴Claiborne, Mississippi, p. 39.

children were slain.⁵

In 1830 an old half-breed, Coleman Cole, who resided there, claimed to be a grandson of one of the captive women and the sole survivor of the Chocchuma tribe. A party of surveyors learned the tradition of the village from him. According to tradition, the animosity of the Choctaws and Chickasaws toward the Chocchumas was so fierce and unrelenting in this aboriginal war, that they killed every dog, cat, and chicken found in the Chocchuma village.⁶

It is difficult to ascertain whether all the Chocchumas were really killed, but if any survived they were probably taken into the other tribes as slaves, for there is today no separate tribe of Chocchuma Indians.

The Choctaw Indians occupied the greater part of the County of Yalobusha as it was originally laid out. The Chocchumas had been exterminated, and the country on both sides of the Yalobusha River was held by scattered tribes. One Indian village was located on Okachickama Creek just east of Okachickama Hill and within a mile of the present station of Bryant, Mississippi. This village extended along the creek for some distance and was ruled

⁵Ibid.

⁶Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, vol. V, pp. 303-305.

by two sub-chiefs, Charlie and Henry Perry.⁷

Another Indian village of Yalobusha County must have been located somewhere near Elliott, for history records that a certain Captain Perry and many Indian families received the missionaries to the Indians when they reached this place in the year 1818. Indian children came to the mission school from places scattered throughout the county, and records of the missionaries mentioned the fact that the Indians owned much live stock.

The Choctaws made treaties with the United States Government in the years 1786, 1801, 1802, 1803, 1805, 1816, 1820 and 1830. In the beginning these treaties were very little more than treaties of friendship and peace between the United States and the Indians as a distinct nation. As the years passed the Choctaws allowed the United States Government to build roads across their territories, and with the roads came settlers on the way to the Southwest. When the southwest territory was filled up, the settlers looked with longing eyes on the great

⁷

Information obtained by the writer from Mr. W. C. Bryant of Coffeerville, Mississippi.

territory in the north central part of the country. Treaty after treaty was made, and each new one left the Choctaw with less of his once magnificent lands.⁸

By 1830 the Indian policy of the government was definitely fixed. It was that no strong nations of Indians should be left east of the Mississippi River; accordingly, when the Indian commissioners met at the treaty ground of Dancing Rabbit Creek, they had only one definite order from President Jackson—"Fail not to make a treaty." The treaty was made; the land was obtained; many of the Indians were dissatisfied; but the power of the government was behind the treaty, and the day of the Choctaw in Mississippi past. Those of the Choctaws who did not care to emigrate to the west were given sections of land after the government survey. Some of them settled on this land, but most of them sold it to the incoming settlers.⁹

⁸Cushman, History of Choctaw, Chickasaw and Natchez Indians, p. 135.

⁹Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, vol. V, p. 386.

Before the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek was signed, the most important white settlement in Yalobusha County was the mission settlement at Elliott, established in June, 1818, three miles south of the Yalobusha River and about thirty miles south of the Yazoo River. This settlement was a branch of the "School Presbyterian Board of Foreign missions" of Boston, Massachusetts. Mr. Kingsbury, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Williams, made the settlement and named the mission Elliott in honor of the Reverend John Elliott, the distinguished missionary to the Indians of New England. These people were later joined by Moses Jewell and his wife, John Kanonse and his wife and Peter Kanonse. Other settlers and missionaries came at intervals and helped to build up the community. In 1819 — fourteen months after the establishment of the mission — there were at Elliott:

Seven commodious cabins which were occupied as dwelling houses.

A Dining room and Kitchen contiguous, (54x20) with hewed logs and a piazza on each side.

A school house 35ft. x 30 hewed logs; and finished on the Lancastrian plan.

A mill house 35x30 ft., and also a lumberhouse and granary, each 18x20 ft.

A blacksmith shop, stable, and three outhouses, all of which are nearly completed. ¹⁰

¹⁰ Cushman, History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Natchez Indians, p. 162.

On the plantation between 30 and 40 acres have been cleared and fenced; and between 20 and 30 acres have been cultivated, which have produced a considerable quantity of corn, potatoes, beans, peas, etc.

Besides the above, considerable time has been spent in cutting woods in several directions, and constructing several small bridges, which were necessary for transporting with a wagon.

The stock at present belonging to the mission, consists of 7 horses, 10 steers, 75 cows, 75 calves, and young cattle, and about 30 swine. Of the above, 54 cows and calves, and 6 steers and young cattle have been presented by the Choctaws for the benefit of the school.

At this time there were probably 15 persons including a physician at the mission. All came out to labor gratuitously for the benefit of the Choctaws.¹¹

These missionaries were well treated by Captain Perry, a half-breed Indian, as well as by many native families. Captain Perry, on their arrival, presented them with a house to use until they could build one of their own.

¹¹Ibid., p. 135.

II

Organization

Yalobusha County was created by an act of the Mississippi legislature passed on December 23, 1833. It was one of sixteen counties formed from part of the Choctaw lands ceded to the United States Government in the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, signed September 28, 1830. The legislative act defining the boundaries of the county is as follows:

An act, to lay off new counties in part of the territory acquired by the United States from the Choctaw Tribe of Indians, at the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, and to define the boundaries thereof, and for other purposes.

Sec. 9. And be it further enacted; that the territory within the following limits, to wit: beginning on the line between townships 21 and 22, at the point at which the line between No. 8 and 9 crosses the line between townships No. 21 and 22, and running from thence north with the said line, between ranges No. 8 and 9 east, thirty miles; from thence west, to the line between ranges No. 3 and 4 east; from thence south with said line between ranges No. 3 and 4 east, to the line between townships No. 21 and 22, and from thence to the place of beginning, shall form a new county, to be called

Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1821-1838 (Jackson, Miss., 1838), p. 415.

Yallobusha County.¹

After the boundaries of the county were fixed, the legislature proceeded to appoint commissioners for the organization of the county.

An act to organize the counties laid off in part of the territory acquired by the United States from the Choctaw Tribe of Indians, at the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, and for other purposes.

Sec. 5. And be it further enacted, that Jesse B. Garth, John H. Byers, Green Hastings, Samuel Gwin, A. S. Campbell, William J. Oldham, Samuel B. Marsh, Robert Dawson and John H. M'Kinney, or either of them, be, and they are hereby authorized to organize the county of Yallobusha; and full power is vested in the said last named commissioners, or either of them, at anytime after the passage of this act, to organize said Yallobusha county, in the most speedy manner, under such rules and regulations as they or either of them may prescribe.²

The commissioners lost little time in proceeding to the organization of the county. This work was turned over to Samuel Gwin, who ordered an election in the county on February 1, 1834. This election was for the purpose of electing members of the board of police and other officers. The members of the first board of

¹Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1824-1838 (Jackson, Miss., 1838), p. 513.

²Ibid., p. 514.

police were as follows: Thomas C. McMackin, William Metcalf, Dempsey H. Hicks, William Minter, Robert Edrington. Other officers elected were: James H. Barfield, sheriff, John Smith, coroner, Francis Clement, surveyor, John K. Mabray, assessor, Robert C. Malone, treasurer, Mathew Clinton, probate judge. Upon these officers was placed the responsibility of organizing and controlling the new county. The records of their undertakings show that these officers entered into their work with energy and purpose.³

The board of police in 1833 held the position which the board of supervisors holds today; however, at that time this body had far more power than the board of supervisors ever has had. Provision for police courts was made in the same act which created the counties. That these courts were given a free hand is shown in the following paragraphs quoted from the act.

Sec. 10. And be it further enacted, that the members of the police court of the several counties organized by this act, shall be commissioned by the governor, upon the certificate of the commissioners, or either of them, appointed by this act, that such persons

³The Coffeeville Courier (Coffeeville, Miss.), Jan. 5, 1933.

are duly elected members of said police court, and said members may be qualified by any of said commissioners, by any justice of the peace in this state, or other persons authorized to administer an oath; and the boards of county police of said counties, after having been elected and qualified, shall hold such terms of police court as they may deem proper for the orderly arrangement of all county business, without regard to the terms prescribed by law for the holding of police courts in the several counties in this state, and may appoint a clerk of said board, pro tem.

Sec. 11. And be it further enacted, that the presidents of the boards of police in and for the counties organized by this act, be, and they are hereby appointed returning officers of their respective counties of the first election that shall be holden in said counties for all state and county officers then to be elected.

Sec. 12. And be it further enacted, that the boards of county police of said counties, be, and they are hereby vested with full power to designate the place where the seats of justice for said counties shall be located, which seats shall be at the geographical centre of said counties, unless the centre should on some account be unsuitable, then, in that case, said location shall be made at the most convenient point within five miles of said centre, and said boards of police may receive by donation or purchase, any quantity of land for the use of said counties, not exceeding eighty acres.

Sec. 13. And be it further enacted, that it shall be the duty of the secretary of state to deliver to the board of police of each of the counties named in this act, or to the commissioners appointed to organize the same, ten copies of the revised code, ten copies of the revised constitution, and ten copies of the acts of each session of the legislature since the year eighteen hundred and twenty-three, if the same be at his command, to be distributed among the officers of said counties

in the manner presented by law.⁴

It can be seen from the instructions just quoted that the organization of the county was turned over to the board immediately after this body was elected. The first meeting was held in Hendersonville, February 24, 1834. There were present three members, D. H. Hicks, Thomas McMackin and William Metcalf, who were sworn in by Commissioner Samuel I. Gwin. In the election of officers, which immediately followed, McMackin was made president and D. M. Rayburn was appointed clerk.

During the first session of the newly elected board of police, the county was divided into five districts. The first was called the Central District as the courthouse was to be located in it; the other four districts surrounded this central district and were called: (2) Northeast District, (3) Northwest District, (4) Southwest District, (5) Southeast District. The election of two justices of the peace and two constables in each district was then ordered and accomplished. Only one day

⁴ Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1824-1838, pp. 518-519.

was needed for the first meeting, as it was a type of special session, and the real work of organization of the county was left until the regular session.⁵

The board of police met for a second session of two days on March 26 and 27, 1834. Among other questions of importance, they considered at that time the location of a county seat. That the board had informed the public as to their intention is evident from the minutes of the board, which record that "divers situations and inducements had been offered."⁶ Two of the proffered sites stood the greatest chance of having this honor conferred upon them; they were Hendersonville and Coffeerville. Hendersonville was at that time a thriving little town with several business houses, taverns and churches. As the meetings had been held at Hendersonville up to this time, Thomas McMackin, President of the board, as well as others, approved of the county seat being located there.

⁵The Coffeerville Courier, Jan. 5, 1833.

⁶Minutes of the Board of Police of Yalobusha County, 1834-1837 (MS.), p. 10.

Four miles north of Hendersonville was the settlement called Coffee's Camp. Here, Surles McCrelles, a tavern keeper, and D. M. Rayburn, a planter, lived. These two gentlemen felt, no doubt, that if the seat were located at their settlement their land would be enhanced in value; accordingly they placed before the board a proposition in which, as an inducement, they offered to give the county fifty-one acres of land if the county seat were located on it. Tradition has it that a heated struggle was carried on in regard to the location of the county seat among the board members, who were then meeting in Hendersonville. One evidence of the intense rivalry and partisanship which existed was the proposal of W. M. Minter that the board retire to a private room to settle the important question. This suggestion was followed, and a whole afternoon spent in deciding the answer to it.⁷ There is no record of the debates that were carried on in private over this matter, but there can be no doubt that the discussion was heated. The minutes of the board show only the following record of

⁷Ibid., p. 9.

this occasion.

William Minter named that the Board withdraw to a private room to themselves for the purpose of examining the propositions made for locating a county seat, and after examining the several places proposed and divers others it is therefore ordered that the clerk enter on the minutes the location thereof. Whereupon it is ordered by the Board that the county seat of YaloBusha shall be located in Township 24, Range 6 East and section 4 that is including the proposition handed in by Surles McCreles and D. M. Rayburn it being a part of the $E\frac{1}{2}$ of N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ off part of $W\frac{1}{2}$ of N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ and a part of the $E\frac{1}{2}$ Southwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of said section. Ordered that the board adjourn until early Candlelight.⁸

Thus Thomas McMackin and Hendersonville lost the battle for the county seat. The board had spent the morning in examining the different locations, and must have ridden up to Surles' tavern to examine the land offered for the county seat. The minutes mention the fact that they had adjourned the morning session with the intention of examining the lands for the location of the county seat. One thing is certain — two days after this meeting of the 26th, Thomas G. McMackin offered his resignation as president of the board.⁹ However, upon taking a ballot for president he was unanimously

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., pp. 9-11.

reelected, and continued to hold his position on the board of police until October, when he resigned at a meeting held during that month. He had attended very irregularly since his resignation as President of the Board; indeed, several fines had been assessed against him for this non-attendance.¹⁰ The story is that as soon as Hendersonville lost out in the race for the county seat, McMacken lost interest in the county. At any rate he soon bought a plot of land near Victoria in Pontotoc County, and later established the town of Pontotoc.¹¹

At this same session, the board of police, after choosing the county seat, passed a resolution that meetings thenceforth should be held at the site of the new county town, that the latter be surveyed by the county surveyor and laid off, and that it be called Coffeerville. At the suggestion of Thomas McMackin, President of the Board, the county was protected in regard to the title of the land offered by the two men,

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 52-72.

