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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Howard G. Adkins entitled "The Historical Geography of Extinct Towns in Mississippi." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Geography.

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THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF EXTINCT TOWNS IN MISSISSIPPI

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Graduate Council of

The University of Tennessee

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Howard G. Adkins

March 1972

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ABSTRACT

Towns are places of agglomerated settlement having economic interaction with a supporting hinterland. While many nucleated settlements were increasing in population, others were losing population and becoming extinct. Between 1830 and 1969, 262 towns became extinct in Mississippi. The spatial distribution of extinct towns in north Mississippi reflect changes in the cotton based economy, while those in south Mississippi reflect the exhaustion of timber resources.

Towns are defined to include a threshold population, functions, legality, and vernacular usage. A functional grouping of towns simplified investigation into the spatial and temporal interaction of towns with their hinterlands. Seventy-one per cent of the extinct towns had functioned as trade centers, and are divided into typical, river port, railroad, and county seat towns. Twenty-nine per cent of the extinct towns functioned as industrial towns, either manufacturing or sawmill towns.

Mississippi was settled largely by persons interested in the production of cotton, which was adapted to cultivation on any scale and was the mainstay of the economy. Antebellum planters marketed cotton and made purchases through factors located in cities outside Mississippi and had no interest in supporting local commercial developments. After 1865 cotton production occurred under the share-tenant and crop lien systems. The crop lien was a self-defeating credit system that held farmers captive and deprived trade towns of their commercial gain. The

size of towns was also influenced by a dispersal of urban functions and by saturation of an area with towns, railroad stations, and riverboat landings. At the height of a town's prosperity, its population averaged between 150 and 300 persons.

Economic development in Mississippi proceeded with a remarkable absence of manufacturing until the lumber era of 1880 to 1920. Lumbering was responsible for peopling the sparsely inhabited Piney Woods region and was performed by persons residing in towns that grew up around company owned sawmills cutting in excess of 15,000,000 board feet annually.

The same forces that had influenced the location of new towns and had shaped their expansion and growth, gave rise to competition, differential growth, and the resultant decline of many centers after 1920. County seat towns acquired an additional element of centrality when the state highway system was designed to connect with all county seats. The external economics achieved by merchants in county-seat towns absorbed the trade of smaller places.

Several conditions contributed to the demise and extinction of towns in Mississippi. Adjustments in settlement sites after the initial surge of settlers caused some towns to disappear. The loss of key local leadership inadvertently encouraged prospective merchants to seek new sites. Farmers tended to rely on the services and goods offered in county seat towns as the range of their needs increased. After 1940 the economic base of many towns was undermined as tenancy declined and farms were consolidated. Railroads and highways interjected an element of competition between towns, and those at less favored locations declined. The decision to relocate county seats often led to the demise of towns.

Since 1960 the pace of extinction has slowed, but a large number of towns were observed to be declining in population, function, and services.

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CHAPTER I

EXTINCT TOWNS, AN ELEMENT OF HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

A. INTRODUCTION

For over three hundred years small towns played a significant role in binding the United States together by providing economic ties and disseminating socio-political information to a dispersed population. The number of towns in any given area at any given time depended upon the means of communication, density of population, spatial extent of the trade area, and economic pursuits of the inhabitants.[1] However, some towns were unable to change as society changed, and declined to the point of extinction.

No substantial body of literature on small towns exists.[2] Perhaps this is because they are small, numerous, and ubiquitous, and because

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[1]Eugene Van Cleef, Trade Centers and Trade Routes (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1937), pp. 4-5; Marion C. Clawson, "Factors and Forces Affecting the Optimum Future Rural Settlement Patterns in the United States," Economic Geography, Vol. 42 (1966), 283-93.

[2]Most works pertaining to small towns date from approximately 1915, when work was initiated by sociologists, to the studies of the Works Progress Administration in the 1930's. Wilbert L. Anderson, The Country Town, A Study of Rural Evolution (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1914), 307 pages; C. J. Galpin, "The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community," Research Bulletin 34, Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Wisconsin (1915), 34 pages; Roland S. Vaile, editor, The Small City and Town (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1930), 159 pages; Harlan P. Douglass, The Little Town Especially in Its Rural Relationships (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1927), 262 pages; Elva E. Miller, Town and Country (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1928), 212 pages; Clayton Rand, Ink On My Hands (Gulfport, Mississippi: The Dixie Press, 1940), 348

large cities rapidly came to dominate commerce and industry. The demise of small towns was often gradual, except where the economy was based upon nonrenewable resources. Furthermore, the demise of towns away from main transportation routes was not readily apparent to those outside the locality. Because there have been almost no studies relative to population, function, and areal patterns of extinct towns in Mississippi, data must be gathered from numerous sources.[3]

Geographers have largely neglected the depopulation of towns which accompanied changes in the characteristics of the hinterland, the means of transportation, the social organization, or the decline of local industry. The objectives of this study in the historical geography of extinct towns in Mississippi are to: (1) further an understanding of these changes and their effects on towns, (2) identify and assess elements leading to the demise of towns, (3) identify types of towns and examine their responses to changes in their economic base, (4) place the towns in their historical perspective for a more comprehensive examination of response to change, and (5) treat a neglected aspect of historical geography.

B. TOWNS DEFINED

"City," "town," "settlement," and other terms referring to agglomerations of nonagricultural population are used with little or no

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pages; G. T. Trewartha, "The Unincorporated Hamlet," Annals, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 33 (1943), 32-81; and Publications of the American Country Life Association, active during the 1920's.

[3]Franklin L. Riley, "Extinct Towns and Villages of Mississippi," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 5 (1902), 311-83.

consistency.[4] Terms covering an extended span of time must be flexible, but the range of each category must allow some degree of unity in meaning. Thus criteria for the use of terms must be offered at the outset of the study.

Agglomerated settlements have sometimes been classified according to site and situation, as, for example, river towns, towns at passes, fall line towns, and crossroad towns--the number of classes equaling the number of identifiable type locations. Other classifications have used demographic size categories--hamlets, villages, towns, and cities.[5] A third approach involves a functional classification, hypothesizing that a particular type of economic base supports a distinctive type of agglomerated settlement.[6]

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[4]Harry R. Merrens, Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1964), pp. 142-43; Clifford E. Tiedemann, "On the Classification of Cities into Equal Size Categories," Annals, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 58 (1968), 775-86.

[5]J. E. Brush, "The Hierarchy of Central Places in Southwestern Wisconsin," Geographical Review, Vol. 43 (1953), 393; R. Vining, "A Description of Certain Spatial Aspects of Economic Systema," Economic Development and Cultural Change, Vol. 3 (1955), 169; Trewartha, op. cit., footnote 2, pp. 32-40; John W. Alexander, Economic Geography (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), pp. 524-28; S. N. Dicken and F. R. Pitts, Introduction to Human Geography (New York: Blaisdell Publishing Co., 1963), pp. 207-09; Brian J. L. Berry, Geography of Market Centers and Retail Distribution (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), pp. 13-23; and W. Zelinsky, "Classical Town Names in the United States: The Historical Geography of an American Idea," Geographical Review, Vol. 57 (1967), 467.

[6]Loyal Durand, Jr., World Geography, An Introduction (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1958), pp. 353-57; Robert E. Dickinson, "The Scope and Status of Urban Geography: An Assessment," Readings in Urban Geography, Harold M. Mayer and Clyde F. Kohn, editors (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 10-26; Allen Pred, "Manufacturing in the American Mercantile City: 1800-1840," Annals, Association of

In state laws of incorporation the ambiguity and confusion is as great as that in geographical nomenclature, for there is little uniformity in the number of people required before a place can be incorporated as a city, town, or village. In the South, as well as in other sections of the country where no areal unit of local government smaller than the county or township developed, incorporation proceeded rapidly.[7]

The compiler of Hutchinson's Code of Mississippi states that "In the absence of a general law declaring the mode in which a city or town might be regarded as a municipal corporation . . . the compiler can only give reference to the numerous incorporating acts."[8] A law enacted in 1892 by the State Legislature divided municipalities into three classes; (1) cities, more than 2,000 inhabitants; (2) towns, less than 2,000 but more than 500; and (3) villages, less than 500 but more than 100. If a population change occurred, the governor was empowered to reclassify the municipality.[9]

American Geographers, Vol. 56 (1966), 307-38; Chauncy D. Harris, "A Functional Classification of Cities in the United States," Geographical Review, Vol. 33 (1943), 86-99; Howard J. Nelson, "A Service Classification of American Cities," Economic Geography, Vol. 31 (1955), 189-210; and R. H. T. Smith, "Method and Purpose in Functional Town Classification," Annals, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 55 (1965), 539-48.

[7]W. L. Bailey, "The American Village," Town and Country Relations, Proceedings of the Fourth National Country Life Conference (New York: Association Press for the American Country Life Association, 1921), pp. 1-20; S. C. Ratcliffe, "Size as a Factor in Population Changes of Incorporated Hamlets and Villages, 1930-1940," Rural Sociology, Vol. 7 (1942), 318-28.

[8]Hutchinson's Code of Mississippi, 1798-1848, p. 92.

[9]The Annotated Code of the General Statute Laws of the State of Mississippi (Nashville: Marshall and Bruce, Law Publishers, 1892), pp. 686-88.

Unincorporated villages could become incorporated:

> When ever a petition signed by two-thirds of the electors of any . . . unincorporated village, shall be presented to the governor, setting forth the metes and bounds of their . . . village, stating the number of inhabitants therein. . . . If he finds it sufficient and to his satisfaction that . . . the place contains at least 100 inhabitants, he shall, by proclamation, declare the village incorporated, defining its limits and boundaries and fixing its name as "The Village of _____."[10]

The procedure for incorporating towns and cities was the same as that for villages, only the titles and population figures were changed

In 1900 these regulations were amended as follows: Towns--less than 2,000 but more than 300, and villages--less than 300 but more than 100.[11] In 1942 a law was enacted abolishing the classification of villages for incorporation.[12] No municipal charter was to be granted to places with less than 300 people.

In spite of legal definitions, the local histories of many places in Mississippi indicate that once an agglomerated settlement containing a variety of business establishments attained a population of approximately 100, the people began referring to it as a town rather

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[10] The General Statute Laws, footnote 9, p. 688.

[11] "An Act to Amend Section 2911 of the Annotated Code of 1892," Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1900 (Jacksonville, Florida: The Vance Printing Co., 1900), p. 514.

[12] "County Affairs; Elections; Legislative; Municipalities," Mississippi Code 1942 Annotated, Recompiled Vol. 3 (Atlanta: The Harrison Co., 1956), pp. 290-91. After 1966 a place could be incorporated as a village if the municipality encompassed a one square mile area with at least six streets making up one mile of hard surfaced streets, and if a public utilities system existed or was under construction that included a water works system or sewage system. 1966 Cumulative Supplement to Mississippi Code 1942 Annotated (Atlanta: The Harrison Co., 1966), p. 148.

than as the "settlement" or "community." The term "village" was seldom used by Mississippians to identify a trade center.[13] Hence, specific demographic size categories of agglomerated settlements are of limited utility in this study, and "town" will be used to refer to all agglomerated settlements unless otherwise noted.

A functional classification of towns, sometimes including major aspects of site and situation, facilitates investigation of town distribution and patterns, as well as into the relationships between towns with a particular function and their hinterlands. At the simplest level function implies a complementary relationship between a town and its hinterland.[14] Towns in Mississippi performed functions that can be recognized (1) by examining the larger units such as county, section, or state, (2) by examining the internal structure of the towns, and (3) by studying local history. For these reasons a functional approach to extinct towns provides the major conceptual framework for the study.

C. URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The United States

Referring to American cities, Bridenbaugh states, "Our national history has been that of transition from a predominantly rural and

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[13] In 1904 the State Supreme Court defined a town "to be a congregation of houses so reasonably near each other that the inhabitants thereof might be fairly said to dwell together." Attorney General's Report, Mississippi, 1904 (Jacksonville, Florida: The Vance Printing Co., 1904), p. 284.

[14] Brian J. L. Berry and Frank E. Horton, Geographic Perspectives on Urban Systems with Integrated Readings (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), pp. 106-112.

agricultural way of living to one in which the city plays a major role." Furthermore, he concludes that "a full-fledged urban society existed well before the close of our first century of history."[15]

On the eve of the American Revolution about 90 per cent of the population lived in rural areas, mainly east of the Appalachian Mountains.[16] The first official census taken in 1790 counted almost 4,000,000 inhabitants, only 5 per cent of whom were classed as urban (Table 1). At this time almost all American cities were commercial centers on the Atlantic Coast or on navigable rivers. Those possessing good natural harbors, control over the avenues of trade and communication, or dominance over a productive hinterland developed into some of America's major cities: New York, Boston, and Philadelphia are examples. Thus the potential for urban growth was greatest in the coastal areas of southern New England, the Middle Atlantic region, and along the lower Mississippi River.[17]

By 1840 the era of agrarian dominance in the United States was drawing to a close.[18] Agricultural resources continued to stimulate the economy, but an expanding domestic market, available raw materials, and progress in transportation and technology encouraged manufacturing in the northeastern United States. More than 85 per cent of the 236 urban

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[15]Carl Bridenbaugh, Cities in the Wilderness, The First Century of Urban Life in American 1625-1742 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. ix.

[16]Carl Bridenbaugh, Cities in Revolt, Urban Life in America, 1743-1776 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), pp. 216-17.

[17]John R. Borchert, "American Metropolitan Evolution," Geographical Review, Vol. 57 (1967), 311-19; Pred, op. cit., footnote 6, pp. 307-12.

[18]Pred, op. cit., footnote 6, pp. 307-38.

TABLE I

URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION: THE UNITED STATES AND MISSISSIPPI, 1790-1960

	United States				Mississippi			
Year	Rural (000)	(%)	Urban (000)	(%)	Rural (000)	(%)	Urban (000)	(%)
1790	3,728	95	202	5				
1800	4,986	94	322	6	8			
1810	6,714	93	525	7	31			
1820	8,945	93	693	7	75			
1830	11,739	91	1,127	9	134	98	3	2
1840	15,224	89	1,845	11	372	99	4	1
1850	19,648	85	3,544	15	596	99	11	1
1860	25,227	80	6,217	20	771	98	21	2
1870	28,656	75	9,902	25	795	97	33	3
1880	36,026	72	14,130	28	1,097	97	35	3
1890	40,841	65	22,106	35	1,220	95	70	5
1900	45,835	61	30,160	39	1,431	93	120	7
1910	49,973	55	41,997	45	1,590	89	207	11
1920	51,553	49	54,158	51	1,550	87	240	13
1930	54,042	44	69,161	56	1,671	84	339	16
1940	57,459	44	74,705	56	1,751	81	433	19
1950[a]	54,479	37	96,847	63	1,577	73	602	27
1960[a]	54,054	31	125,269	69	1,390	64	788	36

[a]New urban definition. This definition not only recognized as urban all incorporated and unincorporated places with a population of 2,500 or more, but also the densely settled urban fringes around cities of 50,000 or more.

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, United States Census of Population: 1960, Characteristics of the Population, Vol. I (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 1-29, 1-35.

places returned by the Census in 1850 were in the northeastern quadrant of the nation. New Orleans, Charleston, and Richmond were the only southern cities with more than 25,000 inhabitants.[19]

From 1870 to 1920 the railroad network was an important factor in urbanization. It opened up new markets for manufactured goods, stimulated mining and agriculture, and carried raw materials to factories as well as food to the growing cities. In 1890 there were 1,348 urban places. By 1920 the number of urban places had increased to 2,722. Since 1920 the automobile, providing a more flexible transportation, has caused changes in the existing pattern.[20] By 1960 the number of urban places had increased to 6,014.[21] While urban growth transformed many towns into cities and metropolitan areas, others declined, some to the point of extinction.

The South

In the South, where the plantation system was predominant, urban development was vastly different from those sections of the country in which family farms prevailed. Most large plantations tended to be economic units maintaining cotton gins, blacksmith shops, and gristmills, and employing carpenters, masons, tanners, and mechanics. Factors

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[19] DeBow listed some 10,000 places in 1854 and believed that about 25 per cent of the population resided in the villages, towns, and cities. J. D. B. DeBow, Statistical View of the United States (Washington: Beverley Tucker, Senate Printer, 1854), p. 192.

[20] Borchert, op. cit., footnote 17, pp. 314-24.

[21] U. S. Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Population: 1960, "Number of Places in Urban and Rural Territories, by Size of Places: 1790-1960" (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1960).

marketed tobacco and cotton produced on the plantations in England and in cities along the northeastern seaboard.[22] These commission merchants also purchased supplies for planters. With the exception of major factorage centers at Charleston, Savannah, Richmond, Mobile, and New Orleans and secondary centers at Natchez, Vicksburg, and Memphis, regional market towns with their many complementary amenities did not develop in the South.[23]

Occasionally planters patronized the small, inland towns, but most towns functioned to supply yeomen farmers with the basic essentials. These towns usually consisted of two or three general stores, the county courthouse, a grog shop (saloon) or two, and a livery stable. In time a post office, inn, gristmill, cotton gin, blacksmith shop, tanyard, and possibly a bank might be added.[24] Along navigable streams, especially the Mississippi River, trading boats or floating stores provided numerous articles that would otherwise have been retailed through stores in towns.[25]

As long as the plantation-factorage system prevailed it limited the growth of inland towns by denying them the retail trade of planters,

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[22]Glenn L. Trewartha, "Types of Rural Settlement in Colonial America," Geographical Review, Vol. 36 (1946), 568-96; C. C. Jones, Jr., The Dead Towns of Georgia (Savannah: Morning News Steam Printing House, 1878), 263 pages, noted that several towns disappeared when the population shift occurred because of numerous reasons, one of which was to purchase more land for greater commercial opportunities.

[23]Ulrich B. Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1931), pp. 140-44.

[24]William G. Brown, The Lower South in American History (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1931), p. 33.

[25]Florence W. Sillers and Wirt A. Williams, editors, History of Bolivar County Mississippi (Jackson, Mississippi: Hederman Brothers, 1948), pp. 34-56.

and by hampering the rise of local manufacturing.[26] During reconstruction the credit system between planters and factors was replaced by the crop lien system, and social and economic power was transferred from plantations to towns. Where there had been one or two stores in a nascent town before the Civil War, there were now several, with proprietors acting as middlemen between the farmers and the markets.[27]

> These crossroads emporiums of cheap merchandise rapidly became symbolic of the creation of a new southern economic system from the wreckage of the old. Perhaps no other southern institution more nearly embodies so much of the intimate story of the new South.[28]

This increase was made possible by an increase in the number of small farmers and by easy credit. Nevertheless, the heavy emphasis on agriculture in the South continued to retard the development of cities, commerce, and manufacturing.

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[26]Alfred H. Stone, "The Cotton Factorage System of the Southern States," American Historical Review, Vol. 20 (1915), 557-69; Phillips, op. cit., footnote 23, p. 142.

[27]Robert Somers, The Southern States Since the War, 1870-1871 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1871), p. 198; Francis B. Simkins, A History of the South (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959), p. 377. In an official publication of South Carolina in 1883, it was stated: "The census of 1880 counts one hundred and five towns in the State. This count, however, includes only a small proportion of lesser villages and trading settlements which are increasing with great rapidity. . . . And are effecting marked changes in the social and industrial condition of the population. . . . Along the lines of railways, and everywhere in the rural districts, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of establishments engaged in trade." The report added 493 towns to the list with a warning that even this number was incomplete. In these towns were 4,645 stores. South Carolina: Resources and Population: Institutions and Industries (Charleston: South Carolina State Board of Agriculture, 1883), pp. 659-61.

[28]Thomas D. Clark, Pills, Petticoats, and Plows: The Southern Country Store (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p. 6.

Much of the basic pattern of urban location in the lower South was an outgrowth of the cotton economy. With some notable exceptions, the buying, collecting, and storing of cotton had been spread among the many small towns that grew up around railroad stations, at river ports, cotton gins, and country stores. Thus most towns in the South were similar in size, without the demographic hierarchy characteristic of agglomerated settlements in the more industrialized North. Cities developed only as the maturing economy needed them until after World War II. Since that time parts of the South have urbanized rapidly.[29]

Mississippi

Not all states have become urban in character; Mississippi has always been a rural state. Settlers were more interested in acquiring land and establishing plantations than in acquiring town lots. Most early towns in Mississippi were primarily collections of rather crude houses. Greenville, located in southwestern Mississippi and extinct since the 1890's, is a good example. In 1807 the town consisted of:

> . . . one wide straight street nearly half a mile long, running north by west and south by east intersected by two small cross ones, containing in all forty tolerably good houses, many of which are now unoccupied, and offered for sale, at a little more than a quarter of their cost in building. It has a small church for general use of all christian sects, a small court house, a gaol and a pillory, a post office, two stores, two taverns, and a apothecary's shop. The town is well watered by wells dug to about thirty feet deep.[30]

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[29]Rupert B. Vance and Nicholas J. Demerath, editors, The Urban South (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1954), pp. 3-7.

[30]F. Cuming, "Sketches of a Tour to the Western Country," Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, Reuben G. Thwaites, editor, Vol. IV (Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1904), pp. 315-16. For a similar description see, Joseph H. Ingraham, The Southwest by a Yankee (New York: Harper Publishing Co., 1835), pp. 163-64.

The same writer declared that although Natchez was:

> . . . dignified with the name of a city, it is nevertheless but a small town. It is however a place of considerable importance in consequence of its being the principal emporium of the commerce of the territory, and of its having been so long the seat of government under French, English, and Spaniards. . . .[31]

In the plantation-dominated southwest and in the thinly settled Piney Woods no more than two or three towns developed in each county, and each town was the center of a trade area that extended several miles into the country around it. After 1833 there was a large influx of yeomen farmers into north Mississippi, and "towns are springing up here and there, like mushrooms, amidst the affrighted forest."[32] More than twice as many towns were established in the fertile and well-drained soil regions of north Mississippi as in the other regions of the state.[33]

After the Civil War towns became a more integral part of the state.[34] With increases in the number of farmers, both owners and tenants, towns became social centers as well as market centers. Stores, saloons, and hotel lobbies provided meeting places, and in several instances schools were held in the backrooms of stores. On Saturdays, court days, and at Christmas, towns were crowded with farmers.

Urban and economic progress in Mississippi from 1880 to 1920 was closely tied to the yellow pine lumber industry and to railroads, the

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[31]Cuming, op. cit., footnote 30, p. 322.

[32]Ingraham, op. cit., footnote 30, p.95.

[33]H. S. Tanner, A Map of Mississippi with Its Roads and Distances, ca. 1836; Herbert Weaver, Mississippi Farmers, 1850-1860 (Nashville: The Vanderbilt University Press, 1945), pp. 38-41.

[34]Neshoba Democrat, Philadelphia, Mississippi, October 9, 1919.

major economic developments to affect towns after the breakdown of the antebellum plantation system. Towns like Hattiesburg, Laurel, Collins, and McComb owe their origin to the lumber industry and railroads. These towns also became regional trade centers, which insured their continued existence.

In 1900 7 per cent of Mississippi's population was urban; in 1920, when 51 per cent of the population of the United States was urban, only 13 per cent of the state's population was urban (Table I, page 8). The number of rural residents increased to a maximum of 1,751,000 in 1940. By 1960 Mississippi's rural population had declined until it was only slightly higher than in 1890, while urban population (788,000) comprised 36 per cent of the total.

Two significant facts are illustrated in Table II, which shows the population of places in Mississippi having 25,000 or more inhabitants in 1960 for the census years 1850-1960. First, 18 per cent of the population lived in the eight largest cities in 1960, whereas only 3.7 per cent had lived in these same cities in 1900. Second, no urban place had a population of 25,000 until 1930; since that date the number has increased to eight.

There is no precise date showing how many of the people migrating to large urban places had previously resided in small towns. However, there were 290 incorporated and unincorporated places of 1,000 or more in Mississippi in 1960. One-third of these places experienced a population loss totaling 7,768 persons between 1950 and 1960.[35] This is an

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[35]U. S. Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Population: 1960; Number of Inhabitants, Mississippi, Final Report PC (1)-26 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1960), pp.26-15 and 26-16.

TABLE II

MISSISSIPPI: POPULATION OF PLACES OF 25,000 OR MORE
IN 1960 FOR THE CENSUS YEARS 1850-1960

Year	CITIES							
	Biloxi	Greenville	Gulfport	Hattiesburg	Jackson	Laurel	Meridian	Vicksburg
1850					1,881			3,678
1860					3,191			4,591
1870	954	890			4,234		2,709	12,443
1880	1,540	2,191			5,204		4.008	11,814
1890	3,234	6,658		1,172	5,920		10,624	13,373
1900	5,467	7,642	1,060	4,175	7,816	3,193	14,050	14,834
1910	8,049	9,610	6,386	11,733	21,262	8,465	23,285	20,814
1920	10,937	11,560	8,157	13,270	22,817	13,037	23,399	18,072
1930	14,850	14,807	12,547	18,601	48,282	18,017	31,954	22,943
1940	17,475	20,892	15,195	21,026	62,107	20,598	35,481	24,460
1950	37,425	29,936	22,659	29,474	98,271	25,038	41,893	27,948
1960	44,053	41,502	30,204	34,989	144,422	27,889	49,374	29,143

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, United States Census of Population: 1960; Number of Inhabitants: Mississippi, Final Report PC(1)-26-A (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 26-9 and 26-10.

indication that urban migration involves not only rural depopulation, but also small town decline and extinction.

D. DECLINING PLACES IN THE UNITED STATES AND MISSISSIPPI

While many nucleated settlements are increasing in population, others are losing population, experiencing a decline in function, and are on their way to extinction.[36] In one of the few studies of declining urban places in the United States, Northam found that 6,034 declining centers had a median population of 333. "Approximately 78 per cent of all declining centers had a population of 1,000 or less and about 91 per cent had 3,000 or less."[37] Evidently, the smaller the town the more likely it will become still smaller.[38]

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[36] Bridenbaugh, op. cit., footnote 15, p. 1.

[37] Ray M. Northam, "Declining Urban Centers in the United States: 1940-1960," Annals, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 53 (1963), 54.

[38] Northam, op. cit., footnote 37, pp. 59-59; Charles T. Stewart, Jr., "The Size and Spacing of Cities," Geographical Review, Vol. 48 (1958), 22-45. In a study of 3,697 villages in nine middle western states it was found that "almost half of the villages in the Middle West had an essentially stable population between 1950 and 1960. Approximately one-fourth of the villages lost population, and almost a third gained, although very few villages had a population growth exceeding the national decennial rate of 18.5 per cent." This study was concerned only with "incorporated places of less than 1,000 persons in 1960 which was outside an Urbanized Area." John Fraser Hart and Neil E. Salisbury, "Population Change in Middle Western Villages: A Statistical Approach," Annals, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 55 (1965), 140-60. In another study, it was stated that "contrary to wide-spread popular and even scholarly belief, villages of 250 persons or more in the Middle West are not dying, but are continuing to grow in population, despite their obvious loss of many of their erstwhile economic functions." John Fraser Hart, Neil E. Salisbury, and Everett G. Smith, Jr., "The Dying Village and Some Notions about Urban Growth," Economic Geography, Vol. 44 (1968), 343-49. Referring to Iowa, Berry states that, "Progressive settlement was accompanied by spread of centers, and increased in population by

Table III, showing the number of places disappearing from the census reports during the intercensal decade in ten selected states, is indicative of adjustments in the cultural and physical landscape. Although it is not known whether all these places are extinct, and perhaps many are not, they did experience population decline or other changes and are no longer reported separately in the census. Two apparent trends are noticeable. First, on a regional basis, the largest number of places dropped was in the southern states. Second, fewer places have been dropped in the more recent census reports, perhaps because the initial impacts of the railroad, the automobile, and exploitation of natural resources have passed. The table implies that whereas most parts of the country experienced a decline in the number of places between 1870 and 1890, the South also experienced a second decline between 1920 and 1930. Fifty-four per cent of the places dropped by the census in Mississippi were dropped after 1920. A similar percentage was reached about 1900 in South Carolina and earlier in other states. The table also implies that, except for the lateness of the process, Mississippi is a rather typical case.

The number of towns in Mississippi reached a peak of 1,193 in 1930 and has since declined (Figure 1).[39] By 1960 the number of towns in

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increasing number of places, to a zenith around 1900. Subsequently there has been a thinning of the system of centers . . . in which the smallest centers vanished." Berry, op. cit., footnote 6, pp. 5, 8.

[39] T. Lynn Smith, "Farm Trade Centers in Louisiana, 1901 to 1931," Bulletin 234, Louisiana Experiment Station (1933), p. 12; Paul H. Landis, "South Dakota Town-Country Trade Relations, 1901-1931," Bulletin 274 South Dakota Experiment Station (1932), p. 35; United States Census, 1900-1960; and Rand McNally Commercial Atlases, 1890, 1920, 1941, 1953, and 1968.

TABLE III

NUMBER OF PLACES NO LONGER LISTED BY MINOR CIVIL DIVISIONS IN THE UNITED STATES CENSUS FOR SELECTED STATES, 1870-1950

State	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	Total
Alabama	10	18	49	14	9	13	25	2	8	148
Arkansas	11	8	35	9	11	3	3	7	13	100
Indiana	150	25	29	5	6	3	2	2	1	223
Kansas	11	3	43	9	4	4	4	1	0	79
Minnesota	21	7	14	9	10	5	1	3	2	72
Mississippi	13	8	8	10	15	22	23	18	6	123
N. Hampshire	4	0	8	0	0	0	3	1	0	15
New Mexico	X	X	14	1	2	1	0	1	0	19
Oregon	10	0	14	1	7	5	3	3	5	48
S. Carolina	8	3	28	17	9	7	20	13	1	106
Total	238	72	242	75	73	63	83	51	36	933

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Population: Population of Counties by Minor Civil Divisions (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1870 to 1950).

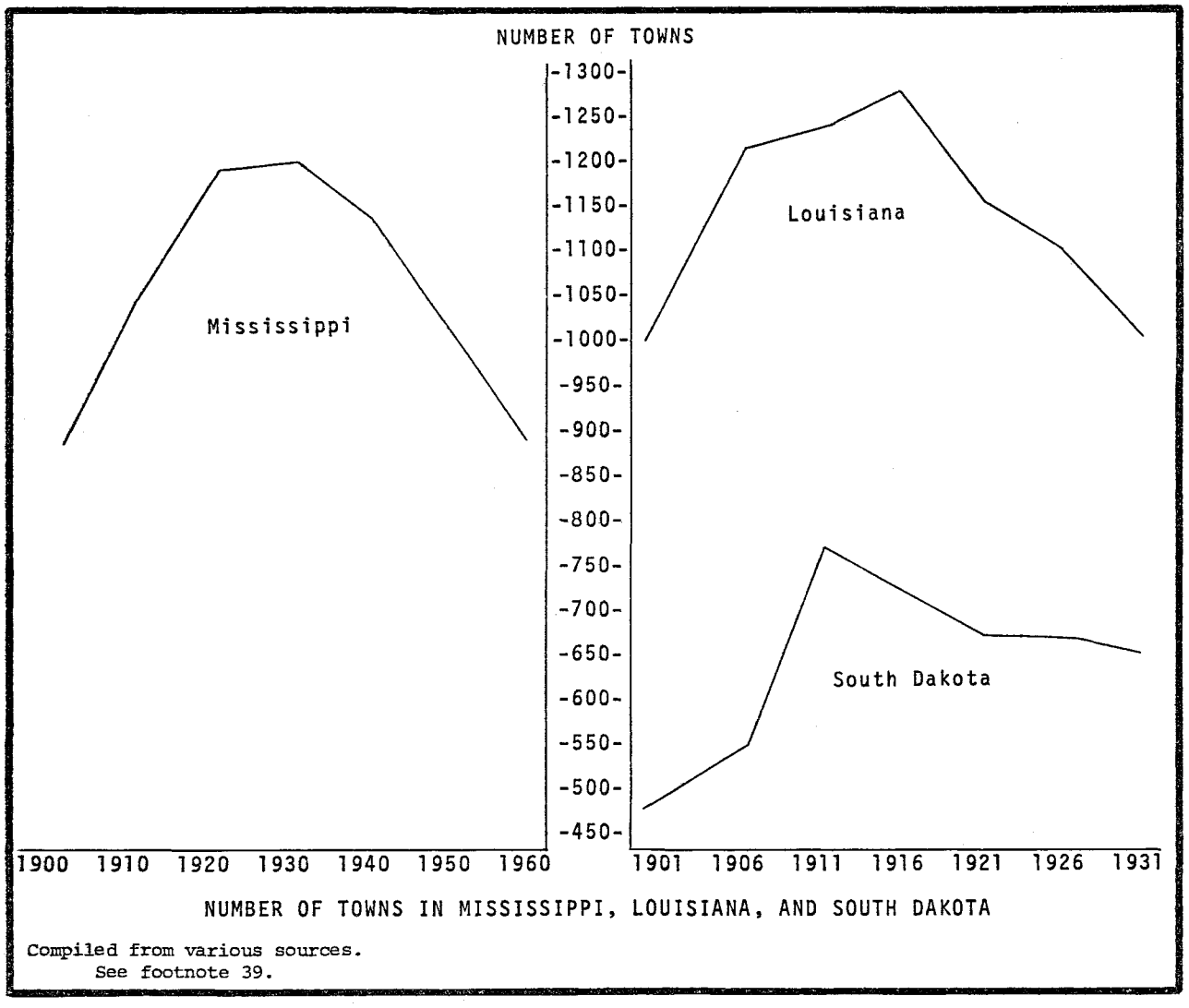


Figure 1. Number of towns in Mississippi, Louisiana, and South Dakota.

Mississippi was eight less than in 1900. For comparative purposes the number of towns in Louisiana and South Dakota, 1901-1931, is also shown in Figure 1.[40] In all three states the number of towns reached a peak between 1910 and 1930. Because of the booming lumber years around the turn of the century, the peak came later in Mississippi and Louisiana than in South Dakota. Moreover, because of the greater density of trade centers and because changes have affected the South's agricultural practices to a greater degree, Mississippi and Louisiana have experienced a greater loss of towns than South Dakota.

E. EXTINCT TOWNS OF MISSISSIPPI

For the purposes of this study an extinct town is defined as an agglomerated settlement which once had several retail and service establishments and a population in excess of 100 inhabitants (fewer if it functioned as a county seat, land office, specialized manufacturing town, or was incorporated) residing in a congregation of houses reasonably near each other, but which has either lost its population and disappeared or has declined and does not function as a town.

A fairly large number (262) of extinct towns was found by examining 1,700 place names of Mississippi cities, towns, villages, and hamlets (Figure 2).[41] Each place name was checked for population size,

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[40] Smith, op. cit., footnote 39; Landis, op. cit., footnote 39.

[41] Charters of Municipalities, Secretary of State's Office, Jackson, Mississippi; Rand McNally Commercial Atlases; Riley, op. cit., footnote 3; United States Census of Population: Population of Counties by Minor Civil Division; Tanner, op. cit., footnote 33; J. H. Colton, Mississippi, ca. 1856; E. G. Wall, Official Map of the State of Mississippi, 1882; Dunbar Rowland, Mississippi: Comprising Sketches of

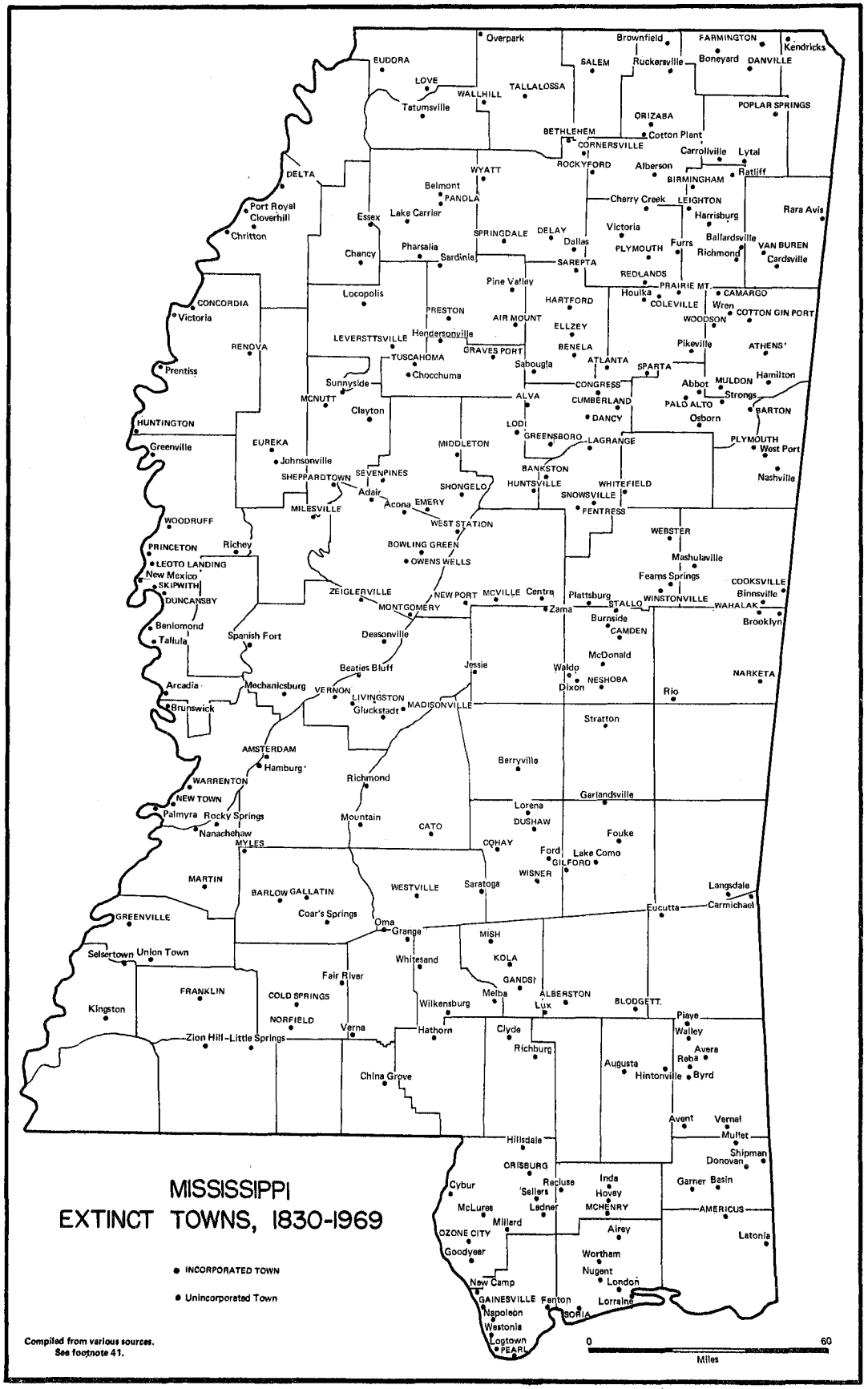


Figure 2. Mississippi extinct towns, 1830-1969.

incorporation status, and appearance and disappearance on maps. The town's basis function was often revealed in the literature, especially local histories, and in the files of the Federal Writers' Project. Where data is lacking, examination of the town's location and existence in the broader regional setting frequently revealed its function. In those instances where the name or spelling changed, the most recent name or spelling was employed. It is possible that some places have been unintentionally overlooked or erroneously classed, but it is believed that such errors will not seriously detract from the validity of the study.[42]

Figure 2, which includes all extinct towns regardless of dates of founding and extinction, shows a fairly general distribution over the state. However, there are some variations in the density of occurrence. Areas of Mississippi with few extinct towns include the Delta, east-central, southwest, and parts of the Piney Woods. On the other hand, northcentral and northeastern Mississippi have the greatest concentration of extinct towns. There is also considerable variation in patterns when towns are mapped by decade of extinction. In some cases extinction was rapid, while in others the process required several years. Because it would be impractical to treat each extinct town individually, the

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Counties, Towns, Events, Institutions, and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form, 2 Volumes (Atlanta: Southern Historical Publishing Association, 1907); and W. P. A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

[42]The following towns are not included since the writer was unable to ascertain their location: Taylor's Depot, Graysville, Gibson, Cletonia, Montevallo, Rutherford, Speeds, Wolf, Duttonville, Myrtle Hall, Camp Three, Rogers, and Lacoste.

extinct towns are grouped into functional categories for the purpose of relating their demise to geographical changes in Mississippi.

A majority of the extinct towns functioned as trade centers, collecting and shipping cotton as well as retailing semi-durable goods and staple commodities. The county seat towns are a sub-group in this classification. Because they were multi-functional, their growth prospects were distinctly better than unifunctional trade towns, but as county boundaries changed some lost their centrality and their governmental function and became extinct. Two other subtypes of trade towns are river and railroad towns. A few of these performed wholesale, warehouse, and cotton collecting and storing services for interior trade centers. Nevertheless, as they were highly dependent upon transportation for their existence, any condition affecting transportation also affected these towns.

Industrial towns, a second functional category, derived basic support from sources other than trade. A few industrial towns relied upon agriculture for raw materials and markets, but most were lumber towns located in south Mississippi.

This study of extinct towns in Mississippi involves several methodological approaches in historical geography. Chapter II deals with the elements of sequent occupance that influenced the pattern and development of towns to 1840. The spatial and temporal interactions of towns with their hinterlands are investigated in Chapters III, IV, and V. Case studies of each functional type are employed for an in-depth analysis of the effects of change. In Chapter VI maps are employed in sequence to illustrate that extinct towns reflect a continually changing series of events.

CHAPTER II

SEQUENT OCCUPANCE TO 1840: A GEOGRAPHIC BASE FOR THE PATTERN AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOWNS

A. PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL OCCUPANCE

When the French established the first colony near Biloxi on the Gulf Coast in 1699, an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 Indians lived in the territory which is now Mississippi. Indian villages were generally of little importance to the development of towns in Mississippi. Few villages became the sites of trading posts because fur bearing animals did not develop quality pelts in the mild winter climate, and because attempts to interest the Indians in commercial agriculture failed.[1]

Mashulaville, "Old" Houlka, Pontotoc, Garlandville, and Fort Adams are examples of Indian villages that became town sites. Mashulaville, an extinct town in Noxubee County, was the village of Mingo (Chief) Moshulitubbee. Three major Indian trails crossed here: (1) a trail which later became the Jackson Military Road between the Tennessee River and New Orleans; (2) the Big Trading Path from Mobile to Muscle Shoals via Plymouth, an extinct town in Lowndes County; and (3) a trail from the Tombigbee River near Pickensville, Alabama. "Old" Houlka, an extinct town in Chickasaw County north and west of Tupelo, was a

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[1] R. S. Cotterill, The Southern Indians: The Story of the Civilized Tribes Before Removal (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), pp. 3-15; H. B. Cushman, History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Natchez Indians (Greenville, Texas: Headlight Printing House, 1899), pp. 99-118.

Chickasaw village at the time of DeSoto's expedition in 1540-41. It later became an Indian Agency and trading post on the Natchez Trace.[2]

DeSoto led the first European expedition into Mississippi, but found no sources of quick wealth so the Spanish directed their attention elsewhere, constructing no forts and founding no settlements in Mississippi.[3]

The first white settlement was established by the French at "Old" Biloxi in 1699, followed by Fort Rosalie (Natchez) in 1716, and Fort St. Peter on the Yazoo River in 1719.[4] Settlers were to breed buffalo, search for pearls and mines, attempt mulberry and silk production, and seek timber for ship construction.[5] In their judgment much of Mississippi was unfit for agriculture. Other than selecting the sites of Natchez and Biloxi, the French had little effect on later town patterns.

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[2]Mississippi, A Guide to the Magnolia State, American Guide Series (New York: The Viking Press, 1938), p. 462; Jessie D. Jennings, "Chickasaw and Earlier Indian Cultures of Northeast Mississippi," The Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 3 (1941), 160-61; H. S. Halbert, "Origins of Mashulaville," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 7 (1903), 386-97; William A. Love, "Mingo Moshulitubbee's Prairie Village," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 7 (1903), 373-78.

[3]J. F. H. Claiborne, Mississippi as a Province, Territory, and State (Jackson, Mississippi: Power and Barksdale, 1880), p. 529.

[4]John K. Bettersworth, Mississippi: A History (Austin, Texas: The Steck Co., 1959), p. 65; Franklin L. Riley, School History of Mississippi (Richmond, Virginia: B. F. Johnson Publishing Co., 1900), pp. 39-44.

[5]Peter Hamilton, Mobile Under Five Flags (Mobile: The Gill Printing Co., 1913), pp. 68, 153-78; John H. Moore, Andrew Brown and Cypress Lumbering in the Old Southwest (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), pp. 3-6.

The English acquired all French territory east of the Mississippi River (except New Orleans) under terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1763. In 1766 a few adventurous Carolinians settled near Natchez and carried on an illicit trade with the Spanish across the river. Settlement, however, began in earnest in 1770 with the arrival of eighteen families. Six years later:

> . . . the town of Natchez consisted of only ten log houses and two frame houses, all situated under the bluff. . . . About seventy-eight families, scattered in different settlements, constituted the whole population of the district, few of which had immigrated to the country previous to 1772. There were four small stores in the town.[6]

The apparent prosperity of Natchez was interrupted when West Florida was surrendered to the Spanish in 1781. But Spain, determined to remain in possession of the country to 32° 31' north, curb westward expansion of the United States, and gain the confidence and loyalty of the inhabitants, invoked a neo-mercantilistic policy by proclamation in 1789:

> Land shall be granted to them at their arrival in proportion of the hands . . . each family should have; they will have the liberty of importing all their property . . . without paying any duty whatever, with the absolute freedom to dispose of the said property in the Posts they should pass by or in this town. Immediately after their arrival they shall enjoy the same franchises and privileges as the other subjects . . . under the condition that they . . . take the due oath of allegiance and bound themselves only to take up arms in defence of this Province. . . .[7]

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[6]Riley, op. cit., footnote 4, p. 60.

[7]Quoted in Jack D. L. Holmes, Gayoso: The Life of a Spanish Governor in the Mississippi Valley, 1789-1799 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), p. 34.

The Spanish policy aimed at establishing families around a church, guardhouse and commandant's residence, while reserving Natchez for officials, merchants, and those supplying services to the farmers. However, the sparse settlement by a self-reliant people of predominately Anglo-Saxon extraction negated this paternalistic program.

Spain was ineffective in settling the district and relinquished control of the territory in 1798. Except for encouraging town growth at Natchez by granting a lot at a nominal price to any settler who would build a house in the town, the Spaniards had no influence on the pattern of towns in Mississippi.[8]

B. POST-COLONIAL OCCUPANCE: A BASIS FOR THE EVOLUTION OF TOWNS

In 1800 the Mississippi Territory was not only beyond the frontier, but much of it was Indian country that lay south of the main path of westward movement of settlers.[9] Treaties with the Choctaws and Chickasaws in 1801 recognized Indian sovereignty over their territory and allowed them to dictate the location and management of way stations, which were usually kept at a considerable distance from Indian villages. The Choctaws and Chickasaws retained control of more than half of Mississippi until 1832, when the demands of settlers and speculators for land could no longer be ignored.

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[8]Claiborne, op. cit., footnote 3, p. 529.

[9]Charles D. Lowery, "The Great Migration to the Mississippi Territory, 1798-1819," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 30 (1968), 178-92; Thomas P. Abernethy, The Formative Period in Alabama, 1815-1828 (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1965), pp. 34-43, 101-02.

The few settlers entering the territory brought with them the rudiments of commercial enterprise and a political system, both essential for early town development. John Foster, writing a friend in 1798, stated:

> . . . laid off my plantation for a town and laid one square within two hundred yards of your spring for the use of publick buildings which shall cost the publick nothing, and as I understand His Excellency the Governor is to pay you a visit, my request to you is to use your influence with him to have the town of Washington (for so I call it) made a Country Town.[10]

Winchester, Princeton, Warrenton, Union Town, Port Gibson, Woodville, and a few others were developing trade towns at this early period. Towns were not necessarily the spearheads of the frontier, planted in advance of the line of settlement, but followed the vanguard.[11]

The Physical Base of Settlement

Mississippi can be divided into three major regions--the Delta, Piney Woods, and the Hills (Figure 3).[12] These divisions are based on differences in soil fertility and topography, progress of settlement,

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[10] Quoted in Charles S. Sydnor, A Gentleman of the Old Natchez Region: Benjamin L. C. Wailes (Durham: Duke University Press, 1938), p. 24. A country town was the seat of justice for the county.

[11] Richard C. Wade, The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 1, noted that in the Middle West " . . . towns were the spearheads of the frontier. Planted far in advance of the line of settlement, they held the West for the approaching population."

[12] Isaiah Bowman, Forest Physiography (New York: J. Wiley and Sons, 1911), p. 498; Nevin M. Fenneman, Physiography of Eastern United States (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1938), pp. 65-99. The Hills include all or parts of the following: the Flatwoods, the Sand Clay (Red) Hills, the Northeast (Tennessee) Hills, the Black Prairie, the Pontotoc Ridge, and the Jackson Prairie. H. B. Vanderford, Land Resource Areas of Mississippi, Information Sheet 568, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station (1960).

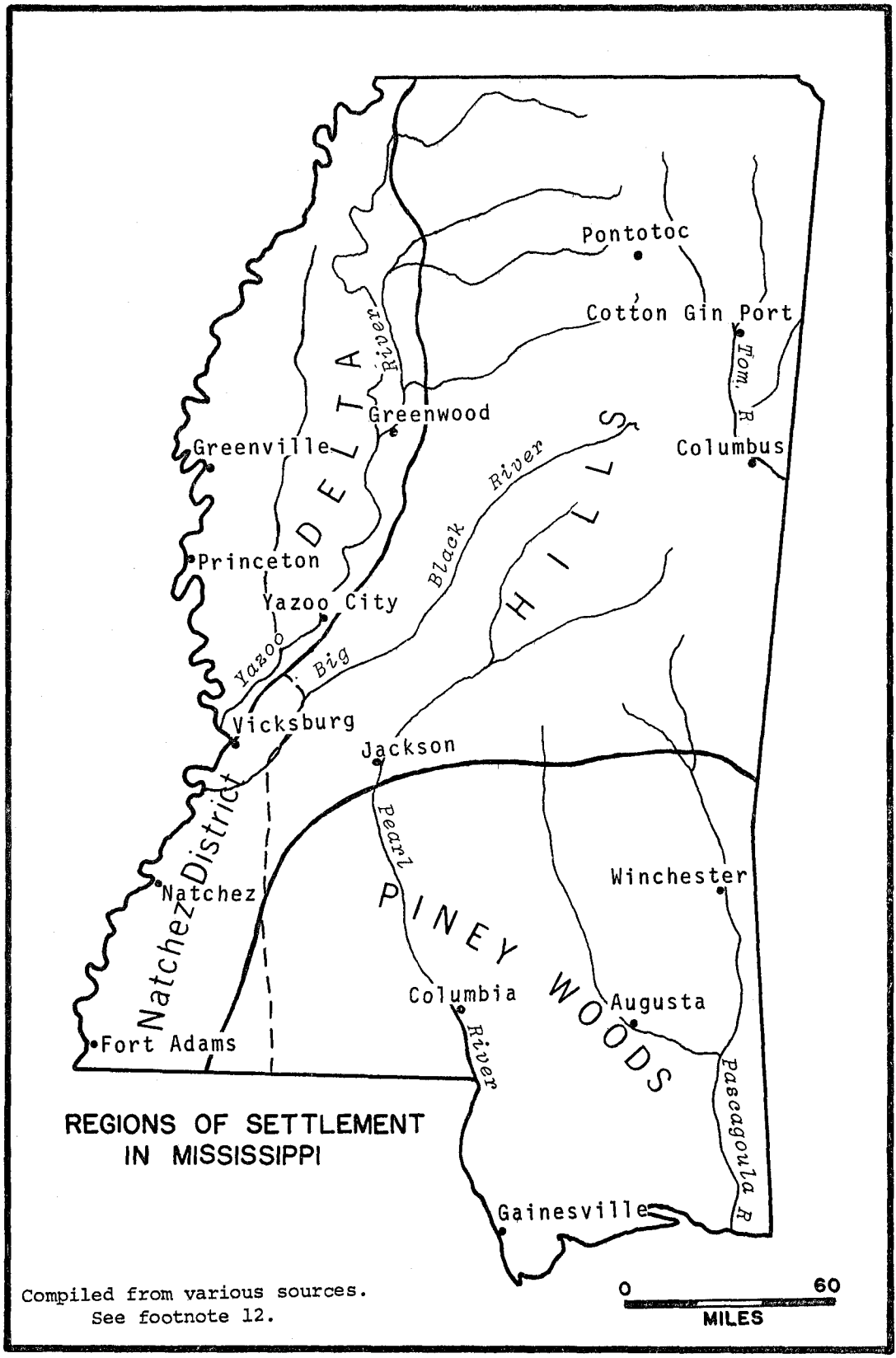


Figure 3. Regions of settlement in Mississippi.

settlement pattern, density of population and towns, and economic activities.

The first settlers in Mississippi preferred the easily worked soils in the Hills extending from the Natchez District to the northeastern corner of the state. This region had the greatest number of large antebellum plantations, although yeomen farmers and small slave holding units were predominant in areas with broken terrain and low soil fertility.[13]

The Delta is an elliptical basin between the Mississippi River and the bluffs extending from Vicksburg to Memphis. Its fertile soils developed from alluvium deposited by the Mississippi and Yazoo rivers. But the expense of clearing and draining the land was substantial and a majority of settlers bypassed the area. Since only the lands of the natural levees could be safely settled and cultivated without flood protection, the Delta remained largely unsettled until the 1870's and 1880's.[14]

The Piney Woods area was generally avoided by settlers because of difficulty in maintaining soil fertility. Except in pockets of

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[13]Herbert Weaver, Mississippi Farmers, 1850-1860 (Nashville: The Vanderbilt University Press, 1945), pp. 47-62.

[14]Rupert B. Vance, Human Geography of the South, A Study in Regional Resources and Human Adequacy (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1932), p. 24; Arthell Kelley, "Levee Building and the Settlement of the Yazoo Basin," The Southern Quarterly, Vol. 1 (1963), 285-308. For an excellent study of early floods along the Mississippi River see: John W. Monette, "The Mississippi Floods," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 7 (1903), 427-78. The first levee legislation, passed in February, 1819, authorized the erection of a levee in Warren County, Laws of Mississippi, 1819, p. 78. In 1854 the state legislature passed an act that replaced the Board of Levee Commissioners (created in 1838) with a single commissioner, Laws of Mississippi, 1854, p. 186.

fertile river bottom land, it was almost impossible to obtain crop yields worthy of the effort on the same plot of ground for more than a few years.

The humid sub-tropical climate in Mississippi exhibited at least a two-fold effect on agriculture. (1) The culture of cotton was suitable to those areas of less autumn rain north of 31° latitude. (2) As a result of a combination of early cotton cultivation practices, thundershowers, and easily eroded loess soils, the Natchez District experienced severe soil erosion which is believed to be one cause of the early abandonment of cotton production.[15]

The Natchez District

The Natchez District was a triangular wedge of land extending for 110 miles along the Mississippi River, approximately fifty miles wide at its base on the 31° parallel, with its apex ten miles wide at the mouth of the Yazoo River.

About 1800 the inhabitants of the district were concentrated in thirteen settlements, six in Adams County and seven in Pickering County. All were within twenty-five miles of the Mississippi River and were

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[15]"Climate of Mississippi," Yearbook of Agriculture, 1941 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1941), pp. 935-44; Eugene W. Hilgard, Report of the Geology and Agriculture of the State of Mississippi (Jackson, Mississippi: E. Barksdale, State Printer, 1860), pp. 195, 313-24; Weaver, op. cit., footnote 13, p. 18. Traveling through the Natchez District, Ingraham noted that: "every plough-furrow becomes the bed of a rivulet after heavy rains--these uniting are increased into torrents before which the impalpable soil dissolves like ice under a summer's sun. By degrees acre after acre of what was a few years previous beautifully undulating ground, . . . presents a wild scene of freightful precipices and yawing chasms." Joseph H. Ingraham, The Southwest by a Yankee (New York: Harper Publishing Co., 1835), p. 86.

connected by four public roads, two north and two south of Natchez.[16] Land sales in the district were delayed until 1807 so that all pending claims could be filed. Many immigrants became so discouraged over the uncertainty of titles that they either returned to their former homes or accepted Spanish offers of free land in Florida or Louisiana.

After 1807 land was purchased by southerners to raise cotton.[17] By 1810 the population in the district had increased to 30,000, nearly half slave. Population growth in towns did not keep pace with rural districts.

Natchez was the principal commercial center for the district.[18] As merchants, mainly from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, prospered in

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[16] Holmes, op. cit., footnote 7, pp. 46-47.

[17] R. S. Cotterill, "The National Land System in the South: 1803-1812," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 16 (1929-1930), 495-506; Report of the Secretary of the Treasury, 1848, 30th. Congress, 2nd. Session, Senate Executive Document 2 (1848), p. 247; Robert V. Haynes, "The Disposal of Lands in the Mississippi Territory," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 24 (1962), 226-27; Sydnor, op. cit., footnote 10, p. 22.

[18] Natchez was small, containing in 1812: "4 tailor shops, 5 blacksmith shops, 4 saddler shops, 6 carpenter and 5 cabinet make shops, 1 coach and sign painter, 2 house painters, 3 hatter shops, 2 tinner shops, 4 boot and shoemaker shops, 1 trunk maker, 1 bookbinder, 1 wagon maker, 1 chair maker, 1 nail manufactury, 3 barbers, 4 brickyards, 1 butcher, 4 magistrates, 3 printing offices, 2 porter houses, 6 publick inns, 6 ware houses, 1 brush maker, 3 gold and silversmiths, 1 confectioner and distiller, 4 bricklayers, 1 horse mill to grind corn, 1 plasterer, 12 water carts, 8 practising physicians, 7 lawyers, 3 English schools, 1 incorporated mechanical society, 1 free mason lodge, 1 reading room and coffee house, 24 mercantile houses, 4 grocery stores, 2 wholesale commission stores, 17 catalene shops (or small stores, where a little of everything is sold), 1 vendue and commission store, 1 bank (called the Bank of Mississippi). Under the hill or landing place, there are 1 tavern, the 'Kentucky,' 2 blacksmith shops, 13 catalene shops, in which are a tinner and shoemaker." The Louisiana and Mississippi Almanac, 1812 (Natchez, 1812), pp. 28-29; C. W. Grafton, "A Sketch of the Old Scotch

Natchez, many purchased plantations. But several remained true to their profession and established stores in the district. A few years later Ingraham noted that it was common to see young men from New York and Boston in almost every town.[19] One enterprising New Jersey immigrant, Abijah Hunt, who engaged in a wide range of activities that included cotton brokerage, hauling logs and cotton, and selling dry goods, built up a chain of stores and gins in Natchez and vicinity.[20] Several of these contributed to the growth of towns. For example, in Jefferson County the town of Greenville was founded at the site of a cotton gin and store owned by Hunt.

Credit was essential to the storekeeper who needed to purchase items from the North and abroad. Planters and farmers in turn purchased two-thirds to three-fourths of their merchandise on credit.[21] The credit system, which was highly sensitive to the market, contributed to the concentration of commerce at Vicksburg, Warrenton, Grand Gulf, Rodney, Natchez, Fort Adams, and other outlets along the river.

Settlement at Union Church," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 9 (1906), 367.

[19]Ingraham, op. cit., footnote 15, p. 168.

[20]The Abijah and David Hunt papers, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

[21]Lewis E. Atherton, "The Problems of Credit Rating in the Ante-Bellum South," Journal of Southern History, Vol. 12 (1946), 534-35. Normal business operations depended heavily on cotton gin receipts and notes issued by the Bank of Mississippi. A gin receipt was a piece of paper about the size of a contemporary dollar and obtained from the ginner upon receipt of raw cotton at the gin. The Bank of Mississippi was chartered in Natchez in 1809 with a capital stock of $500,000, and provided a degree of financial stability until its monopoly was curtailed by legislative acts creating the Planters Bank in 1830, the Agricultural Bank in 1833 and the Union Bank in 1837.

Planters chose to do business through factors located in the riverine towns and in the large port cities, especially New Orleans. This loss of trade retarded the growth and development of interior towns in the district.[22] In 1842 the editor of the Mississippi Free Trader made the following comparison between the planter class and small farmers:

> They would crowd our streets [Natchez] with fresh and healthy supplies of home productions, and the proceeds would be expended here among our merchants, grocers and artisans. The large planters--the one-thousand-bale planters--do not contribute most to the prosperity of Natchez. They, for the most part, sell their cotton in Liverpool; buy their wines in London or Le Harve; their negro clothing in Boston; their plantation implements and supplies in Cincinnati; and their groceries and fancy articles in New Orleans. The small planter has not the credit nor the business connections to do this; he requires the proceeds of his crop as soon as it can be sold; and he purchases and pays for, cash in hand, almost every necessary wanted during the year, in the same market where he sells his cotton. The small planter hoards no money in these times, he lends none at usurious rates of interest; he buys up the property of no unfortunate debtor for a few dollars; but he lays it all out for the purchase of supplies, and thus directly contributes his mite to the prosperity of our city.[23]

In the Natchez District trade was the key to town development. But it was highly seasonal, and except for Natchez and a few similar ports, towns were viable units only during the cotton marketing season and on court days. Otherwise, there were limited opportunities for the growth and development of towns.

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[22]Thomas P. Abernethy, "Social Relations and Political Control in the Old Southwest," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 16 (1929-1930), 530; Lewis E. Atherton, The Southern Country Store, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), pp. 18-37.

[23]Mississippi Free Trader, Natchez, April 14, 1842.

The Piney Woods

The first settlers in the Piney Woods were a heterogeneous group, though possibly a majority were Tories or Loyalists pressured to leave the Carolinas and Georgia.[24] One contemporary writer asserted that:

> . . . they were really refugees from a growing civilization consequent upon a dense population and its necessities. They were not an agriculturist in a proper sense of the term; true, they cultivated in some degree the soil, but it was not the prime pursuit of these people, nor was the location sought for this purpose. They desired an open, poor, pine country, which forbade a numerous population.[25]

Apparently some chose the unsettled Piney Woods in preference to the Natchez District where they were looked upon as plain unlettered farmers. By making their homes in the Piney Woods they were less subject to the economic, social, and political influences of Natchez. There was very little intercourse between the two regions.[26]

Settlers east of the Leaf River grazed cattle on the coarse grasses and reeds that grew profusely among the pines and along the streams. The cattle and surpluses of butter, cheese, honey, eggs, and similar items were marketed in Mobile.[27] Settlers west of the Leaf

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[24]Riley, op. cit., footnote 4, p. 60.

[25]William H. Sparks, The Memories of Fifty Years (Macon, Georgia, 1872), pp. 331-32.

[26]Robert C. Weems, "Early Economic Development of Mississippi: 1699-1840," The Social Science Bulletin, Vol. VI (Mississippi State College, 1952), pp. 18-20.

[27]J. F. H. Claiborne, "A Trip Through the Piney Woods," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 9 (1906), 523; Sparks, op. cit., footnote 25, p. 332; Abernethy, op. cit., footnote 9, pp. 42-43, 91-94.

River cultivated crops on "hommock" soil, and marketed their produce in New Orleans.[28]

Between 1830 and 1840 population in the Piney Woods increased by 11,736 persons (Table IV). (The overall increase in the state during the same period was 249,030 persons.) Obviously settlers east of the Leaf River were not satisfied with soils that restricted cultivation to small tracts of second river bottoms subject to inundations. Greene, Jones, Perry, and Wayne counties all experienced a net population loss to the new purchase areas of the Hills.[29] At the land office in Augusta 9,628,675 acres east of the Pearl River were offered for sale during the period 1811 to 1847, but only 950,713 acres (10 per cent) were sold.[30]

Town development was adversely affected by the sparse, self-sufficient population. Towns that did exist were small and unimpressive, and were declining as people relocated in north Mississippi. Claiborne observed in 1841 that Meadville, county seat of Franklin County, was "once a pretty village . . . but now in a state of dilapidation and

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[28] Claiborne, op. cit., footnote 27, pp. 521-22. The term "hommock" referred to second bottom land along rivers. Hommocks varied in quality, in extent, and in occurrence. Apparently there were three recognized degrees of soil fertility: (1) the always infertile sandy ridges, (2) the variable hommocks, and (3) the always fertile, first river bottoms. Hilgard, op. cit., footnote 15, pp. 297, 308-09, 327, 335, and 348-59. Otherwise, the term "hommock or hummock" refers to a rounded knoll or hillock.

[29] L. A. Besancon, Besancon's Annual Register of the State of Mississippi (Natchez, 1838), p. 190; Jesse M. Wilkins, "Early Times in Wayne County," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 6 (1902), 265-72.

[30] Report, footnote 17, p. 247.

TABLE IV

POPULATION OF PINEY WOODS COUNTIES, 1810-1840

County	1810	1820	1830	1840
Clarke				2,986
Copiah			7,001	8,954
Covington		2,230	2,551	2,717
Greene		1,445	1,854	1,636
Jasper				3,958
Jones			1,471	1,258
Lawrence		4,916	5,293	5,920
Marion		3,116	3,691	3,830
Perry		2,037	2,300	1,889
Pike		4,438	5,402	6,151
Simpson			2,680	3,380
Smith				1,961
Wayne	1,253	3,323	2,781	2,120
Total	1,253	21,505	35,024	46,760

Source: United States Census of Population, "Mississippi," 1810-1840.

decline."[31] Monticello, Columbia, and Ellisville were similarly described.[32]

Augusta, once the most important town in the eastern Piney Woods but extinct since 1900, was described as:

> . . . an extensive parallelogram garnished round with some eight or ten miserable tenements--the wrecks of better times. . . . We never before saw such a picture of desolation. The vestiges of numerous and extensive buildings were still to be seen; the town itself had been planned on an imposing scale; the landing on the Leaf River, where formerly barge and bateau deposited their rich cargoes, was pointed out; the courthouse--once thronged with suitors and defendant--but now all was silence and solitude.[33]

In 1852 it contained only seven families, one church, one school, a post office, and a United States Land Office[34] (Figure 4).

In the late 1820's Winchester, a town in Wayne County, contained about thirty business houses, but was practically depopulated when the inhabitants migrated to north Mississippi in the early 1830's. Thus by 1840 the Piney Woods had passed through the first phase of its development. However, the economic potential of lumbering was recognized.[35]

The Hills

With the acquisition of Indian Lands through treaties concluded in 1820, 1830, and 1832, the northern two-thirds of Mississippi was open

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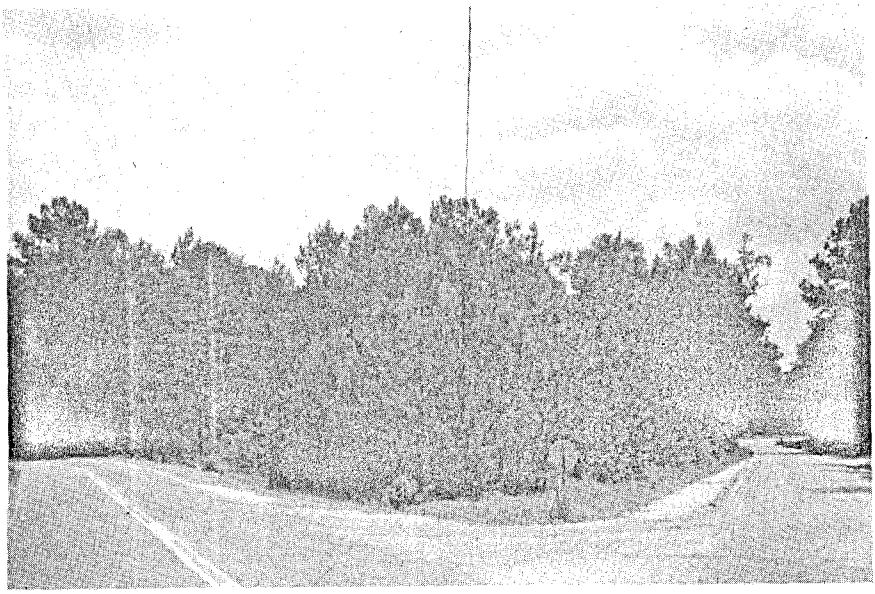
[31]Claiborne, op. cit., footnote 27, p. 491.

[32]Claiborne, op. cit., footnote 27, pp. 510-16.

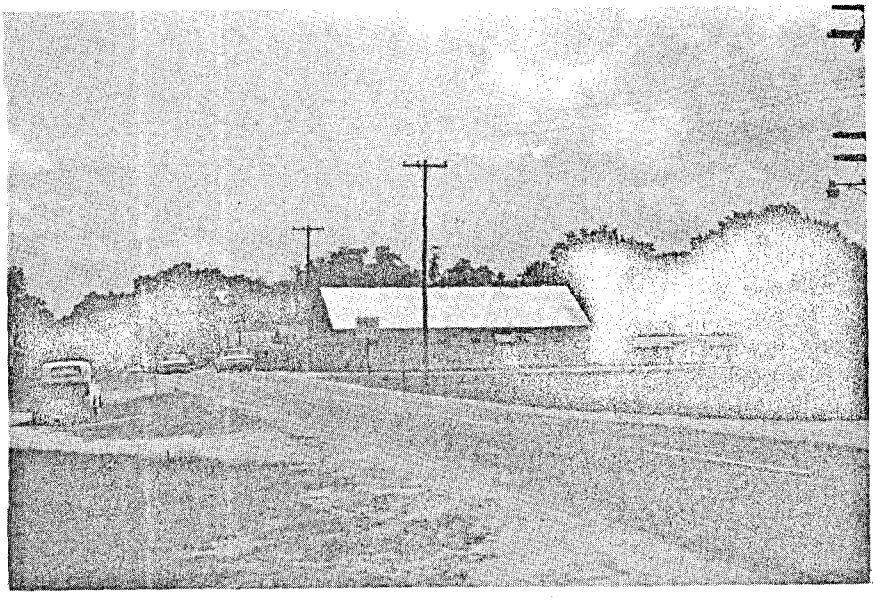
[33]Claiborne, op. cit., footnote 27, pp. 518-19.

[34]John H. Moore, "South Mississippi in 1852: Some Selections from the Journal of Benjamin L. C. Wailes," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 18 (1956), 18-32.

[35]Wilkins, op. cit., footnote 29, p. 270; Claiborne, op. cit., footnote 27, p. 523.



(a) Site of Augusta, Perry County, Mississippi.

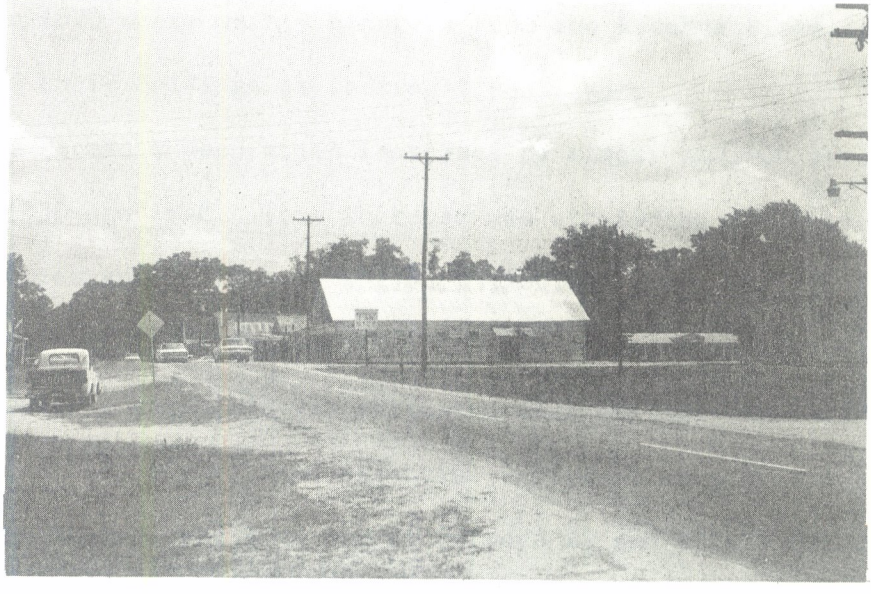


(b) New Augusta, two miles south of Augusta, Mississippi.

Figure 4. Site of Augusta, an extinct town, and a street scene in New Augusta, Perry County, Mississippi.



(a) Site of Augusta, Perry County, Mississippi.



(b) New Augusta, two miles south of Augusta, Mississippi.

Figure 4. Site of Augusta, an extinct town, and a street scene in New Augusta, Perry County, Mississippi.

to settlers. In the Treaty of Doak's Stand (1820), 5.5 million acres, comprising the southern half of the Delta and the south central part of the Hills, were added to lands available in the state.

However, low prices for cotton were characteristic of the years between 1820 and 1830. Prices at New Orleans declined from twenty-five cents a pound in 1816 to twelve cents in 1822 (Figure 5).[36] Following a brief revival to seventeen cents in 1824, prices reached an all time low of eight cents in 1826, and remained under ten cents a pound for the duration of the decade. With little incentive to expand cotton cultivation, the population increased by only 61,173.

The frontier was consolidated rather than extended during the 1820's, and for the most part immigrants went into existing communities instead of establishing new ones. Settlers moving into the territory opened in 1820 where mainly planters from the Natchez District wishing to expand their holdings or seeking fresh lands.

The state's population increased by almost 240,000 persons between 1830 and 1840. This increase was attributed to an increase in cotton prices and to the opening of 15,700,000 acres of land in northern Mississippi after the treaties of 1830 and 1832. When cotton averaged fifteen cents a pound, it was estimated that an investment of about $21,000 in land, slaves, and essential equipment on a well supervised plantation would yield a return of between 22 and 35 per cent.[37] After

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[36] Lewis C. Gray, History of Agriculture in the Southern United States (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, reprinted 1958), pp. 697, 1027; James Hall, A Brief History of the Mississippi Territory (Salisburg: Printed by Francis Coupee, 1801).

[37] Gray, op. cit., footnote 36, p. 688; Traugott Bromme, Mississippi: A Geographic-Statistic-Typography Sketch for Immigrants

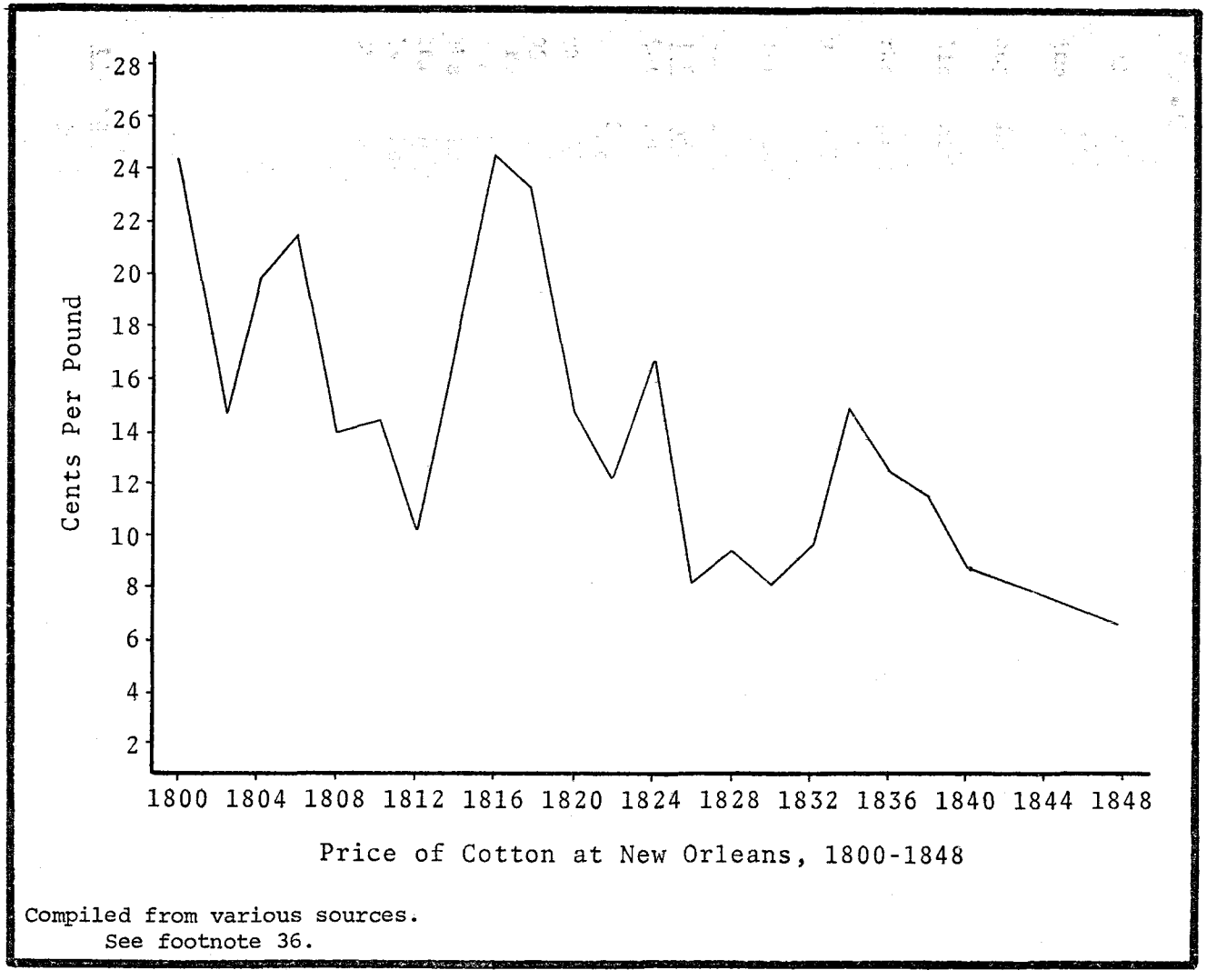


Figure 5. Price of cotton at New Orleans, 1800-1848.

1832 settlers were eager to purchase government land.[38] Cotton production increased from 43,000 bales in 1820 to 386,803 bales in 1840.[39]

Large planters were dominant in an area twenty-five or thirty miles wide east of the Delta and in a narrow crescent-shaped area west of the Tombigbee River. Small planters and yeomen farmers settled primarily in the Hills. Friends and relatives often migrated as a group, and upon reaching their destination they formed new communities called settlements. As others followed and settled nearby, the potential markets proved encouraging to merchants, who opened stores and surveyed town lots around them. Many businessmen were from the North and foreign countries.[40]

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and Friends of Geography and Ethnology (C. Scheld and Co., 1837), reprinted in Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 4 (1942), 105.