¹¹ Information obtained by the writer from Mr. W. C. Bryant.

McCrelles and Rayburn. They were forced to make bond to the amount of ten thousand dollars as follows:

Know all men by these presents that we, Davidson M. Rayburn and Surles McCrelles are held bound to the Board of County Police of Yalobusha County and their successors in office in the sum of ten thousand dollars for the payment whereof well and truly to be made we bind ourselves our heirs and by these presents witness our hands and seals this twenty-eight day of March, 1834. ¹²

Surles McCreles Davidson M. Rayburn

The condition of the above obligation is such that whereas the above bound Davidson M. Rayburn and Surles McCrelles have donated to the said Board of Police fifty-one acres of land to be chosen by said board from any portion or part of the lands-viz-The east half of the Northwest qr and west half of the Northeast qrs the East half of the Southwest qr of section no. four (4) township no. Twenty four (24) of Range no. Six (6) East. This being a donation for the purpose of fixing a county site there on the said D. M. Rayburn and S. McCrelles having the right of receiving to themselves the choice of two lots when the town shall be laid off. Now should the said D. M. Rayburn and S. McCrelles so soon as they shall receive a Patent to said land make to said Board of Police a good and sufficient fee simple title to the said remain in full force and virtue.

Given under one hand and seal day and year above written.

D. M. Rayburn (seal)
Surles McCrelles (seal)

F. B. Ives
Lemuel Bean
William B _____
W. M. Stone 13
A. B. Herron

¹²

Minutes of Board of Police, 1834-1837 (MS.), p. 12.

¹³

Ibid.

III

The Courthouse and Jail

The new county government felt from the first the necessity for a more suitable place of meeting than Thomas McMackin's hotel in Hendersonville, where the original board of police had assembled. One of the first acts of this body, after choosing the county seat and dividing it up into lots, was the provision for the building of a courthouse and a jail. A description of these early structures should be interesting to the student of frontier life. Pioneers are seldom concerned with beauty of architecture. A rough and ready justice needs a rough and ready setting.

Ordered by the court that the following plan be received for the building a courthouse in the town of Coffeerville-vizTo be a framed building thirty feet square, sills 10 inches square plates 4 by 8-height from sills to plates 12 feet to be shingled with 18 inch shingles showing 6 inches- of Poplar cypress or chesnut to be weather boarded with planks planed 7 inches wide, laped $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, of poplar or pine. Eaves to project 10 inches bored and moulded, within the house a plank partition, close and tight extending up to the roof to be run so as to make of the portion cut off to make two rooms 10 by 15 ft each one window each and convenient doors when the partitions connecting with the main room, to be put in outer door to the building the centre of said door to be 10 ft from the

left hand wall to be 5 ft wide six $\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, bottem, folding and well hung with bolts and screws, to be two windows in left hand wall each seven feet from the adjoining wall, 12 lights each 10 by 12 a semicular bar to be made 2 ft wide the outer edge of said bar to be $10\frac{1}{2}$ ft from the wall opposite the door- to be raised $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet from the floor- The _____ base to be four feet square in the sight of the centre of the bar the stand for the Judge's seat to be raised $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the floor against the wall opposite the door one window above it 8 lights 10 by 12- Jury seats to be on the right and left of the Judge's seat floor to be laid down with quartered plank $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches thick- unto sleepers 2 feet from center to center with a centre sill, the studs of the house to be 3 by 4 In door and corner posts 4 by 8 In braces the same-16 joists 4 by 8 the outer door of the house to front towards the south side of the public square the rafters to be 32 in number 2- ft long 3 by 5 inches sawed with collar beams 14 feet long 3 by 4 inches- Payments in the sum agreed upon will be made as follows to wit- one third on 1st January next- one third the 1st January 1836 and the balance 1st January 1837. The work will be required to be completed on the 1st of June 1835 and persons contracting to give bonds and approved security conditioned to that effect and also that it shall be done in a workman like manner- Given by the board of Police for Yalobusha County this the 22 day of october 1834. ¹

Until the new courthouse could be completed, the board of police chose as their meeting place a house adjacent to McCreles' tavern; likewise they appointed this building to be the courthouse for the county until further change should be decided by the board.²

¹ Minutes of the Board of Police, 1834-1837 (MS.), p. 93.

² Ibid., p. 95.

A jail, built at the same time that the courthouse was being constructed, was made from materials at hand and put together in a manner to keep secure those confined within its walls. There was no similarity between this early prison and the more comfortable and sanitary ones which are found even in small towns today. From the following description one would picture a sort of pen built for confining slaves:

Ordered by the Court that the following plan be received for the building of a prison viz- The Intire size of the dungeon thirteen feet 4 inches in the clear two walls of hewn oak timber the outside timbers to be twelve inches square and the timbers for the inner wall ten inches square put together with half dufftail notch the vacancy of 6 inches between the walls completely filled with Round timber with the bark drawn off and set end on end with a good floor on foundation of hewn oak timber 12 inches square laid side & side coupled close the room 8 feet high in the clear with two small grated windows on each side well seemed with Iron slats and bars on each side the greats $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches square with two & half inches between them on both walls the upper Room $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet high single wall of hewn oak timbers 12 inches square rased in the same manner as the lower floore below and above with the same kind of timber of the wall also a partition wall through the center of $2\frac{1}{2}$ Inch oak plank doors as follows, one in the center of one square in the upper room of a suitable size faced with oak facing three inches thick put on with eight inch spikes well bended with heads one inch square one shutter to shut inside made of iron bars $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ inches thick made by crossing at right angles $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart- from center to center united at every crossing with an inch unit and large head to the same, the second cross bar from top and bottom also the centre bar to act as three hinges forged out for that purpose and hung on large staples or hooks with a large _____ dropped through and large heads to said poles, seemed with a large patent stock lock faced on

the inside with sheet iron and riveted to the same with $\frac{1}{4}$ inch rivets, one to shut on the outside, made of oak planks $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick and lined with the same, put together with six inch spikes heads one inch square driven in four inches apart and riveted, hung with large hooks and hinges the hooks made $\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter well bended and driven in the wall 10 inches, the hinges to extend clear across the door, put on with $\frac{1}{4}$ inch rivets the rivets six inches apart secured with a large patent stock lock put in between the door and lining, the facing secured with a stringer bar of iron put on with 8 inch spikes and a place cut in said bar to receive the bolt-a harp and staple, the harp made of axe bar secured with suitable staple at the top on the left hand side to receive the harp, secured with the largest kind of double bolt pad lock, the door of the partition to be of suitable size with a sutter of $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch oak plank hung with large forged hinges and hooks, seemed with patent stock lock - a trap door in the center of the back room, of a suitable size with a slide door, to completely fit the hatch also a large fall door six inches thick and large forged hinges and hooks or staples the hinges to extend far enough to make harps and large staples drove in the floor to receive the same seemed with a large double bolt padlock to each staple to manage the same, two small windows, one in each room above, well grated with inch square bars of iron - the house to have a well framed shaped roof the ends well weather boarded and finished in workman like manner, also a platform and steps to ascend to the doors made of good and lasting timbers and well covered in the foundation of the above prison of rock placed in the ground 18 inches raised 6 inches above surface the wall 28 inches wide with the sills framed together on which to commence the foundation of timbers as above described.³

Three years after the building of this first jail, the townspeople became dissatisfied with it. A petition asking that a new one be built was sent in to

³ Ibid., pp. 92-93.

the board of police, and granted. This request was made on the grounds that the jail was insufficient for the safe keeping of prisoners, that it was considered a nuisance, and also that it was located on a lot which was in the most desirable part of town. Evidently some good citizen desired the lot for other purposes.⁴

Some agitation was carried on over the building of the new jail, but records of the board of police show that they did not arrive at a decision about it for some time. The jail was repaired from time to time, the cost of these repairs amounting to a good deal of money. For the period of 1836-1837 forty-three dollars and fifty cents were paid to H. D. Hill for repairs.⁵ In 1838 two hundred and thirty dollars were allowed Taylor and Treadwell for work on the building.⁶ In the same year the front part of the jail lot was ordered sold, but there is no record of anyone's

⁴Ibid., p. 290.

⁵Ibid., 1838-1847, May 15, 1838 (As the pages are not numbered in some of the volumes of the early records of the board of police, the notes will be cited by dates instead).

⁶Ibid., May 14, 1838.

purchasing it.⁷

The frame courthouse built in 1835 did not for long satisfy the people. As the new county became more thickly settled and prosperity shone upon its people, they clamored for a finer seat of justice, which, in 1838, the board of police ordered to be built:

Ordered by the court that there be let to the lowest bidder on the 20th of Sept. next the building of a Brick Courthouse of good brick and such other materials as may be necessary in finishing the House complete for the county of Yalobusha and that the clerk advertise the same as he may deem most proper the same to be let on one two or three years. ⁸

At the September term of the board in 1838, John McKennon, Thomas Casbury and John A. Topp were appointed commissioners to draft a form in writing for the erection of the court house. The building job was let on November 13 of the same year to Bennet Higgins, David Shannon, Nicholas Rudy, P. S. Mann, G. M. Anderson, Boling C. Barnett and Manson Jones as contractors. Dimensions, materials and other specifications were stated in the contract; as well as the cost of the building, twentythree

⁷Ibid., July 11, 1838.

⁸Ibid.

thousand dollars, which the board had decided to pay in installments of four years. A copy of the contract as found in the records of the board of police follows:

Nov. 13, 1838

This covenant and agreement made and entered into this 13th day of November 1838 by and betwen Bennet Higgins, David Shannon Nicholas Rudy P. S. Mann G. M. Anderson Boling C. Barnett Manson Jones all of the county of Monroe and State of Mississippi of the one part Hendrix A Snow as president of the Board of Police in and for and on behalf of the county of Yalobusha and state aforesaid of the other part witnesseth for that whereas the said Burnett Higgins hath the day of the above date covenanted agreed and contracted with the said Hendrix A Snow president of the Board of County Police of and for the county and state aforesaid to build on the public square in the town of Coffeerville and county aforesaid a certain Court House for said county for and In consideration of the sum of twenty three thousand dollars To be paid by said county as hereinafter mentioned to him the said Bennett Higgins the said court house to be built and executed as hereinafter specified the house on the base to be fifty two in width by fifty-Eight in Length from outside to outside of the walls thereof the wall on the foundation to be five Brick or a suitable thickness and to Reach from each side untill it be Reduced to twenty Seven Inches which thickness it is to be at the Ground floor and which floor is to be Two feet from the surface of the earth at the ground floor on the out Side the wall is to recede four and onehalf Inches with a Suitable moulding of Brick to Show that size as moulding Round the House with good Stone door cils to the East and West doors from _____ to the second story of the house to be in thickness Two Bricks and one half of common sized Brick or twenty two and one half inches and to be twelve feet high in the clear from the Top of the lower floor to the Bottom of ceiling of the uper and from the Second floor the walls to be Reduced to the thickness of two Bricks or Eighteen Inches the uper Story of the house or uper Room to be fifteen and one half feet high in the clear from the uper _____ to the underneath part of the ceiling overhead in the Court Room and the said outside Brick in said walls To be moulded in oil and all