[38]John H. Moore, Agriculture in Ante-Bellum Mississippi (New York: Bookman Associates, 1958), p. 60; John C. Belcher and Morton B. King, Jr., Mississippi's People, Sociological Study Series, No. 2, Bureau of Public Administration, University of Mississippi (1950), pp. 8-13; Clare L. Marquete, "The Life and Letters of a Pontotoc Pioneer, Charles Hathaway Larrabee," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 20 (1958), 80. Within ten years more than 7.8 million acres of land were sold, principally in the 1830 and 1832 purchase areas. The amount of land sold each year was as follows:

Year	Acres	Year	Acres
1833	1,221,494	1838	271,070
1834	1,064,454	1839	17,787
1835	2,931,181	1840	19,174
1836	2,023,709	1841	21,635
1837	256,354	1842	43,966
		Total Acres	7,870,824

Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, Vol. 13 (1850), 470-72.

[39]The 1840 figure was computed from the United States Sixth Census, 1840 Compendium, p. 228, using 500 pounds as the average weight per bale. The figure has been estimated as high as 483,504 bales.

[40]Frank Owsley, "The Pattern of Migration and Settlement of the Southern Frontier," Journal of Southern History, Vol. 2 (1945), 62; A. J. Brown, History of Newton County from 1834 to 1894 (Jackson,

The possibility of a career in politics and a lucrative litigation business, arising out of a need to clarify land titles based on Indian claims, pre-emption laws and irregular land sales, attracted many young lawyers to the nascent towns in the Hills.[41] Speculators and capitalists were also present in large numbers. The need for construction timber, gins, gristmills, blacksmiths, tanners, and artisans attracted other settlers.[42] Ingraham described the population of Raymond, a small town in Hinds County as follows:

> There are many enterprising professional men and merchants in the village from almost every state in the Union, but they are generally bachelors, and congregate at the hotels, so that for the number of inhabitants the proportion of families and dwellings is very small.[43]

From accounts for other places, Ingrham's description was apparently typical.

Traveling through the Cumberland and Ohio valleys in the 1830's James Hall observed that "it requires the united influences of many individuals and various interests and concurrence of a diversity of

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Mississippi: Clarion-Ledger Co., 1894), pp. 36-44; William A. Love, "Lowndes County, Its Antiquities and Pioneer Settlers," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 7 (1903), 362.

[41]Reuben Davis, Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1890); Joseph G. Baldwin, The Flush Times of Alabama and Mississippi, A Series of Sketches (New York: D. Appleton, 1854); Ingraham, op. cit., footnote 15.

[42]Ingraham, op. cit., footnote 15, pp. 159-82; Edwin A. Davis, editor, "A Northern Sojourner's Remembrances of the Mississippi," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 12 (1950), 127; Mary J. Welsh, "Recollections of Pioneer Life in Mississippi," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 4 (1901), 343-56.

[43]Ingraham, op. cit., footnote 15, p. 167; James S. Buckingham, The Slave States of America, Vol. 1 (London: Fisher, Son, and Co., 1842), pp. 450-51.

circumstances to give impulse to the healthy growth of towns."[44] This observation was applicable to Mississippi in 1840. The 291 towns shown in Figure 6 are fairly evenly distributed, except for the sparsely settled and less developed Delta and Piney Woods regions.[45] Each county had a county seat town where records were kept, taxes paid, and court held. For other towns, a nucleus was formed if two or three merchants could be induced to locate at a specific site. Most interior towns had between 150 and 300 inhabitants and all were dependent on agriculture.[46]

It is apparent that agricultural employment was overwhelmingly dominant in Mississippi in 1840 (Table V). This would not have been detrimental to the growth and development of towns had it been able to support substantial employment in urban-related functions. However, the ratio of combined employment in commerce and manufacturing to that in agriculture was one to forty.

Almost no capital was available for investment in manufacturing and commerce. The wealth of the planters was consumed in the purchase

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[44]James Hall, The West: Its Commerce and Navigation (Cincinnati: Applegate and Co., 1848), pp. 227-28.

[45]Based in part on (1) contemporary maps: Sketch of the Inhabited Parts of the Mississippi Territory Adjoining to the Great River, 1802; Map of Mississippi, 1822; Young and Decker, Mississippi, 1823 edition; Brafford, Mississippi, 1836 and 1838 editions; and Morse and Breese, Mississippi, 1842 edition; (2) contemporary bibliography sources: Ingraham, op. cit., footnote 15, pp. 159-82; Franklin L. Riley, "Extinct Towns and Villages of Mississippi," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 5 (1902), 310-83; Davis, op. cit., footnote 41; and (3) "Cities, Towns, and Communities" of the Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

[46]Riley, op. cit., footnote 45, pp. 311-83. From a list of towns possessing such a location, the estimated population average in 1854 was 207. J. D. B. DeBow, Statistical View of the United States (Washington: Beverley Tucker, Senate Printer, 1854), pp. 383-93.

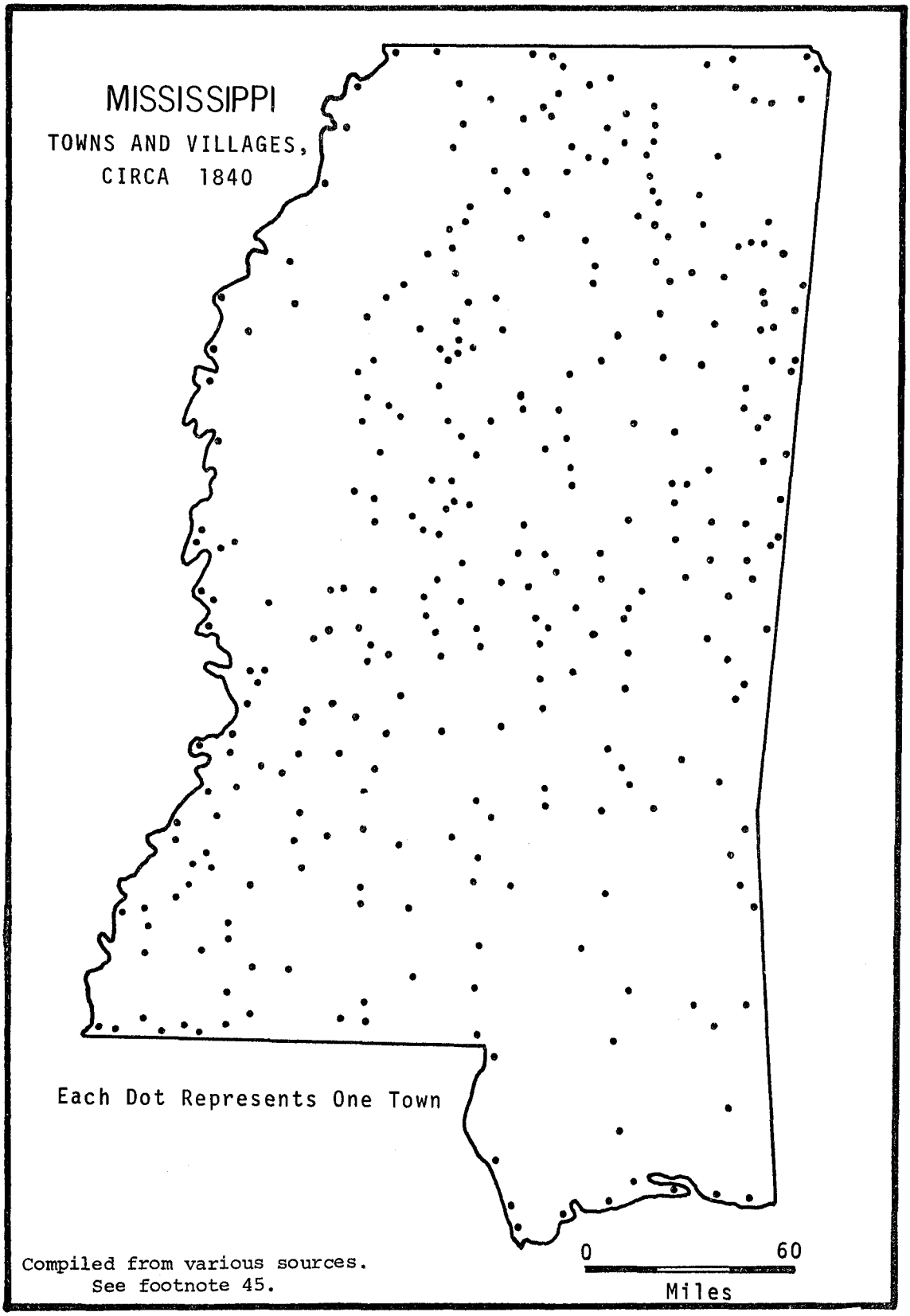


Figure 6. Mississippi towns and villages, circa 1840.

TABLE V

MISSISSIPPI: EMPLOYMENT IN AGRICULTURE, COMMERCE AND MANUFACTURING BY REGIONS IN 1840

Region	Agriculture	Commerce	Manufacturing
Natchez District	38,504	678	538
Hill Section	72,585	456	1,291
Delta	15,294	90	61
Piney Woods	14,721	79	256
Total	141,104	1,303	2,146

Source: United States Census, 1840 Compendium, pp. 230-37.

of land and slaves and in tariffs, freight costs, and commissions. The annual net income of small planters and yeomen farmers amounted to only a few hundred dollars, certainly not enough for investment purposes, and since their cultural heritage was agrarian they saw little future in anything else. Planning for town growth was not considered essential to most Mississippians in 1840. The typical town was no more than a nebulous cluster of mercantile and service establishments located in a place convenient to consumers.

C. TRANSPORTATION AND NASCENT TOWNS

The Influence of Rivers on the Pattern and Development of Towns

The first towns in Mississippi developed because they were accessible to water transportation. Rivers were much easier to use than early Indian trails. However, the major rivers touched only the margins of the state and flowed across the grain of migration, restricting their use as avenues of penetration.

Vicksburg, Grand Gulf, Rodney, Natchez, Port Gibson, and Fort Adams occupied sites where meanders of the Mississippi River impinge on the Loess Bluffs. All owed their early existence to the movement of traffic along the river and served as ports through which cotton produced in the interior was shipped. The Yazoo River joins the Mississippi at Vicksburg. This river and its tributaries drain the Delta and the northwestern section of the Hills. The Big Black River flows through the Hills in a southwesterly direction to a junction with the Mississippi near Grand Gulf. It was not until after the Civil War that interior

towns began to rival Natchez and Vicksburg.[47]

Commerce was first transacted on flatboats moving down the Mississippi River and accepting produce in exchange for goods and services. Many such boats, outfitted with shelves and counters, carried groceries, dry goods, hardware, and liquors, and stopped wherever there was a landing and chance for a sale. Occasionally they were fitted with gristmills operated by the force of the current, and would grind meal and flour for settlers along the river. Some carried tinsmiths, blacksmiths, and toolmakers willing to ply their trade. One Spanish officer calculated that mercantile flatboats accounted for about 85 per cent of the total commerce on the lower Mississippi in the late 1770's.[48]

Within ten years after steamboats first appeared on the Mississippi they had largely replaced flatboats. By 1830 they were operating on the lower Yazoo, the Big Black upstream to Amsterdam, and the Tombigbee to Columbus. Flatboats continued to transport cargoes between upriver sites and landings at the head of steamboat navigation.[49]

As a general rule steamboats would stop to deposit or take aboard freight, passengers, and wood for fuel at any landing serving three or more families.[50] Trade carried on by errand-running steamers and peddling boats had a dwarfing effect on towns by diverting their business

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[47]H. S. Tanner, A Map of Mississippi With Its Roads and Distances, ca. 1836; W. A. Evans, "Steamboats on the Upper Tombigbee in the Early Days," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 4 (1942), 216-24; H. S. Fulkerson, Random Recollections of Early Days in Mississippi (Vicksburg: Vicksburg Printing and Publishing Co., 1885), p. 20.

[48]Leland D. Baldwin, The Keelboat Age on Western Waters (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1941), pp. 9, 186-87.

[49]Moore, op. cit., footnote 38, pp. 54-55.

[50]Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, Vol. 1 (1840), 449; Buckingham, op. cit., footnote 43, pp. 396-97.

and stifling trade.[51] Nevertheless, several towns grew up at landings where calls were common. For example:

> . . . a new and flourishing town of fifty houses, called Amsterdam, has jumped up on the Big Black River, about 100 miles above its junction with the Mississippi in the last 12 months. It is in the heart of a rich cotton growing country, and steamboats easily ascend to it.[52]

Merchants in Amsterdam carried on an extensive wagon trade with farmers and merchants operating country stores in the surrounding area. Even though a cholera epidemic wiped out about half its population in the winter of 1832-1833, Amsterdam was incorporated in the following year and was made a port of entry by an act of Congress. However, it was unable to withstand the loss of trade to Edwards, a new town two miles north on the Vicksburg to Jackson railroad. With the town's economic viability gone, plus the high incidence of cholera and other water borne diseases, merchants and inhabitants quickly sought new locations. All vestiges of the town had disappeared by the mid 1850's.[53]

The first steamboats appeared on the Tombigbee River in 1818. Four years later they were navigating beyond Gainesville, Alabama, to Columbus. At the peak of the high water season, steamboats normally made two trips monthly to the upper river ports: Cotton Gin Port, Camargo, Van Buren, and Aberdeen. Supplies purchased by country merchants, farmers, and large planters were deposited at warehouses along the river and hauled to their destination by wagons. Freight was

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[51] Daily Tropic, New Orleans, October 2, 1845.

[52] Niles' Register, Vol. 45 (1833), 198.

[53] Riley, op. cit., footnote 45, pp. 336-37.

picked up for the trip downstream to Mobile.[54]

The Pearl and Pascagoula rivers lie wholly within the state. The lower Pearl, between Gainesville and the Gulf, was a haven for pirates and freebooters during the flatboat era and was not used as a regular outlet for goods. Occasionally steamboats called at Columbia. The navigable reaches of both rivers lay entirely within the sparsely settled Piney Woods. Near the coast the channels of both rivers were extremely treacherous. By the time the two basins began to develop, railroads had displaced steamboats as the major conveyors of goods in Mississippi.

The numerous stops by steamboats to pick up and deposit freight decentralized trade along the rivers. The mercantile activity of towns inland from the Mississippi River was governed largely by the seasonal production of cotton and by the seasonal appearance of steamboats.[55] However, steamboats were not flexible enough to provide all transportation needs, especially with settlement of the interior.

The Influence of Early Roads on the Pattern and Development of Towns

The first road in Mississippi was constructed between Natchez and Thompson's Creek in 1785.[56] Roads became increasingly important as choice riverine sites were taken and as the interior was settled, but they received relatively little attention for a variety of reasons.

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[54]Evans, op. cit., footnote 47, pp. 216-24.

[55]"Lowndes County," Part 1, W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

[56]Holmes, op. cit., footnote 7, p. 46.

(1) Capital and labor were not available to construct roads. (2) Planters located along navigable streams had little desire to support internal improvement programs. They could market their cotton early and receive top prices, forcing producers in the interior to sell on a saturated market. (3) Hauling of cotton was performed during the slack season. Supplies were brought in on the return trips. Speed was not essential because the major commercial items were nonperishable. (4) The seasonal nature of traffic allowed planters and farmers to act independently of freight companies, which no doubt retarded the development of professional wagoners. Had freight companies operated in the state, there would have been at least one element actively advocating a road-building program. (5) In typical Anglo-Saxon tradition, citizens worked off road taxes by laboring on the roads for two or three days each year. This resulted in little more than filling in ruts or clearing a path through the forest.[57]

Most early roads in the state were either thoroughfares or feeder roads to the water routes. Few towns were established along such famous roads as the Natchez Trace, Three Chopped Way, Gaines' Trace, the Robinson Road, and Jackson's Military Road (Figure 7).[58] In 1801 the Choctaws and Chickasaws permitted the United States government to make

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[57]Balthasar H. Meyer, History of Transportation in the United States Before 1860 (New York: Peter Smith, 1948), pp. 249-50, 261; George R. Taylor, The Transportation Revolution: 1815-1860 (New York: Rienhart and Co., Inc., 1951), pp. 15-17. Historical data pertaining to professional wagoners in Mississippi is, to this writer's knowledge, non-existent.

[58]Tanner, op. cit., footnote 47; Historical Mississippi (no date), Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

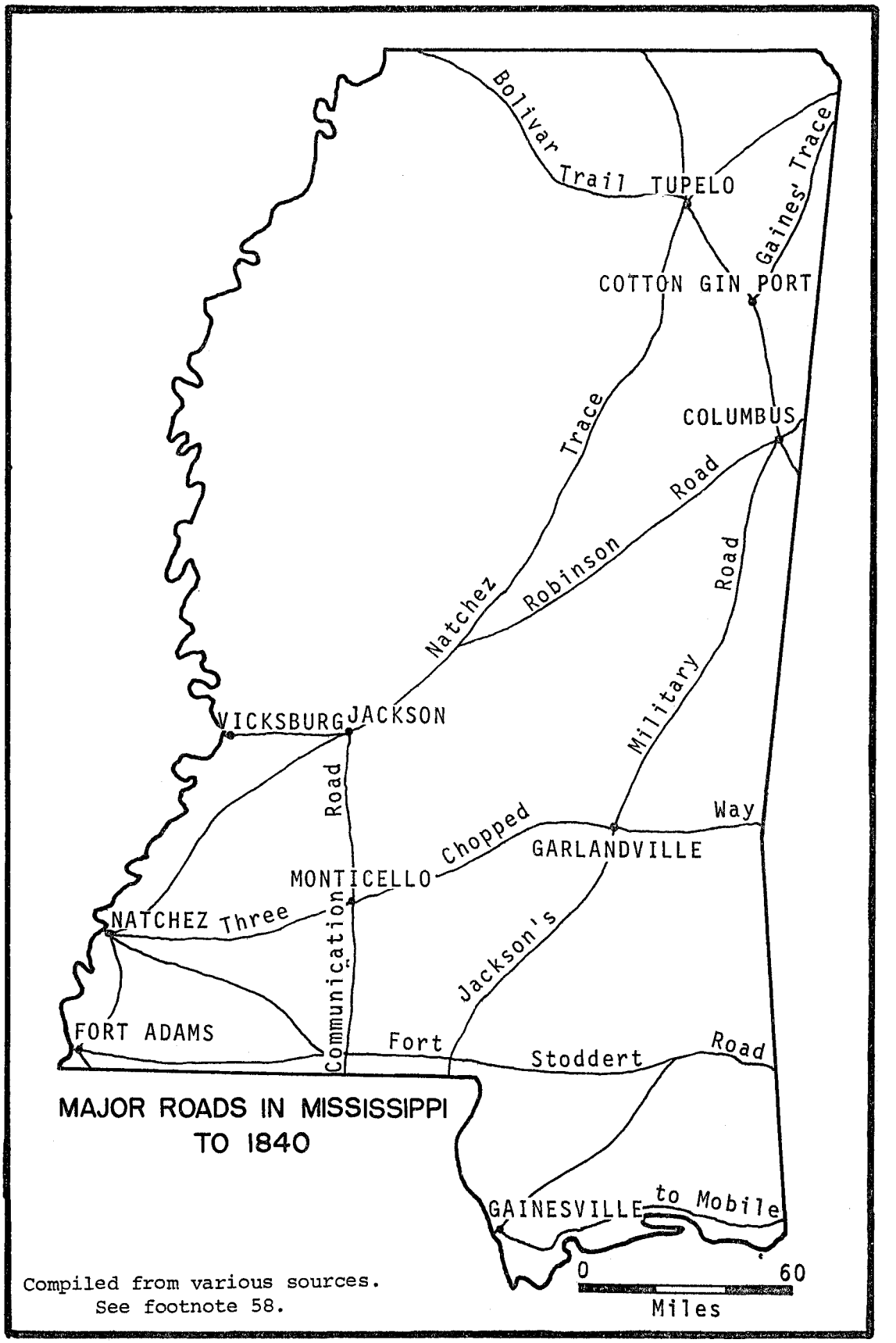


Figure 7. Major roads in Mississippi to 1840.

the Natchez Trace passable for wagons and guaranteed safe passage through their territory for American citizens. In addition to other concessions the Indians were granted the right to operate all ferries and inns along the road. By mid-decade the Trace was the most traveled road in the Old Southwest, but was used primarily by riverboat men returning northward after depositing their cargo at New Orleans.[59]

Traffic on the Trace declined after 1815 because travelers preferred the ease and comfort of steamboats and because the defeat of the Creek Indians allowed traffic to move across the coastal plain and around the southern Appalachians with reasonable safety. A few years later a traveler found the Trace virtually abandoned.[60] Except for Selsertown, Greenville, Rocky Springs, and a few others in the Natchez District, towns did not develop along the Trace, which was a ridge road passing through an area where soils and terrain did not invite settlement. Moreover, it had fallen into disuse before the Indians relinquished claim to the territory through which most of the road passed.

In 1807 the legislature approved an act to mark and open a road from Natchez to Fort Stoddert. This road, referred to as Three Chopped Way, was the first thoroughfare through the Piney Woods. By 1811 a part

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[59]Martin Abbot, "Indian Policy and Management in the Mississippi Territory, 1798-1817," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 14 (1952), 168-69; Charles J. Kappler, editor, Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties, Vol. II (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1904), pp. 55-56; Mount Locust on the Old Natchez Trace, published by the Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1960, p. 3.

[60]Randle B. Truett, Trade and Travel Around the Southern Appalachians Before 1830 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1935), pp. 3-49; F. Cumings, "Sketches of a Tour to the Western Country," Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, Reuben G. Thwaites, editor, Vol. IV (Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1904), p. 315.

of the road was enlarged to facilitate wagon traffic, but in the early 1820's traffic declined and the road was largely abandoned.[61]

Gaines' Trace, Jackson's Military Road, and the Robinson Road were also thoroughfares through Indian territory. These roads had fallen into partial disuse because of declining migration during the 1820's, and towns did not develop along them since they passed through areas uninviting to settlers.[62]

The first local roads sometimes followed Indian trails, but since these often did not lead to settled areas new roads had to be constructed. A system of local roads was essential if settlers were to market their produce and carry on necessary government functions. The law stipulated that a site must be selected within five miles of the center of each county and a building erected to house records, hold court, and serve as a jail.[63] Towns invariably evolved at these sites. Furthermore, local markets could not be many miles distant, since prices paid for farm products were not high enough to absorb the high cost of transportation

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[61]Dunbar Rowland, History of Mississippi: The Heart of the South, Vol. I (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1925), p. 568; John W. Monette, History of the Discovery and Settlement of the Valley of the Mississippi, Vol. II (New York: Harper Publishing Co., 1846), p. 380; Hattie Magee, "Reconstruction in Lawrence and Jefferson Davis Counties," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 11 (1910), 165.

[62]Colonel George Strother Gaines Manuscript in the Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama; "The Jackson or Military Road," Tuscumbia, Tuscumbia, Alabama, November 12, 1824. William A. Love, "General Jackson's Military Road," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 11 (1910), 411-17; Mississippi State Gazette, Natchez, August 4, 1821; Dawson A. Phelps, "The Robinson Road," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 12 (1950), 157-58.

[63]This principle is well borne out in existing "Minute Books" of the Board of Police for Mississippi counties.

by land. The problems of importing merchandise and disposing of produce over bad roads made merchants aware of the advantages to be gained from good road connections to river port towns.

Storekeepers were forced to diversify their economic activities to compensate for the smallness of the market and poor transportation. In this way each nascent town became a center for various services. For example, in 1832 W. Roberts combined the operation of a store, cotton gin, and gristmill at Centre in Attala County. Several years later a tannery, shoe factory, three stores, a saloon, post office, blacksmith shop, and a sawmill were added. Four individuals controlled all business establishments. Merchandise for the general stores came by wagon from Durant, Mississippi, a twenty-five mile trip requiring four days.[64]

Cotton was conveyed from interior towns and plantations to Vicksburg or similar shipping points by wagons at a rate of about twenty miles per day in good weather. In bad weather the rate was slowed to about one mile per hour. Hauling usually began early in the fall to take advantage of high prices and dry roads. By late November the fall rains and cotton wagons had turned the roads into quagmires. Road conditions between Jackson and Vicksburg were vividly illustrated, though perhaps overstated, by one early writer who reported: "the road was so dreadful . . . and so many oxen perished in the yoke in the winter

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[64]Dunbar Rowland, Mississippi: Comprising Sketches of Counties, Towns, Events, Institutions, and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form, Vol. I (Atlanta: Southern Historical Publishing Association, 1907), p. 390; "Centre," W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. For similar examples see: "Huntsville," and "Bluff Springs," W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project.

and spring that . . . one might walk on dead oxen all the way."[65] The average cost of transportation between Jackson and Vicksburg in the 1830's was $1.50 to $2.00 per one hundred pounds, and cotton was transported at a cost of $4.00 to $5.00 per bale.[66]

How much larger an interior town depending on a seasonal agricultural trade would have become had good roads existed is a matter of conjecture. Presumably the number of trade towns would have been fewer, larger, and more specialized had they been more accessible. Lower freight costs also might have led to a concentration of retail trade in fewer towns.

D. CONCLUSIONS

By 1840 the basic patterns of development were established. For almost a century the major economic pursuits of the people would remain the same; however, there would be additions and basic changes in the way these activities were carried out in the Piney Woods, Delta, and Hills (including the Natchez District).

Several classes of towns are easily discernible in early Mississippi. (1) The seaport towns of Mobile and New Orleans were accessible to settlers in the interior via the Mississippi and Tombigbee rivers. Bay St. Louis and other coastal sites possessed good harbors, but they were cut off from a productive hinterland by the Piney Woods.

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[65] Quoted in Bettersworth, op. cit., footnote 4, p. 196.

[66] DeBow's Commercial Review, Vol. 9 (1850), 454; Vol. 11 (1851), 598; and Niles' Register, Vol. 49 (1835), 19.

(2) Towns were established along the Mississippi at Vicksburg, Natchez, Grand Gulf, and other less strategic points. No one location along the Tombigbee north of Columbus had a strong advantage over another; so conditions were unfavorable for the growth and development of larger towns. As the number of steamboats and competition for cargo increased, captains called at almost any hastily constructed landing to pick up and deposit freight. The close spacing of such stops detracted from the centralization of wholesale and retail trade in towns.

(3) State law required each county to have a county seat and fixed its location. Towns were established at these sites. (4) Other towns owed their origin and growth to the development of direct trade with farmers and small planters. These latter two classes of towns were mainly in the interior and were accessible only by poorly developed and maintained roads. General mercantile stores functioned as nuclei of new towns and helped them grow by supplying merchandise, extending credit, and collecting and shipping cotton. The role of planters in urban growth was largely negative. Thus, by 1840 a majority of Mississippi's 291 towns were small in size and functioned as local trade centers for their immediate area.

CHAPTER III

AN AGRARIAN ECONOMY AND EXTINCT TRADE TOWNS

A. THE COTTON ECONOMY AND TRADE: A BASIC FUNCTION OF TOWNS

The Increase in Cotton Production and Influences on Trade Towns

"Historically, no other occupation has dominated the energies of the Southeast as has cotton production. Its economic, political, and cultural implications have been all prevailing."[1] Cotton was adapted to cultivation on any scale and, acre for acre, farmers and planters competed on fairly even terms. The harvested crop could be stored almost indefinitely or hauled several miles to gins and markets. An established market also allowed it to be viewed as a ready-cash crop. By 1840 Mississippi's economic development was almost wholly dependent on cotton production.

After slavery was abolished, cotton production continued under the share cropping system which was an outgrowth of the lack of currency as well as a response to the crop lien devised in 1867 to help the Negro adjust to a new system of cotton production.[2] The crop

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[1]Merle Prunty, Jr., "Recent Quantitative Changes in the Cotton Regions of the Southeastern States," Economic Geography, Vol. 27 (1951), 189.

[2]Rupert B. Vance, Human Geography of the South, A Study in Regional Resources and Human Adequacy (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1932), p. 187.

lien system allowed farmers to pledge their anticipated crops as security for loans or for goods.[3] Merchants did not actually charge interest; however, the difference between cash and credit prices amounted to a practical interest charge that averaged approximately 25 per cent. In 1870 these charges at several stores near Summit, Mississippi, ranged between 40 and 100 per cent. Fifty years later interest often cost farmers as much as 52 per cent.[4] Farmers were compelled to market a disproportionately large amount of cotton as payment for items acquired on credit from local merchants who in turn purchased on credit. Cotton was the only real collateral a Mississippi farmer could provide. Thus the crop lien was a self-defeating credit system that held farmers captive and deprived trade towns of profits by passing it on to other centers and other regions in the form of interest.

If there were fears about cotton's revival as the dominant commercial crop in Mississippi after 1865, they had disappeared by 1875. Financiers and credit merchants were more interested in maximum cotton delivery by their clientele than in stablizing production and advocating crop diversification. Consequently, the economic base of towns continued to depend on the demand for farm products, farm purchasing, and the financing of economic activities related to a single commercial crop.

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[3] Laws of Mississippi, 1866-1867, pp. 569-72.

[4] Robert Somers, The Southern States Since the War, 1870-1871 (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1871), p. 241; John K. Bettersworth, Mississippi: A History (Austin, Texas: The Steck Co., 1959), p. 344; Yearbook of Agriculture, 1927 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1927), pp. 20-22, 240-43.

Communities of farmers became more important after antebellum plantations were broken into smaller units, and there was an increasing demand for merchandise in smaller quantities. The period between 1865 and 1920 has been characterized as the country store epoch, more noticeable in Mississippi than in other cotton-producing states.[5] Farmers preferred to trade with nearby merchants willing to extend credit in the form of merchandise and the use of machinery--cotton gins, gristmills, etc.--at a price payable in cotton.[6] In addition to attracting trade, ownership of gins allowed merchants to oversee the quality of ginning. Although business was a paramount function, nascent towns also assumed a social significance and a community identity with the additions of a post office, church, and school.

Northern wholesale firms eliminated factors by establishing wholesale stores in Vicksburg, Jackson, Meridian, and similar cities, and by hiring drummers to sell goods and organize new store outlets.[7] By the mid 1880's the factorage system had been replaced by local merchandising outlets supplied at regular intervals by drummers.[8]

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[5]Thomas D. Clark, Pills, Petticoats and Plows, The Southern Country Store (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), pp. vii-ix. Vernon L. Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1947), p. 71.

[6]"Circular of the Chamber of Commerce of Vicksburg to the Cotton Spinners of Europe and America," reprinted in Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, Vol. 62 (1870), 230.

[7]Hinds County Gazette, Raymond, Mississippi, October 14, 1868; Vicksburg Times, Vicksburg, Mississippi, December 19, 1869.

[8]Harold D. Woodman, King Cotton and His Retainers, Financing and Marketing the Cotton Crop of the South, 1800-1925 (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1968), pp. 77, 268; Alfred H. Stone, "The Influence of the Factorage System," The South in the Building of the Nation, Vol. VI (Richmond, Virginia: The Southern Historical Publication Society, 1909), pp. 345-51.

This extension of merchandising facilities in interior communities was practically a commercial revolution.[9]

Numerous cotton buyers, representing textile firms in the northeast, dealt directly with local merchants who had received the farmer's cotton in lien of a cash settlement for debts contracted. As early as 1869 it was reported that buyers were located throughout the state at places nonexistent before the war.[10] Twenty years later, following an improvement in transportation and communication to interior localities, it was believed that only a lack of banking facilities prevented all cotton from being sold at interior markets.[11] This slowness in channeling credit through banks undoubtedly had the affect of perpetuating commercial cotton production and retarding agricultural diversification and industrial development. Ultimately, the small town would experience a change as control of credit shifted from merchants to banks in county seat towns. The merchant's immediate control over the farmer's economic life was both reduced and modified after 1930 by the improvement of banking facilities.

The distance farmers were willing to travel for goods and services was limited, especially since different places supplied the

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[9]William C. Harris, Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 223.

[10]Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, Vol. 61 (1869), 364; Stone, op. cit., footnote 8, pp. 349-50.

[11]Bradstreets, Vol. 13 (1886), 226. In 1880 there were six state and twenty-five private banks; in 1890 there were twelve national, forty-seven state, and sixteen private banks; and in 1908 there were thirty national and 316 state banks in Mississippi. Davis R. Dewey, "Banking in the South," The South in the Building of the Nation, op. cit., footnote 8, p. 429.

same goods and services under similar conditions. It was not essential for mercantile establishments to be attractive to credit customers who seldom had much choice as to which store to patronize under the crop lien system. Individual and social overheads were reduced to a minimum. Many stores were large, unpainted buildings with narrow front doors (Figure 8). The size of the store was an important consideration for merchants, since they needed to stock goods for the seasonal expansion of trade.[12] Steps were constructed along one side of the store, leaving two sides for loading and unloading wagons. To the rear of the store were woodsheds, storage facilities, and the privy. Stores were clustered, while other buildings, including warehouses, blacksmith shops, mule-and-wagon barns, boarding houses and hotels, and residences were less concentrated.[13]

Before 1865 planters had issued clothing, food, and other necessities to more than half of the population. Following emancipation

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[12]The stock covered a wide range of articles, One store advertised as "Dealers in Dry Goods, Clothing, Hardware, Boots, Shoes, Groceries, Bagging, Ropes, Ties, etc." M. Faler and Company Papers, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. Stores constructed in the pre-automobile years were invariably larger than more recently constructed stores.

[13]Schools, churches, blacksmith shops, saloons and etc., are nearly always mentioned in: Franklin L. Riley, "Extinct Towns and Villages of Mississippi," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 5 (1902), 310-83; W. P. A., Federal Writers' Project; local histories, and whenever any town is described. At Lake Como, Jasper County, the interests expressed by a few individuals in schools were partly responsible for a number of people building homes nearby for their children to attend school. S. G. Thigpen, A Boy in Rural Mississippi and Other Stories (Picayune, Mississippi: 1966), p. XVI.

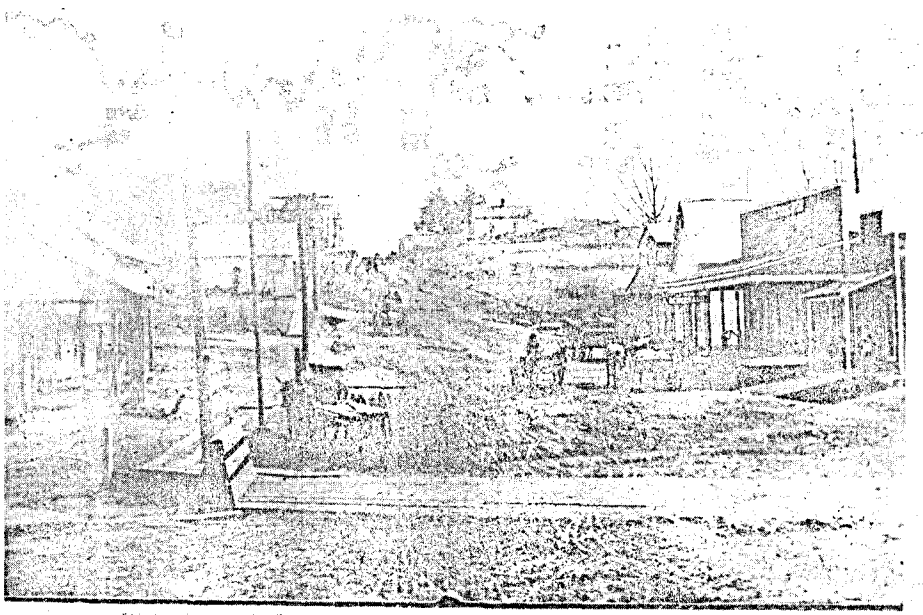


Figure 8. Street scene in Philadelphia, Mississippi, 1908.



Figure 8. Street scene in Philadelphia, Mississippi, 1908.

many plantation owners opened stores and charged tenants for goods.[14] Plantation stores decentralized trade, especially in the Delta, which was the last stronghold of the plantation system.

The Post Civil War Delta

In the Delta counties the population increased from 80,000 in 1860 to 109,000 in 1880, 214,000 in 1900, and 351,000 in 1920. In 1860 settlement was concentrated along the margins of the Hills and the Mississippi River. Few settlers had pushed into the interior. The ratio of Negro to white in the Delta was approximately five to one. Sunflower County, located in the center of the Delta, had a population of 3,917 Negroes and 1,102 whites.[15]

Flooding, the expense of clearing land, and the confusion of land titles retarded settlement in the Delta following the Civil War. Order in land titles was partially re-established by 1880 and large land sales resulted. The Louisville, New Orleans, and Texas Railroad Company acquired almost 2,000,000 acres of land in 1881. The Delta and Pine Land Company acquired 600,000 acres in 1886. Both companies stimulated agricultural development through intensive land sales and settlement

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[14]The establishment of plantation stores is illustrated by the Eli J. Capell Plantation Diaries and Record Books, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. During the antebellum period the day-books for the plantation in Amite County showed normal entries, but after the war entries began to refer to the store. This is one of many examples.

[15]United States Census, "Population," 1860-1920.

programs.[16] By 1900 the Delta had developed into a major cotton producing region.

The post Civil War agricultural system in the Delta was even less favorable to town development than the antebellum plantation system had been. A comparison of three maps reveals that fewer towns were established in the Delta in conjunction with the population influx than had been the case in the Hills in the 1830's.[17] At least three causes are evident. First, adjuncts to plantations--cotton gins, blacksmith shops, saw mills, and commissaries--had a decentralizing effect on the concentration of activities in nearby towns. The major additions to postbellum plantations were commissaries. About one-fourth of all Delta plantations maintained commissaries through which tenants and wage hands were advanced merchandise valued at an average of $13.00 per month for approximately seven months. The average net income of tenants after "settling-up" in the fall was $227.00. Delta wholesale grocery companies estimated in 1920 that 50 to 90 per cent of their wholesale grocery business was with plantation commissaries.[18] The plantation credit system gave tenants almost no opportunity to patronize nonplantation business establishments.

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[16] Arthell Kelley, "Levee Building and the Settlement of the Yazoo Basin," The Southern Quarterly, Vol. 1 (1963), 298-300.

[17] J. H. Colton, Mississippi, ca. 1860; "Map of Mississippi," Gray's Atlas, 1873; E. G. Wall, Official Map of the State of Mississippi, 1882.

[18] T. J. Woofter, Landlord and Tenant on the Cotton Plantation (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1936), p. 203; W. J. Carson, "Financing the Production and Distribution of Cotton," Federal Reserve Bulletin, 1923, p. 174.

Second, land holdings were large. A study of 646 plantations having five or more tenant families found that the average total acreage was 907, of which 385 acres were planted to crops. The average number of families per plantation was fourteen. Railroads were quick to provide large plantations with freight services. For example, along the Yazoo Valley route between Vicksburg and the Tennessee line via Rolling Fork, Leland, and Clarksdale there were seventy-two stops in 1900, averaging three and one-half miles between stops.[19]

Third, Negroes comprised the bulk of the people in the Delta.

> Every step taken in the development of this section has been dependent upon and marked by, an increased Negro population. The railroad rights of way through its forest have been cut out by the Negro, and every mile of track laid by his hands. These forest lands have been cultivated by him into fertile fields, and their subsequent cultivation has called for his constant service. The levees upon which the Delta depends for protection from floods have been erected mainly by the Negro, and the daily labor in field and town, in planting and building, in operating gins and compresses and oil mills, in moving trains, in handling the great staple of the country . . . is but the Negro's daily toil.[20]

However, with limited purchasing power the Negro contributed little other than labor and basic consumption to the town-forming process. He had no vested interest nor active voice in towns.

Cotton production had a fourfold effect on trade centers in Mississippi. First, by requiring large amounts of labor, it influenced population numbers and distribution as well as the economic status of the

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[19]Robert L. Brandfon, Cotton Kingdom of the New South: A History of the Yazoo Mississippi Delta from Reconstruction to the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 84.