the Brick to be of good quality the lower Story of said house to be as to contain therein four Suitable Rooms with passages and Double Staircases as set out on the plan of the house the partition walls of said lower story to be in thickness two Brick from the Base to the Second floor the doors windows and openings to be in Size and dementions and otherwise agreeable to the plan Exhibited and agreed upon by the parties the West End to have a projection of Two feet from the base bends on the corners of which projection a column to be Erected agreeing with the plan those columns to be finished Suitable Base and mouldings and the projection to be in length corresponding with the space taken up by the stairs as seen or Exhibited on the plan and over which a gable or attic front corresponding with the projection on attic or gable of the same size to be supported by two pilasters as set out on the plan On the opsite End and on Each of the other sides of the house there is to be Erected a portico supported by two Colums Each and the colums to stand from the wall of the house Six feet and the angle of the portico to correspond with these arrangement on the plan or to be Regulated by the Openings of the house also on the north and south sides of the house the chimneys are from the Base so as to show the same as a pilaster to have the same projection and over that part of the housewherein the Stair cases are to be Erected as seen by the plan therein to be Erected a cupulo agreeable to and it conformely with the plan Exhibited the uper Room or story to be finished for a courtroom with a platform of sufficient height and pannell from with steps Each side and the seat to be twelve feet long with Jury Boxes and lawyers Bar to be made and Erected as set out on the plan the lawyers Barr to Raised a suitable distance above the floor of the house the Barr Jury Boxes and Judges' Bench to be neatly finished of pannel work and corresponding and a criminal box behind the Barr a Gallery to be Erected in the End of the house opsite to the Bench Supported upon four wooden colums as seen by plan Exhibited the front of gallery to be of pannel work corresponding with the Judges Bench To have Erected in the said gallery at Suitable distances and Elevated one above the other Benches or seats suitable for such the Galery to Extend across the house and to be Seven and one half or Eight feet in width and a stair case to accend to the gallery two Jury Rooms of about fourteen feet square On the same floor with the Court Room fire places and chimney

pieces in Each of the Rooms above and below with Two in the court Room all finished with suitable mantle pieces and other work suitable with a seat or Bench Round upper Rooms for Jury Seats the walls of all the house to be finished in a good workmanlike manner with hard plaster and all the doors of the Rooms to be of good panel work Hinges and finished in a workmanlike manner with good locks and all to be of good materials overhead in all the Rooms to be ceiled with good seasoned plank not to be wider than Eight inches Each the joist for Both floors to be twelve inches wide by three thick and to be not more than twenty inches from center to center the floors in all the Rooms and passages to be not less than inch and quarter thick and not over seven Inches wide to be of best quality pine all the windows to be finished with good Venecian Blinds Hinges and finished with suitable fastenings and the windows to be finished in a workman like manner with mouldings the Roof of said Building to be what is called a hip Roof and to be framed and constructed and put together on the house as a Roof of the first order as Known by the name of a principle Roof and when the Roof angles on the corners to _____ under the shingles to keep the joints from leaking the angles Round the chimneys to be tined in like manner to keep the damp or Rains from geting along them and the Roof to be covered and finished with good cipress shingles the Roof to have good tin Gutters with pipes at Each corner of the house for the purpose of caring off the water on Iron Rodd $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch to Extend from a suitable distance in the ground to the distance of three or four feet to be well secured to the house and cupulo, the columns and pilasters _____ to be plastered with good hard plaster all the wood work of the house to be made out of good and sound materials and to be painted and finished in good workman like manner with pavement of Brick Round the case of said house to correspond with the outside of the columns from the house the four columns to stand upon a plinth of Hewn Stone of suitable size and which plinth is to be Erected On or sustained by a good solid Brick foundation laid in good hard lince mortar the upper part of the wall or Eves to be finished as also the attic Eves with a fine cornish Suitable to the size and height of the building and of the tonic order agreeing with the plan the Windows to be finished with Brass stops to keep them at suitable distances up when to be raised and all the work to be done and Executed out of good sound materials and of durable quality and the said courthouse

to be finished in all things in a workmanlike manner on or before the space of Two Years from and after the first day of January One thousand Eight hundred and thirty nine that is to say said house to be above consumated on or before the first day of January, 1841, and for and in consider of which house so to be built and erected the said Hendrix a Snow as president of the Board of County Police in for and behalf of said county of Yalobusha agrees for and behalf of said county the sum of twenty three thousand dollars to be paid to him the said Bennett Higgins in the following manner that is to say four Thousand six hundred dollars on or before the first day of March One thousand Eight hundred and thirty nine if in the opinion of the building committee the work shall have progressed so as to warrent the same one fourth of the Remaining Sum to be paid on the first day of December 1839 One other fourth on or before the first of April 1840 and the other two fourths at the time the building shall be finished and Received by the Building committee appointed by the Board of County police of said county this house to be Built by the plan now agreed upon by and betwen the contracting parties and for the true and faithful performance of all and every part of the foregoing contract and covenant the parties thereto Bind themselves in the sum of twenty three thousand dollars that is to say the said Bennett Higgins David Shannon Nicholas Rudy P. D. Mann and G. M. Anderson Boling C Burnett Mansen Jones their heirs Executors and Administrators and him the said Hendrix A Snow as president of the Board of County Police in and for the said County aforesaid and his successor in office in witness whereof the parties hereunto sets their hands and seals the day and date above written.

David Shannon	(seal)
Bennett S. Higgins	(seal)
Nicholas Rudy	(seal)
P. D. Mann	(seal)
P. M. Anderson	(seal)
Boling C Burnett	(seal)
Mansen Jones	(seal)
Steward Pipkin, president pro tem	9

⁹ Ibid., November 13, 1838.

The completion of the new courthouse was delayed for a while by the death of the chief contractor, B. J. Higgins; his executors, however, were allowed an additional year in which to finish the work.¹⁰ It was May 3, 1842 before the building was received as a completed job, but the court had been meeting in the upper room since October, 1840.¹¹

The first law suit against the board of police was a result of the construction of the second courthouse. Thomas Carbry, a subcontractor, claimed to have done much work on the building for which he had not received the pay due him. By the terms of a contract between Higgins and Carbry, the latter was to receive \$11,643 for his part of the work; accordingly he filed a claim for that amount of money against the county board. As the executors of the Higgins Estate also claimed a right to this money, the board resolved not to pay the amount until the case between these parties was decided, and

¹⁰ Ibid., May 3, 1842.

¹¹ Ibid., Oct. 29, 1840.

retained as its lawyer, A. R. Herron, to whom they paid a fee of four hundred dollars.

The case of Carbry against the Board of Yalobusha County was brought to trial in the chancery court at Carrolton, Mississippi, but was suspended until the case of Thomas Carbry vs. James Jones (executor of the Higgins Estate) was decided.¹² Records show that Carbry won his case and that the court later paid him three thousand dollars as a part payment on this account.

Ordered by the Board that the Treasurer of this County out of the Special fund pay unto Thomas Carbry the sum of Three Thousand Dollars in part of the Judgment recovered by said Carbry at the last Circuit Court of this County for building the Court House of said County.¹³

This courthouse, built by Higgins and Carbry, was located on the hill just above the present highway through the town, on the exact spot where the negro Baptist Church has since been built. It served as the courthouse for many years after the old town of Coffeeville was decayed and gone, for the town was moved to the railroad about 1860, and a courthouse was not built in the new town until 1890.

¹²Ibid., Feb., 1843.

¹³Ibid., May, 1845.

IV

The Board of Police

No early history of Yalobusha County would be complete without a brief discussion of the Board of County Police. This body was the heart and soul of the whole county government for years; all matters of county organization were submitted to it for final settlement; it conducted elections, marked out roads, appointed road overseers, levied taxes, builded courthouses, licensed inns, taverns and mills, and controlled bridges and ferries. A history of the action of this body is a history of early county development. The members of the first board elected, Thomas C. McMackin, William Metcalf, Dempsey Hicks, William Minter and Robert Edrington, were capable, upright men, who were not afraid of the task laid upon them. They entered heartily and with good will into organizing the county. Their work stands for itself and needs no praise. The board changed as the years passed, but, all in all, it was composed of men with the interest of their county at heart and of men who did their duty as

they saw it to the best of their ability. This chapter is for the purpose of discussing some actions of the board which were of such a varied nature that they could not well be included in any other part of this history.

The board of police met for some years without having any special rules as to the order of procedure while in session. Evidently no need for such regulations arose at once; therefore a set of rules was not adopted until April 29, 1840. They were as follows:

Ordered by the Board that the following rules be adopted-

Rule I. No motion shall be discussed without a motion is made and seconded.

Rule II. Each speaker or member shall rise and address himself to the president and no one shall speak more than twice on any motion unless by permission of the board.

Rule III. The President shall be the Judge as regards order in the discussion of any subject except when an appeal is made to the board.

Rule IV. The rules of order shall be distinctly read by the clerk when called for. Rules to be attend or amended by a majority when they think proper. ¹

There is no record of the members of the board receiving any pay for the first eight years of the county history. This first reference to pay was made in the meeting of November 1, 1842. At that time the members

¹Minutes of the Board of Police, 1838-1847 (MS.) Apr. 29, 1840.

voted that each of them receive three dollars per day for each day they were in session.²

The board of police had charge of all expenditures of the county money. They levied the taxes and supervised the assessment and collection of them. Only the board could raise or lower an assessment after it had been placed on record, and all complaints in regard to taxation had to come before them.

For the first few years, from 1834 until 1838, the county tax was fifty percent of the amount levied by the state. The state tax at that time was only 4 mills. Until 1838, therefore, it was very low, but when the new and fine courthouse was built, a special tax became necessary. The special tax amounted to 6 mills in 1838, 1839 and 1840, and was about 4 mills in 1841. The regular county and state tax remained about the same. This meant that even while paying for the courthouse — and that tax was considerable — the whole amount of the property tax was only 12 mills. The policy of the board was the "pay as you go" method, one which they observed for the most

² Ibid., November, 1842.

part until the period of the civil war.³

Another duty of the board of police was to make provision for the poor in the county. An overseer was appointed in each district to make a report of the poor in that district.⁴ At that time there was no county poorhouse. The paupers were given into the hands of private persons for care and their cost of upkeep paid by the county. There were not many of these paupers, but that their expenses each year amounted to quite a sum is shown by the following quotation from the minutes of the board.⁵

This day came Judy and Delila Welch by Petition and asks for their names to be entered on the list of porpors of Yalobusha County which is done accordingly whereupon came John G. Ramsey and purposes to furnish the said Judy and Delila with Board clothing & washing for twelve 50/100 Dollars pr month Each it is therefore ordered by the Court that Twelve 50/100 per month for Each Judy and Delila Welch be allowed and paid out of the County Treasure to John G. Ramsey of any monies not otherwise appropriated from 28th day of October 1840 agreeable to the act of 1833.⁶

³ Ibid., July, 1838, Sept., 1838, Sept., 1839, Dec., 1840, Oct., 1841, Sept., 1842, Oct., 1843.

⁴ Ibid., April, 1840.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., October, 1840.

When the county was first organized, the sixteenth section of each township was reserved for the use of the public schools. This sixteenth section land was handled by five trustees elected by the voters of the township, who were under the supervision of the board of police, and bonded by the board of police until their trusteeship was concluded. In one instance the trustees were accused of selling illegally the sixteenth section of Township 23, Range 5, East. The board of police investigated the case and declared these trustees illegally elected and their acts null and void.⁷

Another instance of the dealings between the board of police and sixteenth section trustees is shown in the following act:

Abel Buity and William E. Stone made report of sale of 16th section of Township 24 Range 6 East and paid over the proceeds arising from the sale of the section to the Trustees of the Male and Female Academy of the Town of Coffeerville, whereupon came D. M. Rayburn David Mabray & R. C. Malone Trustees to the Male and Female Academy aforesaid and acknowledged the receipt of the same, thereupon be it ordered by the Board that the trustees of the 16th section aforesaid be and they are hereby authorized to withdraw their Bond on making deed for the land to

⁷ Ibid., December, 1840.

John A. Hanston according to contract.⁸

At the time that this land was sold, there was no provision for public education in the county. This did not come until 1870. There were then only a few private schools or academies. Oftimes the school lands were sold and the proceeds turned over to some municipal academy conducted as a private school. That agitation for taxation for public schools in the county began as early as 1847 is shown by the following quotation:

Upon the petition of William Minter & others concerning the tax for the support of common schools — the commissioners appointed by the board in accordance with the statute approved the 4th of March 1846, having set forth before this court that certain Townships, have voted for the tax, and the petitions request or demand that the tax be levied. Whereupon, the vote being taken, thereon resulted as follows. Lewis Aldrige and John Johnson for the Tax, James M. Holmes and Hugh G. Grozier against the Tax.⁹

⁸Ibid., March, 1841.

⁹Ibid., February, 1847.

V

Early Roads

Yalobusha County at the time of its creation in 1833 could have had only a few roads. The country was then very thinly populated, and the few settlements were, for the most part, on the water courses. No doubt there were Indian trails, but these lent themselves only to transportation by packhorses and not to the heavy commerce of a white civilization.

Hendersonville was the only settlement of importance in the new county when it was organized. A road ran from this point down to the landing at Troy on the Yalobusha River.¹ This road was incorporated into the county road system when it was laid out. A new road which was ordered viewed and marked from Coffeerville to Troy followed the old one the distance from Hendersonville to

¹Minutes of the Board of Police, 1834-1837 (MS.), p. 14.

Troy. Its meanderings and crooks were later straightened out by the jurors of view.²

The building of roads was one of the greatest tasks before the board of police in the organization of the county. For years this body gave the greater portion of time in its meetings to the consideration of this important duty, and eventually they laid out a system of roads covering the whole county. A considerable part of the records of the board was given over to their instructions in regard to these roads.

The procedure followed by the board of police in laying out the road system was to appoint a group of twelve men called a "Jury of View" to mark out the road. This body met on the appointed date and place for this purpose. Usually the board gave them only a starting point and a finishing point, with perhaps a few general instructions concerning the direction. The board also reserved the right to turn down any prospective road, and oftentimes did reject the survey and call for a new one. In the March meeting of 1834 ten juries of view were

²Ibid., p. 14.

appointed for the surveying of roads. In the June meeting of the same year two juries were appointed, and in the following August meeting one other jury was appointed.

These are the orders that were given:

Ordered by the Board that James Nation, John B. Wood, G. B. Ragsdale, Thomas Vaugh, Lemuel Bean, John Jackson, William Truitt, Robert Williams, Samuel Colson, Lewis Shelton, James Scott, and Nathan Edwards be and they are appointed Jurors of View to view and mark out a road from Coffeerville to the South Boundary Line in a direction to Carroll Court House by way of Tulahoma and Pittsburg and that the above Jury meet in the Town of Coffeerville on the 1st of May next.

Ordered by the board that Davidson Pitman John Brister, Samuel Colson, John Jackson, Nathan Edwards, James Trotter, Posey Logan, William Chapman, William Lupton, Lewis Shelton, James Scott, A. C. Smith, meet at the East boundary Line on the 10th of May next to view and mark out a road from East Boundary line by way of W. Pittmans & D. H. Hicks and Tulahoma to West boundary line in a direction to Chocchuma.

Ordered by the Board that Joshua T. Brown, Mathine Wilson, George Humpries, John W. Durden, Thomas Robinson, Wm. Fly, Wm. Nelson, George Hanks, Wm. Cain, Archibald Roberson, Wm. Ship, Tho. L. Burns, be and they are approved Jurors of View to view and mark out a road from Coffeerville to the north boundary line in a direction to Lagrange. Shall meet at Coffeerville on 20 May.

Ordered by the board that David Mabrey, Leman Haile, William Stone, Sturling Harrison, L. B. Powers, John Smith, Andrew Lackridge, R. C. Malone, John Boone, Stansell Bobb, Amos Harris, Henry Loggins, meet at Coffeerville on 30th of May next to view & mark out a road from Coffeerville to W. boundary line by way of Commerce Troy

and Hastings ferry in a direction to the county seat of Carroll County.

Ordered by the board that the above named Jurors view and mark out a road from Troy by way of Hastings ferry to South line in direction of Chocchuma.

Ordered by the board of County Police that William Buntin, Jesse Bean, Abraham McMinn, Will Swearingin, Zack Osburn, John Tabb, Lemuel Bean, Able Baity, Robt. McMinn, John Swearingin, Rocolin Bowles, John M. Doak, meet on the 9th June in the town of Coffeerville to view and mark out a road from the Town to west boundary Line in a direction to the County seat of Tallahatchy County.

Ordered by the board of County Police that Moses Cavatt, Abraham Buford, J. L. Harris, John M. Doak, Michael Tolbert, Tho. Harris, Abraham Smith, Draton Durby, Thomas Powers, Will T. More, Sandy M. Key, meet at Troy on the 19th June next to view & mark out a road from Troy & Commerce to north boundary line in a direction to Dukes Ferry.

Ordered by the board of County Police that William Norman, Balis Nations, Joshua Brunson, Henry Fudge, James Furgerson, Jesse B. Garth, John H. McKennie, Alfried McCaslin, William Bowls, Blank Vinson, Moses Cavott, R. C. Malone, meet in the town of Henderson on the 30th June next to view and mark out a road from Henderson to west Boundary line in a direction to the then fork Eulaboba.

Ordered by the board of County Police that Williams, John H. Furgeson, Phillip Mason, William Holmes, Hugh Hastgrove, James Arnett, H. W. Thornton, Jonathan Yoark, James C. Miller, _____ Ingram, T. B. Ragsdale, Elkna Sullivan, meet at the town of Henderson on 15th May next and view and mark out a road from Henderson to East line up Lusconoe Valley by way of Jonathan Yoark.

Ordered by the board of County Police that Leman Haile, David Mabray, John H. Byers, Jesse B. Gurth, John Williams, R. C. Malone, James Black, Martin Edwards, Alfried McCaslin, Murdock Bay, H. D. Bridgers, & Thomas Vaughn, meet on 6th May & view and mark out a road from Henderson to McKennie Landing on Looscano.

Ordered by the board of County Police that William Barfield, _____ Carrington, Jacob Kuykendall, Isaac Kuykendall, William Reed, A. C. Buford, W. H. Shaw, Shadrich Haile, William C. Marwell, Joel Barfield, Saml McGee, John Ramsey, meet on the _____ and view and mark out a road from the north boundary line to intersect the Dukes Ferry Road by way of Jefferson Ferry. ³

The following roads were ordered surveyed at the June meeting of the board of police:

Ordered a road viewed beginning at Dukes Ferry from thence to the most convenient and eligible rout to the South Boundary line of Yalobusha County in a direction to Carilton, Crossing the river at Troy or at Commerce as the jury may deem most expedient - It is further ordered that the said Jurys review be summoned to attend for the above mentioned purpose at Dukes Ferry on the 19th June 1834.

Ordered by the board of county police for Yalobusha county that Reuben Cox, Wm. B. Sorrels, Thomas Roberson, Tho. J. Tucker, Lackin Tucker, John Obarrior, Joseph Butcher, Charles Stewart, Mark Williams, James McCay, a Jury of view to view and mark out a road beginning at the Town of Coffeerville thence to East Boundary line of Yalobusha County in a direction to Pontatock. ⁴

During the August term of the board a road was ordered viewed from Tulahoma to the Southeast corner of section 34 entering a road leading from Carroll County to Columbus, Mississippi. This road was surveyed two or

³ Ibid., pp. 13-16.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 47-56.

three times before it was finally accepted.⁵

Most of these roads were viewed and marked out on the dates mentioned in the order. After the jury of view had made its survey, it made a report to the board of police. The first road reported on was one leading from "Jeffersons Ferry on the Yalnapatapa" to a point where the overseers thought this road would intersect another one leading from Dukes Ferry to Troy. This road must have proved acceptable to the board as there was no mention made of its rejection.

Some of the roads were rejected. The report of the jury of view on a road from Coffeenville to the south boundary line of Yalobusha County by way of Tullahoma was rejected and another survey ordered; likewise the report of the jury on the Pontatach road was rejected and a new survey ordered, as well as the report of the road toward La Grange, Tennessee. The report of the jury on the road from Hendersonville to the west boundary line of the county was suspended for further information.⁶

⁵Ibid., p. 64.

⁶Ibid., pp. 66-67.

From the records of the board of police it is to be inferred that the roads which were ordered viewed were marked out and accepted at some later date. Those which were rejected upon the first survey were later resurveyed and accepted. In all cases they ran in about the same directions and approximate places as were originally ordered.

With each meeting of the board of police during the first year new roads were ordered surveyed, most of which were local roads, connecting links for the larger system. However, there were some of sufficient importance to be worthy of description.

In the summer of 1838 a road was ordered viewed and marked out from the spot where the Taylor road crossed the road from Coffeenville to Magee's Bridge. This new road was to extend by Magee's Bridge on to the north boundary line of the county in the direction of Panola County. At a later date a road was laid out from Sardinia to the boundary line in the direction of Belmont, a town in Panola County. Belmont was on the Tallahatchie River at the point where the present United States Highway

crosses it.⁷

Another road ordered viewed in 1838 was to be laid from Coffeeville to the western boundary line of the county to intersect a road leading from Charleston to the eastern boundary of Tallahatchie County. Evidently this road was not laid out to the satisfaction of the board of police; at each meeting for some months a new order was given concerning it.⁸ The same instructions were given upon these different occasions, but in 1840, according to a list of the major roads of the county found in the records of the board of police, the road was then completed from Coffeeville to Oakland. Though nothing was said of its continuing to the county line, it was probably extended that short distance.

A road of early importance was one laid out from E. Sullivant's on the Lusacuna River northward to cross O'Tuckolofa Creek. This road, running across the northeastern part of the county, was for many years the only road through a stretch of land very sparsely

⁷ Ibid., 1838-1847, March, 1838.

⁸ Ibid., September 4, 1838.

settled in early times.⁹

A complete record of all the roads laid out in the county over a period of years would be practically impossible to obtain. Numerous changes were made at intervals, and some roads were abandoned while new ones were built. However, a list of the main roads of the county was given in the minutes of the board of police on April 28, 1840. This list is of especial interest because of the fact that it gives the different classes of roads in the county. The roads in grade I were the best, being thirty feet wide; grade II roads were twenty feet wide, while those in grade III were only fifteen feet wide. The list is as follows:

Grade of Roads

From Coffeerville to county line south	1 Grade
From Coffeerville to county line north	1 Grade
From Henderson to county line East	3 Grade
From Coffeerville to Richmond	3 Grade
From Coffeerville in a direction to Greensborough by way of Graysport	2 Grade
From the Forks South of Cypress to Troy	2 Grade
From Coffeerville to Pontotoc	3 Grade
From Coffeerville to Sardinia	2 Grade
From Coffeerville to Preston	3 Grade

⁹ Ibid., November 18, 1839.

From Coffeerville to Oakland	2	Grade
From Dukes Ferry to county line South	2	Grade
From Oakland to Sardinia	2	Grade
From Sardinia to Tennessee Road	2	Grade
From Graysport to county line to Shongalo	3	Grade
From Graysport to county line to Springhill	3	Grade
From Grenada to Belfontaine	2	Grade
From Grenada to Chocchuma	3	Grade
From Grenada to Tuscahoma	3	Grade
From Hall to Troy	1	Grade
From Troy to Charleston	3	Grade
From Grenada to Middleton	1	Grade
From Clevelands toward Houston	2	Grade
From Richmond to Belfontaine	3	Grade

10

All roads, no matter what the width of the road bed, had a twelve foot right of way free of obstruction.¹¹

No doubt the object of this was in some degree to keep tree limbs from falling in and obstructing the roads.

This system of roads as listed in 1840 should have been sufficient to serve the county, as several of the roads crossed it in each direction. The town of Coffeerville was the hub, with the roads running out to all the towns or places of importance.

Work on these roads started as soon as they were surveyed and the surveys accepted. As the road from

¹⁰
Ibid., April, 1840.

¹¹
Ibid., 1834-1837, p. 88.

Jefferson Ferry to Dukes Ferry was the first one accepted, it was also the first one on which work was started. Samuel McGee, James D. Darby and Rawlin Bowls were appointed overseers of construction.¹² The custom in that day was to give the overseer control over a few miles of road and the authority to collect the men who lived along the way and to compel them to spend a certain amount of time working on it. With the help of the plantation owners and their hands the overseer then worked the road to the best of his ability. Each month it was the road overseer's duty to make a report to the board of police. A fine of five dollars was imposed on one who failed to make the report. If the road did not come up to the standard expected by the board of police, the overseer could be displaced and another one appointed.

The following are examples of orders given by the board to overseers and road hands:

Ordered by the board that Lemman Haile be overseer of the Road in place of John W. McLemore and that G. A. Thompson & hands all the hands of Hendersonville J. G. Robertson Robt Weir Bird Crowley hands James Crowley

¹²Ibid., p. 72.

& hands Lewis Clyburn Wm Greenhill John Scurr hands Thomas & Berry Sand & hands work thereon under his direction. 13

April Term

James Minter report Received and continued overseer of the Road with the same hands and Mrs. May Smith hands to work thereon under his direction.

April Term

Ordered by the board that M A Brasel be overseer of the road in place of J. William and that the following hands work thereon under his direction. Viz. David York I. M. York C York A. York. R Carraway John Carraway I Ferguson E Ferguson Johnthan Williams Caleb Sullivant Green Stewart Hardy Brassel Dr Roan Saml Walters. J. H. Murray P. Murray John Forbes & Lovejoy & hands & E. Polk. 14

In the early years of the county's organization the work was carelessly done. Many overseers failed to make reports, but as time passed the board became very exacting and the overseers became more efficient. At first the road overseers drew little pay, but after some years they began to look upon their work as a source of revenue. They drew pay according to the number of days they worked.