[20]Alfred H. Stone, Studies in the American Race Problem (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1908), p. 87.

producer. In 1930, 91 per cent of all farms were classed as cotton farms. The size of farms declined from 370 acres in 1860 to 55 acres in 1930. The proportion of tenant farmers increased from 43 per cent in 1880 to 72 per cent in 1930 (Table VI). High interest rates and dependence on one crop reduced tenants to a subsistence level. One student of economic history estimated that the per capita income of Mississippi farmers in 1900 was about equal to that of 1840.[21] The average annual cash income per farm between 1920 and 1930 was $605.00. A study of 2,000 farm tenants in the 1930's revealed that the average per capita income was $105.43.[22] Ten years later the average income was $192.00.[23] In 1950 the average income was $703.00.[24]

Second, the mercantile activity of towns was governed largely by the seasonal production of cotton.

> The cropper sees but little cash during the cultivating and growing season. Now that he has money in hand he goes on a spending spree. The . . . stores which summer-long have had in stock only the most utilitarian foods such as beans, fat meat, flour, lard, and coffee, now flaunt on their shelves the unaccustomed luxuries of dried figs and raisins, apples and oranges, lemons and grapes, and tinned California fruit.

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[21]Richard A. Easterlin, "Interregional Differences in Per Capita Income, Population, and Total Income, 1840-1950," Trends in the American Economy in the Nineteenth Century, Vol. 24, Studies in Income and Wealth by the Conference on Research in Income and Wealth (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 97-102.

[22]Charles S. Johnson, Edwin R. Embree, and W. W. Alexander, The Collapse of Cotton Tenancy (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1935), p. 1.

[23]Harold Hoffsommer, editor, The Social and Economic Significance of Land Tenure in the Southwestern States (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1950), p. 511.

[24]Harvey S. Perloff et al., Regions, Resources, and Economic Growth (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960), p. 530.

TABLE VI

CHARACTERISTICS OF FARMING IN MISSISSIPPI, 1850-1964

Year	Average Size of Farms: Acres	Number of Farms	Full Owners	Part Owners and Managers	Tenants	(%)	Number of Cotton Farms	(%)	Number of Cotton Gins
1850	308	33,960							
1860	370	42,840							
1870	193	68,023							
1880	156	101,772	57,214		44,558	44			
1890	122	144,318	68,058		76,260	53			
1900	83	220,803	82,021	930	137,852	62			3,780
1910	68	274,382	82,475	10,416	181,491	66			3,283
1920	67	272,101	83,768	8,531	179,802	64			1,695
1930	55	312,663	77,382	9,664	225,617	72	282,000	91	1,292
1940	66	291,092	88,697	9,576	192,819	66	260,000	89	1,280
1950	82	251,383	103,053	18,509	129,695	53	191,000	76	1,030
1960	135	138,142	75,283	19,260	43,599	32	77,000	55	698
1964	163	109,141	64,557	18,950	25,634	23	51,000	46	617

Sources: E. G. Wall, Handbook of the State of Mississippi (Jackson, Mississippi: Power and Barksdale, Steam Printers, 1882), p. 11; United States Census, "Agriculture," 1850-1964; Agricultural Statistics: Mississippi, Mississippi Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, Statistical Reporting Service, Supplement Number 7 , Jackson, Mississippi, 1968, p. 12.

> The dry-goods stores, which have sold only work clothes and cheap dresses, now display wondrous suits for men. . . . "Sunday" shoes . . . are now . . . worn everyday. Rayon socks and rayon neckties are bright. . . . Caps will be worn . . . and there are shotgun shells for rabbit-hunting. For the women there are dresses. The stores are crowded.[25]

Accounts were closed in November and December and new books opened in January.[26] With crops moving to markets, retail trade was steady during December and January; however, the volume of trade was limited by income and the willingness of merchants to advance credit on anticipated crops. Between April and August there was almost no cash available for retail trade in the towns.[27] In 1935 the per capita retail trade was $89.00, by 1963 it had increased to $879.00.[28]

Third, cotton was oriented to a world market, and towns were exchange stations in systems that, except for ginning, added no value to the cotton. The distribution of towns was influenced by density of farmers and accessibility, since it was essential that merchants acquire and market the crop with maximum efficiency. The average trade territory was limited mainly by the distance farmers could travel to and from town in a day with time allowed for transacting business.

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[25]David L. Cohn, God Shakes Creation (New York: Harper Brothers Publishers, 1935), pp. 44-45.

[26]Thomas D. Clark, "The Furnishing and Supply System in Southern Agriculture Since 1865," Journal of Southern History, Vol. 12 (1946), 31.

[27]E. F. Nunn and Company, Shuqualak, Mississippi, Ledgers for 1876, 1877, 1887, and 1913. Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi; Calvert's Store, Rio, Mississippi, Ledger Book, 1887, in possession of A. J. Calvert, Collinsville, Mississippi.

[28]Mississippi Statistical Abstract, 1969, Division of Research, College of Business and Industry, Mississippi State University, 1969, p. 411.

Finally, local producers lacked control over the price of cotton. Buyers obtained cotton in local towns at prices below a fair differential from prices at Memphis, New Orleans, and Atlanta. This was made possible by the farmer's lack of knowledge of the selling price of cotton, and by the fact that many farmers sold early to meet their credit obligations. Thus the credit system reduced the total amount of money entering small cotton trade towns.

The Effects of Declining Cotton Production and Crop Diversification on Towns

As previously noted, most Mississippi towns existed to furnish supplies, credit, and services to farmers growing cotton. The reliance upon cotton as the mainstay of the economy offered limited support to an all-year commerce and was detrimental to diversification. Technical developments came slowly, and not all farmers were able to adopt production techniques designed to improve farm efficiency. Many farms were too small, many were operated by farmers lacking education and incentive, and capital was in short supply. Nevertheless, in the present century agricultural change has altered the economic base of many Mississippi towns causing marked changes in function, some progressive and some retrogressive.

The boll weevil appeared in Mississippi in 1907 and was the first in a series of events that affected cotton production. Weevil damage was a major reason for the 55 per cent reduction in cotton production in non-Delta counties between 1900 and 1920 (Table VII). Farmers forced off the farm were employed in the lumber industry of

TABLE VII

MISSISSIPPI: BALES OF COTTON PRODUCED BY REGIONS, 1900-1966

Section of State	1900	1920	1940	1960	1966
Piney Woods	121,802	78,717	140,001	49,295	35,300
Natchez District	135,169	28,001	47,437	14,575	14,180
Hills	612,006	373,312	449,444	560,330	446,220
Delta	368,689	477,497	886,207	923,400	863,100
State Total	1,237,666	957,527	1,523,089	1,547,600	1,358,800

Sources: United States Census, "Agriculture," 1900-1940; Agricultural Statistics: Mississippi, Mississippi Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, Statistical Reporting Service, Supplement Number 7 Jackson, Mississippi, 1968, pp. 28-31.

south Mississippi or in war plants in the Northeast.[29] Production reached pre-weevil levels by 1925 through the use of commercial fertilizers, insecticides, and improved strains of cotton. After an all time peak in 1930 cotton acreages have declined, although there was a slight upward trend between 1940 and 1950. Total production has remained relatively stable since 1940. Perhaps more significant has been the diminishing relative dependence upon cotton after 1930 (Figure 9).

Recent changes in agricultural production have been of two types: Changes in techniques of production with mechanization replacing manual labor, and the change from a labor-intensive crop to others requiring less labor. Without the mechanized means of production 50 per cent of the average farm family's work time was required to produce ten acres of cotton. Between 1940 and 1960 the area under cultivation declined by more than 2.5 million acres. Of this number, one million acres had been producing cotton, implying that there has been less diversification than is commonly assumed. Cattle have replaced mules in pastures, and soybeans is the only crop showing a significant increase since 1956. Actually the decline in cotton acreages had very little effect on the demise of towns. On the other hand, the decline of farm population was a most significant factor.

Cotton production was not easy to mechanize. The four stages of production (preparing and planting, cultivating, thinning and weeding,

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[29] H. P. Todd, "Industrialization in Mississippi, 1903-32," Social Science Studies, Historical Series 1-5, Mississippi State College, 1955, p. 7.

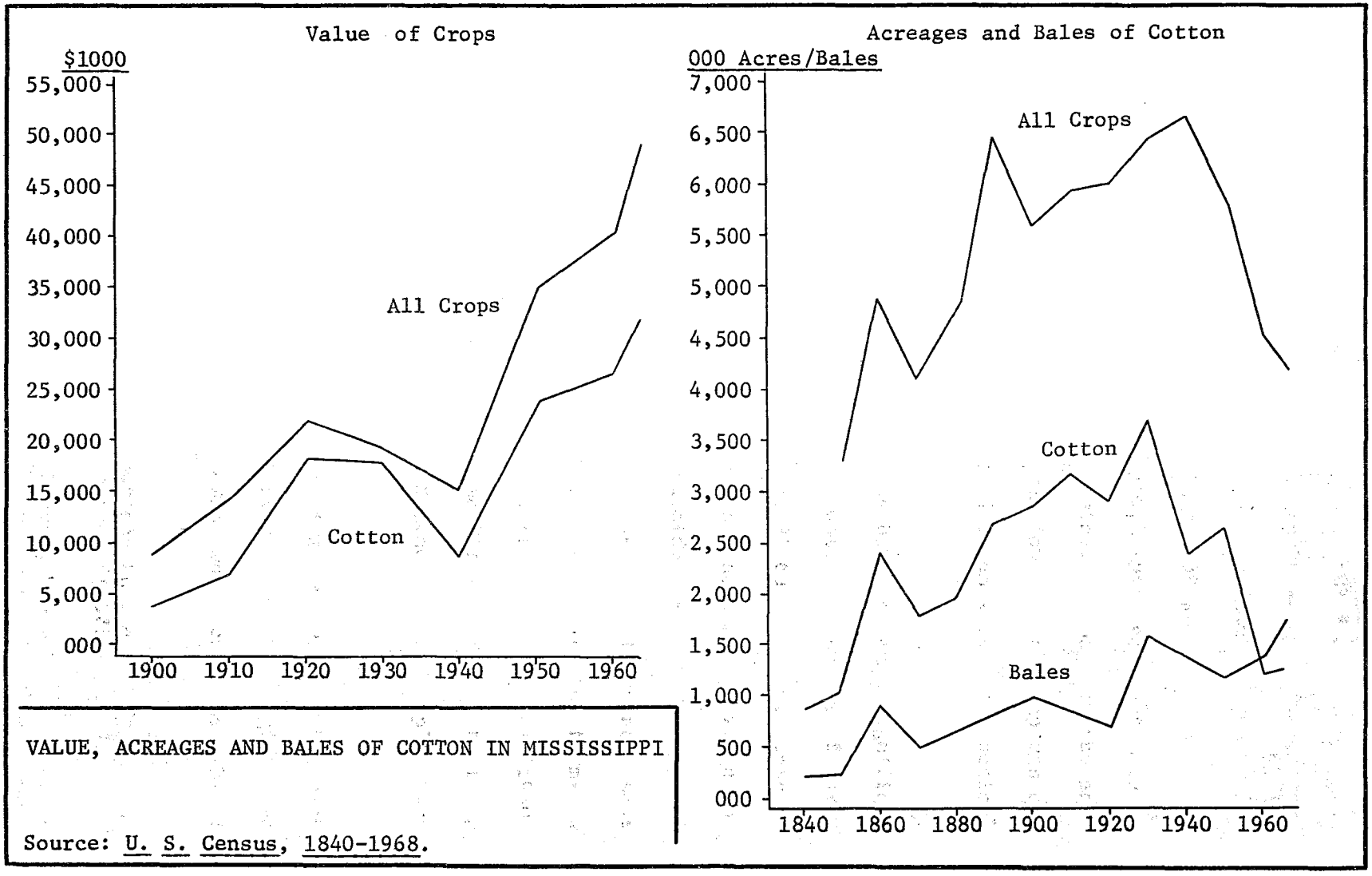


Figure 9. Value, acreages and bales of cotton in Mississippi.

and harvesting) had to be equally mechanized or a peak labor demand remained. The first items of equipment purchased were tractors and cultivation tools. The number of tractors on farms increased from 1,871 in 1920 to 90,347 in 1964. Between 1950 and 1964 the amount of cotton harvested by machine increased to 64 per cent. In 1966, 82 per cent of the cotton was harvested by machine. To pay for the equipment and keep inventory and overhead expenses low, a cash crop was essential; hence farmers who mechanized were forced to enlarge their scale of farming operations.[30]

Perhaps the change in tenancy has been the most significant effect of farm mechanization on small towns. The number of tenant farmers declined from 225,617 in 1930 to 25,634 in 1964. This segment of the farm population that turned to a nonfarming livelihood in the larger towns both in Mississippi and outside the state was certainly large enough to influence the economic base of small towns. Additional evidence of a population shift is noted in the number of farms, which, after a peak in 1930, has declined by 35 per cent. Between 1950 and 1960 the rural nonfarm population in the Hills increased by 173 per cent,[31] and a few towns, Burnside and Mantachie for example, have become rural bedroom communities.

The higher price paid for a better-ginned product was also an incentive for farmers to bypass local gins for improved gins (usually cooperatively owned) in county seat towns, where buyers and banking

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[30]Merle Prunty, Jr., "Land Occupancy in the Southeast: Landmarks and Forecast," Geographical Review, Vol. 42 (1952), 446-47.

[31]John C. Crecink and Herbert Hoover, "Income and Resources, Rural Nonfarm Families in the Clay-Hills of Mississippi," Bulletin 648, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station, 1962, pp. 1-19.

facilities were also available and where it was possible to purchase higher order goods. The implement business, sales and services, and small-scale implement manufacturing enterprises became active in many large towns. Merchants in towns began to depend on the cash wages of cotton laborers more selective in their shopping habits, and for the first time began to actively seek industrial payrolls.

The proportion of the population over sixty-five years of age has almost doubled since 1930, increasing from 3.6 per cent to 7 per cent. One study found that in towns with a population less than 1,000 the aged population had increased by 90 per cent as a result of the youth migrating to larger towns in search of employment.[32] The magnitude of this change is even more significant in view of the fact that the state lost population in 1940, 1950, and 1960. Thus mechanization of cotton production not only changed the economic base of the towns, it also furthered an exodus of young people who might be expected to marry and establish new consuming units.

Changes in transportation also influenced the pattern of towns. Railroads centralized their collecting and distributing operations at county seat towns to compete more favorably with motor transport. The number of automobiles in the state increased from 25,000 in 1916 to 1,000,000 in 1967. During the same fifty years, surfaced roads increased from 4 per cent to 87 per cent of the total road mileage.[33] With

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[32]Marion T. Lofton, "Mississippi's Older People," Bulletin 599, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station, 1960, pp. 3-16.

[33]Marsha P. Hataway, "The Development of the Mississippi State Highway System, 1916-1932," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 28 (1966), 286-303; United States Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1968, 89th. edition (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 553.

automobiles and highways came rolling stores, parcel post, rural free delivery, school consolidation, and cooperative gins, all of which meant the eclipse of small towns. Stores were abandoned by enterprising merchants quick to relocate wherever business appeared best. Whereas traditional changes had led to an addition of centers and growth at the lowest functional level, recent changes have decreased the number of centers and increased trade areas.

Seventy-one per cent (187) of the extinct towns in this study functioned as trade centers in cotton producing areas. Various writers have referred to them as country towns, trade and service centers, crossroad towns, country store villages, "the settlement," or as furnishing and supply towns. If this writer were to select one term to identify them as a group it would be "furnishing and supply" towns, since this implies a complementary relationship between the town and the system of cotton production.

Towns supported by cotton production and trade are divided into four groups to facilitate investigation and analysis of changes affecting their existence. The categories and number of towns in each are: typical trade towns--101, county seat towns--29, river port towns--29, and railroad towns--28.

B. PLATTSBURG: THE GROWTH AND EXTINCTION OF A TYPICAL TRADE TOWN

The typical trade towns shown in Figure 10 were concentrated in the Hills north of the Piney Woods and east of the Delta, an area of predominantly small farms. Their location and density were influenced

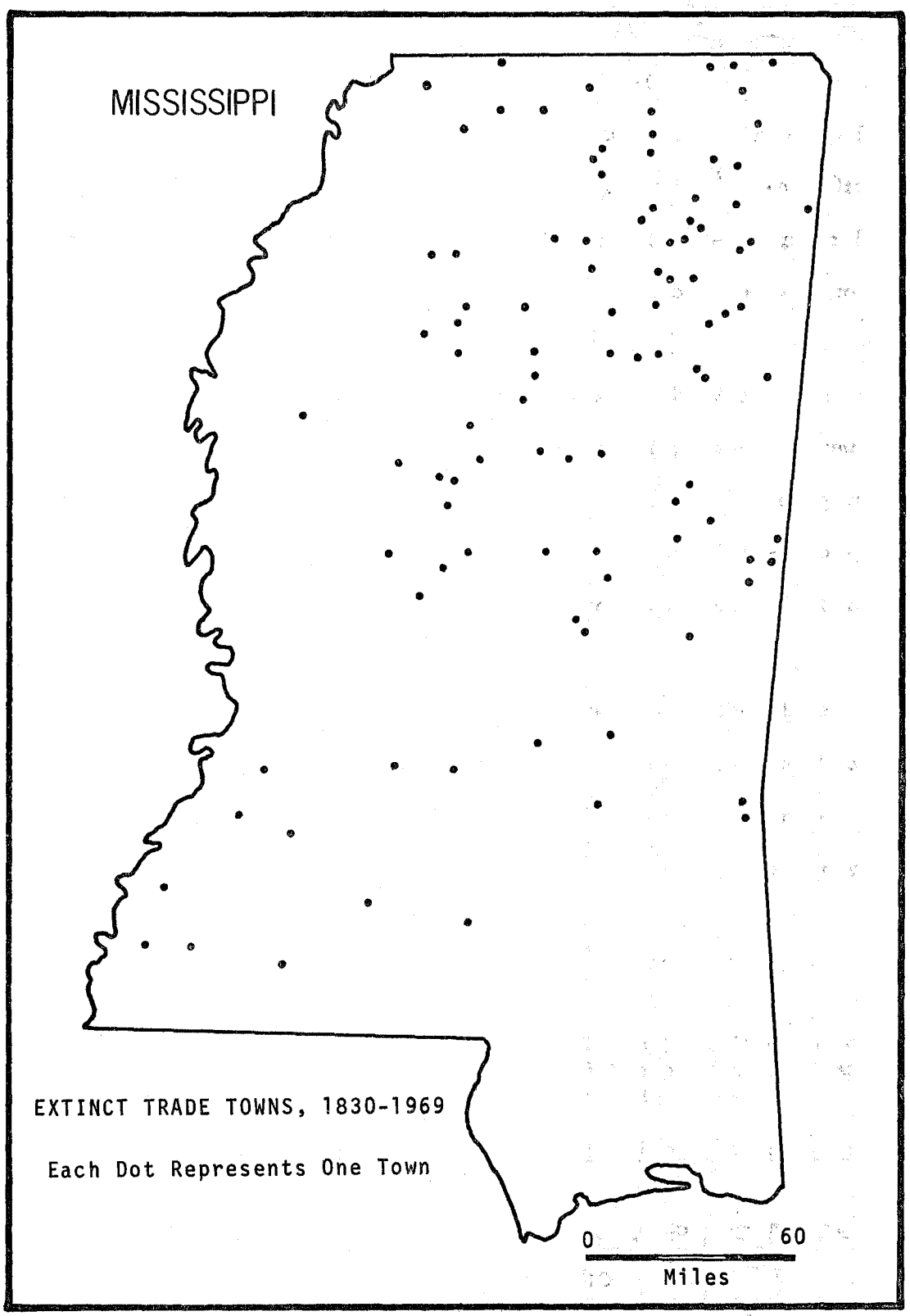


Figure 10. Extinct trade towns, 1830-1969.

primarily by the density of the farm population.[34] Thirty-four towns vanished prior to 1919, thirty-three disappeared between 1920 and 1949, and thirty-four became extinct between 1950 and 1969.

Plattsburg, representative of the many extinct trade towns in Mississippi, was located in Winston County (Figure 11).[35] When Winston County was surveyed and formed in 1833 it comprised a rectangular block of territory containing twenty-four townships, but lost three townships to Choctaw County in 1871.

Within Winston County are the headwaters of the Pearl and Noxubee rivers. Clay beds lying near the surface impede the downward cutting of streams, reduce soil permeability, and cause flooding during winter months. Flooding affected the early situation of Plattsburg by partially isolating the town and providing merchants with a "natural" trade territory (Figure 11).

The dominant natural vegetation was forest. On the ridges were loblolly pine (Pinus Talda), with an intermixture of "scrub oak" of the blackjack and post varieties. The more fertile soil of the river botton was thick with cane when the county was first settled in the early 1830's.[36]

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[34]For a similar finding see, Glenn T. Trewartha, "The Unincorporated Hamlet, One Element of the American Settlement Fabric," Annals, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 33 (1943), 51-52.

[35]H. S. Tanner, A Map of Mississippi with Its Roads and Distances, ca. 1836; J. H. Colton, Mississippi, ca. 1856.

[36]Charles Mohr, The Timber Pines of the Southern United States, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1896), pp. 107-11.

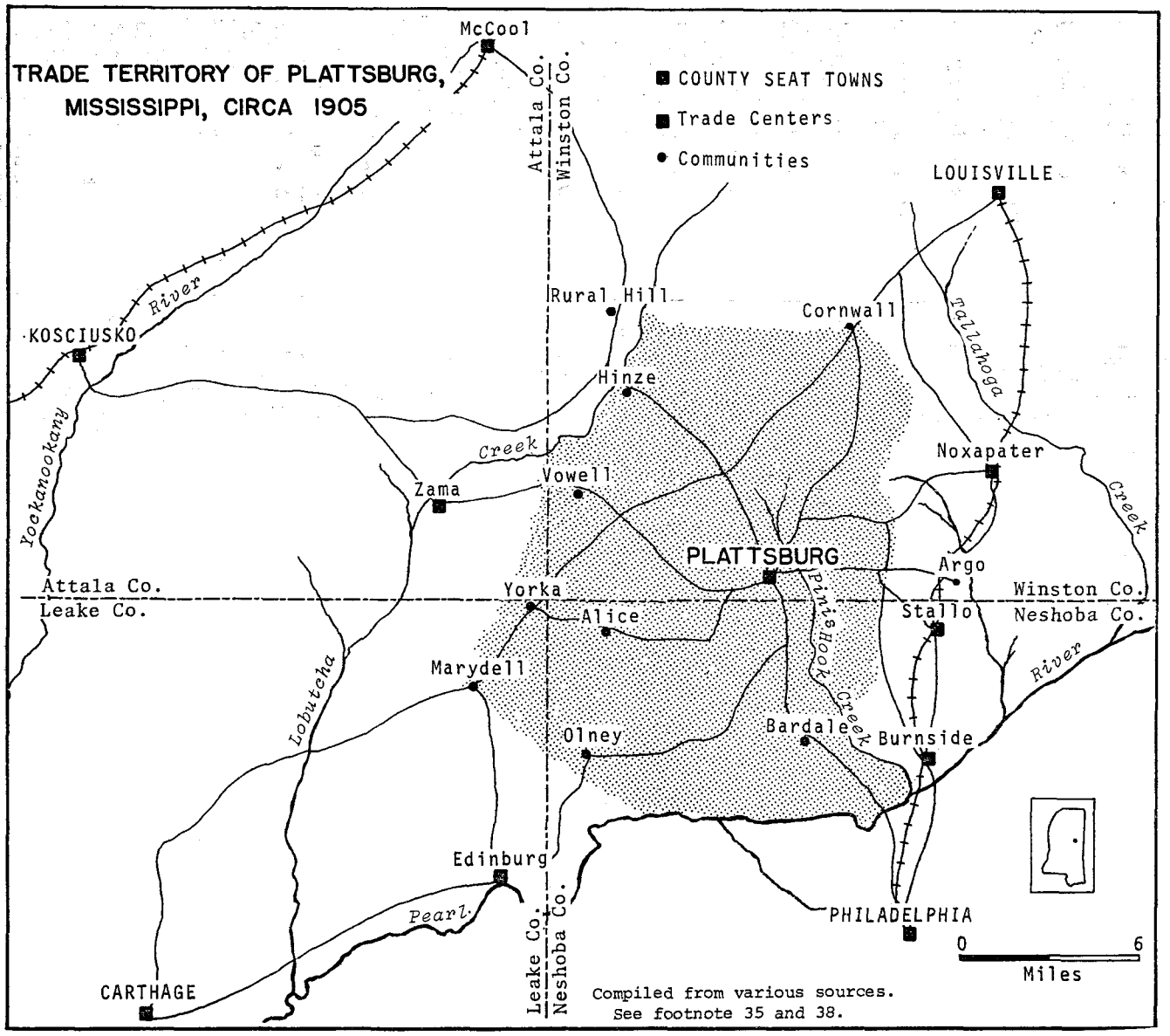


Figure 11. Trade territory of Plattsburg, Mississippi, circa 1905.

The settlers who entered via the Robinson Road were of English extraction from Tennessee, Georgia, and North and South Carolina. The most common names in Plattsburg were Blount, Breazeale, Coghlane, Davis, Dotson, Jones, Myers, Page, Sanders, and Webb. A few slaves were owned by Plattsburg residents, especially by the Davises and Breazeales.[37]

About 1840 or 1842 a man from Plattsburgh, New York, constructed a small log store at a site where the Louisville and Philadelphia roads crossed (Figure 11).[38] In August, 1853, the Board of Police responded to a petition signed by thirty-six citizens and moved the polling place from the Pinis Hook Indian village to the store. Two months later a post office was established under the name Pinis Hook, but in November, 1856, the name was changed to Plattsburgh (now Plattsburg).[39]

The leading crops in the area were cotton, corn, wheat, potatoes, and rice. Swine, cattle, sheep, and horses and mules were the most important types of livestock. During winter months large herds of cattle were grazed on the cane in river bottoms.[40] Between 1840 and

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[37]In the Plattsburg Cemetery there are fifteen Negro Slave graves.

[38]Winston County Journal, Louisville, Mississippi, September 25, 1942. This account of Plattsburg was derived from recollections provided by an exslave, Uncle Tom Kelly. See also: Dunbar Rowland, editor, Mississippi: Comprising Sketches of Counties, Town, Events, Institutions and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form, Vol. 2 (Atlanta: Southern Historical Publishing Association, 1907), p. 437. Although the name of the individual is not known, all reasonable evidence through an examination of names point to H. Minshire. In the United States Sixth Census, 1840 Compendium, three retail stores valued at $25,000 were located in Winston County.

[39]Winston County Journal, Louisville, Mississippi, July 8, 1967. The Board of Police was later changed to the Board of Supervisors.

[40]William T. Lewis, "The Centennial History of Winston County," unpublished manuscript, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi (no date), pp. 30-36.

1850 the most noticeable increases were in wool (1,689 to 10,305 pounds), corn (209,165 to 326,408 bushels), swine (12,898 to 22,768 head), and potatoes (22,971 to 89,386 bushels). During the same time, cotton production increased from 2,772 to 3,091 bales.[41]

Traders from Tennessee with wagonloads of fruit, small clothing items, spun thread, beeswax, honey, whiskey, sugar, and other goods were the main source of stock for the stores. The volume of business conducted by these early traders was small but essential.

Plattsburg was near the trail divide for livestock from Kentucky and Tennessee grazed southward through the thinly settled Hills. One route carried the livestock southwestward along the divide between the Pearl, Big Black, and Mississippi rivers, to the New Orleans market while the other led in a southeasterly direction between the Pascagoula and Tombigbee-Mobile rivers to the Mobile market. Several drives passed through Plattsburg annually between the mid 1830's and the Civil War. Drovers purchased supplies, corn, oats, and livestock from merchants and farmers. Occasionally farmers around Plattsburg organized herds and joined the drives.

By 1860 the town consisted of three general stores, two shops making furniture and leather goods, a tanner, blacksmith, cotton gin, flour mill, gristmill, a one room school, post office, and Masonic Lodge.[42]

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[41] United States Sixth Census, 1840 Compendium, pp. 226-37; J. D. B. DeBow, Statistical View of the United States (Washington: Beverley Tucker, Senate Printer, 1854), pp. 260-65.

[42] Lewis, op. cit., footnote 40; Winston County Journal, Louisville, Mississippi, September 25, 1942.

After the Civil War stores and shops were reopened, and several new ones were established on credit extended by northern business houses.[43] By 1900 Plattsburg had evolved as the trade town for seven farm neighborhoods in a trade territory of approximately 290 square miles bounded by Lobutcha and Tallahoga creeks, and the Pearl River.[44] Flooding along these streams practically isolated the area from Philadelphia, Carthage, Kosciusko, and Louisville during the winter and early spring. Crossing Pearl River swamp on the Philadelphia road in 1863, a reporter for the New York Times noted that "water everywhere was three to four feet deep, with every few hundred yards a mire-hole in which frequently for a few moments man and horse were lost in view."[45] Sixty years later, road conditions had apparently changed little for a resident of Plattsburg commented that:

> We can't get to market, church, or school; not even to a neighbor's home without bogging in mud half knee deep. . . . Here it is March 1st and we haven't our fertilizer hauled. Why? Because the roads are such that the average farmer's team can't pull two sacks of fertilizer and a barrel of flour on one load. At this rate it will take ten days to get our supplies home. . . .[46]

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[43] Interview with Miss Mary L. Holman, Louisville, Mississippi, August, 1969; Deed Book No. 2, Chancery Clerk's Office, Louisville, Mississippi; Lewis, op. cit., footnote 40.

[44] Edmund DeS. Brunner, G. S. Hughes, and Marjorie Patten, American Agricultural Villages (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1927), pp. 53-69; noted that the average southern trade town depended on the trade of five communities.

[45] Quoted in D. Alexander Brown, Grierson's Raid (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1954), p. 89.

[46] Neshoba Democrat, Philadelphia, Mississippi, March 11, 1920.

Because there were no organized freight lines operating in this section of Mississippi, merchants contracted with farmers to "backload" merchandise on the return trip from regional market towns. Items were sold and purchased along the route. Farmers traveled in groups to insure safety and to help in case of breakdowns. Wagon trains usually went out from Plattsburg in the early spring, and again after cotton was harvested and ginned. Cotton was transported to shipping points at an average cost of fifty cents per one hundred pounds during the dry season, or seventy-five cents in the winter.[47] Merchants normally stored a percentage of the cotton received in lien of a cash settlement. Farmers who otherwise would have traveled empty to the larger towns for spring supplies willingly hauled the cotton for the merchants. It also allowed local merchants to pay for spring and summer merchandise. Herds of cattle and hogs accompanied the wagons to market.[48]

Merchandise from Mobile came up the Tombigbee River and out from Gainesville, Alabama, or from New Orleans and Jackson up the Pearl River to Edinburg by flatboat. Merchants shifted their activities to Meridian after the Mobile and Ohio Railroad was completed, and both Gainesville and Edinburg declined as supply centers. In 1867 the Illinois Central Railroad was completed to Kosciusko, a distance of twenty-five miles versus the fifty to Meridian, and again merchants shifted their wholesale

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[47]Eugene W. Hilgard, "Report on the Cotton Production of the State of Mississippi with a Discussion of the General Agricultural Features of the State," The Miscellaneous Documents of the House of Representatives for the Second Session of the Forty-Seventh Congress, 1882-83, Vol. 13, Part 5 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1883), pp. 101-02.

[48]Winston County Journal, Louisville, Mississippi, July 8, 1967.

purchasing. When the Mobile, Jackson, and Kansas City Railroad (now the Gulf, Mobile, and Ohio) was completed in 1905, several leading merchants relocated in Louisville, Noxapater, and Philadelphia.[49]

Plattsburg was a crossroads town with no side streets along which business establishments concentrated. The form of the town as it existed about 1905 is shown in Figure 12.[50] Trade, manufacturing, professional, and agricultural occupations characterized the functions of Plattsburg. A photographer's shop, millinery shop, barbershop and a second drug store also existed between 1885 and 1905, but their location could not be ascertained. The town contained three saloons until a local-option whiskey bill was passed in 1885.

The prevalence and diversity of service establishments between 1880 and 1905 indicate a period of stability and prosperity. The eight general mercantile stores were concentrated mainly along the Louisville road, which followed a flat topped ridge for several hundred yards. Non-retail functions were located mainly in the north and west sectors of the town.

Seven establishments were engaged in manufacturing wagons, buggies, plow stocks, pieces of furniture and coffins for sale or

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[49] Neshoba Democrat, Philadelphia, Mississippi, October 9, 1931.

[50] The map was reconstructed on the basis of interviews in the summer, 1969, with: M. H. Wells, Philadelphia, Mississippi; Mrs. Edna Barrett, Edinburg, Mississippi; Mrs. Nanna Stickt, Noxapater, Mississippi. Mrs. Edna Barrett, daughter of J. P. Blount, a blacksmith and postmaster in Plattsburg from July 30, 1902, to November 24, 1911, operated the post office in her father's name. For a list of post masters see, Winston County Journal, Louisville, Mississippi, July 8, 1967.

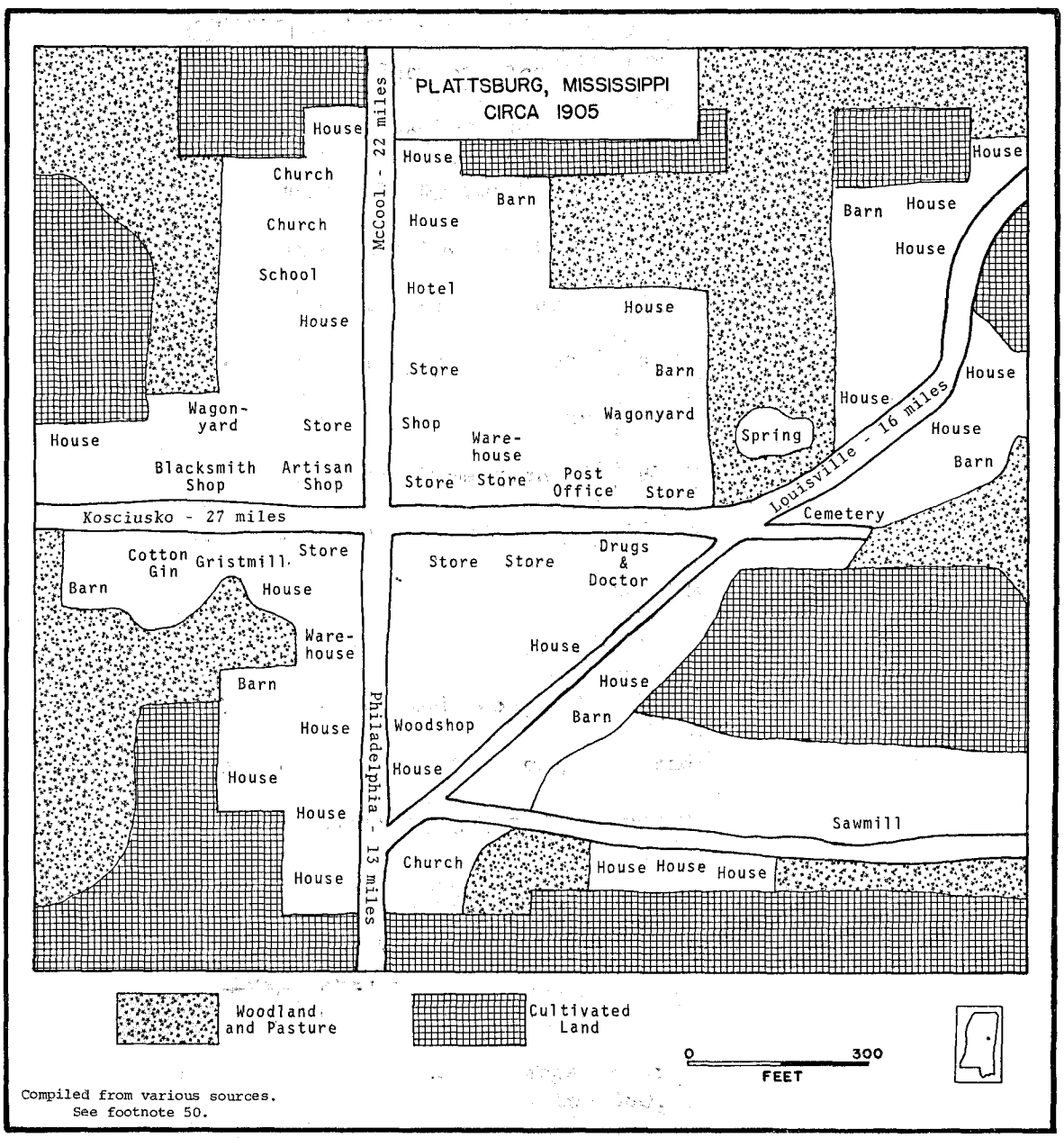


Figure 12. Plattsburg, Mississippi, circa 1905.

trade to the local people. About 1890 a "spoke-and-handle" wood-working factory operated for a brief period, shipping the items outside the region by wagon. It had only three or four full-time employees and transportation problems were probably the key factor in its failure.

Some processing of farm products was essential to reduce bulk, increase value, and reduce carrying costs. Ginning cotton removed the seeds and reduced the weight by 55 or 60 per cent. With the nearest cotton oil mill in Meridian, four days by wagon, seeds were used locally as animal feed or as fertilizer. Hides not consumed in the local shoe and harness industries were tanned prior to selling. The processing of most other items--butter, lard, bacon, and feathers--was performed in the homes and marketed through merchants in Plattsburg. The town had no bank; however, money was loaned to individuals by the more prosperous merchants.[51]

Like other southern towns after the Civil War, Plattsburg was a social and cultural center, and people gathered in town on Saturdays and special holidays. Like many unincorporated trade towns without law enforcement officers, Plattsburg was notorious for its violence.[52] Voting was the only civil function performed in Plattsburg.

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[51] Neshoba Democrat, Philadelphia, Mississippi, March 11, 1920; Wells, op. cit., footnote 50.

[52] Wharton attributes the violence in Mississippi towns to the near-frontier conditions that existed in 1860, the abandonment of civil law during the war, anarchy and guerrilla bands immediately following the war, and resentment toward an unpopular military and Republican Government. Wharton, op. cit., footnote 5, pp. 216-17. To this writer's knowledge, the effects of violence on the growth and demise of small towns has been neglected. Apparently violence was more characteristic in the Hills and among small farmers, hence a geographical application of this cultural phenomena is possible. Plattsburg was frequently referred to as "Fort Grow."

The first school was established on the eve of the Civil War with ten students in attendance. It reopened in 1866 and operated as a one-teacher school until replaced in 1890 by the Winston Normal High School, a boarding school that occupied a three-story building immediately north of the crossroads.[53]

Churches were not the center of gravity around which the town evolved. The Baptists established the first church at Plattsburg in 1892. By the turn of the century the church had engaged a full-time minister, and membership steadily increased, reaching a peak of 129 in 1916. Between 1896 and 1934 two additional denominational churches were active, served by ministers who appeared at regular intervals for church services (Figure 13).