There is no record of the manner of working these roads, though there is mention of the fact that

¹³Ibid., 1838-1847, March, 1840.

¹⁴Ibid., April, 1840.

they were worked periodically. Probably hand labor was used for the most part, and the ditches dug out with shovels. Road machines had not then been invented, and hard surface road construction was many years in the future. A fairly good road for wagon traffic could be built with only a little clearing and ditching. Ordinarily the early settlers expected a road that would be serviceable only in dry weather.

Of course, as the county developed and more settlers came in, there was a growing need for more and better roads. Before the advent of the railroad, stage-coach lines were running through the county. These stage lines were established during the period from 1835 to 1840, but the exact dates are unknown. One stage road ran from Chocchuma north to Preston, from thence north to Sardinia, and from that point in the direction of Memphis. Another line ran from Chocchuma north to Hendersonville, and from thence north toward Memphis. This road passed through old Wyatt on the Tallahatchie River. At a later date, after Grenada had become more important, it is certain that a stage line led north from Grenada through the county. This road passed through old Oakland, which was then about three quarters of a mile east of the present town of Oakland. The stagecoaches

were finally, in the fifties, supplanted by the railroads. Some traces of the stage roads can be found at the old sites of Hendersonville and Oakland. One of them is still in use at Coffeeville; it is a small lane leading in front of the Armstrong's home in that town.¹⁵ Records show that this road from Coffeeville to the south boundary line of the county was known as the stage road in 1844.¹⁶

The first stagecoach, according to report, passed through Grenada on the way to Memphis in 1838, just twenty-two years before the first train reached that city.¹⁷

¹⁵ Information obtained by the writer from Mr. W. C. Bryant.

¹⁶ Minutes of Board of Police, 1838-1847 (MS.), August, 1844.

¹⁷ Stokes, R. M., History of Grenada 1830-1880 (University, Miss., June, 1929), p. 45.

VI

River and Railroad Transportation

Most of the heavy freight of the county was transported on the Yalobusha and Lusascuna Rivers, which served as the avenues of commerce until the railroads made shipping unprofitable for the boat owners. An act was passed February 4, 1836 by the state legislature declaring the Yalobusha and Lusascuna Rivers navigable streams, and naming a fine of \$50 against any person setting timber adrift in these streams.¹

Though these streams were declared navigable by the legislature, they were not navigable for large boats the year around; thus the common practice was to do most of the shipping during winter and spring months when the water was highest. Even in December the water was not always high enough to float the boats.²

¹ Stokes, History of Grenada, p. 41.

² Bassett, J. S., The Southern Plantation Overseer as Revealed in His Letters (Northampton, Mass., 1925), p. 137.

The means of transportation on the upper parts of the rivers were, for the most part, keel boats. The goods were loaded on them at the landings, then shipped down to the Yazoo River to be reshipped on a steamer.³ Small steam boats came up the river as far as Troy and even as far as Grenada when the water was high. If one of these boats remained too long, it was marooned for a whole season. One case of this nature is described in the following quotation from a letter of an overseer to Mrs. James K. Polk:

The steamer Unicorn had been up all summer and will go out this rise is asking \$4 four dollars pur Bag. I think that is rather high Coten is low perhaps we will dough better yet on this rise your coten is in the care of Powell and Trummell troy miss.⁴

This letter shows that there were certain hazards in river shipping. At another time the overseer wrote Mrs. Polk that the water did not rise very much one whole season, and that the people were so wearied waiting for a rise that some of them commenced hauling their cotton down the river to a place where they could ship it.⁵

³Ibid., p. 210.

⁴Ibid., p. 212.

⁵Ibid., p. 209.

The most important landings on the Yalobusha River were Troy, Commerce, Tullahoma and Graysport. Shipping was carried on from these points until the railroad offered a far better mode of transportation. The charge for shipping cotton from Troy to New Orleans ran as high as four dollars a bale, and then there was danger that it would not reach the market. Boats sank, blew up or burned at frequent intervals.⁶

With the coming of the railroads the shipping on the river became less and less. Such towns as Troy, Commerce and Graysport lost their importance and gradually dwindled away. Today few signs of their existence are to be found.

The Mississippi Central Railroad Company was chartered March 10, 1852, but was not completed until 1860. On March 27, 1858, the railroad was reported as having 102 miles of well equipped railroad in operation. It was at that time completed as far as Water Valley. This road was built from both ends, the terminals being Jackson, Mississippi and Middleton, Tennessee. In 1858

⁶ Ibid., pp. 209-212.

only ten miles of unfinished road separated Middleton from Grenada. The road reached Coffeeville in the summer of 1858.⁷

The Mississippi Tennessee Railroad, chartered October 16, 1852, was to run from Memphis to Grenada to join the Mississippi Central at the latter place. It reached Oakland in Yalobusha County in 1858. The last section of road between Oakland and Grenada was completed in 1861, and the first train from Memphis to New Orleans passed over the road on July 20, 1861.⁸

The Board of Police of Yalobusha County called a special election of the qualified voters of the county in 1852 to see if the public would vote an appropriation for the purchase of capital stock. The voters favored the purchase, and the county bought \$200,000 worth of capital stock. A special tax levy was authorized to pay for it. Each tax payer was given a separate receipt for all railroad taxes paid, and

⁷ Killebrew, J. R., Developments of the Railroads of Mississippi before 1861 (University, Miss., 1927), p.54.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

when the receipts were of sufficient amount he could convert them into a share of railroad stock. The capital stock was exempt from taxation for a period of ten years from the time the company was chartered.⁹

⁹ Ibid., p. 46.

VII

Ferries and Bridges

Provision for crossing the streams of the newly organized county were deferred until the roads were laid out and cleared. Early roads led to shallow places where the streams could be forded, or, where the stream was too deep, some enterprising person established a ferry or toll bridge. The county board of police did not approve the building of expensive bridges at the public's expense; so it granted ferry privileges and toll bridge privileges to responsible persons. Although the ferries called for constant attention during day and night, and the ferry owners were compelled by the board of police to make provision for the accomodation of travellers at all times, ferries were far more common than bridges at that time.

A good system of ferries was much needed in the county as there were three rivers, the Yocona, Lusacuna and Yalobusha Rivers, which were not fordable a large part of the year. A list of the most important ferries as recorded from 1834 to 1847 are as follows:

Jefferson Ferry	Yocona River
Dukes Ferry	Yocona River
Tullahoma Ferry	Yalobusha River
Pittsburg Ferry	Yalobusha River
Graysport Ferry	Yalobusha River
Troy Ferry	Yalobusha River
Hastings Ferry	Yalobusha River
Commerce Ferry	Yalobusha River
Hartgroves Ferry	Lusascuna River ¹

The ferries at Commerce, Hastings, Dukes and Jefferson Points must have existed before the establishment of the county; at least this is to be inferred from their being mentioned in the records of the laying out of the road system early in 1834. The other ferries were established as necessity and settlement demanded. The board refused to grant a license to establish a ferry at Troy in March of 1834, but later granted the privilege to the Troy Town Company in October of the same year. ²

¹ Minutes of the Board of Police, 1834-1837 (MS.), pp. 5, 87, 96, 100.

² Ibid., p. 5.

The rival towns of Pittsburg and Tullahoma were at such odds, though side by side on the Yalobusha River, that each petitioned for a ferry. Tullahoma Town Company was granted the privilege of establishing a ferry on October 20, 1834, and Pittsburg received the privilege three days later.³

The county board of police not only granted the privileges for establishing ferries, but it also regulated the rates which should be charged. In all cases of the same period these were the same. From the following list of rates established for the Tullahoma Ferry it can be seen that the ownership of a ferry on a much travelled road was very profitable.

loaded 4 horse or ox waggon	75 ¢
empty 4 horse or ox waggon	50 ¢
pleasure carriage of any kind	75 ¢
carryall chair or gig or 1 horse cart	37½ ¢
one ox cart and oxen	50 ¢
loaded 2 or 3 horse waggon	50 ¢
empty 2 or 3 horse waggon	37½ ¢
man and horse	12½ ¢
loose horse or footman	6½ ¢
drove of hogs, horses, cattle, sheep or goats	3 ¢ ⁴

³ Ibid., pp. 89-96.

⁴ Ibid., p. 87.

A common practice was to route the roads so that they converged at ferries. Evidently the traffic was heavy at Tullahoma and Pittsburg, since on April 20, 1836, after the two towns had united as Grenada, a company obtained a permit to build the first toll bridge in the county across the Yalobusha River. The permit, which should be of interest, is as follows:

Application being made by petition to the Board of Police for the erection of a toll bridge over the Yalobusha River at that point of the town of Grenada formerly known by the name of Pittsburg in pursuance of the provision of the statutes in such case made and provided and whereas it appears to the satisfaction of the Board of Police that a Bridge across said stream at the point aforesaid would be advantageous and highly useful to the citizens of the county of Yalobusha and the travelling community generally and whereas in the opinion of the Board owing to the Rapidity of the water and the width of the stream it would be too burthensome to build a public bridge at the point aforesaid and keep the same in repair by a tax on the Inhabitants of the county therefore it is adjudged expedient and accordingly determined by this board that they will and do hereby enter into a contract with the condition and stipulations hereafter _____ with James Sims Granvill R. Momp Ralph Goffman Nathan Howard Jeremiah J. Tabbot and Allen Gillespie and such other persons as may think proper to join them in the contract to build a good and substantial Toll bridge and causeway across said stream at place or point aforesaid and grant unto the said builders and proprietors as a compensation for building said toll bridge and causeway and to their heirs and assignees all the revenue rents toll issues and profits arising and accruing from said Bridge and causeway for the period and the term of 99 years from this time and in consideration that the said contractors of builders of said bridge and causeway have agreed to construct the same of good and substantial materials within the space of three years from this date keep the same in good repair at their own expense for the time of 99 years

aforesaid and in consideration that the said contractors or builders have agreed not to charge exceeding the following rates of toll for the period aforesaid of 99 years to wit for each and every person on foot six and one fourth cents for man and horse twelve and one half cents for cattle horse and mules in droves six and one fourth cents per head for sheep and hogs three cents per head for four wheeled carrages and waggons and teams fifty cents per two wheeled carrage and carts and teams twenty five cents each and to permit citizens of the county of Yalobusha going to and returning from church public election murder and court marshall to pass free of any toll whatever and in further consideration above that the said contractors of builders have agreed to construct said bridge so as not to obstruct in any way the navigation of said stream and in consideration also that the said contractors or builders have agreed to pay an annual revenue to the county of Yalobusha of five dollars per annum for the first five years from the completion of said bridge and from and after the expiration of said term of five years such tax as may be levied by the board of police not exceeding the advalorem rates of the county taxes levable on individual property of other citizens of the county and it is adjudged and determined by this board that such a contract be accepted and entered into and this Board doth accordingly accept and determine for themselves and their successors in office to accept and enter into the said contract for building of a toll bridge and causeway at the place aforesaid upon the terms and stipulations above set forth and hereinafter expressed and for themselves and their successors in office do hereby stipulate and agree that no contract shall be made by this board or their successors in office with any other person or persons whatever to build any other bridge or bridges across said stream within three miles of the point where said bridge and causeway shall be or may be erected during the said term of 99 years and this board doth further stipulate and agree for themselves and their successors in office to establish and keep constantly established during the term of 99 years aforesaid a public road leading to and from and crossing said bridge and causeway as soon as the same shall be completed and they will not establish any public road or ferry within three miles of said bridge after the completion of said bridge for the period of 99 years aforesaid and this board doth further stipulate and agree that they will not

lay the rules of toll for passing said bridge and causeway at a less rate than that above established for the term and continuance of the privilege aforesaid and that the said contractors builders or proprietors of said bridge and causeway shall not be taxed at a higher rate than that above specified for the term aforesaid without the consent of the contracting parties and provided lastly that the said contractors or proprietors of said bridge shall not take or receive any toll or compensation from any person or persons whatsoever who may cross said bridge until they shall have executed to the president of the Board of Police a bond with good and sufficient security conditioned as the law directs. ⁵

Construction was started on this bridge in December, 1836.⁶ As the county developed very fast during this period, no doubt the bridge was used a great deal. No records have been found, however, concerning its success or the length of time it continued to function.

The only other toll bridge established in the early years of the county was one across the Yocona River on the road from Coffeenville to Panola County. The contract for the building of it follows:

⁵ Ibid., p. 241.

⁶ Ibid.

Toll Bridge

A. J. Magee having presented his bond and the same being approved by the court, ordered that he be allowed to keep a Toll Bridge across Yackanapatapa, on the road from Coffeerville to Belmont and that he be authorized to charge as follows. seventy five cents for loaded wagons horse or ox team, fifty cents for empty wagon, fifty cents for pleasure carriage, Twenty five cents for a two horse carriage wagon and horse carriage, $20\frac{1}{2}$ cents for man and Horse, ten cents for a single horse ³ for cattle 2 cents sheep or hogs $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents a head.⁷

This bridge was established in 1837, a year after one had been built at Grenada. The charges were cheaper in some respects; probably it was because of a change in the times, or because of the fact that the Yocona River was not as large as the Yalobusha River and the expense of bridge building was less.

⁷ Ibid., 1838-1847, February, 1847.

VIII

Mills and Gins

Yalobusha County is very well watered by creeks and rivers. Their water power was used to good advantage to run mills and gins in the period before steam power came into general use. Every stream in the county of any size had some type of watermill. Dams were built on the smaller streams to create powerful heads of water. Anyone who desired to build a mill must petition the board for a permit; if the permit was granted, a jury was then appointed by the board to visit the location, and to assess any damages which might result to neighboring property as a result of the dam and mill pond. An example of such a petition is as follows:

Petition for mill

Ordered by the board of county police of Yalobusha that A. R. Govan by this is authorized to build a mill dam on the east $\frac{1}{2}$ of Section 17 Township 22 Range 5 East on Belupanong.
Ordered by the board that the Sheriff summons a jury to assess all damages that any person or persons may sustain

by building said mill & make return thereof to the board of county police.¹

This permit was granted to Govan in the March term of 1834. In April D. M. Rayburn and J. Jenkins were given a permit to build a mill dam and mill on Turkey Creek; various other petitions besides were granted in subsequent meetings of the board of police. Though the majority of such petitions was granted, in a few cases they were rejected on the ground that damage would result to the adjacent land. In one case a mill had already been built when the jury appointed to assess damages agreed that several acres of the neighboring land had been ruined. The court then ordered the mill owner to purchase the damaged land in adjustment.²

These early mills were for the purpose of grinding wheat, corn and other grains, though some of them also had cotton gins in connection. At first the greater part of the cotton was ginned by horse power;

¹Minutes of Board of Police, 1834-1837 (MS.), p. 17.

²Ibid., p. 38.

later steam gins came into use. Many of the large plantations had gins of their own. These early horse gins turned out only two or three bales of cotton per day. The James K. Polk Plantation, as well as the neighboring plantation, had one of these gins.³

The first steam gin of any importance in the county was built in 1840 about two miles northwest of Coffeerville on Durdens Creek. According to report the boilers were very much longer than those ordinarily employed, and were made in several sections allowing a large surface for heating the water. Cotton was hauled to this gin from a wide territory.⁴

A list of the mill permits granted, as given in the minutes of the board of police is as follows:

Govans Mill on Belupanong Creek	1834
Rayburns Mill on Turkey Creek	1834
McCraken Mill on Turkey Creek	1835
Sperrys Mill on Seboughlahatchie Creek ...	1838

³Bassett, Southern Plantation Overseer, p. 195.

⁴Information obtained by writer from Dr. Ralph Criss, Coffeerville, Miss.

Sullivants Mill on Bolin Creek	1838
Johnson Mill on Johnson Creek	1838
Plummer Mill on Turkey Creek	1838
Brown Mill on Tillatoba Creek	1839
Haviston Mill on Turkey Creek	1839
Edmunson Mill	1839
McCreles Mill on Turkey Creek	1840
York Mill and Gin on Dyers Creek	1844
Jones Mill on Lusascuna River	1845
Murphree Mill on Johnson Creek	1846

IX

Taverns and Saloons

One of the frequent duties of the county board of police was the granting of licenses for houses of entertainment such as taverns and saloons. It is to be imagined that grocery stores were usually combined with the saloons since records show they were often mentioned in the same order. No license charge was made for an ordinary store, but all types of hotels, taverns, inns, boarding houses and saloons were required to pay a license, varying according to the type of business.

During the July session of the board of police, 1834, Surles McCreles received the first privilege license granted in the new county. This license was an order allowing him to keep a house of entertainment in Coffeerville and to sell spirituous liquors. The license fee was twenty-five dollars. Not only had the board the power to grant the license; but it also regulated the rates that should be charged for the accomodation of man and beast. Some of its prescribed rates were as follows:

Horse feed 25 cts, Breakfast 37½ cts, Supper 37½ cts, Lodging 12½ cts, Spirits 12½ cts, - man and horse all night \$1.25 - Man and horse all night Supper and Breakfast \$1.50 - Horse one night 50 cts - man and horse one day \$2.00. ¹

From the above rates it will be noted that the charge for lodging a person overnight was small, while the charges for meals and horse feed were considerable.

At the August meeting of the board in 1834 the following privilege licenses were granted:

Ordered by the Board of Police for Yalobusha County that John Smith be licensed to Keep an inn and tavern in the town of Pittsburg for the term of one year from the 14th of July 1834.

Ordered by the board that John Smith pay the sum of Twenty Dollars for the above named License to keep a house of entertainment.²

It will be noted that John Smith's license cost only twenty dollars which was five dollars less than that of Surles McCreles. The difference arose from the fact that McCreles had the right to sell liquor as well as to keep a Tavern. The privilege tax for a house of private entertainment (probably a boarding house) was only ten dollars.

¹ Minutes of the Board of Police, 1834-1837 (MS.), p. 58.

² Ibid., p. 59.

William R. Cockrum made application for a license to keep a house of private entertainment in the town of Pittsburg for the term of one year which is granted and such license ordered to issue on his paying the sum of Ten Dollars. ³

At the same meeting of the board of police, W. W. Douthit made application for a license to conduct a house of entertainment in Pittsburg, and Richard Nichols for the privilege of running a saloon in the same town.

Richard Nichols petitions for a license for retailing vinous or Spirits Licuors in the town of Pittsburg for the term of one year, which is granted and such license ordered to issue on his paying the sum of fifteen dollars. ⁴

At the aforementioned term of the board, W. A. Simmons was granted the privilege of retailing groceries and spirituous liquors in Coffeeville for a period of six months at the cost of seven dollars and fifty cents. Henry S. Lake and W. Lake, Allen R. Jones, and John W. McKennie, of Hendersonville, were granted the same privilege, while Lucenda W. Briggs was granted the right of opening a hotel in that town. William B. Sourles

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 60.

received a license to keep a house of entertainment on the road leading from Coffeerville to Pontotoc. The cost of his license was fifteen dollars, which meant probably that taverns outside the corporate limits did not pay as high a fee as those in town.⁵

From the number of licenses granted during the year of 1834-1835, it can be seen that the county was growing rapidly. Some of the houses of entertainment had been operated before the organization of the county, but they were few in number. Thomas McMackin owned a hotel at Hendersonville before the year 1834, but he never obtained a privilege license. Surles McCrelles had a hotel in Coffeerville before 1834, and he was the first to purchase a license. Permits similar to the ones quoted above were granted in the towns of Preston, Sardinia, Tullahoma, Graysport and Troy.

As the years passed and Coffeerville and Grenada began to outstrip other towns in the county, the board of police made distinctions between the cost of licenses in these towns and those of smaller size.

⁵Ibid., pp. 60-63.

In 1839, John Lusk was granted a license to operate a house of entertainment in the town of Oakland at a cost of fifteen dollars. At the same meeting of the board Patton and Catron paid twenty dollars for the right to keep a house of private entertainment, while Robert Edrington paid forty dollars for the privilege of keeping a house of public entertainment. McCracken and Patton paid the same tax to carry on a similar business in Grenada.⁶

The most astonishing change in the cost of licenses occurred in the year 1842, when the license tax for a saloon was increased to one hundred dollars, and the owner was forced to make bond to the amount of one thousand dollars.

Thomas C. Montgomery this day produced the necessary recommendations setting forth that he is a suitable and fit person to keep a house in the town of Coffeerville for the purpose of Retailing Spirituous Liquors.

Thereupon came the said Montgomery and entered into Bond in the sum of one Thousand Dollars conditioned as the law directs with Wm. Cook Hillary Talbert & James M. Hunter surities Three to which is approved and having produced the Receipt of the Treasurer for one hundred Dollars which is the amount required It is ordered by

⁶ Ibid., 1838-1847, March 5, 1839.

the court that the said Thomas C. Montgomery is and he is hereby authorized to retail spirituous liquors in any quantity,⁷ at his house in the town of Coffeerville for 12 months.

The charge for keeping a saloon in Grenada and Coffeerville changed to a one hundred dollar tax and one thousand dollar bond, while the tax in all other towns in the county was only fifty dollars.

Thos A Hill This day having produced here in Court the nessary Recomendation from Oakland that he is a Suitable & fit person to keep a house for Retailing Spirituous Liquors in said Town of Oakland -

Thereupon came the said Thomas A. Hill and Entered in to Bond in the sum of one Thousand Dollars with Wm Cook & John Montgomery Surity conditioned as the Law directs which is approved and he having produced the Receipt of the County Treasure for fifty Dollars that being the Amount of Tax Required It is Therefore ordered that the said Thomas A Hill be and he is hereby authorised to keep a house and Retail Spirituous Liquors in any quantity for 12 months in the Town of Oakland. ⁸

Even though the license tax for a saloon was very high and a bond had to be posted by the owner, such houses were common throughout the county. There were several in all the larger towns, at least one in the smaller towns and a few situated in the county districts.

⁷ Ibid., March 15, 1842.

⁸ Ibid., April 25, 1843.

One saloon was located at Magees Bridge in the north-western part of the county; another was conducted in the back of Sullivants Mill in the southeast section of the county; and a third was at the house of Thomas Shannon, a place later called Shannonsville.

The first saloon was located at Magees Bridge in the north-western part of the county; another was conducted in the back of Sullivants Mill in the southeast section of the county; and a third was at the house of Thomas Shannon, a place later called Shannonsville.

Information obtained by the writer from Mr. W. C. Bryant.

X

Early Settlers

The first white settlement in Yalobusha County was the Presbyterian mission at Elliott in 1818, which has been described in a previous chapter. Probably the next one was Hendersonville. This settlement, like Elliott, was made by a Presbyterian missionary, in this case, John Henderson; the exact date of his coming, however, is unknown. It was after the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek that settlements became general.¹ Since the territory now comprising the County of Yalobusha had belonged before the signing of the treaty to the Choctaws, no land could be owned by white people; consequently they were not encouraged to settle there; but after the Indians were driven westward from Mississippi, the United States Government had the land surveyed and opened the country for settlement, offering the land at a very

¹ Information obtained by the writer from Mr. W. C. Bryant.

reasonable price, one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre.

Even before the land was surveyed, people flocked into the territory by hundreds. These early comers squatted on the land until they could obtain title from the government, which was doing a thriving business at the Chocchuma land office. Some of these squatters failed to obtain title to the lands they claimed, and later petitioned the government for the privilege of exercising preemption according to the law of 1832. In the interest of these settlers, Franklin E. Plummer, United States Representative from Mississippi and one of the founders of the Pittsburg Town Company, introduced the following motion before Congress.

Congress of the United States
In the House of Representatives,
January 10, 1835.

On motion of Mr. Plummer;
Resolved, That the Committee on the Public Lands be instructed to inquire into the expediency of passing a law, authorizing Isaac Richmond, Jonah White, Conway Oldham, David Richmond, David Clay, Ignatius Bankston, Samuel Hackenbury, Jefferson Clay, George Simmons, Samuel B. Parrish, Thomas C. McMackin, David Mabray, and John Balfour, and other persons, who were entitled to preemption rights to eighty acres of land, under the provision of an act of Congress, passed on the 2nd day of March, 1833, entitled "An act supplementary to the several laws for the sale of the public lands," and were prevented from making their entries under said act, in consequence of a decision of the officers government against their rights, to enter, in lieu thereof, the same quantity of land elsewhere, within the same land

district, at the minimum price of one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre; and that the accompanying documents be referred to said committee.

Attest:
W. S. Franklin, clerk.²

December 19, 1834.