In 1905, five years after Rural Free Delivery was authorized, a twenty-mile postal route was established from the Plattsburg post office. By 1912 three postal routes totaling seventy-two miles were operating out of Plattsburg delivering mail to the communities of Alice, Olney, Yorka, Vowell, and Hinze.[54]

The completion of the Mobile, Jackson, and Kansas City Railroad seven miles east of Plattsburg in 1905 and 1906, set in a motion a chain of events in extinction of the town by the mid 1950's. First, and perhaps most significant, was the loss of several prominent merchants to

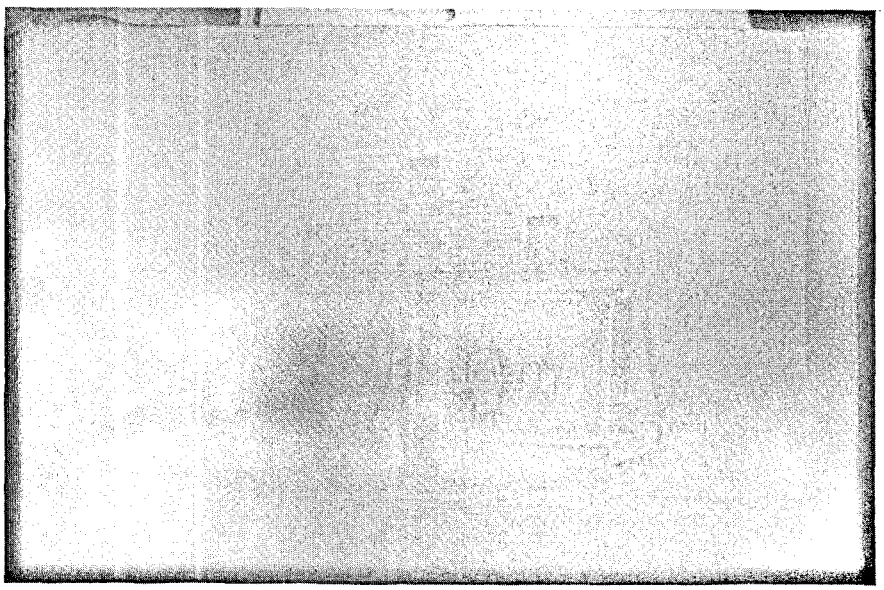
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[53] Winston County Journal, Louisville, Mississippi, July 8, 1967; Neshoba Democrat, Philadelphia, Mississippi, March 11, 1920; Wells, op. cit., footnote 50.

[54] Winston County Journal, Louisville, Mississippi, July 8, 1967; Barrett, op. cit., footnote 50.



(a) Site of Plattsburg, Mississippi.



(b) Store in Plattsburg, about 1900.

Figure 13. Plattsburg, an extinct trade town in central Mississippi.



(a) Site of Plattsburg, Mississippi.



(b) Store in Plattsburg, about 1900.

Figure 13. Plattsburg, an extinct trade town in central Mississippi.

Philadelphia, Noxapater, and Louisville.[55] Apparently these merchants desired to maximize profits by relocating at sites with greater accessibility to potential customers, wholesale houses, and markets for produce received in trade. The Fair Lumber Company and railroad repair shops established at Louisville in 1905 employed several Plattsburg residents. During the following two decades, several others were employed in the two large brick yards at Louisville.[56]

The social functions of Plattsburg declined between 1910 and 1934. Between 1910 and 1920 the Winston Normal High School and several one room schools nearby were consolidated with new high schools at Zama, Noxapater, and Bardale.[57] In 1914 the polling place of the remaining qualified voters was moved to Noxapater without serious objections. Although postal services had been extended in 1905 and 1912 to serve the community better, declining postal receipts led to the closing of the post office in 1923.[58] Membership in the Baptist Church declined from 129 to 1916 to 20 in 1934.[59]

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[55] Neshoba Democrat, Philadelphia, Mississippi, March 11, 1920; Holman, op. cit., footnote 43; Lewis, op. cit., footnote 40, pp. 110-26.

[56] Winston County Journal, Louisville, Mississippi, July 8, 1967; Wells, op. cit., footnote 51.

[57] Winston County Journal, Louisville, Mississippi, July 8, 1967; Wells, op. cit., footnote 50.

[58] United States Official Postal Guide (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1924); Barrett, op. cit., footnote 50; Wells, op. cit., footnote 50.

[59] Winston County Journal, Louisville, Mississippi, July 8, 1967.

The blacksmith shop operated until the owner died in the early 1930's.[60] One general store closed during the depression; however, the store and the gristmill were reopened in 1942, but closed again in 1948. Farmers used the cotton gin until 1948, when the higher price paid for cotton ginned at better-equipped gins was sufficient to cause a shift. Better roads and trucks facilitated such a move. Cotton not under lien to Plattsburg's remaining merchant was sold in Louisville, Noxapater, Philadelphia, and Kosciusko.

The external economies achieved by merchants in the four nearby towns were sufficient to permit them to extend their service area to include Plattsburg, especially as roads were improved and the number of automobiles increased. It is generally believed that bootleggers burned several vacant buildings in the 1920's and 1930's to preclude any re-occupation that might interfere with the use of the town site as a contact for their illicit operation. In 1969 the Baptist Church and a small store were relic features of Plattsburg (Figure 13, page 88).

The typical trade towns were adversely affected by certain spatial and temporal changes. As illustrated with Plattsburg, these resulted into the loss of enterprising merchants to sites possessing the competative advantage of accessibility. As the scale of trade increased at those sites favored by newer modes of transportation, changes in the traditional functions of cotton ginning, blacksmithing, postal services, and a host of others were initiated that led to extinction.

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[60] Barrett, op. cit., footnote 50.

CHAPTER IV

SUB-TYPES OF EXTINCT TRADE TOWNS

A. INTRODUCTION

Differences in the origin and location of certain extinct towns supported by trade permits a division into sub-types of county seat, river port, and railroad towns. The distribution of these towns is shown in Figure 14. Eighty-six towns, 45 per cent of the trade towns, fall into these categories; moreover, they were nearly evenly divided, as twenty-nine were county seats, twenty-nine were river ports, and twenty-eight were railroad towns. A majority of the towns were concentrated in the Hills and along the Mississippi River. Although several county seat and railroad towns are strung out diagonally across the state from Vicksburg to Mobile, they reflect no developmental or extinction processes oriented to this axis.

Unlike typical trade towns, which depended on a high degree of accessibility to the largest number of possible patrons, sub-type trade towns occupied a site chosen on the basis of centrality within the county, the navigability of a stream, or the line of a railroad. It is generally assumed that such a site and situation would impart a high degree of permanence, but these towns were also sensitive to conditions affecting their economic base.

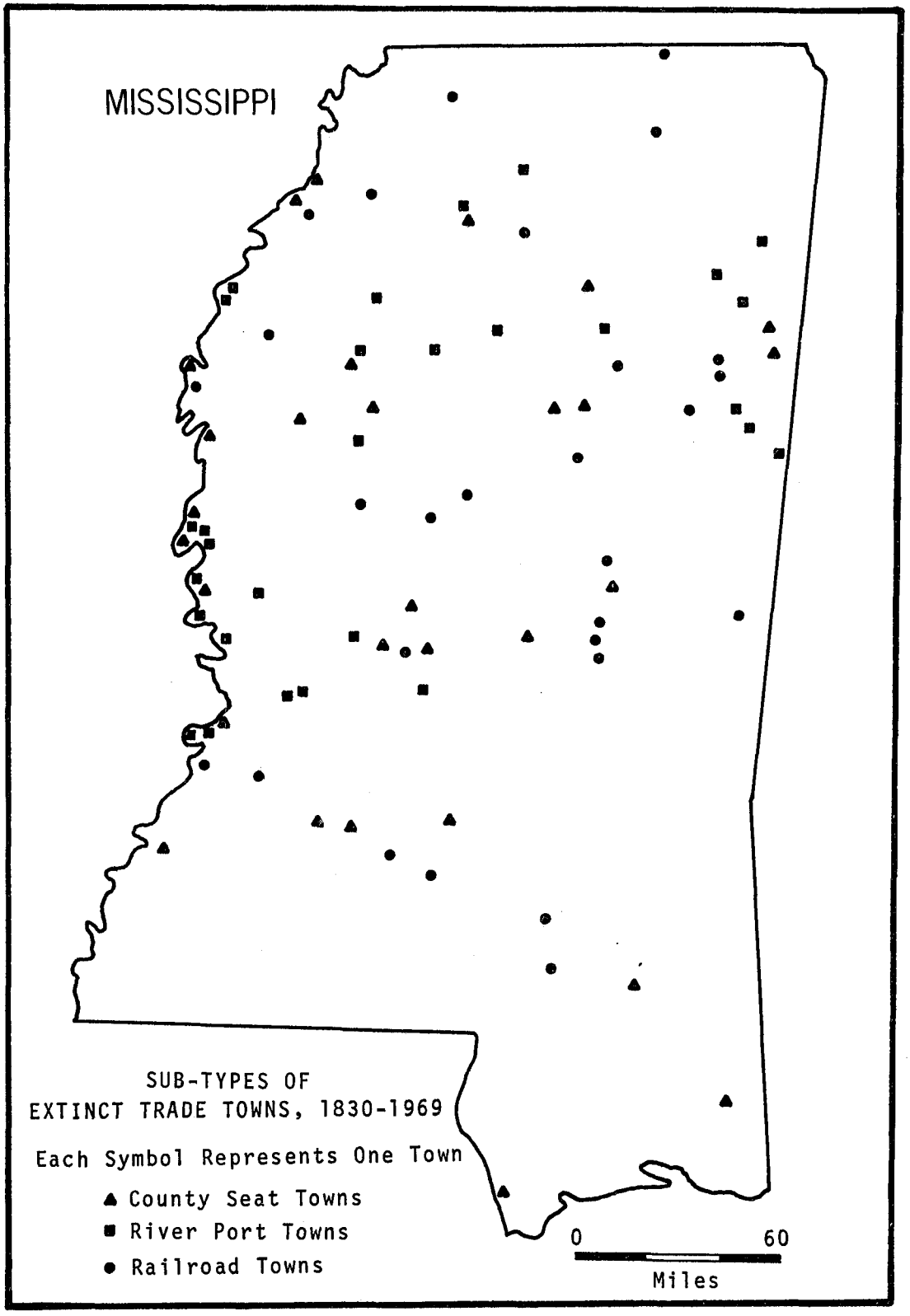


Figure 14. Sub-types of extinct trade towns, 1830-1969.

B. EXTINCT COUNTY SEAT TOWNS

Almost from the beginning there have been two forms of local government in the United States, the town and county systems. The county method was the most widespread. This system was transplanted from England to the Southern Colonies in 1634 and was carried into the Old Southwest Territory where dispersed settlements made this system the most logical form of local government.[1]

Counties in Mississippi were established by individual acts of the State Legislature. The enabling acts authorized a commission of three to select a site for the courthouse as near the center of the county as possible, but almost always within five miles of the geographic center.[2] After selecting a site, the commission was authorized to acquire land on which to build the town. In most cases a one-acre central square was reserved for the courthouse, which served as the nucleus of the town. Revenues from the sale of lots to the highest bidder were used to construct the courthouse.[3] In most instances the

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[1]Edward T. Price, "The Central Courthouse Square in the American County Seat," Geographical Review, Vol. 58 (1968), 37.

[2]This principle is borne out in existing "Minutes Books" of the Board of Police for Mississippi counties. Article XIV, Section 259 states: "No county seat shall be removed unless such removal be authorized by two-thirds of the electors of the county voting therefor; but when the proposed removal shall be toward the center of the county, it may be made when a majority of the electors participating in the election shall vote therefor." Section 260 states: "No new county shall contain less than four hundred square miles, nor shall any existing county be reduced below this size." The Constitution of the State of Mississippi, 1890. This compares favorably with the majority of states, Price, op. cit., footnote 1, pp. 36-37.

[3]Franklin L. Riley, "Extinct Towns and Villages of Mississippi," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 5 (1902),

first courthouse was a log or rough-hewn lumber building containing a small courtroom and jury room. Within a few years this building was replaced by a larger and more permanent brick structure.[4] To this early nucleus was added a jail, tavern, boarding house or hotel, two or three workshops, several stores, and houses.[5] Thus a town was started at a location decided by politics.

By 1840 Mississippi was organized into fifty-six counties. Subsequent changes added twenty-six, bringing the total to eighty-two. Each boundary alteration was followed by the designation of a new county seat. The removal of courthouses and county offices changed the status of county seat towns, and twenty-nine are now extinct, having been replaced by new county seat towns.[6]

359-60, 368-69; Willie D. Halsell, "Sunflower's First Two County Seats," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 12 (1950), 225-27; Price, op. cit., footnote 1, p. 37.

[4]A. J. Brown, History of Newton County from 1834 to 1894 (Jackson, Mississippi: Clarion-Ledger Co., 1894), pp. 2-3, 45-46; Halsell, op. cit., footnote 3, pp. 226-30; Neshoba Democrat, Philadelphia, Mississippi, May 8, 1969.

[5]William H. Sparks, The Memories of Fifty Years (Macon, Georgia, 1872), p. 482, states: "Each courthouse town had one or more taverns, which did their best business during court. Every preparation was made for the judge and lawyers. Beds were aired and the bugs burned out."

[6]The law required a location within five miles of the geographic center, and since there was much competition between the inhabitants for political favoritism they apparently did not hesitate to relocate the seat of justice. L. Lake, "Grenada and Neighboring Towns in the 1830's," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 3 (1900), 313. There are additional towns that perhaps should be added to this list. For example, Paulding and Chester, one time county seats of Jasper and Choctaw, respectively, were visited by this writer in the summer of 1969 and found to be extinct for all practical purposes. Riley mentions that the seat of justice of Monroe was removed to Augusta after Lowndes County was formed, Riley, op. cit., footnote 3, pp. 357-58.

The location and distribution of the twenty-nine extinct courthouse towns are shown on Figure 14, page 92. One-third were located on the natural levees of the Mississippi River and were not centrally located in the counties, but as roads and settlements were extended into the interior more centrally located county seat towns were desired. If the first sites were undesirable, they were abandoned for more favorable ones.[7]

Three of the towns were in Washington County which was organized in 1827 from parts of Yazoo and Warren counties. New Mexico was established as the seat of justice, but it proved to be outside the county.[8] In 1830 all public buildings and records were moved to Princeton,[9] a landing accessible to a large number of planters receiving supplies on consignments from factors. It was also the shipping point for cotton produced inland on the natural levees of Lake Washington, an oxbow of the Mississippi River. Princeton attained an estimated population of 600 and was incorporated in 1838,[10] but a decline in trade during the Panic of 1837 and the formation of Issaquena County from the southern part of Washington in 1844 caused people to lose interest in the town. Inhabitants of Washington County did not relish the thirty-five to forty

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[7]"Delta," W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

[8]Laws of Mississippi, 1827, p. 128; Henry T. Ireys, "County Seats and Early Railroads of Washington County," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 14 (1914), 267-300.

[9]Laws of Mississippi, 1830, p. 41.

[10]Laws of Mississippi, 1838, p. 262.

mile trip to transact legal business in a decaying town, and in 1847 the Board of Police met at "Old" Greenville, the new county seat.[11] In 1863 "Old" Greenville was burned and never rebuilt. Five miles to the south the present city of Greenville was founded as the seat of justice for Washington County in 1867.

Courthouse towns had several advantages over other types of trade towns. The courthouse furnished a place for socializing. Such centers became increasingly important as the number of rural post offices was reduced and as contact between citizens and government increased. During the 1930's and thereafter, county agents, relief, welfare, and health officials became significant adjuncts to courthouse towns and provided an impetus for better roads. There was a distinct improvement in appearance over purely trade towns. Moreover, a county seat town usually contained a newspaper that imparted to it a degree of community leadership.

Gallatin, An Extinct County Seat and Trade Town

Gallatin was a typical courthouse town. After a change in the county boundary in 1824 Gallatin was selected as the seat of justice for Copiah County, but lost its political function to Hazlehurst in 1872 after being by-passed by the railroad.[12]

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[11] Minutes of the Board of Police, Washington County, Mississippi, 1847, p. 218. This town should not be confused with the town of Greenville in Jefferson County.

[12] Laws of Mississippi, 1823, p. 89; Laws of Mississippi, 1872, p. 189; Mississippi Official and Statistical Register, 1964-1968, Jackson, Mississippi, p. 318.

For several years prior to 1820, when the territory was legally opened to settlement, yeomen farmers had proceeded up the Pearl River Valley beyond Monticello to settle on hommocks of fertile land at Rockport, Georgetown, and Coar's Springs.[13] They entered Copiah County by two principal routes. Those from Georgia and the Carolinas traveled the Federal Road between Milledgeville, Georgia, and Forts Stoddert and Stephens on the Tombigbee River in Alabama. From these two points they followed either the Three Chopped Way to the Pearl River and up the valley into eastern Copiah County, or the Fort Stephens to Natchez Road via Georgetown and Coar's Springs. Settlers from Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky traveled the Natchez Trace-Robinson Road routes. They left the Trace at the Choctaw Agency north of Jackson and traveled southward via the Monticello-Holmesville Road or by the Communication Road.[14] By 1819 Coar's Springs was the largest settlement in the region. When Copiah County was formed in 1823 the proximity of Coar's Springs to the geographical center of the county justified its selection as the county town (Figure 15).[15]

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[13]These settlements were localized by "prongs" of fertile soil near the Pearl River. Eugene W. Hilgard, Report on the Geology and Agriculture of the State of Mississippi (Jackson, Mississippi: E. Barksdale, State Printer, 1860), pp. 309, 353-54.

[14]H. S. Fulkerson, Random Recollections of Early Days in Mississippi (Vicksburg: Vicksburg Printing and Publishing Co., 1885), p. 29; These roads are shown on numerous early maps. See, for example: H. S. Tanner, A Map of Mississippi with its Roads and Distances, ca. 1836; Growth of Counties, ca. 1842. Reference to these routes are also found in Copiah County News, Hazlehurst, Mississippi, July 28, 1955.

[15]Dunbar Rowland, editor, Mississippi: Comprising Sketches of Counties, Towns, Events, Institutions and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form, Vol. II (Atlanta: Southern Historical Publishing Association, 1907), p. 462; "Coar's Springs," W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

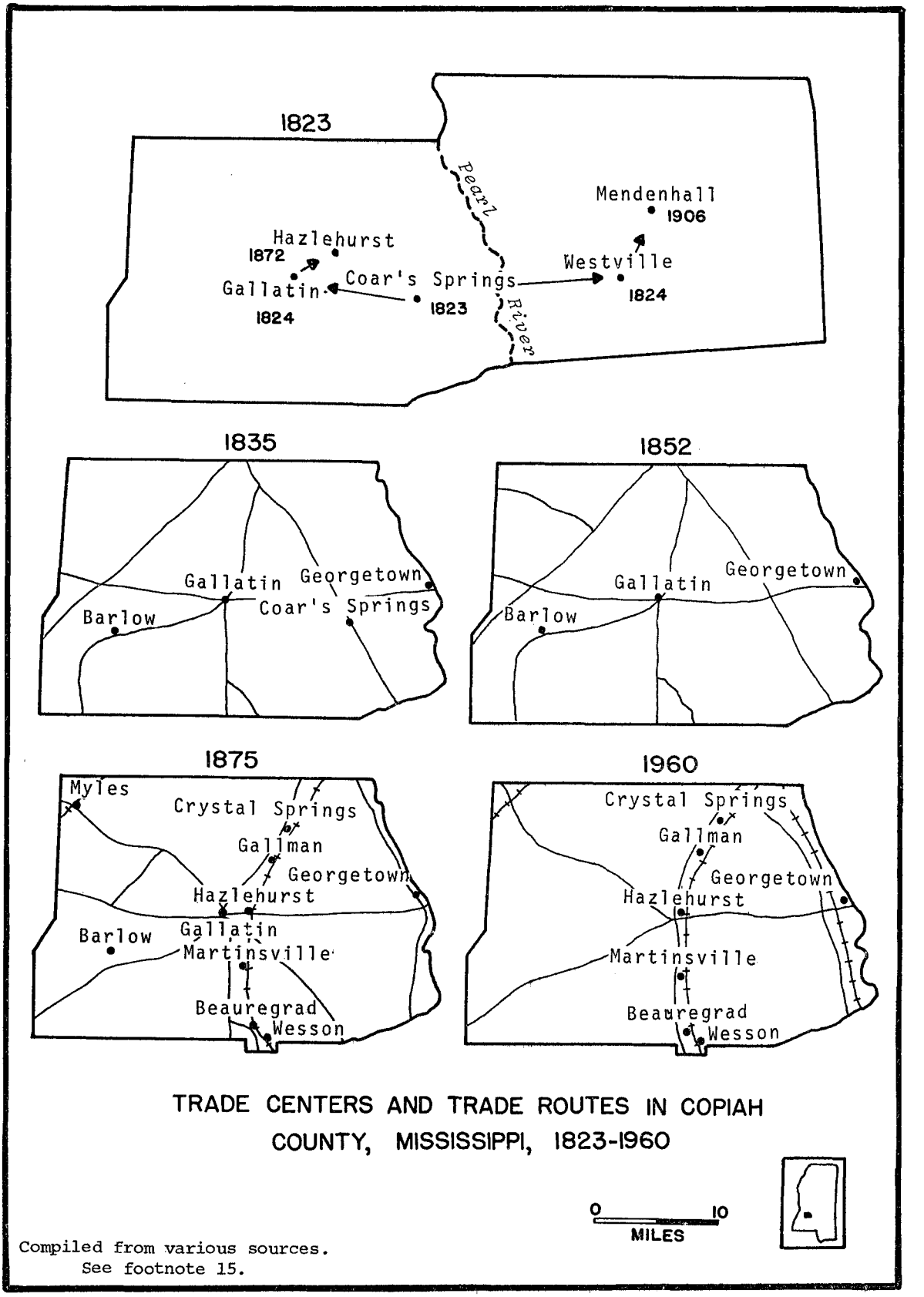


Figure 15. Trade centers and trade routes in Copiah County, Mississippi, 1823-1960.

In 1823 settlers east of the Pearl River formed Simpson County and selected Westville as the seat of justice. Gallatin, located on a slightly elevated second river bottom in the headwaters of the Bogue Pierre River, replaced Coar's Springs as the county seat of Copiah County (Figure 15).[16]

Gallatin was surveyed around a one-acre central square reserved for the courthouse.[17] In addition to its legal function, the town was a trade and social center. There were two banks, a newspaper, several workshops making guns, shoes, carriages and cabinets, a large warehouse, a drug store, and several general merchandise and dry goods stores. Two hotels, a theater, a masonic lodge, Baptist and Presbyterian churches, a female seminary, an academy for boys, a grog shop, and race track were additional amenities of the town. Surveyors, lawyers, doctors, and one dentist had offices in the town. At least one small freight line operated between Gallatin and the river.[18]

The population of Gallatin about 1836 or 1837 was 800; but had declined to 203 by 1854.[19] The Panic of 1837 had a decided influence

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[16]Laws of Mississippi, 1823, p. 89; J. F. H. Claiborne, Mississippi as a Province, Territory and State (Jackson, Mississippi: Power and Barksdale, 1880), p. 424; "Gallman" and "Hazlehurst," U.S.G.S. Mississippi Quadrangle, 7.5 Minute Series, 1963; Fulkerson, op. cit., footnote 14, p. 30.

[17]Southern Star, Gallatin, Mississippi, April 7, 1838.

[18]Copiah County News, Hazlehurst, Mississippi, July 28, 1955; Laws of Mississippi, 1836, pp. 475, 389-90; Laws of Mississippi, 1840, p. 66; Riley, op. cit., footnote 3, pp. 331-34; Fulkerson, op. cit., footnote 14, p. 30.

[19]Southern Star, Gallatin, Mississippi, April 7, 1838; Copiah County News, Hazlehurst, Mississippi, July 28, 1955. J. D. B. DeBow, Statistical View of the United States (Washington: Beverley Tucker, Senate Printer, 1854), p. 355.

on the town. Properties listed for sale in the Southern Star for December, 1838, included household furnishings, farm equipment, two cotton gins, two gristmills, one sawmill, cattle, sheep, oxen, hogs, and corn.[20] Four months later the Sheriff advertised for sale two lots and buildings, and the Planter's Bank offered for sale eight lots, the Mansion House, a tavern, and several buildings. The same issue noted that twenty slaves and 7,652 acres of land in tracts exceeding twenty acres were offered for sale. Almost half of the land was listed by twenty-six individuals.[21]

Several urban-related activities were dispersed about the countryside rather than concentrated in Gallatin. An advertisement in the Southern Star in 1838 noted that a blacksmith shop had opened two miles from Gallatin, and was prepared to execute all orders on short notice. The advertisement also noted that ploughs not stocked could be acquired shortly.[22] In 1844 a wool carding machine was placed in operation one and one-half miles from Gallatin. Wool was carded at eight cents per pound or was received in payment if it was not convenient to pay cash.[23]

Before Gallatin had recovered from the Panic of 1837, the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad was surveyed three and one-half miles to the east. This particular route crossed a low and

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[20]Southern Star, Gallatin, Mississippi, December 23, 1837. In 1828 Gallatin possessed one of the six newspapers in the state.

[21]Southern Star, Gallatin, Mississippi, April 7, 1838.

[22]Southern Star, Gallatin, Mississippi, April 7, 1838.

[23]Radical Democrat, Gallatin, Mississippi, August 10, 1844.

partially dissected interfluve between the headwaters of Bayou Pierre and tributaries of the Pearl River into the upper Bogue Chitto River plain at Brookhaven, Mississippi.[24] To pass through Gallatin would have required grading across two stream divides and bridging the Bogue Pierre River. Presumably railroad engineers would have laid track into Gallatin in 1856 had the town exhibited a more prosperous atmosphere and subscribed to stocks and bonds or donated land. As it was, railroad magistrates, knowing the behavior of small towns and the power of railroads to attract trade, decided to let the town and trade gravitate to them.

Trade was the first function Gallatin lost to Hazlehurst, a new town three and one-half miles to the east and on the railroad. In September, 1958, the Argus advertised that a cash store was open in Gallatin and:

> . . . will keep on hand a full and complete stock of dry goods, family groceries, provisions, hardware, cutlery, glassware, books, stationary, perfumery, drugs, medicines, saddlery, bridles and leather. In order to save freight he [B. R. Neal] has a store at Hazlehurst where he will be found at all times during the cotton season.[25]

In 1859 the newspaper, Argus, was merged with the Copiahan at Hazlehurst. However, an expensive brick courthouse erected in 1852 delayed the relocation of government functions in Hazlehurst until 1872.[26]

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[24] J. H. Colton, Mississippi, ca. 1856; U.S.G.S., footnote 16.

[25] Argus, Gallatin, Mississippi, September 22, 1858.

[26] Riley, op. cit., footnote 3, p. 333; Laws of Mississippi, 1872, p. 189.

Gallatin continued as a small and slowly declining town until 1926, when the school was consolidated and the post office merged with those at Hazlehurst. The remaining store was closed in the early 1930's.[27]

C. EXTINCT RIVER TRADE TOWNS

Mississippi is virtually surrounded by navigable waterways: the Mississippi, Tombigbee, and Tennessee rivers, and the Gulf of Mexico. Moreover, much of the state's interior was seasonally accessible, though navigation was hazardous in all seasons. Until about 1840, when railroads began to appear, the easiest routes to the interior were along rivers, and all large towns were located where the settlers could make the greatest use of rivers in transporting goods to and from markets.[28]

Towns located along rivers, in which trade invariably overshadowed other functions, are shown in Figure 14, page 92. In a few cases it was difficult to decide whether a particular town handled enough river freight to be classed as a river trade town, but without more precise data there was no alternative to classification by site and brief references in local histories. Furthermore, where small towns are dependent on a seasonal and colonial-type agricultural system for their economic base, a site facilitating movement of items produced is of utmost importance in the town's viability.

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[27] Copiah County News, Hazlehurst, Mississippi, July 28, 1955.

[28] John H. Moore, "Economic Conditions in Mississippi on the Eve of the Civil War," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 22 (1960), 175.

The general situation of small river towns like Gravesport, Port Royal, Chocchuma, and Leoto Landing was similar to that of Greenville, Vicksburg, and Natchez. Only the scale was different. Both were dependent upon a river frontage and a supporting hinterland, but because of spacing, early start, and the size of their hinterland, the situation of large towns was more favorable. Nevertheless, the twenty-nine extinct river towns functioned as a first market and shipping point for cotton on its way to the New Orleans and Mobile markets, and received goods and supplies for interior settlements.[29] The twenty-nine river towns had an average life span of thirty years before becoming extinct.

The sites of small river towns often proved to be unfavorable. In the first place, most functioned as trade centers for restricted local hinterlands and were hypersensitive to disruptive changes. Second, small towns normally occupied wet-land sites and were susceptible to undercaving and course changes in the rivers.[30] Third, the sites generally proved unhealthy, and inhabitants were continually plagued with malaria and yellow fever.[31] For this reason several towns like

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[29] Niles' Registar, Vol. 49 (1835), 41; Andrew F. Burghardt, "The Location of River Towns in the Central Lowlands of the United States," Annals, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 49 (1959), 305-08; John H. Moore, Agriculture in Antebellum Mississippi (New York: Bookman Associates, 1958), p. 54.

[30] Florence W. Sillers and Wirt A. Williams, editors, History of Bolivar County, Mississippi (Jackson, Mississippi: Hederman Brothers, 1948), p. 134; "Leoto Landing," W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. Only the towns along the Mississippi River were noted to be affected by such changes.

[31] Willie D. Halsell, "Migration into, and Settlement of, Leflore County, 1833-1876," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 9 (1947), 219-37; William B. Brierly, "The Influence of Surface Features Upon the Distribution of Malaria in Northwestern Mississippi," The Journal of

Hamburg, on the Big Black River in Hinds County, were abandoned shortly after their founding.[32] Steamboat trade was also notorious for introducing and spreading diseases, especially cholera.[33] An outbreak of yellow fever in 1879 claimed 40 per cent of the inhabitants of Concordia.[34]

> At first there was almost nothing permanent about landings. They were merely places to load and unload the boats' cargoes, consisting of the mail, plantation supplies, and other articles of trade. They were maintained by the use of spades and shovels.[35]

But as settlement increased, several landings generally coalesced at a site equitable to all involved, establishing the basis for a town and for regular services.

Steamboat traffic reached a peak in the 1850's and competed favorably with railroads until 1861.[36] Shortly after 1865 steamboat traffic on the Big Black and Tombigbee rivers, and especially on

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Geography, Vol. 44 (1945), 312-24; Ruben G. Thwaites, editor, Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, A Series of Annotated Reprints of Some of the Best and Rarest Contemporary Volumes of Travel, Vol. IV (Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1904), pp. 308, 310-11, 348-49; Joseph H. Ingraham, The Southwest by a Yankee (New York: Harper Publishing Co., 1835), p. 163; W. A. Evans, "Disease and Doctors," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 5 (1943), 130; Reuben Davis, Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1891), pp. 6-9.

[32]Riley, op. cit., footnote 3, p. 336.

[33]William D. Jenkins, "The Cholera in 1849," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 7 (1903), 271-79.

[34]Sillers and Williams, op. cit., footnote 30, pp. 135-36.

[35]Sillers and Williams, op. cit., footnote 30, p. 135.

[36]Mississippi River Navigation, Mississippi River Commission and United States Army Engineer Division, Lower Mississippi Valley (Vicksburg, Mississippi, 1962), p. 2; W. A. Evans, "Steamboats on the Upper Tombigbee in the Early Days," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 4 (1942), 216-21.

lesser streams where freight was light and navigation difficult, succumbed to rail competition. Steamboats operated without competition in the Delta until 1881. Between that year and 1903, 816 miles of track were laid in the Yazoo Basin.[37] As more and more of the Delta's commerce was diverted to the expanding railroads, river commerce had almost disappeared and by the turn of the century small river port towns were deprived of their prime purpose for existing. Their growth had been dwarfed by an excessive number of landings, by competition from more favorably located and larger towns, by railroads, and by the unhealthiness of their sites.

Cotton Gin Port, An Extinct River Trade Town

Cotton Gin Port was located about one mile below the confluence of Town Creek with the Tombigbee River, where the river meanders in an easterly direction against the escarpment of a low plateau, averaging twenty feet above normal water level (Figure 16).[38] Three Indian trails converged on the river at this point. One was the Bolivar Trail, a fork of the Big Trading Path from Mobile that connected with the Mississippi River below Memphis. A second trail came from the east, crossed the river, and continued almost due west to the Natchez Trace. The third trail paralleled ridges between the Tennessee and Tombigbee rivers, and in later years served as a portage route referred to as Gaines' Trace.

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[37] Arthell Kelley, "Levee Building and the Settlement of the Yazoo Basin," The Southern Quarterly, Vol. 1 (1963), 300.

[38] U.S.G.S., "Wren Quadrangle," Monroe County, Mississippi, Scale 1:24,000, 1966; George J. Leftwich, "Cotton Gin Port and Gaines' Trace," Publication of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 7 (1903), 263-70.

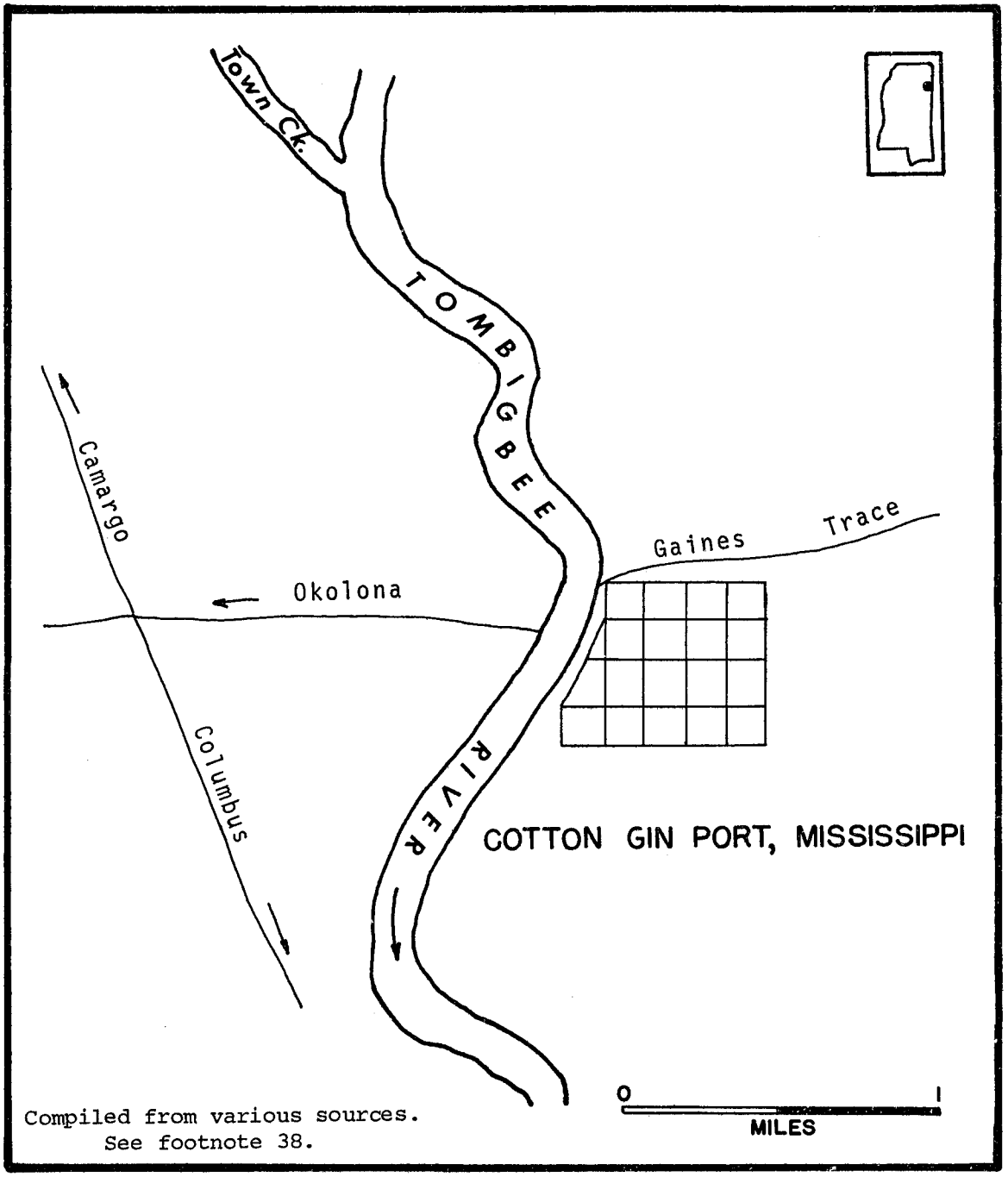


Figure 16. Cotton Gin Port, Mississippi.

It was followed by early traders and settlers entering the Mississippi Territory. A small trading post was established by the English in the mid 1700's where the Indian trails crossed.

Shortly after the Mississippi Territory was organized, the Federal Government constructed a cotton gin near the river in an attempt to promote cotton cultivation among the Chickasaws; however, the Indians burned the gin. After the Chickasaws relinquished their claim to the territory east of the Tombigbee River and south of the Tennessee River in 1816, the western 687 square miles of this territory was incorporated into the Mississippi Territory.

Cotton Gin Port offered ready access to the Indian trade of north Mississippi, and was a debarking point for settlers and goods moving between the Tennessee and Tombigbee rivers; nevertheless the town grew slowly. In the first place, most settlers bypassed the broken terrain and settled in Alabama's Black Prairie or moved into the Doak's Stand purchase area of Mississippi. In the second place, more than 100 miles of Indian Territory separated Cotton Gin Port and the capital at Jackson. Finally, between 1816 and 1821, when the Huntsville Survey was completed and Monroe County organized, the area was unorganized territory and indefinite claims to the land deterred settlement.[39]

The town in the early 1820's contained seven log houses, a school, and trading post. Court was held at Cotton Gin Port before a county seat was established for Monroe County.[40]

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[39]E. F. Puckett, "Reconstruction in Monroe County," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 11 (1910), 104-05; Leftwich, op. cit., footnote 38.

[40]Riley, op. cit., footnote 3, pp. 358-59.

Cotton was the major commercial item produced on the small hillland farms east of the river. Cotton and other items were carried to Cotton Gin Port for transhipment down the Tombigbee on barges to the market at Mobile. The barges were broken up and sold for lumber, and the men returned overland along the Big Trading Path. After 1822 the barge traffic was largely replaced by steamboats making regular trips to the town during winter months. An examination of one cargo carried down river to Mobile in 1832 revealed much about the region. In addition to passengers the steamboat carried 465 bales of cotton, 37 bales of deer hides, 1,300 bales of cow hides, a box of furs, and five barrels of beeswax.[41] Numerous stops were made along the river to load and discharge passengers and freight, detracting from trade that presumably would have gravitated to Cotton Gin Port.

When the Chickasaw Survey was completed in 1836, settlers, mainly from Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, quickly took up the rich black lands west of the Tombigbee River.[42] Thus, the situation of Cotton Gin Port, located on the eastern bank of the Tombigbee, was changed with respect to the trade area. Along the west bank of the river across from Cotton Gin Port was a low flood plain one-half mile wide, not at all favorable for the site of a town. New towns established west of the river, both north and south of Cotton Gin Port,

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[41] Evans, op. cit., footnote 36, pp. 216-24.