State of Mississippi, Yalobusha County:

This day personally appeared before me, Stephen Smith, an acting justice of the peace for said county, William B. Edwards, and made oath, in due form of law, that he was an actual settler on public lands of the United States, in the limits of the Choctaw Nation, in the years 1832 and 1833; that the said William B. Edwards was prevented from taking the privilege of the preemption law of 1832 in consequence of no instructions having been given to the register at Chocchuma. His land having been sold as aforesaid he craves the privilege, granted to other settlers of taking by float one quarter section on unappropriated land belonging to the United States. He resided on the northwest quarter of section 7, township 24, range 6, east.

Given under my hand and seal this 19th, December, 1834.

Sworn to and subscribed before me, this 19th, December, 1834.

Signed

Wm. B. Edwards ³
Stephen Smith J. P.

State of Mississippi, Yalobusha County:

This day personally appeared before me, Stephen Smith, Esq., an acting justice of the peace in and for said county, William Sullivent, and made oath, in due form of law, that he was an actual settler on public

² Documents of the Congress of the United States in Relation to Public Lands (Washington, 1860), vol. VI, p. 608.

³ Ibid., p. 618.

lands of the United States in 1833, and that he was prevented from his preemption claim in consequence of the land sales of October 21, 1833. The land on which he lived was sold at Chocchuma; and he now craves the privilege granted to other persons who were settlers on public lands of the government. He does not expect to get the land on which he resided, but wishes to get a float of one hundred and sixty acres of unappropriated land at the minimum price of one dollar and twenty-five cents, on the usual condition of two years to pay the same. The land which he improved was the 34th section, township 24, range 5 east.

Sworn to and subscribed before me, this 25th December, 1834.

Signed

William Sullivent ⁴
Stephen Smith J. P.

The Choctaw cession was one of the last great strips of territory opened up in the South, east of the Mississippi River, and settlers from many regions came there. Much of the land in the older colonies being worn out, planters brought their slaves to seek new plantations, for the cotton era was in full sway and good cotton lands were scarce and valuable. Land speculators rushed in to buy up the most valuable land in order that they could get high prices from the late comers. A land boom was on.⁵

⁴Ibid., p. 620.

⁵Bassett, Southern Plantation Overseer, p. 25-30.

Many of the Choctaws, instead of going to the reservation west of the river, had accepted land from the United States Government in settlement of their claims, later selling their property to speculators. Some of the settlers who came in were evidently well off financially for records show that they bought large tracts of land. Following is a list of lands bought in 1836 from the Indians by James Brown and William Fly, two early settlers.⁶

Buyer	Seller	Price	Acres
James Brown	Dickson Frazier	\$ 2,500	1,280
James Brown	Lah pi go Ra	\$ 2,000	960
James Brown	Polly Kemp	\$ 2,500	1,280
James Brown	Ponca Nubby	\$ 1,600	1,280
James Brown	Iuntah tubby	\$ 1,625	1,280
James Brown	Pissah tuc Cubby	\$ 810	640
William Fly	Helah	\$ 1,600	1,280
William Fly	Joseph Perry	\$ 1,120	630
William Fly	Joseph Perry	\$ 2,075	1,920
William Fly	Suzan Perry	\$ 1,000	640
William Fly	Edmund Perry	\$ 1,100	640
William Fly	Nancy Moone	\$ 1,750	640

⁶ Deed Book of Yalobusha County, 1834-1844 (MS.), pp. 160-180.

In one year Brown bought a total of 6,720 acres, and Fly 5,760 acres. Both these men were speculators, and though they settled in the county, they sold part of this land at a later date.⁷ The larger group of settlers did not purchase land in such large tracts, but bought half sections and quarter sections. They were not rich and came with the purpose of winning homes from the wilderness.

The lands near the two rivers, Yocona and Yalobusha, were first taken up. Naturally a plantation was far more valuable when near a navigable river; also the bottom lands were better farm lands. Most of the large slave plantations were established in these bottoms by men who were planters already owning slaves when they came to the territory. The hill sections of the county were settled at a later date by small farmers who owned few slaves.⁸

It would be a very difficult and tedious if not an impossible task to list the large number of

⁷ Information obtained by the writer from Mr. W. C. Bryant.

⁸ Ibid.

settlers who came into the county between 1830 and 1850, for records are poor in regard to the dates of their coming. Many of the descendants of these pioneer families do not know even the approximate date that their forefathers came to this county. Suffice it to say that the majority of the settlers were from the southern states, probably the largest number having migrated from North and South Carolina. However, Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama and even south Mississippi contributed to the settlement of the county.⁹ They brought their institutions with them, but the frontier county soon moulded them into a cast distinctly its own. Some of the names prominent in historical records of those early pioneer days were: Hughes, Moore, Smith, Powell, Lee, Statum, Leigh, Jones, Garner, Lester, Lake, Brown, Gollady, Ransome, Simms, Minter, Whittaker, McLean, Gray, Fisher, Mullen, Stokes, Hall, Aldrige, Coffman, Walker, Pass, Winter, Thompson, Stewart, Calhoun, Townes, Williams, Kirkman, Wade, Oliver, Store, Baker, Riddick, Eggleston, Jennings, Barksdale, Hardy, Carr, Rayburn,

⁹ Information gathered by the writer from many descendents of early settlers.

Durden, McCrelles, Bryant, Metcalf, Edrington, Magee.¹⁰

There is no record of the number of people in the county before 1837. The state census of 1837 gave the county a population of 4871 whites and 4215 negroes.¹¹

In 1840 the total population was 12,248; in 1850 it was 17,258, and in 1860, it was 16,952.¹² The decrease between 1850 and 1860 was probably caused by the formation of Calhoun County which was formed partly out of Yalobusha territory. The population was divided about equally between whites and negroes. The increase was steady from the organization of the county until 1850; it stood about even until 1860, and then decreased to some extent after the civil war.

Many of the people who came into the county became rich within a few years. Records show that a family by the name of Leigh owned a great deal of land and many slaves, and that the Haistons owned over a

¹⁰These names were gathered by the author from cemeteries and from records of the board of police.

¹¹Woodville Republican (Woodville, Miss.), May 20, 1837.

¹²Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi (Goodspeed Publishing Co., Chicago, 1891), p. 857.

hundred slaves. There were many owners of fine estates.¹³ Very few of these settlers built homes on the magnificent scale of those found in southwest Mississippi; indeed, there are no homes in the whole county to compare with the mansions of the older counties. The reason is apparent. In a new community the first task is to clear land and to accumulate property. Few of the Yalobusha planters had time or money to build magnificent homes in the first twenty-five years of the county's development, and then the civil war cut short any expectations they might have had. For this reason most of the fine homes in the county are of modern construction.

¹³Inventory Book of Estates of Yalobusha County (MS.), 1890.
vol. E, pp.258-271.

XI

Early Towns

Hendersonville was the first town to be established in Yalobusha County. Other early towns were Troy, Coffeerville, Preston, Grenada, Sardinia, Oakland and Graysport.¹ By 1838 Hendersonville had passed away, and by 1860 Preston, Sardinia and Troy had declined almost to the vanishing point because of the fact that they were off the railroads.² In 1847 the following places were election precincts: Coffeerville, Grenada, Troy, Oakland, Sardinia, Shannonsville, Cuddy Hunk, Chisselville, Middleton and Graysport.³ Many of these old towns have entirely vanished, and their only remains are in the minds of old men and old books.

It is not the purpose of the author to give a

¹ Minutes of Board of Police, 1838-1847 (MS.), May 13, 1838.

² Rowland, Dunbar, History of Mississippi, the Heart of the South (Chicago, Jackson, 1925), vol. II, pp. 860-862.

³ Minutes of Board of Police, 1838-1847 (MS.), August, 1847.

complete history of these towns, but to discuss briefly their development from 1834 to 1860. A full investigation has not been made in each case, and no attempt will be made to go into detail in regard to them. A comprehensive history has been written of the town of Grenada,⁴ and a detailed account of the other towns will of necessity await another day. Water Valley had its beginning after 1850, and will not be discussed in this story of early towns.

Hendersonville

Hendersonville was located about four miles south of Coffeerville and about a half mile northwest of the present station of Bryant. John Henderson, a missionary for whom the town was named, has already been mentioned in a chapter describing early settlers of the county. It was also stated in that chapter that the date of his coming is unknown. It is not certain that Henderson ever lived on the site of the town named for him. The first settlers who reached the territory after

⁴ Stokes, R. M., History of Grenada 1830-1880 (University, Mississippi).

the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek established a settlement near a place called Henderson Port and Dugout Landing, and decided to call it after the missionary.⁵ The new settlement was made before the settlers were allowed to file claim to any land; thus they did not own the property where the town was located. At a later date, 1836, some of these pioneer settlers were still petitioning the United States Congress to allow them the right of preempting the amount of land allowed by law.⁶

The period of Hendersonville's growth was from the time of its establishment, probably around 1832, until 1834, when Coffeerville was chosen as the county seat. After losing out in the race for this honor, the town began to decline, for it was not on the river, and its only hope of growth had been in the fact that it was near the geographical center of the county and had stood a good chance of being chosen as the county seat. It was no longer used as a voting precinct after the

⁵This is tradition and is not substantiated by records.

⁶American State Papers, Public Lands, vol VI, p. 608.

year 1838.⁷ Most of its inhabitants moved either to Coffeerville or to Grenada.

It was here that Col. T. C. McMackin, the celebrated hotel keeper, in the early history of Mississippi, began his career. The mercantile firms of this town in 1834 were; Martin, Edwards and Co., John H. McKenney, Armout, Lake and Bridges, H. S., and W. Lake, and McCain and Co. The physicians were Thomas Vaughn, Robert Malone, and Murkerson. The following citizens were then living at that place: Thomas P. Ives, Murdock, Justice of the peace, Stephen Smith, blacksmith, Alfred McCaslin, blacksmith, and Joshua Weaver, Constable. Beaten by Coffeerville in its efforts to become the County seat, the town rapidly decayed.⁸

Today there is nothing left of the old town. The Holly House, a hunting lodge of some northern sportsmen, is situated on the site of the old McMackin Hotel. The main business street is grown up in brambles and brush. Only one sign of former habitation is left; an enormous pear tree of a type seldom seen today is growing nearby the old spot. This tree is surrounded by second growth timber, and is, according to old time settlers, at least one hundred years of age. The land on which Hendersonville was situated belongs to Mr. W.

⁷ Minutes of Board of Police, 1838-1847 (MS.), Sept., 1838.

⁸ Rowland, History of Mississippi, vol. II, p. 861.

C. Bryant of Coffeerville, who has tried to preserve the history of the extinct town. In a grove just north of the school house at Bryant Station he has had set up a series of stone markers on which are painted the following legends:

Near here James K. Polk of Tennessee, the eleventh president of the United States established his Yella Busha slave plantation in 1835. His widow sold it in 1860. It is yet known as the Polk Place.

Okachickama Hill was location of the Post Office in the Pioneer days and Bob Brooks was Postmaster for over thirty years. Many letters between President Polk and overseers passed through this office.

Captain Levin Lake cleared the land where the consolidated school grounds are, about 1830 and made a corn crop.

Near here was the town of Plummersville, established by Franklin E. Plummer, the political adversary of Hiram G. Runnels, Here was held the first court in Yalobusha County and the first case called was 'Arles McCreles vs. Loflin McLaughlin.' E. Percy Howe, editor of the 'Yalobusha Pioneer', disgusted with the change of the county site sang:

Upon a hill near Durdens Mill
 Stands the town of Coffeerville
 The damndest town I ever saw
 Save Plummersville Okachickama.

Just north of the residence where J. E. Lacook lived for 59 years is the site of the former Indian Village, Perryville. It was ruled by Sub-chiefs, Charlie and Henry Perry, brothers of Chief Jo Perry. In a small graveyard on an adjoining hill are a few grave stones marking some of their graves. Joe Perry lived on a cone shaped mountain in the center of 'Polk Place.'

Near here was the McMackin Hotel. Col. Thomas C. McMackin was a member of the Board of Police of Yalobusha County, the most northern county in Mississippi. Indignant over the selection of Coffeerville by soldier vote to be the county seat he removed to Victoria, bought a tract of land near there and laid off the present town of Pontotoc. ⁹

Coffeerville

The town of Coffeerville was established at the meeting of the county board of police of July, 1834, and at the same time received its name because of the fact that it had been the site of General Coffee's camp when that gentleman was Indian Commissioner of this territory. Here Surlis McCreles, about 1830, had already built the first house, which he used as a store and inn. Few other houses were built there until after 1834. McCreles and D. M. Rayburn, who later became clerk of the county board of police, owned the land where the town was located. How these two men persuaded the board of police to locate the county seat on their land has already been related in a previous chapter.

⁹Information obtained through a visit to Bryant Station and through conversation with Mr. W. C. Bryant.

After its selection as the county seat, Coffeeville grew rapidly for a while. The town was laid off in lots around a public square on which the county courthouse was later built. Many of the mercantile firms of Hendersonville moved to Coffeeville. Surles McCreles continued his business as inn-keeper, and built a new hotel on the north side of the courthouse square, a two story affair with a wide gallery across the south front of the upper story. From this gallery the candidates for office, as well as other orators, delivered their speeches. Other tavern-keepers of the town were W. W. Simmons, Thomas Edrington, Thomas Montgomery and William Barton. Business houses extended along the south and west sides of the square. A man by the name of Edward Hatch obtained the greater part of the eastern side of the square in payment for some work which he did for the county. On this side the square he built a row of offices which he leased to professional men. Later he sold the property to various individuals.

In 1838 Coffeeville had a population of about two hundred inhabitants. Most of the buildings with the exception of the courthouse, were of wooden construction. Besides the courthouse, prison, and law offices, there were a Methodist church, two taverns, five stores, and a

weekly newspaper.¹⁰

Until the civil war Coffeeville had a group of fine lawyers, as the town was the county seat of a large county; too, there was much legal business in a newly organized county. General E. C. Walthall, L. Q. C. Lamar, Colonel Gollady and other famous lawyers practiced in her courts. According to report six members of the Coffeeville bar were killed in the battle of Shiloh. After the war the bar never attained its early excellence.¹¹

The old town of Coffeeville was located about a quarter of a mile west of the present town which was built up after the coming of the railroad, in 1860. The most influential citizens lived to the west of the town, but today only three of the early homes there are still standing. The Gollady home which was in Old Coffeeville, is now nearly a mile from the present business section of the new town. The D. M. Rayburn home, about the same distance away, is now used for the County "Poor House." E. C. Walthall once lived where the present public school

¹⁰ Information obtained by writer from Mr. Frank Herron (deceased) of Coffeeville, Miss.

¹¹ Information obtained by writer from Mr. W. C. Bryant.

is located.

The Mississippi Central Railroad reached Coffeerville probably in the summer of 1858.¹² With the coming of the railroad the business houses were gradually moved to the railroad where the new town was built on ground which had once been considered too low to be healthful. Much of the old town is not even included in the present corporate limits. The courthouse, which was finished in 1842, was used for many years after the town moved to the railroad. The Negro Baptist Church now stands upon the site of this early seat of justice, which was given over to negroes during reconstruction days and now is a part of negro town.

The site of the present business section of Coffeerville, before the advent of the railroad, was owned by Major Jim Aston. The officials of the Mississippi Central Railroad Company wished to locate the railroad repair shops on this land, but Major Aston declined to sell it, declaring that the shops would be

¹²

Killebrew, Development of the Railroads of Mississippi, p. 54.

a nuisance and a menace, and that they would fill the town with smoke and make it such an unhealthful place that no one would care to live there. Judge E. E. Bryant offered \$2,000 to Major Aston for the property in order that he might donate it to the railroad, but Major Aston refused to sell it. As a result the shops were later located in Water Valley, and caused that town to grow and surpass Coffeerville as the most important town in the northern part of the county.¹³

Oakland

Though Oakland was not incorporated until 1848, settlement there began in the same period as in the rest of the early towns in the county. It was voting precinct as early as 1838.¹⁴

Oakland, like Coffeerville, was originally in a different location from that of the present town. Old Oakland was situated about three fourths of a mile east of the present town on the road between that and Coffee-

¹³

Information obtained by the writer from Mr. W. C. Bryant.

¹⁴

Minutes of Board of Police, 1838-1847 (MS.), Sept., 1838.

Ville. In 1850 there were several stores, blacksmith shops, a hotel, woodshop, a church and a school located there, as well as many dwelling houses. A stage coach line which ran from Grenada to Memphis, passed through the old town between the Green D. Moore home and the business section.

The keeper of the tavern in Oakland was a gentleman by the name of George Washington Sidney Davidson, a very eccentric character. He must have been very proud of his old birth place, for it is told that whenever he introduced himself he always said, "My name is George Washington Sidney Davidson from Bunkum County on the bank of the French Broad River." Practically all the property on which the present town of Oakland is located was owned by Mr. Davidson, who sold the land out as town lots when the new town was built up on the railroad. He also served as station agent for many years after the railroad was built through Oakland.

The business section of Oakland, like that of Coffeetown, moved to the railroad when the Mississippi-Tennessee line was built near the town. Today only one building of the old town remains; it is the home built about 1840 by Green D. Moore, in the hands of whose descendants it has remained through the years, being still in a state of good preservation. It faces the old

town site across the present day gravel highway.¹⁵

Troy

The town of Troy was situated on the north side of the Yalobusha River a few miles below Grenada. At the time of its greatest prosperity it had a population of 100 or 150 people. The country surrounding it was settled by wealthy planters, and the town was the trading point for this territory. The principal mercantile firm there was "Chisholm and Minter."¹⁶

County records of 1834 show that the town was established previous to that date. A ferry was built by the Troy Town Company in October, 1834.¹⁷ Steamboats and keel boats came as far up the river as Troy during high water; hence warehouses and cotton yards were located there for the storing of cotton until the propitious time arrived for the shipping. Most of the

¹⁵Information obtained by writer from Mr. Green H. Moore of Oakland, Mississippi.

¹⁶Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, vol. V, pp. 379-381.

¹⁷Minutes of Board of Police, 1834-1837 (MS.), pp.209-212.

cotton from the James K. Polk plantation was shipped to New Orleans from this point.¹⁸ Dr. Bryant, the father of W. C. Bryant, was the owner of a boat, "The Wave," which ran from Troy on the Yalobusha to the Yazoo River.

Like many other towns Troy was destroyed by the failure of the railroad to pass through it. It was several miles west of the Mississippi Tennessee Railroad, and as the steamboats and keelboats could not compete with the railroads, the town lost its importance and soon passed away. Its trade and population were absorbed by the growing town of Grenada. Though used as a shipping point as late as 1856, it dwindled away to nothing soon after 1860.¹⁹

Today little remains to show that a town once existed there. The old town site is over grown with weeds; there are traces of old chimneys; and on the side of the river, stuck in the mud, is part of the hull of a keelboat.²⁰

¹⁸ Bassett, Plantation Overseer, pp. 209-212.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Information obtained by writer from Mr. W. C. Bryant.

Preston

Preston was located near Scobey, and about 14 miles north of Grenada. Settled in 1835, it once had about 250 people and was incorporated in 1840. Here lived the Simmons family, the Harpers, Brigers, Townes, Calhouns; Doctors Sutton, Payne, Neville and the Reverend Hayward; Duke and Co., and Evans and Co were the mercantile firms. When the station of Garner sprang up on the railroad in 1858, most of Preston's population moved there. ²¹

The only surviving home in Preston is that of J. D. Crenshaw. ²²

Graysport

Graysport, a small town ten miles east of Grenada on the Yalobusha River, was established about 1833. Small boats went up the Yalobusha River to this point which was the river landing for the eastern part of the county. ²³ It had several stores, a tavern and saloons. Like Troy, it was absorbed by Grenada after the coming of the railroad. Graysport served as a post office for many years after it lost its importance as a trade center. Its present existence is owing to a consolidated school located there.

²¹ Rowland, History of Mississippi, vol. II, p. 861.

²² Information obtained from Mr. W. C. Bryant by writer.

²³ Stokes, History of Grenada, p. 41.

Sardinia

Sardinia, a place of about 150 people, once was located on the Craig plantation near the Yocona River one mile north of the present church of Sardinia. Established about 1835, it was a voting precinct as late as the fifties.²⁴ A bridge crossed the Yocona River near the town, and a turnpike road led from this place across the Yocona River bottom.²⁵ This town had become dead by 1856, owing to the fact that it was off the line of the railroads.²⁶

²⁴ Minutes of Board of Police, 1847-1855 (MS.), Nov., 1852.

²⁵ Ibid., 1838-1847, February, 1847.

²⁶ Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, vol. V, pp. 379-381.

Summary

Yalobusha County was created by an act of the Mississippi State Legislature on December 23, 1833, from territory ceded to the United States Government by the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians. The county was a perfect square containing twenty-five townships or nine hundred square miles.

After fixing the boundaries of the county, the state appointed commissioners for its organization, who, under the leadership of Samuel Gwin, held an election for county officers. A sheriff, coroner, surveyor, assessor, treasurer, probate judge, as well as five members of the county board of police were elected. This board was empowered by state law to attend to all matters of county business; at the first session, presided over by Thomas McMackin, president, they divided the county into five districts, ordered an election for two justices of peace and two constables in each district, chose and named the county site of Coffeeville, and passed a resolution that future meetings should be held at this new seat.

The resolution taken by the board of police made necessary a place of meeting. The board ordered the

immediate construction of a frame courthouse, appointing a temporary place of meeting at the county seat. At the same time they ordered a crude jail of logs to be built. The courthouse did not long suffice for the needs of the county; so in 1838 construction was begun on a brick courthouse, which was not completed until 1842. The board, however, held their meetings in it after 1840.

At the time of the creation of the county most of its settlements were on water courses and there were few roads, with the exception of Indian trails which were unsuitable for heavy transportation. The laying out of roads within the county was under the direction of the board of police. Juries of view were appointed by this body to mark out the most eligible ways from Coffeerville to the county boundaries, as well as to all places of importance within the county. Overseers were appointed and invested with authority to call out all hands who lived along the way to help in the construction. During the first year fourteen roads were marked out and the construction of them begun.

In addition to supervising the road system the board of police made provision for crossing the streams. Ferry privileges and toll bridge privileges

were granted to responsible persons, and the rates which should be charged regulated by this body. The first toll bridge in the county was commenced in 1836 on the Yalobusha River at Grenada. In 1837 a second bridge was begun on the Yocona River.

The water power of the county was used to good advantage in running mills and gins before steam power came into general use. Permits to build dams and mills were obtained from the board of police, who at the time of granting them appointed a jury to decide whether the neighboring land would suffer damage.

Before the advent of the railroad most of the freight of the county was transported on the Yalobusha and Lusascuna Rivers, which were declared navigable by the state legislature. The most important landings on the Yalobusha River were Troy, Commerce, Tullahoma and Graysport. Shipping was carried on from these points until the completion of the railroad caused them to lose their importance for that purpose.

Records of the board of police show that taverns and saloons were frequently established in the county. These businesses were licensed and their rates regulated by that body. Until 1842 the license costs

were moderate. After that year the costs increased greatly, and distinctions were made between large and small towns.

Because of the importance of the board of police in county government, no early history of Yalobusha County would be complete without a brief discussion of this body. It held about the same place in county government as the board of supervisors today, but had far more power than that body has at present. All matters of county business were submitted to it for settlement. Some of its actions have already been described in this resume of the history of the county. To summarize the powers of this body: it conducted elections, marked out roads, appointed road overseers, builded courthouses, licensed inns, saloons, mills, levied taxes and supervised the assessment and collection of them; it had charge of all expenditures of county money, made provision for the poor, supervised public school lands. In a word, the history of the actions of this body is a history of early county development.

The first white settlement in Yalobusha County was the Presbyterian Mission at Elliott in 1818. Immigration was not common, however, until after the treaty of

Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830. The early settlers came in the main from the older southern states. Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky and others contributed many, but the largest percentage came from North and South Carolina. Some of the new comers were men of wealth and property, who bought large tracts of land. The greater number of them, however, exercised the privilege of preemption and bought only quarter sections. These quarter sections were often combined into larger estates. There is no record of the number of people in the county before 1837, but in that year the state census gave the county a population of 4,871 whites and 4,215 negroes. In 1850 the total population was 17,258.

The early towns were Hendersonville, Grenada, Preston, Coffeerville, Troy, Sardinia, Graysport and Oakland. These places had their beginning between 1830 and 1838. Coffeerville owed its origin to the fact that it was chosen as the county seat; Grenada, Troy and Graysport, on the river, were used as shipping sites; Hendersonville, Sardinia, Oakland and Preston were inland towns built on stage roads. Hendersonville declined after it lost the race for the county seat to Coffeerville, but Sardinia, Troy, Preston and Graysport

lost their importance because of the fact that the railroad did not pass through them. By 1860 all of the early towns except Grenada, Coffeeville and Oakland had passed away, leaving few landmarks. Both Coffeeville and Oakland have felt the power of the railroad's influence in that both have been forced to move a short distance and build anew. Grenada has been fortunate in that several railroads have their junction within her limits, and these have contributed to her growth and prosperity.

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