[42] George J. Leftwich, "Reconstruction in Monroe County," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 9 (1906), 537; R. C. Beckett, "Antebellum Times in Monroe County," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 11 (1910), 87-102.

occupied a more favorable position and gradually absorbed much of the trade of Cotton Gin Port.[43]

The height of prosperity in Cotton Gin Port was reached about 1850. At that time the population had grown to about 500. The principal business enterprises were twenty stores, a flour mill, a carding factory, a cotton gin, and a blacksmith shop. Along the river near the boat landing were warehouses for the storage of cotton pending shipment down the river and merchandise and supplies brought up river. Even though the town was off the main stage route, service was available between Okolona and Columbus three days of each week during the mid 1850's. The town was incorporated in 1858.[44]

After 1857, when the Mobile and Ohio Railroad reached Okolona and Egypt Station fifteen miles to the west, Cotton Gin Port merchants hauled supplies from these two towns, as the railroad was more dependable than steamboats. Traffic on the Tombigbee declined for points above

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[43]From an examination of early maps of the state the increase in towns along the Tombigbee River between the Alabama state line and Town Creek is as follows: Bradford's, Mississippi, ca. 1835, 5 towns; H. S. Tanner, A Map of Mississippi with its Roads and Distances, ca. 1836, 8 towns; Bradford's, Mississippi, ca. 1838, 8 towns; Morse and Breese, A Map of Mississippi, ca. 1842, 9 towns; Thomas Cowperthwait, A New Map of Mississippi with its Roads and Distances, ca. 1850, 16 towns; J. H. Colton, Mississippi, ca. 1856, 11 towns; and J. H. Colton, Mississippi, ca. 1860, 10 towns. All are on file in the Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. The most rapidly growing town in Monroe County was Aberdeen, the county seat. This town contained a population of 2,700 in 1838, and was rapidly absorbing the trade of smaller towns, Davis, op. cit., footnote 31, p. 254.

[44]John A. Farmer, "Cotton Gin Port: Monroe County's Historic Shrine," unpublished typed manuscript, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi (no date); Riley, op. cit., footnote 3, pp. 358-59; W. A. Evans, "Stagecoach Lines and Inn in Monroe County, Mississippi," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 5 (1942), 162-67.

Columbus, Mississippi, the normal head of navigation on the river. Apparently the town made little progress after the Civil War. At any rate the fate of Cotton Gin Port was sealed when the tracks of the Memphis and Birmingham Railroad were laid through the territory in 1887, bypassing the town for a more suitable route across the upper Tombigbee. The speed with which the town's businesses and residents relocated at Amory, a new town on the railroad two miles to the northeast, is illustrated in Table VIII. By 1900 the site of Cotton Gin Port was a cultivated field.[45]

D. A DEVELOPING RAILROAD SYSTEM

The first centers of traffic in Mississippi were those towns situated on navigable bodies of water, but as the ambitions of the merchants increased they began to reach out to the interior for trade. Railroads constructed between 1831 and 1840, the initial period, did not originate from the demands of the rural population for better transportation, but from the desire of river and coastal towns to tap interior markets. Merchants and factors had argued that railroads were a more direct form of transportation and would bring prosperity to the state by opening up new areas to commercial cotton production.[46]

By 1840 charters had been granted to twenty-four railroads. Many of the legislative acts under which railroads were chartered made it clear they were to transport cotton and other products from the

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[45] Riley, op. cit., footnote 3, p. 359.

[46] DeBow's Commercial Review, Vol. 12 (1853), 435-54.

TABLE VIII

POPULATION: MONROE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI, 1880 AND 1890

Minor Civil Division	Total Population 1880		Total Population 1890		Net Increase	
Beat 1	3,593		4,253		660	
Cotton Gin Port		106				
Amory				739		739
Beat 2	3,052		3,285		233	
Beat 3	3,517		4,374		857	
Beat 4	12,456		12,576		120	
Aberdeen		2,339		3,449		1,110
Beat 5	5,935		6,242		307	
Total	28,553		30,730		2,177	

Sources: United States Census, "Population of Civil Divisions Less Than Counties," Mississippi, 1800, p. 235; United States Census, Population, "Mississippi," Aggregate Population by Minor Civil Division, 1890, pp. 241-42.

interior to the Mississippi River for shipment.[47] The Jackson-Vicksburg road formed an outlet to the Mississippi River for the rich cotton district between the Pearl and Big Black rivers. It was this road that assured Vicksburg's future growth and position of supremacy over Natchez.

> The exports of Vicksburg last season amounted to 50,000 bales of cotton--this year it will be 70,000, and . . . it is calculated, in two years the quantity will not fall short of 100,000 bales. This is only one item. The vast amount of imports of merchandise from New Orleans going to all counties of the state, and the passengers traveling on the railroad, will largely swell the income.[48]

Before the railroad between Jackson and Vicksburg began operating, the general cost of transporting a bale of cotton was four to five dollars; by rail the cost was seventy cents per bale. In 1850, 70,000 bushels of corn was shipped on the Jackson to Vicksburg railroad at an estimated savings of $10,200 over the cost of shipment by wagon.[49]

In another section of the state and at a later date, a correspondent of the Vicksburg Whig reported that:

> . . . since the completion of the Mobile and Ohio through our pine forest . . . a complete change has resulted in everything connected with the growth and prosperity of the county. Towns and villages have sprung up as if by magic . . . and the value of farm land has risen to a high of twenty dollars per acre.[50]

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[47] Charles R. Johnson, "Railroad Legislation and Building in Mississippi, 1830-1840," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 4 (1942), 195-205. See also individual Acts of Incorporation for Railroads in Laws of Mississippi, 1836, 1838, and 1840.

[48] Niles' Registar, Vol. 49 (1935), 19.

[49] DeBow's Commercial Review, Vol. 11 (1851), 598-99.

[50] Whig, Vicksburg, Mississippi, October 5, 1859. The county referred to was Lauderdale.

The pressing question of railroad development was one of finance. Previously the state had relied upon individual enterprise for transportation, but the available private means were not adequate to cover the cost of railroad construction.[51] As a result, the state granted liberal charters, subscribed to stock with state funds, and authorized railroad companies to establish banks.

> From December 20, 1831 when banking privileges were conferred on the West Feliciana and Woodville Railroad, until the crash came in 1837, Mississippi was gridironed with imaginary railroads, and beridden with railroad banks. In these enterprises there was more watered stock sold than crossties laid; reckless speculation brooked nothing as prosaic as the actual construction of railroads, on the successful operation of which it was supposed fabulous dividends would be declared.[52]

Even though railroads were more flexible and dependable than water transportation, there were few prosperous towns ready to pay a bonus for construction.[53] Moreover, builders of the New Orleans to Jackson line through Mississippi's Piney Woods were confronted with

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[51]After investing heavily in railroads in Mississippi, John A. Quitman made a special trip to Europe in 1839 to secure funds for the enterprise. He was forewarned of the frutiality of such a trip in a letter from William Brune, a onetime Natchez nabob living in Germany: "Mr. Rothschild is . . . the only banker in Germany who has loaned to New York, but even he . . . is not willing to make loans to the South." William Brune to J. A. Quitman, July, 1839, J. F. H. Claiborne papers, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

[52]Charles H. Brough, "The History of Banking in Mississippi," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 3 (1900), 325-26.

[53]The "Mobile and Ohio Railroad was then in progress, and the engineers employed in locating it came to Aberdeen, and offered to come through this place in consideration of a bonus of one hundred thousand dollars. Our people were entirely unacquainted with railroads and their possibilities. With an unwise economy they refused to pay the sum demanded, and the road was carried eight miles west of us." Davis, op. cit., footnote 31, 263-64.

an absence of towns, requiring long and expensive hauls of supplies.[54] Approximately 170 miles of track had to be laid before the New Orleans and Jackson Railroad reached the first source of freight--cotton produced on the Jackson Prairie north of Jackson. The volume of timber transported on Mississippi railroads was insignificant until the 1880's.

The sequence of railroad construction is shown in Figure 17.[55] Before 1873 almost all rail mileage was in three main lines: Memphis to New Orleans, Mobile to Columbus, Kentucky, and Vicksburg to Meridian. Between 1865 and 1873 the state was involved in rebuilding railroads destroyed in the Civil War. A constitutional provision prohibited state aid to railroads in Mississippi, and mileage increased less than in other southern states.[56]

Most of the track laid between 1874 and 1895 was constructed in the Yazoo Basin in connection with large-scale land speculation and cotton production. At first Delta planters along the rivers were hesitant to support railroad construction. But as the first trains began to operate, making it possible to market crops earlier than normal, they realized the advantages of railroads and supported them wholeheartedly.[57]

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[54]Thomas D. Clark, A Pioneer Southern Railroad from New Orleans to Cario (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936), pp. 62-63.

[55]"Map of Mississippi," Gray's Atlas, 1873; A New Map of Mississippi, The Scarborough Co., 1904; Rand McNally Commercial Atlases, 1895 and 1920.

[56]James W. Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1901), p. 314.

[57]Robert L. Brandfon, Cotton Kingdom of the New South, A History of the Yazoo Mississippi Delta from Reconstruction to the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 65-90; Sillers and Williams, op. cit., footnote 30, p. 229.

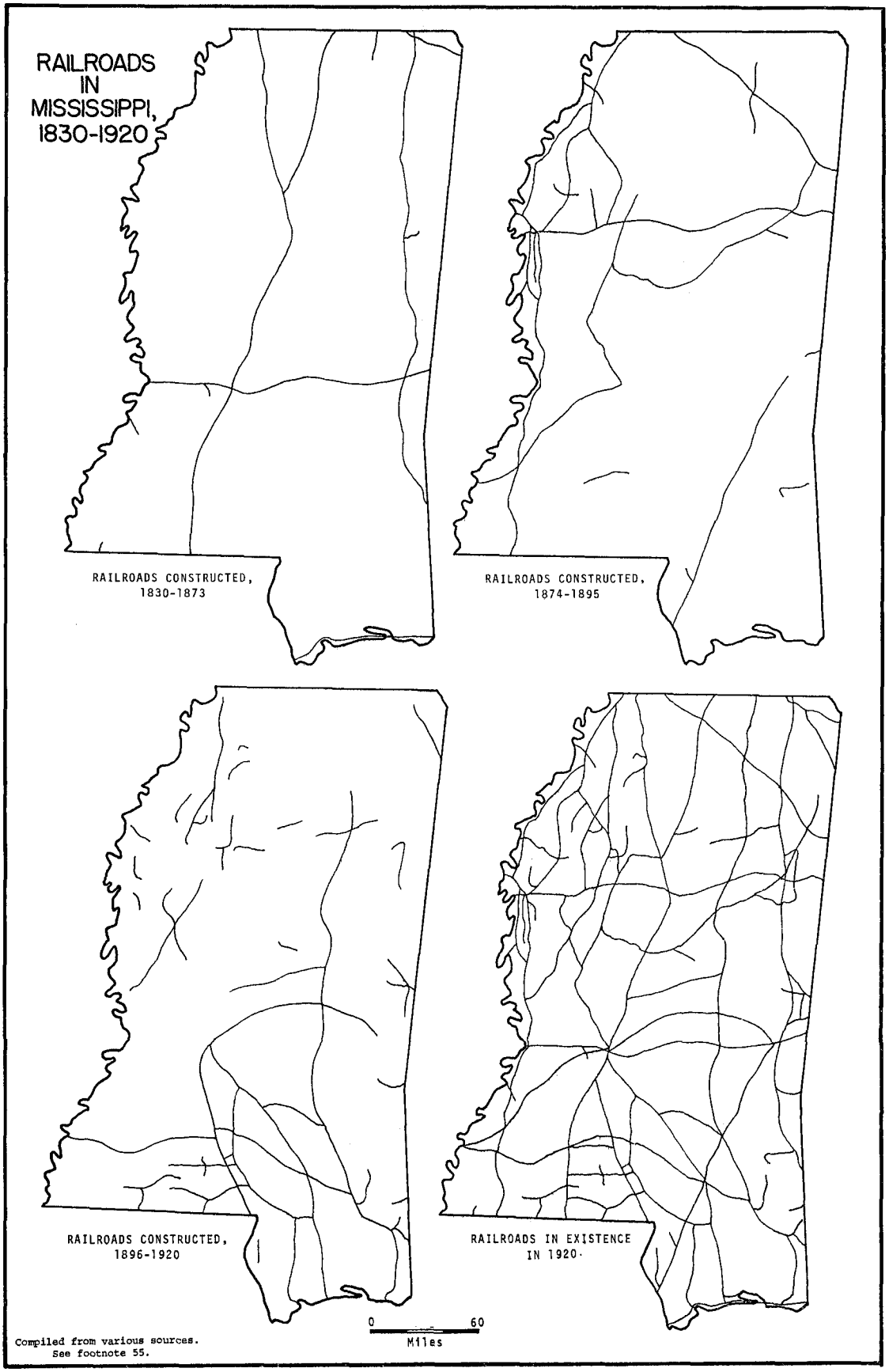


Figure 17. Railroads in Mississippi, 1830-1920.

After 1895 mileage in the Piney Woods increased as lumbering developed. In general, tracks were laid in the Hills until about 1880, in the Delta until about 1895, and thereafter primarily in the Piney Woods. The peak railroad mileage in Mississippi was reached in 1915 (Table IX).

After 1865 much commercial development took place along the railroads as trade centers and small towns arose to handle the business of the interior. Railroad companies willingly provided freight stops, both to acquire the maximum freight possible and in exchange for a free right of way to compensate for limited capitalization. Small towns developed around many of these freight stations but generally the frequency of stops was detrimental to town growth. Cotton, the leading freight item carried on railroads in Mississippi in 1902 and 1903, was shipped from 484 stations. The number of bales ranged from a high of 95,228 at Vicksburg to as few as two bales at several stations. An average of 931 bales was shipped from stations in towns that are now extinct. Cotton was shipped from 524 railroad stations in the state in 1903-1904.[58]

The number of stops along four Mississippi railroads are shown in Table X. In 1920, when average spacing between stops along railroads in the United States was over five miles, the average distance between

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[58]James L. Watkins, "The Commercial Cotton Crops of 1900-1901, 1901-1902, and 1902-1903," Bulletin No. 28, United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Statistics (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1904), pp. 43-46; James L. Watkins, "The Commercial Cotton Crop of 1903-1904," Bulletin No. 34, United States Department of Agriculture Bureau of Statistics (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1905), pp. 46-48. The average distance from a farm to a rail stop in 1906 was twelve to fifteen miles. Frank Andrews, "Costs of Hauling Crops from Farms to Shipping Points," Bulletin No. 49, United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Statistics (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1907), pp. 20-21.

TABLE IX

RAILROAD MILEAGE IN MISSISSIPPI

Year	Mileage	Year	Mileage
1840	50	1910	4,413
1850	75	1915	4,456
1860	862	1920	4,369
1870	990	1925	4,170
1880	1,127	1930	4,191
1890	2,292	1940	3,919
1900	2,919	1950	3,739
1905	3,672	1960	3,659

Source: "Statistics of Railways in the United States," Interstate Commerce Commission (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office).

TABLE X

STOPS ALONG FOUR MISSISSIPPI RAILROADS

Rail Lines	Miles	Number of Stops					
		1873	1882	1895	1920	1935	1960
Corinth to State Line	260	25	34	45	62	58	43
Horn Lake to Osyaka	290	28	56	66	79	77	55
Vicksburg to Meridian	136	15	22	31	51	56	28
Lake View to Whittaker	310	--	--	74	111	114	79
Total	996	68	112	216	303	305	205

Sources: "Map of Mississippi," Gray's Atlas, ca. 1873; E. G. Wall, Official Map of the State of Mississippi, 1882; Rand McNally Standard Map of Mississippi, 1895 and 1920; Cram's Map of Mississippi, 1935 and 1960.

342 stops in Mississippi was only 2.9 miles.[59] Twenty-eight places reached a population of 100 and later became extinct largely because railroads centralized their freight services into county seat towns after 1920.

McDonald, an Extinct Railroad Trade Town

Many towns were located on land owned by the railroad companies. McDonald, on land donated to the Gulf and Chicago Railroad for a right of way by W. H. Church, was typical[60] (Figure 18). McDonald was halfway between Philadelphia and Union, two towns of considerable importance, and was a likely site for a passing point and freight station. Furthermore, McDonald was halfway between the town of Dixon and the House community (Figure 19).[61]

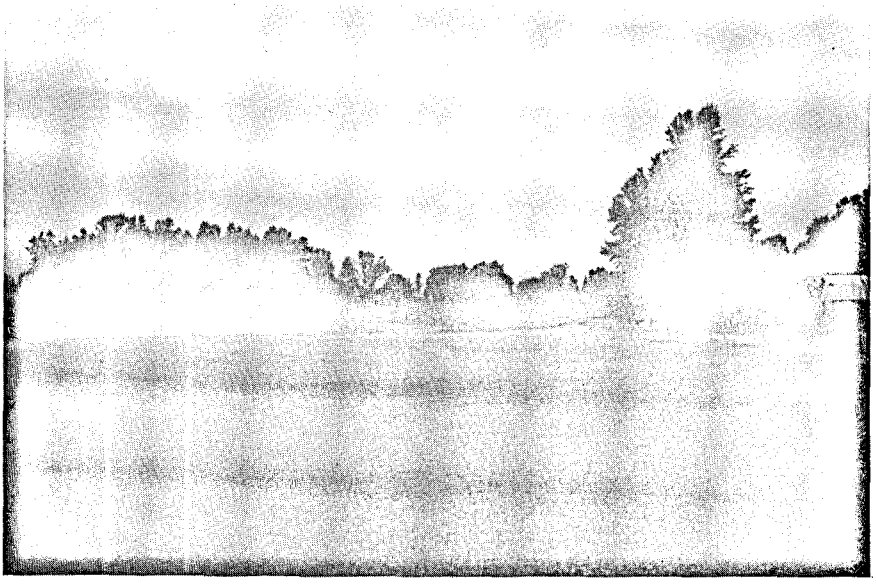
When the town site was first surveyed into lots and offered for sale in 1904, the people exhibited very little interest. But almost immediately after the first train reached the town, people moved in, purchased lots, built homes, and opened businesses. Many were from

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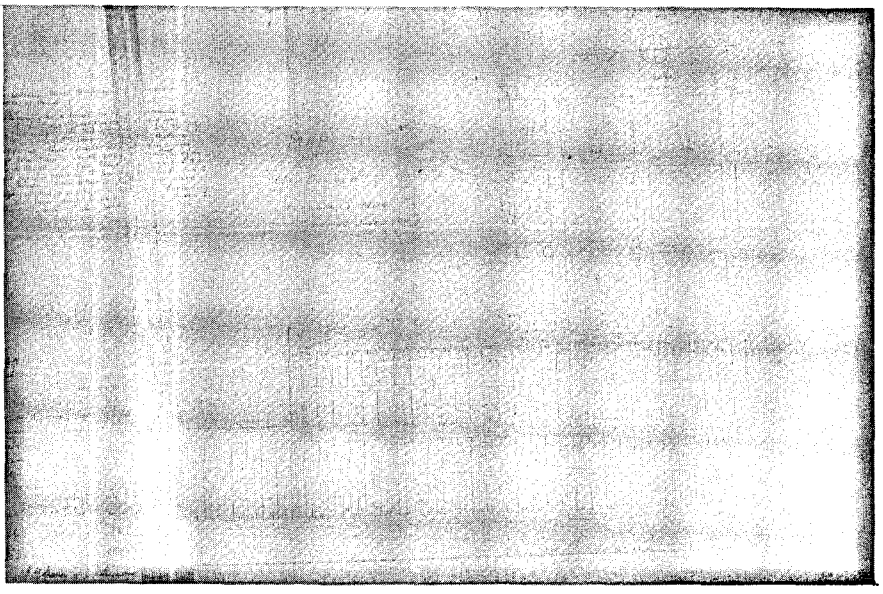
[59]Douglas C. Ridgley, "Geographic Principles in the Study of Cities," The Journal of Geography, Vol. 24 (1925), 77; calculated from Cram's Map of Mississippi Showing Counties, Cities, Villages, Post Offices, Railroads and Stations (Indianapolis, Indiana: The George F. Cram Co., Inc., 1920).

[60]Unless otherwise noted, the information for this town is based on: A. E. Cliburn, "A Town of the Past: McDonald, Mississippi," unpublished manuscript; and interviews with J. H. Adkins, C. Clark, A. Robinson, and A. E. Cliburn in July, 1969. To the knowledge of this writer, Mr. Cliburn's manuscript is the most authentic and complete source of local history on McDonald.

[61]General Highway Map, Neshoba County, Mississippi, prepared by Mississippi State Highway Department, Traffic and Planning Division; Rand McNally Standard Map of Mississippi, 1920; Cliburn, op. cit., footnote 60.



(a) Site of McDonald, Mississippi.

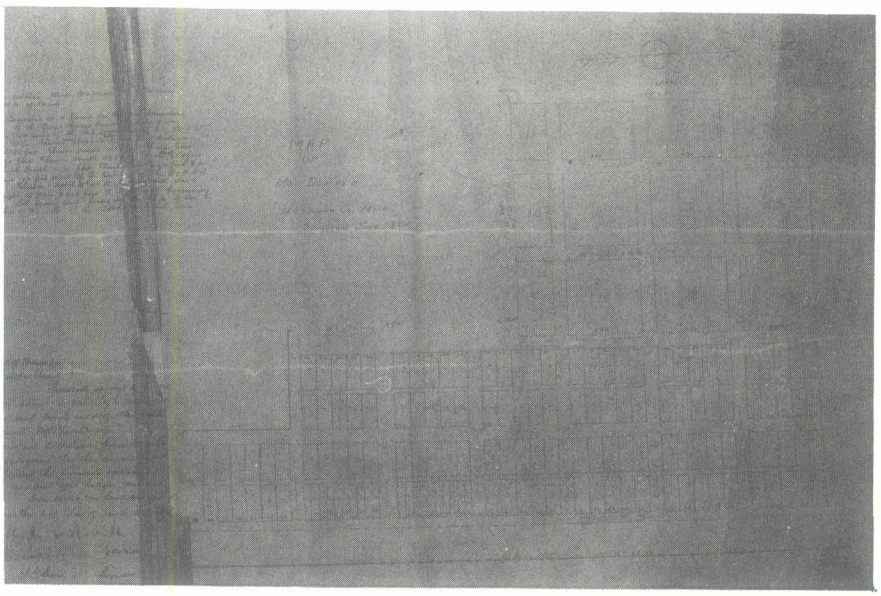


(b) Platt of McDonald, Mississippi, 1904.

Figure 18. McDonald, an extinct trade town on the G. M. & O. Railroad in Mississippi.



(a) Site of McDonald, Mississippi.



(b) Platt of McDonald, Mississippi, 1904.

Figure 18. McDonald, an extinct trade town on the G. M. & O. Railroad in Mississippi.

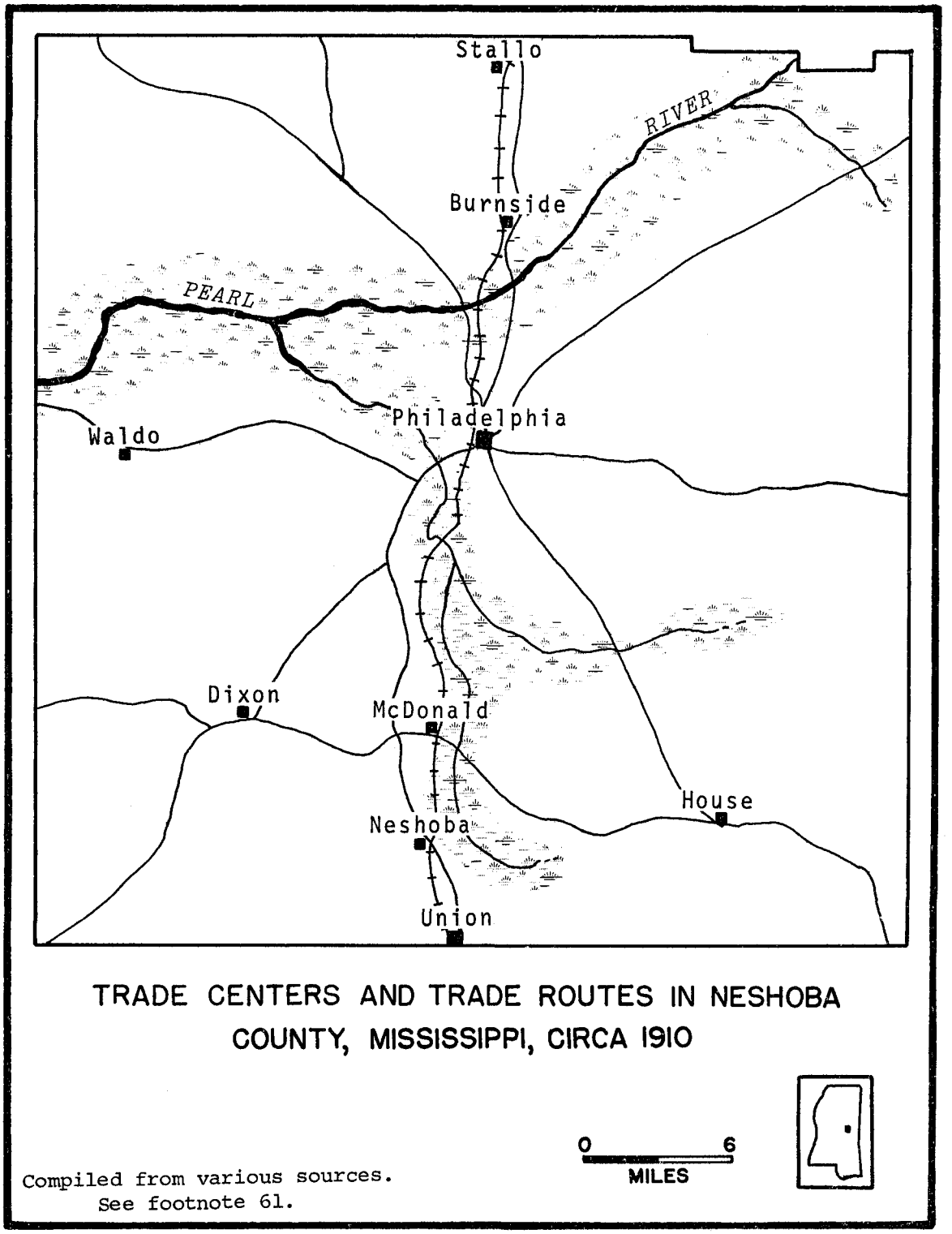


Figure 19. Trade centers and trade routes in Neshoba County, Mississippi, circa 1910.

Dixon and House.[62] By 1915 the town contained thirteen mercantile houses, two wholesale business firms, the McDonald Cabinet Works, a cotton gin, gristmill, blacksmith shop, a drug store, two churches, a school, post office, ice house, boarding house, and hotel, and had two doctors, a mayor, and a constable.[63] An estimated one hundred houses were located in the town, which attained a population of several hundred by 1915.

Like numerous other towns along the railroad, McDonald was located along one side of the track. There were two reasons for this. In the first place, railroads normally followed the margins of streams, cutting across divides only when necessary, and often only one side of the track was favorable as a town site. In the second place, fires caused by sparks from trains were threats in all early towns. To minimize this problem, towns were constructed on the windward side of the track if at all possible.[64]

The economic base of McDonald was balanced between agriculture and lumbering until about 1920. From July to September and from December to March farmers supplemented their income by cutting and hauling logs to the three sawmills in town. The mills were small, but

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[62]"Dixon," W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

[63]Neshoba Democrat, Philadelphia, Mississippi, August 22, 1907; October 9, 1931.

[64]This relationship was observed among numerous towns, both extinct and contemporary, along the Illinois Central and Gulf, Mobile, and Ohio railroads having different orientations. Empirically, it was noted that towns laid out by the railroads paralleled the tracks whereas those pre-existing towns by which the railroads passed took on an "L" or "T" form.

they cut enough rough lumber to keep a planning mil in operation at the north end of town until 1920. Some of the hardwood timber was converted into cross ties and purchased by the railroad. Land, cleared of its timber, was drained and used for cotton cultivation.[65] A farmers' market operated in the town until 1920, when it was forced to close because of the post war depression.

Other factors, more significant in the long-run than the post war depression, were also beginning to affect McDonald. In 1920 a bond issue to improve Neshoba County roads passed by a vote of 896 for and 756 against. The vote at polling places in five of the county's extinct towns was as follows: McDonald--13 for, 13 against; Neshoba--24 for, 82 against; Dixon--42 for, 21 against; Burnside--15 for, 22 against; and Stallo--32 for, 7 against.[66] Whether the people realized the influence better highways and the automobile would have on their town is not known, but citizens at Dixon, not on a railroad, and Stallo, fifteen miles north of the county seat, had more to gain from highways than citizens in the other towns.

The first road improved in the county was State Highway 15, connecting Philadelphia and Union. This highway bypassed McDonald. Almost immediately traffic into Philadelphia increased by 50 per cent, and the Dixon trade shifted from McDonald to Philadelphia.[67] After

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[65]The following appeared in the local paper, "The Hercules Powder Company demonstrated blasting ditches with dynamite at McDonald. Ditches were blasted on J. M. Cooper's and J. M. Cliburn's land in the Kentawha Drainage District. The demonstration was a decided success." Neshoba Democrat, Philadelphia, Mississippi, February 26, 1920.

[66]Neshoba Democrat, Philadelphia, Mississippi, March 18, 1920.

[67]Neshoba Democrat, Philadelphia, Mississippi, October 9, 1931.

State Highway 19 was improved, farmers in the House community also shifted their trade to Philadelphia.

Several changes initiated in the 1920's in the freight and passenger services of the Gulf, Mobile, and Northern Railroad adversely affected McDonald. In 1930 the railroad began operating trucks on the principal highways to supplement and complement rail services. Moreover, the number of freight stops was reduced to increase speed and make better connections at principal interchanges so the line could compete more favorably. Several passenger trains were discontinued, and in 1936 the Gulf, Mobile, and Northern Railroad began operating buses. Six years later (1942) passenger service to McDonald was discontinued. Between 1942 and 1945 the freight service to McDonald was discontinued and transferred to stations at Philadelphia and Union.[68]

The school at McDonald was consolidated with two others at a more accessible site on Highway 15. Several stores and the sawmill closed during the depression. By the mid 1940's two stores, the cotton gin, post office, church, and a pulpwood yard were the only remaining functional units at McDonald. Over the next several years these businesses were discontinued, and in 1958 the post office was closed. Several former businessmen reverted to farming.

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[68]James H. Lemly, The Gulf, Mobile and Ohio: A Railroad That Had to Expand or Expire (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1953), pp. 115-82.

E. CONCLUSION

The economic base of 187 of the 262 extinct towns in Mississippi was trade. Based on origin and location, four categories of trade towns are noted: the typical trade towns (101), the county seat towns (29), the river port towns (29), and towns established in conjunction with railroads (28). The sites as well as the functions, of the last three categories account for their separate treatment.

Each case study illustrates that small towns were hypersensitive to changes. The county seat, railroad, and river port towns were multifunctional, unlike the typical trade towns. However, their basic economy also depended on an agricultural hinterland engaged in the production of cotton, and they were as sensitive to changes in cotton production as the typical trade towns were. Trade was decentralized by a dispersal of urban-related functions and by over-saturation of an area with stations and towns along the railroad. Most towns were unattractive and made few concessions to the consuming public. They therefore received little social and cultural support from their service area. An appropriate adage might run as follows: the river left it, the railroad missed it, disease and rowdyism hit it, and the automobile killed it.

CHAPTER V

EXTINCT INDUSTRIAL TOWNS

A. A BRIEF INDUSTRIAL HISTORY

Even though the industrial history of Mississippi begins in the late eighteenth century, Mississippians depended mainly on agriculture. Profits from cotton blinded them to the advantages of industrial development, and the predominance of agriculture restricted the size and variety of early manufacturing enterprises.[1] No alternate form of economic effort was introduced on a large scale until the 1880's, when significant progress was made in the lumber industry.

A manufacturing industry based on local agricultural needs first appeared in 1795, when mechanics began to improve the Whitney gin and fabricate new cotton gins. By 1801 the Whitney gin had been so improved that Natchez cotton was not injured in the ginning process and commanded a considerable premium because of its superior preparation. Eleazer Carver, a successful ginwright, constructed the first sawmill in the Mississippi Territory in 1807 to supply lumber for his gin factory, but was forced to transfer his gin manufacturing to Massachusetts to take advantage of skilled workmen and recent improvements in the design and manufacture of machine tools.[2]

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[1] John K. Bettersworth, "The Beginnings of Manufacturing in Mississippi," Social Science Studies, Historical Series 1-5, Mississippi State College, 1955, p. 4.

[2] John H. Moore, Agriculture in Ante-Bellum Mississippi (New York: Bookman Associates, 1958), p. 23.

In 1810 the territory had twenty-two textile establishments containing a total of 807 spindles and 1,330 looms producing over 342,400 yards of cotton cloth, 450 yards of linen and 7,890 yards of woolen goods valued at $419,073. There were also ten tanneries, six distilleries, one tinshop and one hat manufacturer.[3] However, the competition of cheaper products from northern factories and insufficient capital due to the all-absorbing passion for cotton production, were major factors retarding industrial growth. Other handicaps involved inadequate machinery, shortage of skilled white laborers, and the lack of coal for fuel.[4] When the small custom order and household businesses failed to provide manufactured articles, they were brought in easily and cheaply on the steamboats that were rapidly appearing on the rivers.[5] From the Census of 1840, it is obvious that manufacturing was not a prime function in the state (Table V, page 46). Furthermore, and perhaps more significant, no concentration of manufacturing existed in any locality.

A Mississippi planter argued in 1849 that cotton growers could do little toward encouraging manufacturing because they were scattered over too large an extent of territory without the means of communicating

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[3]Tench Coxe, Tabular Statement of the Several Branches of American Manufacturing in the Autumn of 1810, prepared for the Treasury Department (Philadelphia: 1813), pp. 2, 36, 38, 159.

[4]D. Clayton James, Antebellum Natchez (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), pp. 204-05.

[5]Adna F. Weber, The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century, A Study in Statistics (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1969), p. 196, noted that such a process "removes population from the village."

with each other.[6] In addition to being scattered the population was claimed to be of low quality for nonagricultural activities. Furthermore, it was generally assumed that manufacturers could not succeed in a plantation economy, and that industry was inimical to the interest of slavery.[7]

When manufacturing was encouraged the emphasis was upon types depending on a local raw material base such as cotton or lumber. But it was noted that Mississippi was:

> . . . capable of manufacturing whatever she may find to her interest to manufacture. The question is: to what extent is it to her interest, or whether it is to her interest to manufacture for herself all articles of prime necessity.[8]

The confidence in Mississippi's general policy and laws toward manufacturing was destroyed as a result of the speculative mania following 1832, corrupt banking practices, and repudiation of bonds in 1842. Following this series of events, Mississippi dropped behind other southern states that were also falling behind the Northeast in the rate of manufactural growth.[9] The value of home manufacturing increased

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[6] DeBow's Commercial Review, Vol. 7 (1849), 74.

[7] Broadus Mitchell and George Mitchell, The Industrial Revolution in the South (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1930), p. 100.

[8] James M. Wesson to John F. H. Claiborne, August 11, 1858, a letter quoted in The Journal of Economic History, Vol. 16 (1956), 203.

[9] Richard W. Griffen, "Manufacturing Interests of Mississippi Planters, 1810-1832," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 22 (1960), 110-22; R. A. Muckenfuss, "Industrial Mississippi in the Light of the Twelfth Census," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 6 (1902), 275-76.

from $1,164,020 in 1850 to $7,809,153 in 1860.[10]

In 1858 an industrialist wrote that:

> The Citizens, generally, of Mississippi did not appreciate Manufacturing until very recently. It is true that politicians resolved many very pretty things upon the subject, but . . . they would not so much as to move a finger for its support. We, therefore, had to battle against all the prejudices, against broken Banks, Rail Roads & Manufacturing Co. We believe our Citizens are now waking up to their interests, both in Agriculture and Manufacturing, and their minds should be properly diverted and instructed.[11]

Investment capital of the 1850's went into internal improvements, especially railroad construction. During the reconstruction era the energies of Mississippians were absorbed in rebuilding railroads and restructuring the cotton economy, rather than developing industry. Northern capital not channeled into the rebuilding processes was used to develop a new commercial system to replace the cotton factorage system. Thus limited capital, restricted credit, and reconstruction limited industrial investment.

The 1880's introduced a new era in the state's economic development in at least four ways: (1) settlement proceeded so rapidly in the Yazoo Basin that it became the dominant cotton producing region; (2) over 1,000 miles of railroad track was laid, more than in any other decade (Table IX, page 117); (3) northern capital was being invested at an increasing rate in the lumber industry; and (4) with the emergence of the Bourbon Democrats, politicians began to promote industrial

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[10]Herbert Weaver, Mississippi Farmers, 1850-1860 (Nashville: The Vanderbilt University Press, 1945), p. 99.

[11]Wesson, op. cit., footnote 8, p. 202.

expansion programs. In 1882 this political group, supported by railroad, insurance, banking, and manufacturing interests, was able to enact a law exempting new industries from taxation for the first ten years of operation. Wage earners and the value of products more than doubled during the 1880-1890 decade (Table XI).

Growth continued to be slow, although legislation enacted in 1924 and 1936 encouraged manufacturing. The first act repealed a law limiting one company or corporation to landholdings valued at $1,000,000, and manufacturing companies to real estate valued at $2,000,000 at the time of purchase. The second act, the Industrial Act of 1936, marked the beginning of what is popularly known as the BAWI Program (Balance Agriculture with Industry). The newly created Mississippi Industrial Commission encouraged industries by authorizing local governments to incur bonded indebtedness to erect plants for lease to reputable manufacturing firms.[12]

Although both measures were pieces of depression legislation, Mississippians were already concerned about the uncertainty of depending almost entirely on a cotton economy. Moreover, the two measures signified an end to the hostile attitude toward manufacturing that had prevailed for almost a century. Changes in the type of employment between 1939 and 1966 are illustrated in Table XII. The increase in nonagricultural employment is even more striking when it is recalled that the number of farms declined 63 per cent and tenancy 86 per cent,

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[12]Lee B. Gaither, "Industrialization in Mississippi After 1933," Social Science Studies, Historical Series 1-5, Mississippi State College (1955), pp. 8-9.

TABLE XI

SELECTED ELEMENTS SHOWING INDUSTRIAL GROWTH
IN MISSISSIPPI: 1840-1963

Year	Number of Establishments	Wage Earners	Value of Products ($1,000)
1840	1,383	5,063	---
1850	947	3,154	2,912
1860	976	4,775	6,590
1870	1,731	5,941	4,154
1880	1,479	5,827	4,607
1890	1,698	14,465	10,064
1899	1,294	26,799	17,175
1909	2,598	50,384	43,630
1919	2,379	57,383	100,559
1929	1,911	52,086	107,325
1939	1,235	45,893	72,661
1947	1,985	70,282	302,268
1958	2,433	92,468	642,175
1963	2,384	108,480	1,016,962

Source: United States Census, "Manufacturing," 1840-1963.

TABLE XII

OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF MISSISSIPPI, 1939 AND 1966

Type of Employment	1939	1966
Mining	800	5,700
Contract Construction	13,900	31,000
Manufacturing	59,200	165,800
Transportation and Public Utilities	19,300	27,100
Wholesale and Retail Trade	34,300	97,500
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	3,300	17,600
Service and Miscellaneous	22,800	60,200
Government	49,400	114,200
Agriculture	423,000	122,900
Total	626,000	642,000

Source: Mississippi Magic, Publication of the Mississippi Agricultural and Industrial Board, Jackson, Mississippi, July, 1965, p. 2; and January, 1968, p. 9.

and that the state's population declined during the same period.

The antebellum practice of locating industry outside urban areas was reversed as industralists located in cities and towns where shipping facilities and a labor force were readily available, but except for lumbering in south Mississippi no regional concentration of industry appeared before 1940. Since that time manufacturing has tended to concentrate along the east Gulf Coast and in Jackson.

The number of industrial firms in the state capital increased by 202 between 1935 and 1964, and centripetal forces essential to industrial development have only recently developed in Mississippi.[13]

Even though the urban population increased by almost 200,000 persons between 1950 and 1960, the advent of rapid transportation prior to industrialization has allowed a significant number to remain on the farm or in rural communities and commute to work. The rural nonfarm population in 1960 was almost 340,000. Stated another way: of every five Mississippians in 1960, one lived on a farm, two were found in cities, and two in rural nonfarm residences.[14] Although the place of residence has not changed appreciably, the economic pursuits have changed significantly and have adversely affected small towns. For the purpose of this study, extinct industrial towns are grouped into manufacturing and sawmill towns.

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[13]Howard G. Adkins, "The Economic Industrial Base Factor of the SMSA: Jackson, Mississippi," unpublished, 1966, p. 15.

[14]Daniel W. McMurry and John N. Burrus, "Mississippi's Population: An Analysis of a Half-Century of Demographic Change," The Southern Quarterly, Vol. 6 (1967), 55.

B. EXTINCT MANUFACTURING TOWNS

Altogether eight towns in which the inhabitants engaged in manufacturing as a major occupation have disappeared. It is questionable whether all eight were exclusively manufacturing towns, but available data imply it was the most significant function. All of these towns were settled between 1790 and 1850, and were located in a line extending diagonally across the state northeast from Vicksburg or in a crescent from Natchez to the Pearl River (Figure 20).

Union Town

Union Town was the oldest of the manufacturing towns. In 1798 William Ferguson and four neighbors wrote Governor Sargent concerning the construction of a jail near an inn on the Natchez Trace. Two years later the site was surveyed into lots and sold. Union Town was a collection of artisans which functioned as a village economy.

> . . . Shackleford established an extensive tannery, and had branches at the old Cable place and at Mrs. Wallaces'. Ellis had a public gin, as few at that day were able to run one for private use. Farley made all the hats. . . . Jake Warner made boots. . . . Pintard was cabinet-maker. McMurchy made wagons, plows, and etc., and old Getzendman made bull whips. Weaving was extensively carried on, but it was done by hand. Greenleaf . . . established a cotton-gin factory. . . .[15]

By 1807 a brick kiln, two inns, a doctor, and store had been added to Union Town.[16]

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[15]Quoted in Dunbar Rowland, editor, Mississippi: Comprising Sketches of Counties, Towns, Events, Institutions and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form, Vol. II (Atlanta: Southern Historical Publishing Association, 1907), p. 836.

[16]Mount Locust on the Old Natchez Trace, published by the Eastern National Park and monument Association, U. S. Department of the Interior (1960), pp. 10-11.

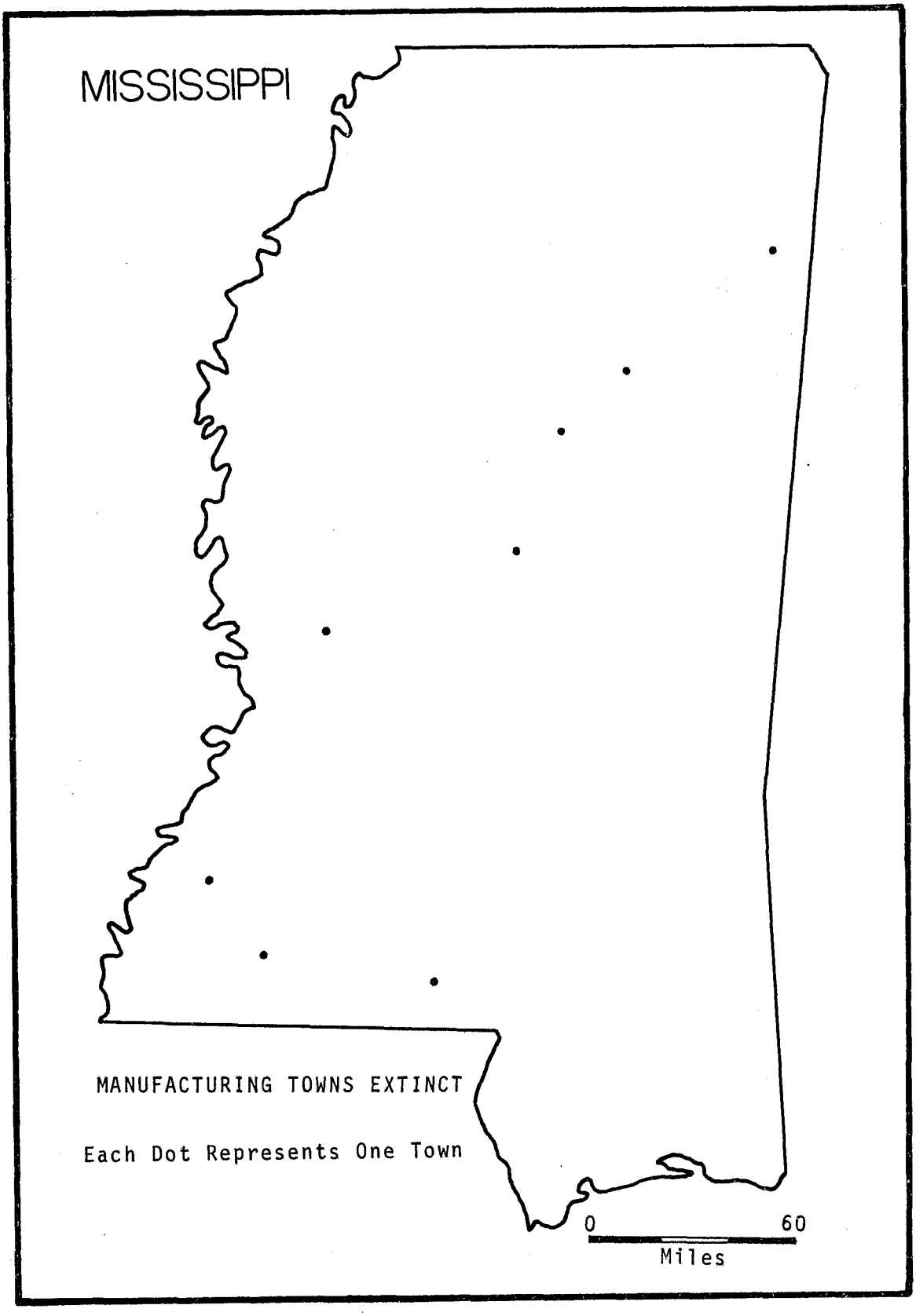


Figure 20. Manufacturing towns extinct.

Opportunity for survival was lost when Union Town was not selected as the seat of Jefferson County, and when Ferguson, the town's most dynamic leader, died. By 1830 Union Town had lost all semblance of a town. Those possessing adequate acreages turned to farming, several relocated in nearby Rodney and Fayette, and still others moved into the recently acquired Doak's Stand Cession area.[17]

Bankston, An Antebellum Mill Town

The first significant industry in the state was textiles. With local markets and a locally produced raw material, everything appeared favorable for a successful operation. However, success was questionable because almost all firms were designed to supply coarse fabrics and yarns to a local market, periodically supplied more cheaply from outside the state. Furthermore, with money in short supply, operations were conducted on a barter system whereby cloth was produced on order and paid for by a percentage of goods fabricated from customer supplied raw materials.[18] Other disadvantages were a lack of investment capital, a shortage of skilled labor, and inefficient steam powered machinery. Nevertheless, the Mississippi Manufacturing Company at Bankston in Choctaw County operated successfully until burned by Federal troops in 1864.

The Bankston Company was organized in 1847 at Columbus, Georgia, under the direction of J. M. Wesson, and was incorporated by an Act of

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[17] Goodspeed's Biographical and Historical Memories of Mississippi, Vol. I (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1891), p. 176; Mount Locust, footnote 16.

[18] Southwestern Farmer, Vol. 1 (1842), 117.

the Mississippi State Legislature on January 26, 1848. The company was to erect a factory in the back country of north central Mississippi and produce cotton and woolen fabrics. In Wesson's words:

> We came to Mississippi, selected a situation in a high, healthy, well-wooded and well-watered district settled with a poor population, at equidistance from the navigable waters of the Yazoo and Bigby [Tombigbee] rivers, with the view of buying cotton at its market value (less the cost of transportation) and of finding a home market for our goods without competition.[19]

The site on McCurtain's Creek, a tributary of the Big Black River, was isolated and not accessible by road at first but by 1856 Bankston had become the focus of five roads.[20]

Rather than depend exclusively on a local labor force, the company recruited thirty families in Georgia and transferred them to Mississippi.[21] Unpublished census returns for 1850 show an employment of twenty-one men and sixteen women. A decade later the numbers had increased to forty-five and forty, respectively.[22] Altogether, 178 persons were employed in and about the mills. White labor was employed because it was cheaper and more efficient, although Wesson recognized an unstable white element that could not be induced to work steadily even by high wages. This, he maintained, would improve with each successive generation.

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[19] Wesson, op. cit., footnote 8, p. 201.

[20] Morse and Breese, Mississippi, ca. 1842; Thomas Cowperthwait, A New Map of Mississippi with its Roads and Distances, 1850; J. H. Colton, Mississippi, ca. 1856.

[21] Sentinel, Vicksburg, Mississippi, April 26, 1848; Mississippi Session Laws, 1848, pp. 317-20.

[22] United States Census, "Manufacturing," 1850 (micro film), Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi; United States Census, "Mississippi: Manufactures by Counties," 1860, p. 286.

Negro slave labor was considered inferior in manufacturing because most lacked initiative. They performed only closely supervised duties in the preparatory departments.[23]

The plans of Bankston are not available. However, the town did contain a cotton and woolen factory with machinery valued at $80,000, a gristmill, flour mill, and other buildings, including the company houses in which the mill workers lived, valued at $15,000. A church, school, tannery, shoe factory, brick yard, machine shops, and sawmills contributed to the town's size. Vegetables and meat were supplied by company farms.[24] Bankston was a company town.

Farmers in Choctaw and Attala counties were encouraged to plant wheat (Wesson imported seeds for distribution to farmers at no cost) and raise sheep so that the company could diversify its operations and secure additional sources of income.[25] Evidently the farmers responded favorably to Wesson's encouragement as illustrated by the increasing production of wool, wheat, corn, and cotton (Figure 21). By the late 1850's the company was grinding some 50,000 bushels of wheat annually, and had outstripped the local supply of raw wool, landing 30,000 pounds in Vicksburg in February, 1858, for transhipment up the Yazoo River to Greenwood and overland to Bankston.[26]

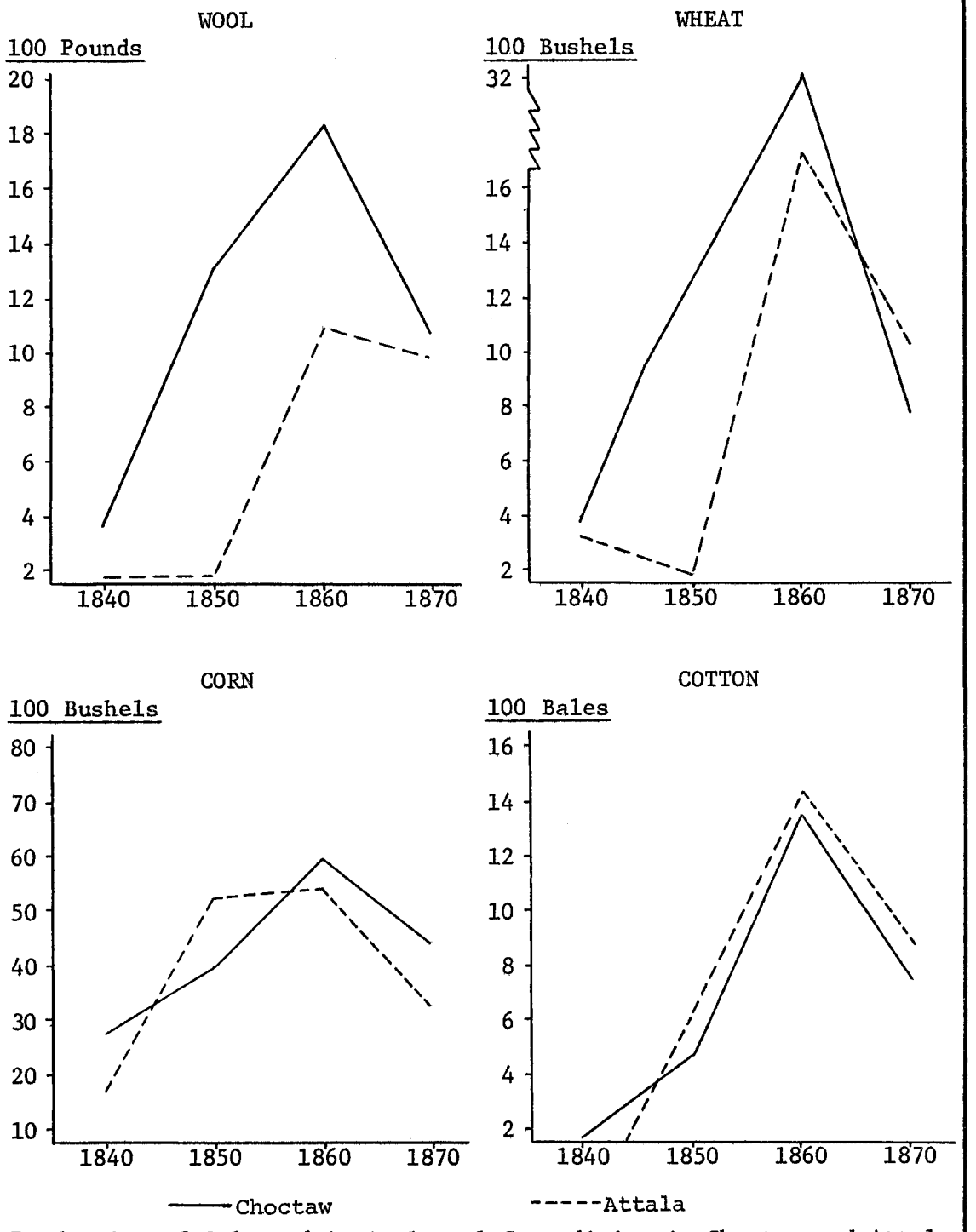
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[23]Wesson, op. cit., footnote 8, pp. 203-05.

[24]John H. Moore, "Mississippi's Ante'Bellum Textile Industry," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 16 (1954), 89-90; DeBow's Commercial Review, Vol. 9 (1850), 433.

[25]Moore, op. cit., footnote 24, p. 87; Moore, op. cit., footnote 2, p. 131; Wesson, op. cit., footnote 8, p. 202.

[26]Wesson, op. cit., footnote 8, p. 202; Whig, Vicksburg, Mississippi, March 10, 1858.



Production of Selected Agricultural Commodities in Choctaw and Attala Counties, Mississippi, 1840-1870.

Source: U. S. Census, 1840-1870.

Figure 21. Production of selected agricultural commodities in Choctaw and Attala Counties, Mississippi, 1840-1870.

The company was successful in its primary function--that of cotton manufacturing. Wesson wrote in 1858 that:

> . . . since we have increased our operations and established a character for our goods, we defy competition and place our goods in New Orleans, Vicksburg and Jackson, and the other large towns and cities of the state. We now have (and expect to keep) a good supply in New Orleans,[27]

Two years later the firm declared a 29 per cent dividend.[28]

Very little is known about working and living conditions in the town and the relationship between employers and laborers. Wages were slightly below average, but the workers apparently lived comfortably in company-owned houses.[29] The Mississippi Manufacturing Company experienced no difficulties until mid 1864. At that time the greatest problems were due to armed deserters, for Wesson reported to Governor Clark they were "burning dwelling houses, corn cribs, cotton pens, and attacking local citizens in their homes and on the public highways."[30] He further reported there were threats to burn the factory and government shoe shops.[31]

Within a year after the mill and company town of Bankston were burned by union troops in 1864, Wesson received a charter to re-establish

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[27]Wesson, op. cit., footnote 8, pp. 201-02. Products from the factory were marketed through a Mississippi wholesale firm, Moore, op. cit., footnote 24, p. 89.

[28]Moore, op. cit., footnote 2, p. 90.

[29]United States Census, 1860.

[30]James M. Wesson to Governor Clark, March 26, 1864, Governor Correspondence, File E-65, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

[31]Wesson, op. cit., footnote 30.

Mississippi Mills and secured credit from northern investors to purchase new equipment and machinery valued at $500,000.[32] Fully aware of the disadvantages of the original location in receiving supplies and in marketing the finished product, Wesson selected a new site on the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad in Copiah County. Wesson, a company town, was incorporated and seventy-five houses were built for laborers, many of whom had resided at Bankston, creating what reportedly was to become "one of the largest manufacturing villages this side of Massachusetts."[33]

The effects of relocating the mill and town along with similar industrial changes on Choctaw and Copiah counties are illustrated in Table XIII.

The four or five trade and service establishments not owned by the company, but burned by Federal troops in 1864, were rebuilt in the nearby towns of Chester, Ackerman, and Greensboro. Riley observed in 1901 that only a post office remained at Bankston.[34] The remaining visible evidence of the town are an abandoned store, a polling (voting) place, and a cemetery (Figure 22).

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[32] Weekly Enterprise, Wesson, Mississippi, February 1, 1952.

[33] Picayune, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 17, 1865.

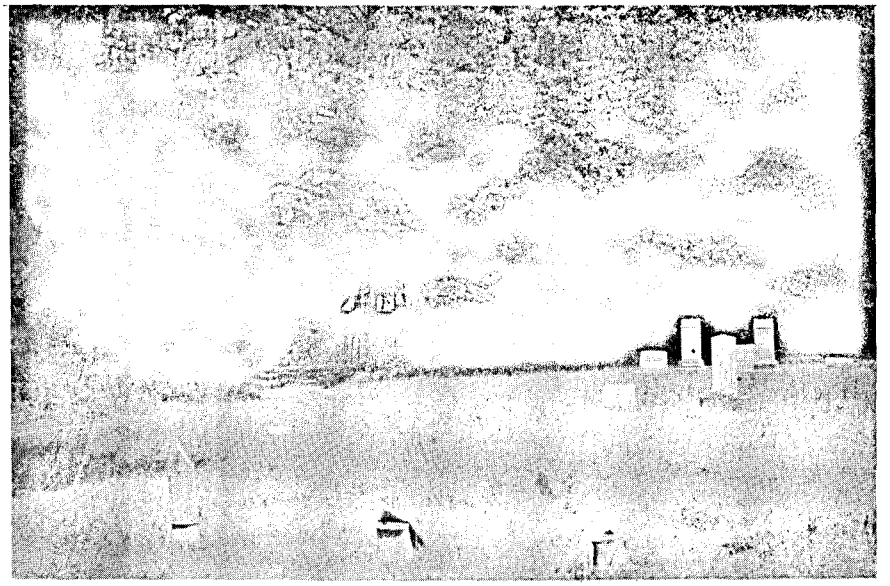
[34] Franklin L. Riley, "Extinct Towns and Villages in Mississippi," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 6 (1902), 328.

TABLE XIII

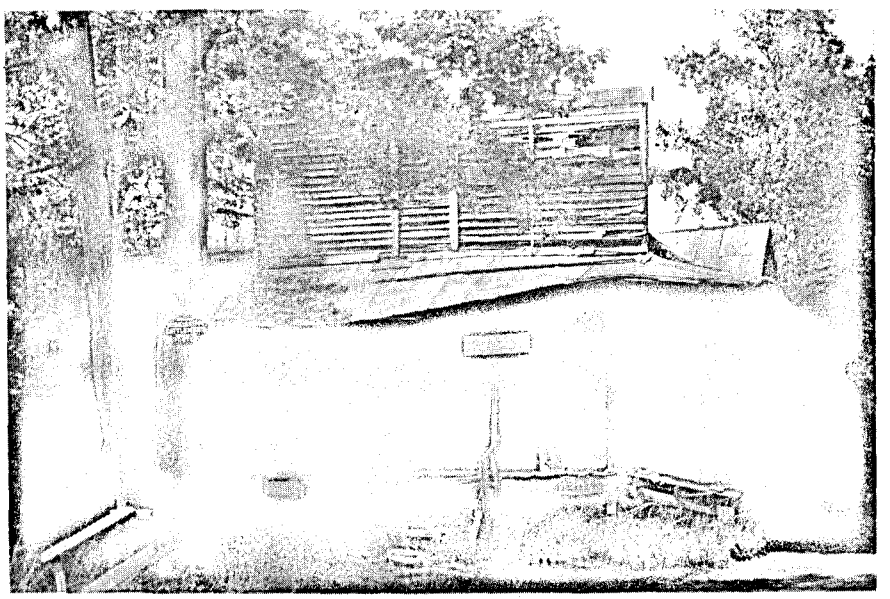
CHOCTAW AND COPIAH COUNTIES BEFORE AND AFTER THE RELOCATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI MANUFACTURING COMPANY

	1860		1870	
	Choctaw	Copiah	Choctaw	Copiah
Establishments	43	14	14	58
Capital Invested	$142,030	$62,500	$9,375	$614,485
Employment	186	74	24	352
Cotton Goods	56	—	—	100
Woolen Goods	35	—	—	20

Source: United States Census, 1860 and 1870.



(a) Bankston, Mississippi, 1969.



(b) Store at Bankston, Mississippi, 1969.

Figure 22. A cemetery, polling place, and store at Bankston, Mississippi, 1969.



(a) Bankston, Mississippi, 1969.



(b) Store at Bankston, Mississippi, 1969.

Figure 22. A cemetery, polling place, and store at Bankston, Mississippi, 1969.

C. EXTINCT LUMBER TOWNS

Introduction

One of the first objectives of the French colonizers at Biloxi was to seek timber for ship construction.[35] Since that time lumbering has been carried on in Mississippi, and the large-scale exploitation of the virgin forest which commenced in the 1880's was the occasion for a major economic boom.

Because of poor transportation for moving logs, sawmills were dispersed rather than concentrated in the existing towns. Unlike lumbering in the Great Northern Forest where the men lived in sawmill camps, logging and sawmill operations in the Piney Woods were conducted by men living with their families in company-owned sawmill towns located within the forest.[36] Occasionally a town developed beyond the mono-industrial stage and became a thriving, functional center; however, most were transient, lasting only as long as the timber and disappearing shortly after it was exhausted.[37]

The lumber industry in the Piney Woods had far-reaching social and economic effects on the life of the people. With an estimated 90 per cent of the land unsuited for cotton culture, the economy in the

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[35]Peter Hamilton, Mobile Under Five Flags (Mobile: The Gill Printing Co., 1913), p. 68.

[36]Clayton Rand, Ink On My Hands (Gulfport, Mississippi: The Dixie Press, 1940), pp. 1-10.

[37]Rupert B. Vance and Nicholas J. Demerath, editors, The Urban South (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1954, p. 13; The South's Third Forest . . . How It Can Meet Future Demands, a report of the Southern Forest Resource Analysis Committee - 1969, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1969, p. 1.

longleaf pine forest had depended upon hunting, grazing cattle, and cultivating small plots of sterile pine soil. Wherever large sawmills were erected in a particular area there was a general movement to the town.[38] Those continuing to farm marketed vegetables, dairy products, and poultry in the sawmill towns and purchased supplies at sawmill commissaries.

Forest Types

The most extensive tree types were pines (Figure 23).[39] The longleaf variety (Pinus Palustris) was commercially the most important, especially in an area between the Alabama border and the eastern edge of the Loess Belt and extending approximately 100 to 150 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico. The core of this area begins approximately ten miles inland and lays between the Pearl and Pascagoula rivers. In 1880 the longleaf forest covered more than 75 per cent (7,500,000 acres) of the region.[40]

Loblolly and shortleaf pines were most abundant in the Hills, except along river bottoms and on clay slopes where hardwoods

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[38]Nollie Hickman, Mississippi Harvest, Lumbering in the Longleaf Pine Belt, 1840-1915 (University, Mississippi: The University of Mississippi, 1962), p. 253; Charles Mohr, The Timber Pines of the Southern United States, U. S. Bureau of Forestry, Bulletin No. 13 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1896), p. 42.

[39]Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, Map 1; Mohr, op. cit., footnote 38, Plates III, XIV, and XVIII; C. S. Sargent, Report on the Forest Trees of North America (Exclusive of Mexico), House Miscellaneous Documents, No. 42, Vol. 9, Serial 2137, 47 Congress, 2nd. Session (1883), p. 532.

[40]Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, p. 2; Mohr, op. cit., footnote 38, pp. 30, 42-43.

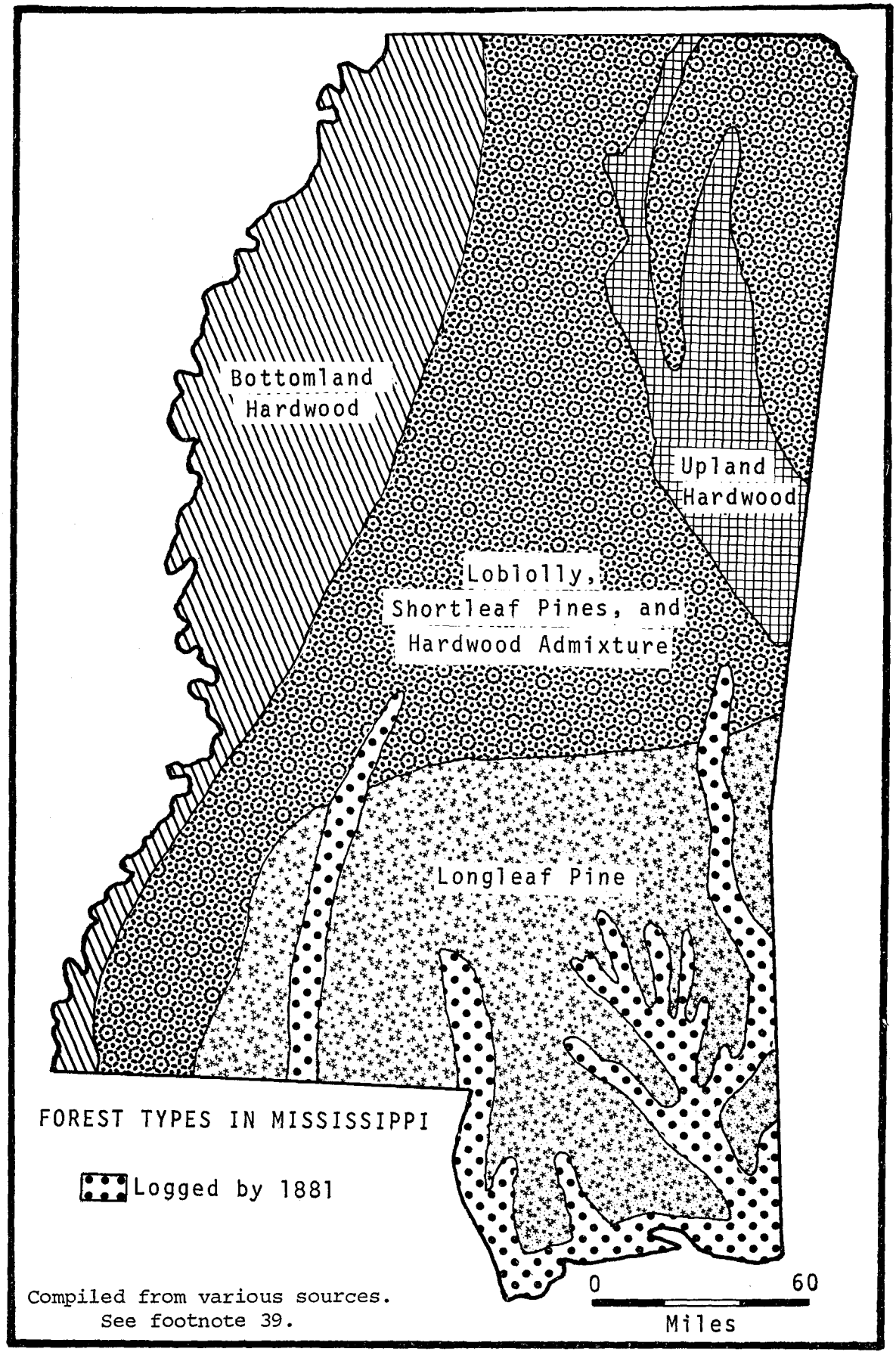


Figure 23. Forest types in Mississippi.

prevailed.[41] The usual swamp growth of bottomland hardwoods, cypress, oak, hickory, and pecan comprised the bulk of the tree types in the Delta. Upland oak, pines, and "prairies" extended northward into the Hills in a narrow crescent between the Alabama and Tennessee boundary.[42]

The Pre-Big Mill Era: Lumbering to 1880

Colonial lumbering. Colonial inhabitants in the lower Mississippi Valley engaged in commercial lumber production before the sugar and cotton kingdoms were established. These pioneer lumbermen converted longleaf and slash pines into masts and spars for sailing vessels, selling the timber to the Spanish at Pensacola and to French sea captains sailing out of ports in the West Indies. Tar, pitch, and turpentine were important in the late colonial period. Cypress, however, was the mainstay of the early Gulf Coast lumber industry.[43] Cypress was an easy-to-work building material, almost immune to borers and decay, and excellent for the manufacture of barrel staves for the West Indies trade.[44]

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[41]Mohr, op. cit., footnote 38, pp. 87-88; 108-11.

[42]Eugene W. Hilgard, "Report on the Cotton Production of the State of Mississippi with a Discussion of the General Agricultural Features of the State," The Miscellaneous Documents of the House of Representatives for the Second Session of the Forty-Seventh Congress, 1882-83, Vol. 13, Part 5 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1883), pp. 87-97.

[43]John H. Moore, Andrew Brown and Cypress Lumbering in the Old Southwest (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), pp. 3-4; Lewis C. Gray, History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860, Vol. I (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, reprinted 1958), p. 159; Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, pp. 15-16.

[44]Moore, op. cit., footnote 43, pp. 4-5; Dunbar Rowland, History of Mississippi: The Heart of the South, Vol. I (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1925), p. 296.

Lumbering was a sideline activity for colonial farmers and planters during late autumn and winter. There were no towns in colonial Mississippi in which lumbering was the major source of livelihood, but apparently there were some turpentine and tar distillation camps. In 1777 Bartram noted three large pots of several hundred gallons capacity which had been used for this purpose near an old fort or settlement west of Mobile Bay.[45]

Antebellum lumbering. After 1798 sawmills were located along the Mississippi River south of Vicksburg and on the Gulf Coast. They supplied pine and cypress lumber for the local market, and for the New Orleans and foreign markets. Sawmills in the interior were small and operated in conjunction with rice, grist, and cotton mills. Regardless of size, sawmills depended on water for power, and were furnished with an ample supply of logs offered for sale at the landings by loggers who cut timber on public lands.[46]

During the early 1820's the steam sawmill appeared in Natchez. Sawmills were no longer rigidly restricted to water power sites, but the operation depended on logs rafted to the mills and water to convey the finished product to markets.[47] Perhaps the largest sawmill in the state during the 1830's was owned and operated by Andrew Brown in Natchez.

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[45] Mohr, op. cit., footnote 38, p. 29.

[46] Moore, op. cit., footnote 43, pp. 20-21; Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, pp. 16-17.

[47] Moore, op. cit., footnote 43, pp. 73-97; Nollie Hickman, "Logging and Rafting Timber in South Mississippi, 1840-1910," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 19 (1957), 154-55.

In 1835 the annual production of his mill was 2,000,000 board feet, but was insufficient to meet the demands of the area. The cypress timber used by the Brown mill was supplied by loggers operating in the Delta.[48] Even though steam increased the total output and fostered specialization of labor in sawing techniques, the industry did not change radically until railroads penetrated the region and gave rise to the big mill.

The first steam powered sawmill on the Mississippi Coast was erected at Pascagoula in 1835. Five years later, ten were operating in Hancock County and two in Jackson County. At this time 309 sawmills were operating throughout the state.[49] After 1840 the industry began to concentrate on the Gulf Coast along the lower Pearl River at Pearlington, Napoleon, Logtown, and Gainesville; along the Wolf and Jordon rivers at the head of Bay St. Louis; at the head of Biloxi Back Bay; and along the Pascagoula and Escatawpa rivers (Figure 24).[50]

The lumber industry developed more rapidly in the Pearl River--Bay St. Louis section than in the Pascagoula area. This occurred in spite of the fact that the Pascagoula and Escatawpa rivers drained the heart of the longleaf pine forest. Apparently the marketing and shipping

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[48]Moore, op. cit., footnote 43, pp. 30-33.

[49]United States Sixth Census, 1840 Compendium, p. 236.

[50]Compiled from, J. F. H. Claiborne, "A Trip Through the Piney Woods," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 9 (1906), 487-538; Eugene W. Hilgard, Report on the Geology and Agriculture of the State of Mississippi (Jackson, Mississippi: E. Barksdale, State Printer, 1860); John H. Moore, "South Mississippi in 1852: Some Selections from the Journal of Benjamin L. C. Wailes," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 18 (1956), 18-32; Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38; Mohr, op. cit., footnote 38; and S. G. Thigpin, A Boy in Rural Mississippi (Picayune, Mississippi: S. G. Thigpin, 1966).

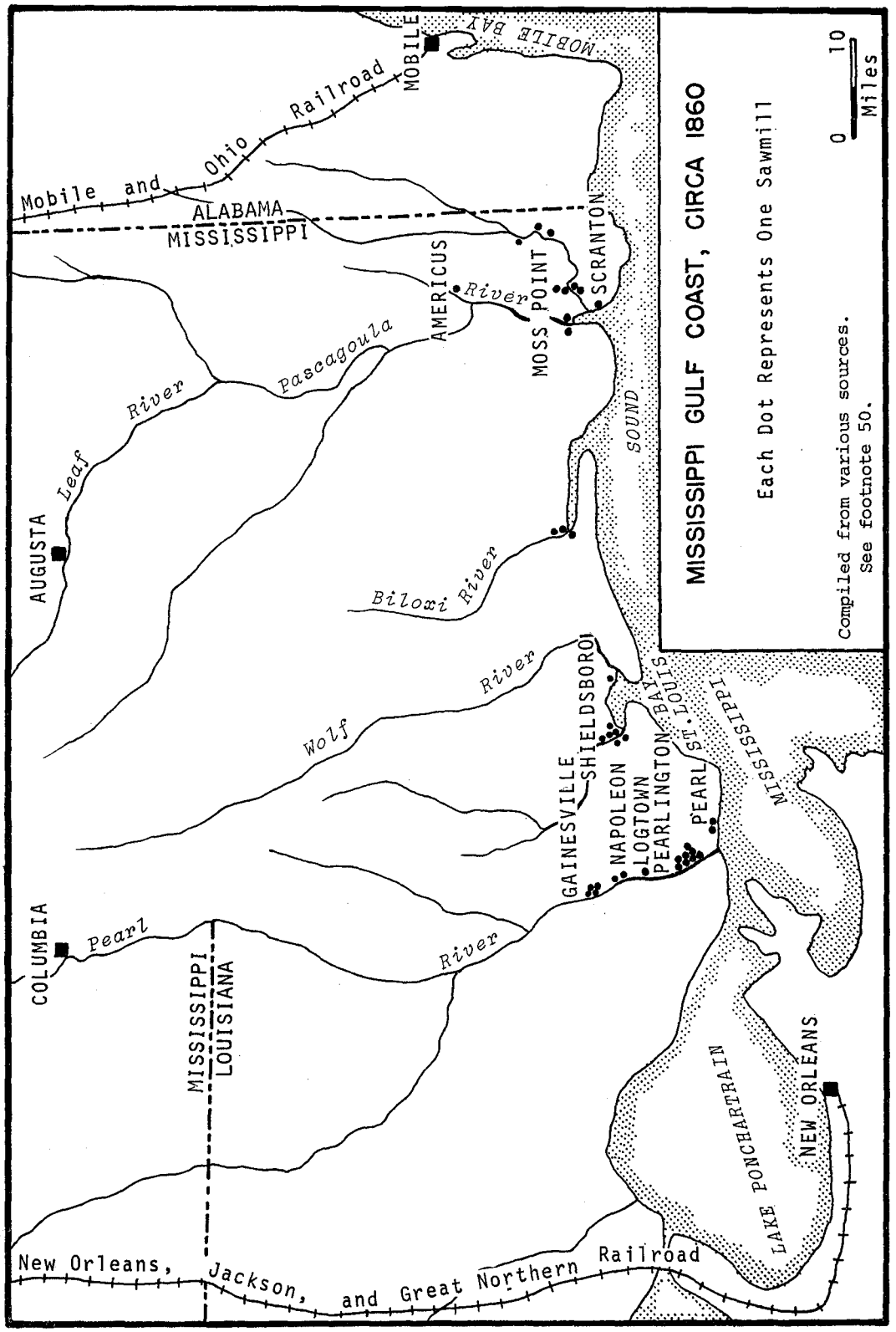


Figure 24. Mississippi Gulf Coast, circa 1860.

facilities at nearby New Orleans, the supplies of logs cut by farmers and rafted to the sawmill towns along the lower Pearl, and the early start of Gainesville, Logtown, Napoleon, and Pearlington were more attractive to lumbermen migrating from New England.[51]

Two events in the 1850's led to change in the lumber industry. One was adoption of the continuous cutting circular saw. Its major advantages over the sash method were a smaller kerf (cut) and greater speed, but it needed a larger and more dependable supply of logs than that provided by farmer-loggers rafting timber to coastal mills with spring freshets. The second event was the building of the Mobile and Ohio and the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern railroads along the margins of the longleaf pine belt. The former crossed the headwaters of the Escatawpa River in Alabama and entered Mississippi at the Greene-Wayne county line, but remained east of the Chickasawhay River. The latter was located west of the Pearl River (Figure 24). Sawmills were established along the railroads, but they were small operations as resinous pine was not marketable until the dry kiln was introduced in the 1870's and 1880's.

By 1860 lumbering employed 31 per cent (1,441) of the state's industrial wage earners (Table XIV). The economy of the coastal counties relied heavily on the forest.[52] But the presence of outsiders with

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[51]Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, pp. 15-22; Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News, Jackson, Mississippi, June 23, 1957; The Picayune Item, Picayune, Mississippi, April 26, 1962; May 3, 1962; May 10, 1962; May 17, 1962; and Hattiesburg American, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, June 16, 1962.

[52]United States Census, "Mississippi," 1850 and 1860.

TABLE XIV

MISSISSIPPI LUMBER INDUSTRY

Year	Employment in Sawmills	Per Cent of Wage Earners in Industry	Number of Sawmills	Value of Products ($100)	Employed in Turpentine and Resin
1840	123	--	309	192	--
1850	1,079	32	259	913	33
1860	1,441	31	229	1,832	4
1870	1,954	33	265	2,160	27
1880	1,295	22	295	1,920	--
1890	4,427	28	366	5,770	620
1900	9,676	36	844	15,656	2,288
1910	37,118	73	1,647	42,793	2,573
1920	35,512	64	1,435	87,508	2,495
1930	30,747	59	916	84,074	1,360
1940	16,515	36	396	30,380	--

Sources: United States Census, 1840-1940; Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, p. 240, list 16,421 sawmills workers in 1899, 24,415 in 1904, and 37,178 in 1909.

capital, the application of steam, the circular saw, the railroads, a climate that permitted uninterrupted logging throughout the year, and demand in foreign and domestic markets were major factors in the development of an industry that transformed the economy of the region.

Post-Bellum lumbering. The first industry to be revived after the Civil War was lumbering. It was essential to the rebuilding process. In late 1865 forty-two sawmills were reported to be operating in Copiah County, more than half located along the railroad.[53] During the 1870's, sawmills were small operating units that cut timber primarily for local markets and had little impact on existing towns or on the development of new towns.

In perhaps the most comprehensive study of lumbering in Mississippi's longleaf pine belt, Hickman characterizes the post-bellum period as one of transition. Railroads increased their role in transporting logs and lumber. New techniques required a larger and more highly trained labor force. Mills near the coast were the largest operating units in the state. For example, the Favre and Poitevent enterprise at Pearlington employed 155 persons and produced 20,000,000 board feet in 1870-1871. Five years later an estimated 800 persons were dependent on the mills at Pearlington and Logtown. Pearlington, Logtown, Gainesville, Handsboro, and Moss Point were the first five towns to grow directly out of the lumber industry.[54]

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[53] Clarion, Jackson, Mississippi, November 24, 1865.

[54] Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, pp. 44-54.

The Big Mill Lumber Town After 1880

Most of the extinct sawmill towns shown on Figure 25 were established after 1880 in conjunction with large and medium-sized mills. Large mills were capable of cutting more than 40,000,000 board feet annually. A mill cutting more than 500,000 feet daily was uneconomical because of the cost involved in transporting logs to sustain the daily cut at a site for any length of time.[55]

Several factors facilitated the establishment of medium-sized and large mills. Large tracts of good pine land was available. At Cybur a 10,000 acre tract contained an estimated 20,000 board feet per acre.[56] Logging operations were seldom interrupted by adverse weather conditions for any extended period of time. The region was a well drained area of rolling topography with deep sandy soil, all of which presented no problem in constructing railroads. By using skidders operating from tram or dummy lines and short haul logging wagons, most areas were accessible to the loggers.

The general unsuitability of the pine lands for profitable farming caused agriculturalists to avoid the region. In 1850 there were approximately 6,000,000 acres of vacant land, and the amount did not change appreciably until after reconstruction. As late as 1888 the area between Biloxi and the confluence of the Chickasawhay and Leaf rivers was described as a wilderness without population.[57]

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[55]There is no accepted precedence for this distinction based on annual cut. However, Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, pp. 158-60, 178-83, implies such a distinction.

[56]Thigpin, op. cit., footnote 50, pp. 129, 148.

[57]Herald, Biloxi, Mississippi, February 18, 1888.

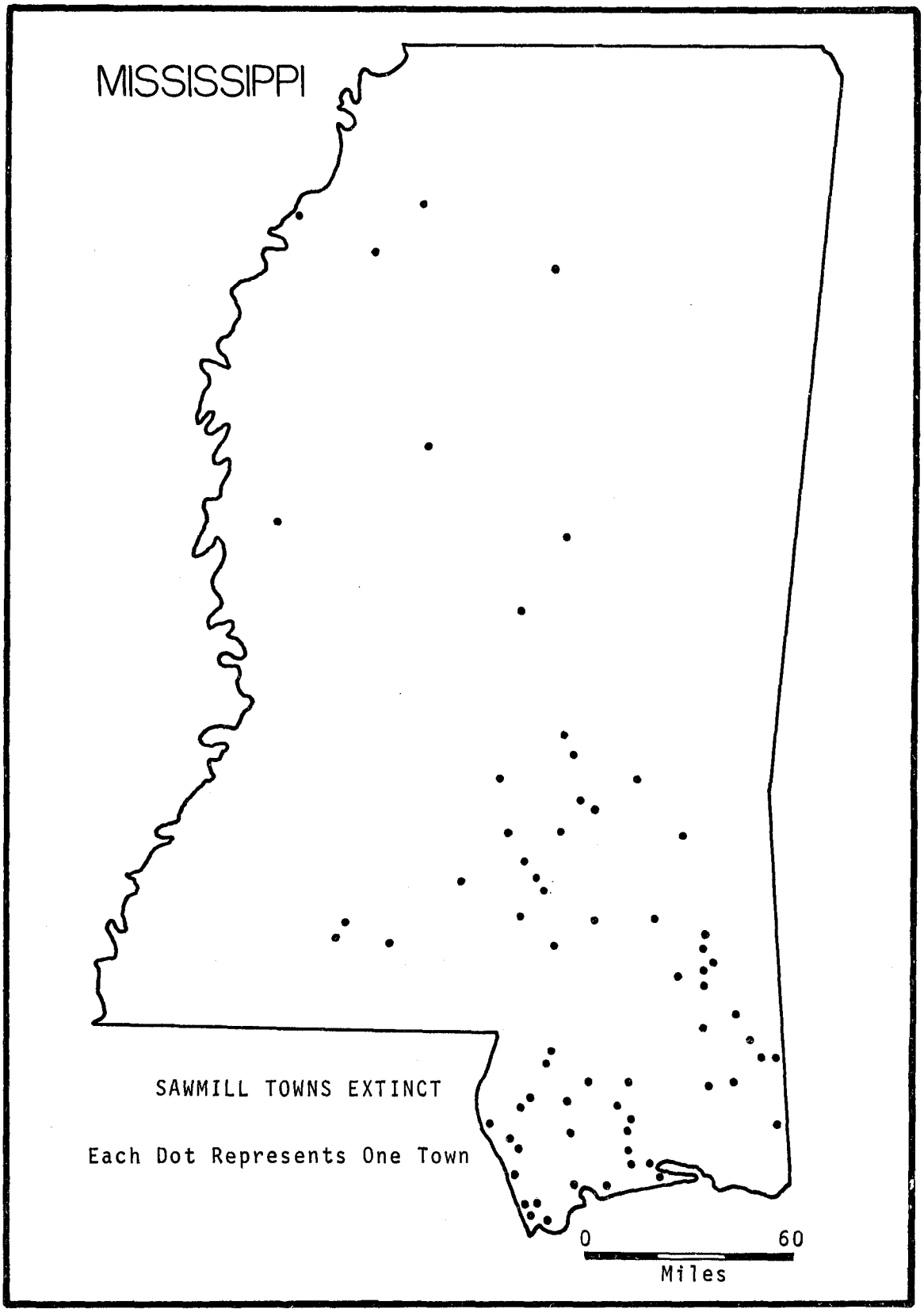


Figure 25. Sawmill towns extinct.

Prior to 1866, people commonly cut trees on public domain, and timber within five to ten miles of transportation arteries was logged rapidly (Figure 23, page 146). The prevailing low price for timber was passed on to loggers, who were unable to purchase timberland and sell the cut profitably to mill men. Moreover, when settlers needed money, they simply cut saw logs, hauled them to the nearest stream, and rafted them to mills at Moss Point and Pascagoula.[58]

In 1866 the Southern Homestead Act closed all federally owned land in the South to private entry. However, when federal agents seized logs and blockaded shipment of timber from the Pascagoula area in an attempt to end timber theft, public sentiment in favor of Piney Woods lumbermen and inhabitants led to passage of a bill that legalized private sale of public land in 1876. Northern lumbermen and speculators were also becoming aware of the yellow pine forest as a replacement for the rapidly dwindling white pines, especially since yellow pine land sold for a minimum of $1.25 per acre with no limit on acreages purchased.[59]

The federal government had returned 3,300,000 acres of land to Mississippi under terms incorporated in the Swampland Act of 1850.[60] Prior to 1877 this state-owned land was sold in unlimited quantities,

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[58]W. F. Bond, "The Life of Jim Broom," Bulletin of the Delta State Teachers College, Vol. 25 (1949), 7-9.

[59]Democrat Star, Pascagoula, Mississippi, January 4, 1874; United States Statutes at Large, 1866, pp. 66-67; United States Statutes at Large, 1877, pp. 73-74.

[60]Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, 1898 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1898), p. 266. The act was passed in 1849 and applied only to Louisiana, but the following year it was extended to include other states.

but thereafter legal sales consisted of one 240 acre tract per individual within a twelve month period.[61] Through false entries and quitclaims, individuals and companies acquired conterminous 240 acre tracts that occasionally gave holding of 20,000 acres and more.

With justification, Mississippians began to fear that a few northern and eastern capitalists would acquire a land and timber monopoly and threaten local millmen in the Pascagoula, Pearl and Bay St. Louis districts.[62] L. N. Dantzler, a large land owner, sawmill operator, and speculator at Moss Point, used the Northwestern Lumbermen to advertize his willingness to locate, survey, and buy government land for northerners at a 30 per cent commission or at one-third interest.[63] Gates noted that by 1888 forty-three individuals had acquired 1,023,629 acres of federal land for an average holding of 23,805 acres.[64] A bill to abolish private sale of public domain land was passed in 1888, but not before 2,640,469 acres of federal land had been sold.[65]

By 1903 an estimated two-thirds of the longleaf pinelands were owned by non-mill operators. Seven mill owners held title to a majority

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[61] Mississippi Session Laws, 1877, p. 34.

[62] Democrat Star, Pascagoula, Mississippi, February 9, 1886.

[63] Northwestern Lumbermen, 1888, p. 24.

[64] Paul W. Gates, "Federal Land Policy in the South, 1866-1888," Journal of Southern History, Vol. 6 (1940), 320-21. The largest number of investors in Mississippi pinelands were from Michigan. For example, D. A. Blodgett owned 721,000 acres of timberland in 1906. Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, p. 83.

[65] United States Statutes at Large, 1888, p. 622; Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1890), pp. 109-110, 252.

of the remaining acreages.[66] Timberland holdings acquired from the state and federal governments and from private sales were often ample to maintain mill operations at one site for a twelve to fifteen year run.

Railroads were as important as land purchases in the development of the lumber industry. The mere existence of vast amounts of virgin yellow pine timber 1,000 miles nearer northern markets than northwestern timber was an incentive for constructing the New Orleans-Great Northern, the Meridian and Memphis, the Jackson and Eastern, most of the Gulf, Mobile and Northern, and segments of other railroads in the Piney Woods[67] (Figure 17, page 115). Furthermore, generous land grants (more than one million acres in Mississippi) encouraged railroads to extend mileage.

The first railroads inland from the Gulf were an outgrowth of rivalary between Mobile and New Orleans for cotton produced in the interior. These two railroads touched only the margins of the Piney Woods, but by mid 1861 lumber ranked second to cotton in freight. Between 1880 and 1910 rails were extended into almost every area of Mississippi's longleaf pine forest.[68] Supplementing the main lines were feeder roads, called "dummy-lines" or "tramroads," constructed by sawmill companies and seldom more than thirty miles in length. Their

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[66] Lumber Trade Journal, Vol. 63 (1903), 22.

[67] James H. Lemly, The Gulf, Mobile and Ohio, a Railroad That Had to Expand or Expire (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1953), p. 274.

[68] Twelfth Biennial Report of the Railroad Commission of the State of Mississippi, 1909, Nashville, 1910, pp. 186-192.

prime purpose was to haul logs to the mills, but they frequently carried freight and passengers to company towns.[69]

Sawmills were erected almost as quickly as tracks were laid. In 1883 every stop on the Illinois Central line was reported to have a sawmill. In 1888 there were seventy-five mills within a thirty mile radius of McComb, Mississippi, from which lumber from an area west of the Pearl River could be shipped on the New Orleans to Jackson Railroad.[70] A traveler on the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad in 1902 noted an average of one turpentine distillery and sawmill to every three miles of track.[71] The number of sawmills along five railroads in the Piney Woods are listed in Table XV.

The principal freight was lumber and forest products. In 1924 82 per cent of the freight carried by the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Railroad between Walnut Grove and Union, Mississippi, was lumber.[72] Sawmills with a daily capacity of 100,000 board feet required forty to fifty flat cars of logs. As the demands on railroads increased, numerous disputes arose between the rail interests over the availability and priority of cars, tap-line service and use, and services in general. For the purposes of this study, however, it is sufficient to note that railroads allowed lumbering to penetrate the interior and were instrumental in developing mills capable of supporting a large labor force living in mill towns.

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[69] American Lumbermen (Chicago: The American Lumbermen, 1905), p. 369; Lemly, op. cit., footnote 67, pp. 271-72.

[70] Southern Lumbermen, 1888, p. 15.

[71] Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, pp. 156-58.

[72] Lemly, op. cit., footnote 67, pp. 271-72.

TABLE XV

SAWMILLS ALONG RAILROADS IN THE PINEY WOODS

Railroad	Year	Sawmills
Gulf and Ship Island Railroad	1897	18
	1900	60
New Orleans and Northeastern Railroad	1900	53
Illinois Central Railroad	1902	35
Mobile, Jackson and Kansas City Railroad	1905	60
Mississippi Central Railroad	1906	26

Source: Nollie Hickman, Mississippi Harvest, Lumbering in the Longleaf Pine Belt, 1840-1915 (University, Mississippi: The University of Mississippi, 1962), pp. 156-58.

Towns were not usually found around mills cutting less than 15,000,000 board feet annually. Sawmills capable of cutting 30,000,000 board feet annually were of near-optimum size. These mills "needed about 20,000 acres of virgin timberland to supply a ten-years' run."[73]

Operating and maintaining a mill with an annual capacity exceeding 15,000,000 board feet required a large and dependable labor force. Skilled and unskilled labor, especially in the years between 1890 and 1910, was recruited from outside the area. Skilled operators were brought from the North. Unskilled laborers came from central and north Mississippi, the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, and northern Florida. A few Germans, Italians, and Scandinavians were recruited, but most left the state because they were unable to purchase beer and wine in dry Mississippi.[74]

When labor was in short supply, as it was between 1890 and 1907, mill owners catered to workers in an attempt to keep them satisfied and on the job. There were disputes involving such issues as payment in script redeemable only at the company stores, irregular pay days and working conditions, but in general labor enjoyed a favorable position. From 1907 to 1914 wages were low, work infrequent, and workers or mill owners made few attempts to improve general social conditions.

Nevertheless, employement in the lumber industry attracted a large number of persons to the region, and most of these people resided in towns. Every county in the longleaf pine belt increased in population

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[73]Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, p. 160.

[74]Rand, op. cit., footnote 36, pp. 7; Southern Lumbermen, 1907, p. 43.

between 1880 and 1900, when 65 per cent of the population depended upon the lumber industry.[75] Lumber production, the bulk of which came from the Piney Woods, reached a peak in 1925 when 3.2 billion board feet were cut in Mississippi. By 1930, although production was already declining, the population of counties in the longleaf pine belt was almost four times that recorded by the 1870 census.[76]

Sawmill Towns in the Piney Woods

Unlike lumbering in the white pine region of the North where most timber was cut during the winter months, logging in the Piney Woods was a year around activity. Sawmills were located near the source of timber to reduce the cost of transporting logs.[77] To be assured of a year-around labor supply, company towns were established at the sawmills and men working out of camps returned to their homes in mill towns for weekends and holidays. In 1905 there were 8,185 workers in 527 camps operated by large companies like the Carriers, Finkbine Lumber Company, Eastman and Gardiner, and the Westons; in 1913 two-thirds of all mills possessed logging camps.[78]

The lumber industry had an astounding impact upon the socio-economic life in the Piney Woods and was responsible for peopling a

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[75] Lumber Trade Journal, Vol. 67 (1915), 18.

[76] Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, pp. 276-67.

[77] In 1924 per-ton mile of freight was 7.64 cents along the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Railroad. Lemly, op. cit., footnote 67, p. 72.

[78] Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, p. 251; James W. Silver, "Paul Bunyan Comes to Mississippi," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 19 (1957), 104-15.

sparsely inhabited region. It generated steady income and led to the development of group housing, medical services, and shipping facilities as well as the usual services found in towns--especially schools.

Before 1880 settlement had occurred mainly around the periphery of the Piney Woods and the number of towns had not changed appreciably since 1830. The number of towns containing a population of 500 or more and returned by the census increased from eleven in 1880 to forty-nine in 1930, and by 1960 the number had increased to sixty-one.[79] Contemporary towns like Hattiesburg, Laurel, Lumberton, Wiggins, Lucedale, Poplarville, Moss Point, Summit, and Petal began as lumber towns.

The sixty-seven towns that failed to survive the passing of the lumber era are shown on Figure 25, page 155). It is reasonable to assume some others were unintentionally overlooked. Many failed to meet the lower limit of the population criteria established in Chapter I. Assuming that twelve to fifteen men were employed in small mills using timber cut by approximately thirty to thirty-five workers in the woods, that one-half were married, and that one-half of this number had an average of three children, then the population clustered around each small mill site would total about one hundred. When the same averages are applied to sawmills employing 300, a population of almost 700 is derived. By adding to this figure a supporting population, a town of 1,000 to 1,500 was not unusual.[80] In this category were towns like Cybur, Wisner, and

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[79] United States Census, "Mississippi," 1870-1960.

[80] More accurate figures are not readily available because most extinct towns were unincorporated and did not appear in census tabulation, especially those which did not exhibit a degree of permanence. However, the estimates are supported by: Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38; Thigpin,

Zama. Moderate-sized sawmills, similar to the ones at Reba and Fouke, employed 150 men and supported a town population of three to four hundred.[81] A majority of the extinct lumber towns were associated with moderate sized sawmills.

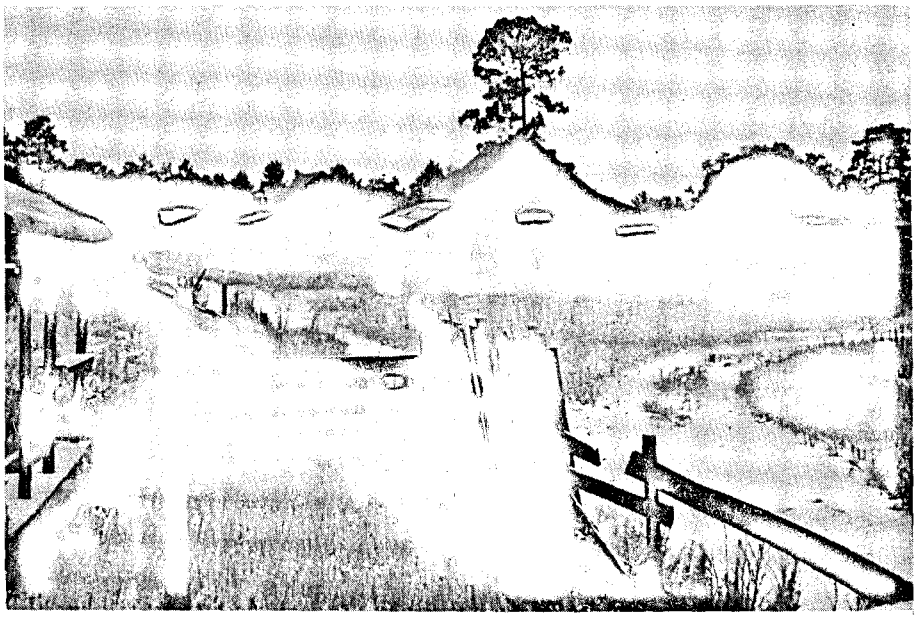
A shiftless, unstable, and transient labor force comprised the initial population element in most early towns. They soon moved to other boom towns where they believed things were better. The first houses were standard two or three-room cabins constructed in the California style with planking nailed on perpendicularly and cracks covered with laths. As a more dependable and permanent population entered the towns, houses changed to small, square, one-story, frame buildings with thin partitions dividing the interior into four rooms of equal size. Extending across the front and back of each house were lean to porches (Figure 26). The California style cabins were occupied by Negro mill hands and their families and segregated from the white residents. Each house, white and Negro alike, fronted on a dirt street and had a garden plot in the rear. Villages and camps were less permanent. They consisted of boxcar sized cabins that were easily moved on flat cars as the timber was cut.[82]

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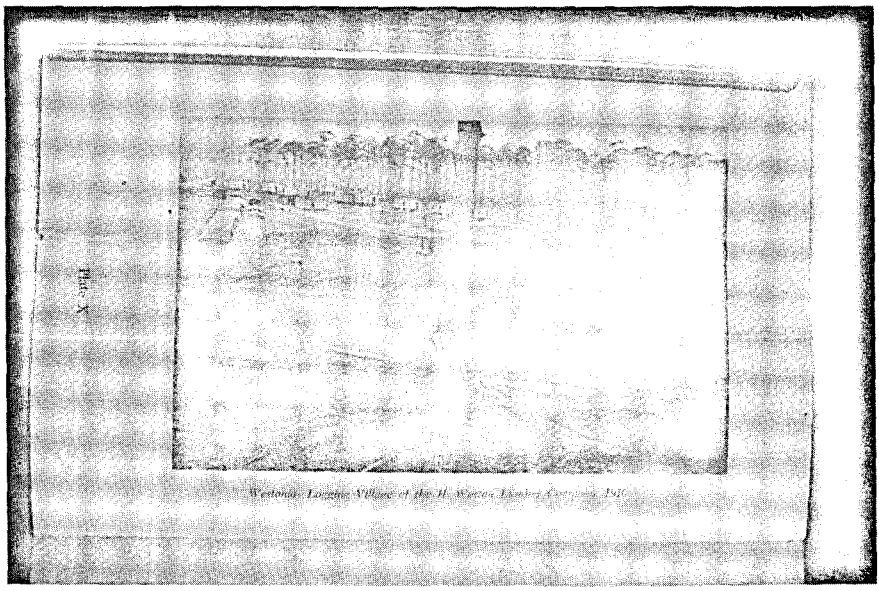
op. cit., footnote 50; figures quoted in W.P.A., Federal Writer's Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi; and Rand McNally Commercial Atlases.

[81]"Cybur," "Fouke," "Reba," "Wisner," and "Zama," W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

[82]Mississippi, A Guide to the Magnolina State, American Guide Series (New York: The Viking Press, 1938), pp. 152-53; Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, pp. 251-53; Thigpin, op. cit., footnote 50, p. 177.



(a) An extinct sawmill town in the Piney Woods, about 1930.



(b) Westonia, a logging village of the Weston Lumber Company, 1910. (Photo from Nollie Hickman, Mississippi Harvest, Lumbering in the Longleaf Pine Belt, 1840-1915 (University, Miss.: The University of Mississippi, 1962).

Figure 26. Sawmill town and village in the Piney Woods.



(a) An extinct sawmill town in the Piney Woods, about 1930.



(b) Westonia, a logging village of the Weston Lumber Company, 1910. (Photo from Nollie Hickman, Mississippi Harvest, Lumbering in the Longleaf Pine Belt, 1840-1915 (University, Miss.: The University of Mississippi, 1962).

Figure 26. Sawmill town and village in the Piney Woods.

Mill owners provided medical services, schools, recreational facilities, retail services, and protection. The quarter-boss was responsible for collecting rent, keeping houses in repair, and maintaining law ans order among mill hands. The legal basis for law enforcement was acquired through incorporation.[83]

As was the case with general stores in trade towns, the commissary was the center of town life. It was a shopping center and a gathering place for men. Most commissaries were barn like structures measuring forty by one hundred feet, with roofed porches extending across the front. Sheds used for storage were attached to the rear. The interior was divided into a doctor's office, post office, company offices, and a retail general merchandising section that occupied a major portion of the floor space and was well stocked with staple commodities.

At first wages were paid in company script or sawmill money called brozine. Its use was justified by the absence of banks during the early years of lumbering, and by the desire of the company to retain employees, to control as much revenue as possible (the commissary owned by the Weston Lumber Company in Logtown had annual sales of $350,000), and to eliminate or control alcohol consumption. Payment in script redeemable only at the company store prohibited the establishment of competitive retail establishments.[84] After currency replaced sawmill

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[83]"McHenry," W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. The following are also examples of incorporated extinct lumber towns: Alberston (200), 1894; Blodgett (400), 1916; Cohay (800), 1915; Gandsi (100), 1905; Whitesand (300), 1905; and Wisner (800), 1909.

[84]Rand, op. cit., footnote 36, p. 20.

money, commissary books were frequently checked against payroll lists to ensure that mill hands were spending their earnings at the proper place. However, after the turn of the century companies were unable to maintain complete economic dominance, and service establishments were opened in many towns. For example Bond, Norfield, Hillsdale, and Zama contained barber shops, skating rinks, theaters, hotels, Y.M.C.A.'s, garages, churches, schools, post offices, and frequently a bank.[85]

Included in the structure of most towns were activities either supporting or related to the mill operation. The number varied in proportion to the size and location of the sawmill, but almost invariably included machine shops, foundaries, brick kilns, turpentine distilleries, and planning mills.

Naval stores ranked second to lumbering. The industry developed on a moderate scale in Greene, Harrison, Pearl River, Perry, Rankin, and Simpson counties. Mohr noted that most turpentine orchards were exhausted within four years.[86] Northern capital, expanded markets, and transportation were major factors in the development of the pineries. Almost all the physical labor was provided by Negroes. As a lot, they were drifters who had followed the industry through the Carolinas and Georgia, and when the industry concentrated in Nugent, Bond, Shipman,

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[85]Rand, op. cit., footnote 36, pp. 8-10; The Star Herald, Kosciusko, Mississippi, March 23, 1967; Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News, Jackson, Mississippi, June 23, 1957; Hattiesburg American, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, June 16, 1962; "Airey," "Basin," "Paive," "Shipman," and "Verna," W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi, also contained a variety of functions.

[86]Mohr, op. cit., footnote 38, p. 70.

Fenton, McHenry, and Kiln they made up a large segment of the population.[87] With the exhaustion of virgin timber by the mid 1930's, the naval stores industry virtually disappeared.

Most extinct lumber towns had a life span of approximately fifty years, but lumbering was the dominant economic activity for only about one-third of this time. After sawmills ceased to operate, towns such as Cybur, Bond, Lux, Gandsi, Airey, and Dushaw, functioned as agricultural trade centers. The cutover land sold to sawmill laborers and to others brought in by real estate promoters and lumber companies proved unprofitable for agriculture. Within a few years continuous cultivation depleted plant nutrients in the thin pine soils and farmers had to clear new lands of stumps, a difficult task because of the pine tree's long tap root. Farming was discouraging, and many returned to former homes or relocated in better soil regions of the state, especially the Delta.[88] One study revealed that in 1942 farm earnings in several Marion County communities around Hathorn were less than $100 per farm, primarily because husbands worked in the Gulf Coast shipyards while family members looked after the crops.[89]

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[87] W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. Almost invariably the writers note racial percentages of people in each town.

[88] Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, pp. 263-65; "Agriculture," George and Jackson Counties, W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. See also the materials on individual towns in the Piney Woods.

[89] Harold Hoffsommer, editor, The Social and Economic Significance of Land Tenure in the Southwestern States (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1950), p. 366.

The establishment of sawmill towns in Mississippi ended about 1920. Although the lumber industry was severely effected by economic conditions in the early 1930's, it was depletion of the timber that caused a change in the industry and extinction of the towns. Closing out a company town was accomplished very rapidly. The company simply dismantled the mill and buildings, placed them on rail cars and transported the equipment and those laborers electing to remain with the company to new timberlands in east Texas or the Pacific Northwest. At least one company, the Harbison Lumber Company, moved into Florida.[90]

Trucks and "peckerwood" or "tractor" (portable) mills replaced the tram road and large stationary mills and completed the harvest of scattered small stands of virgin and second-growth timber. Some company owned houses were dismantled and reassembled at the new location; the lumber from others was sold. A few houses were sold to workers who continued to live at the town site and commute to logging and sawing operations.[91] As these last stands of timber were cut and jobs were lost, the sawmill workers and their families migrated to jobs at Hattiesburg, Laurel, or towns along the Gulf Coast.

D. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The early settlement and development of Mississippi proceeded with a remarkable absence of interest in the manufacturing industries. Except for several decades around the turn of the century when lumbermen

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[90] Hickman, op. cit., footnote 38, pp. 181-83; Thigpin, op. cit., footnote 50, p. 130.

[91] Lemly, op. cit., footnote 67, p. 20.

from the north exploited the yellow pine forest, manufacturing has been of primary concern for only the past quarter-century. Manufacturing was relegated to a secondary function in the Hills and the Delta and provided full time employment for few Mississippians.

Manufacturing in antebellum Mississippi was characterized by periodic fluctuations, with investment and interest increasing during those years when manufacturing was stagnant elsewhere. Industrial prosperity in the northeast and in western Europe arrested Mississippi's industrial growth by encouraging cotton production through high prices. Furthermore, the absence of fuel, lack of investment capital, and an inadequate supply of skilled labor were detrimental to manufacturing. Manufacturing was highly dispersed, and no core area evolved.

One of the first successful manufacturing companies was located at Bankston, a site inaccessible to northern textile products. After the mill and town were burned in 1864, Wesson, having proved that manufacturing could compete with northern mills, relocated at a site more accessible to raw materials and markets. All post-Civil War manufacturers desired locations in existing towns with transportation facilities. Most labor came from local sources, especially from agriculture and the small trade towns.

Mississippi's oldest continuous industry and the largest non-agricultural source of livelihood was lumbering. Prior to 1880 the industry was concentrated in Natchez and Vicksburg and along the lower courses of the Pearl, Jordon, and Pascagoula rivers to take advantage of water transportation.

After 1880 the industry shifted to the interior Piney Woods region and centered around mills cutting more than 25,000 feet daily. This shift was made possible by railroad expansion into the region, and by the flow of northern capital and entrepreneurship into the state. The use of complicated machinery, transportation costs, the nature of the labor force, and continuous logging operations are reasons for the establishment of company towns in conjunction with the operation. Sixty-seven towns, ranging in population from 100 to more than 1,000, disappeared when the forest was depleted and mills were dismantled and moved to new locations. Since 1930 gasoline-powered portable sawmills, trucks, and a commuting labor force have replaced the company towns.

CHAPTER VI

REGIONAL PATTERNS AND HISTORICAL SEQUENCE OF EXTINCT TOWNS

A. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century most towns in Mississippi were supported by cotton production and trade, or by lumbering. Almost all were small and closely spaced, a characteristic of towns in the pre-automobile era, many were unable to control their destiny, and 262 are now extinct (Figure 2, page 21).

The number of now-extinct towns established in each decade is compared with the number disappearing in each decade in Figure 27.[1] This figure is the basis for several general conclusions, perhaps the most obvious being that all now-extinct towns were established between 1780 and 1939. The number of towns disappearing increased significantly after 1919. The average life span of extinct towns in Mississippi was fifty-six years, or about two generations.[2]

Herman Friis uses the term historico-geographical in referring to the use of maps in dynamic sequence to portray the diffusion of

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[1]Most places contained several urban related functions before it was considered a town. When a town lost these functions it was considered extinct. It is possible some towns are dated from the first settlement that frequently began as the site of a farmstead, and possible the date of extinction exhibits a similar error.

[2]A similar relationship was noted by Herbert A. Whitney, "Estimating Precensus Populations: A Method Suggested and Applied to the Towns of Rhode Island and Plymouth Colonies in 1689," Annals, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 55 (1965), 179-89.

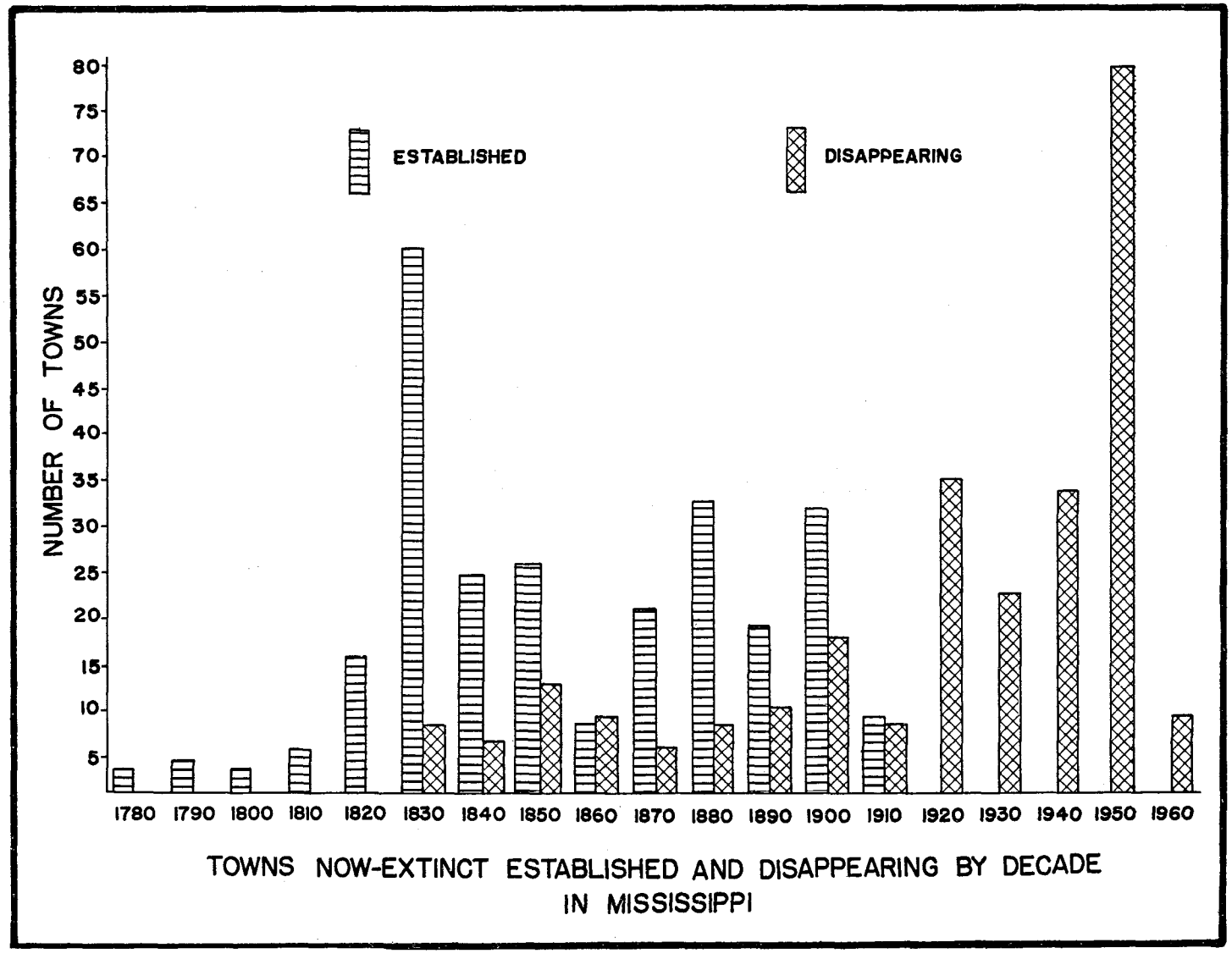


Figure 27. Towns established but now extinct and towns disappearing by decade in Mississippi.

population and patterns of settlement.[3] This chapter follows the dynamic approach, traces the sequence of founding and extinction of towns in Mississippi, and seeks to illustrate how these towns reflect a continually changing series of events. Perhaps this approach is best expressed by Clark, who states: "Historical geography achieves its full flowering when the geographies, interpreted from the changing patterns, are studies as dynamic, rather than static, entities."[4]

B. THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF SETTLEMENT, 1780-1859

The first effective settlements were made in the Natchez District during the 1770's.[5] Union Town, Greenville, Kingston, and Rocky Springs were towns which were established in the pre-territorial period but later became extinct. The number of towns increased with settlement, but significant numbers of the early population were quick to relocate or change their occupation when opportunities elsewhere appeared more favorable.[6]

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[3]Herman R. Friis, A Series of Population Maps of the Colonies and the United States, 1625-1790, Publication No. 3 (New York: American Geographical Society, 1968), p. 1.

[4]Andrew H. Clark, Three Centuries and the Island, A Historical Geography of Settlement and Agriculture in Prince Edward Island, Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), p. 222.

[5]Colonial rule largely deterred settlement as prospective settlers avoided Mississippi and settled in Tennessee and Kentucky. In 1792 the population of the Natchez District was 4,346, that of Tennessee was 35,691, and that of Kentucky was 73,677. Eight years later it was Natchez 8,850, Tennessee 105,602, and Kentucky 220,955. Jack D. L. Holmes, Gayoso: The Life of A Spanish Governor in the Mississippi Valley, 1789-1799 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), pp. 114-15; United States Census, 1800.

[6]Lewis E. Atherton, The Southern Country Store, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), pp. 82, 87, 151-52.

As the age of towns increased, the ratio of families to single men also increased.

Gallatin, New Mexico, Princeton, Greenville (in the Delta), Beattie's Bluff, Madisonville, Hamilton, and Augusta were established as county seat towns. Cotton Gin Port, Richmond, Graves Port, Hamburg, and Amsterdam were located near the head of navigation on rivers draining the interior. All were small and almost entirely dependent upon the trade of yeomen farmers, but by 1829 no town had become extinct.

Mississippi's population increased from 137,000 in 1830 to 792,000 in 1860. The Hills was the most rapidly developing region in the state. A few towns were established in the Piney Woods and Delta, but major settlement in these two sections did not occur until after 1880. Claiborne and Wailes note the demise of early towns in the Piney Woods when northern Mississippi was opened to settlement, but several were revived by lumbering before they completely disappeared.[7]

More towns now-extinct were established between 1830 and 1860 than in other decades (Figure 27, page 173). Throughout the antebellum period most Mississippians viewed cotton production as the social and economic focus of life, while the plantation system, slavery, sparse population, lack of roads, and availability of cheaply produced items from the northeast and abroad were considered insurmountable obstacles to manufacturing. The changing pattern of towns reflects an intensification

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[7]J. F. H. Claiborne, "A Trip Through the Piney Woods," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 9 (1906), 487-538; John H. Moore, "South Mississippi in 1852: Some Selections from the Journal of Benjamin L. C. Wailes," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 18 (1956), 18-32.

of cotton production as well as an extension of producing areas.

Towns with similar functions tended to be similar in structure and size. The occupational structure of most furnishing and supply towns consisted of professional, trade, manufacturing, agriculture, and governmental categories. During prosperous years in the 1830's a few contained banks. The one at Madisonville was capitalized at $600,000.[8] Towns on navigable streams contained two or three large warehouses. Normally a post office and school were established within three to five years after the settlement became identified as a town, but churches were seldom found in these early towns.[9] Although the number of inhabitants varied, most towns had a population of between 150 and 300 during their prosperous years.

To function efficiently trade towns had to be accessible to the rural population. In antebellum Mississippi this was accomplished by increasing the number of towns rather than by improving roads. Each town served a local trade area determined by the distance farmers could travel, conduct business, and return within a day's time. Population densities in the trade areas varied, but storekeepers were unable to specialize to any great extent. Other factors limiting the size of towns were the seasonal nature of the trade in cotton and similarity in functions and services. Planters patronized only the county seat towns, and then only to pay taxes or attend court. Without the support and

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[8]"Madisonville," W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi; Madison County Herald, Canton, Mississippi, August 29, 1963.

[9]A. J. Brown, History of Newton County from 1834 to 1894 (Jackson, Mississippi: Clarion-Ledger Co., 1894), p. 329.

trade of the planters opportunities for trade towns to grow were limited.

Navigable streams were used to ship cotton to the markets at New Orleans and Mobile during late winter and early spring. The availability of rivers plus the attitude that road building was a local responsibility hindered the construction of a state wide road system. Railroads provided the state with its first dependable system of land transportation. At first they were constructed to complement river transportation, but by 1860 when there were 862 miles of track in three main trunk lines, they were competing with river boats. Freight pickup and delivery services were available in almost every town along the route, but unlike the post Civil War period railroads were not saturated with freight stations.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the patterns of extinct towns shown on Figure 28. (1) It is apparent that the directional trend of extinction followed the direction of settlement, that is, from the original core of settlement in the Natchez District into the northeastern hills. (2) Fewer towns disappeared during the 1840's, a less prosperous decade in the state. Perhaps this was because people are less prone to migrate during times of general economic depression.

The twenty-six extinct towns shown as disappearing in Figure 28 are listed in Table XVI according to the prevailing cause of extinction. Since many county seat towns were established without regard to trade constituents, they rapidly disappeared when county boundaries changed and government functions relocated. The original site of some river towns, for example Hamburg, was too marshy. Others were also abandoned

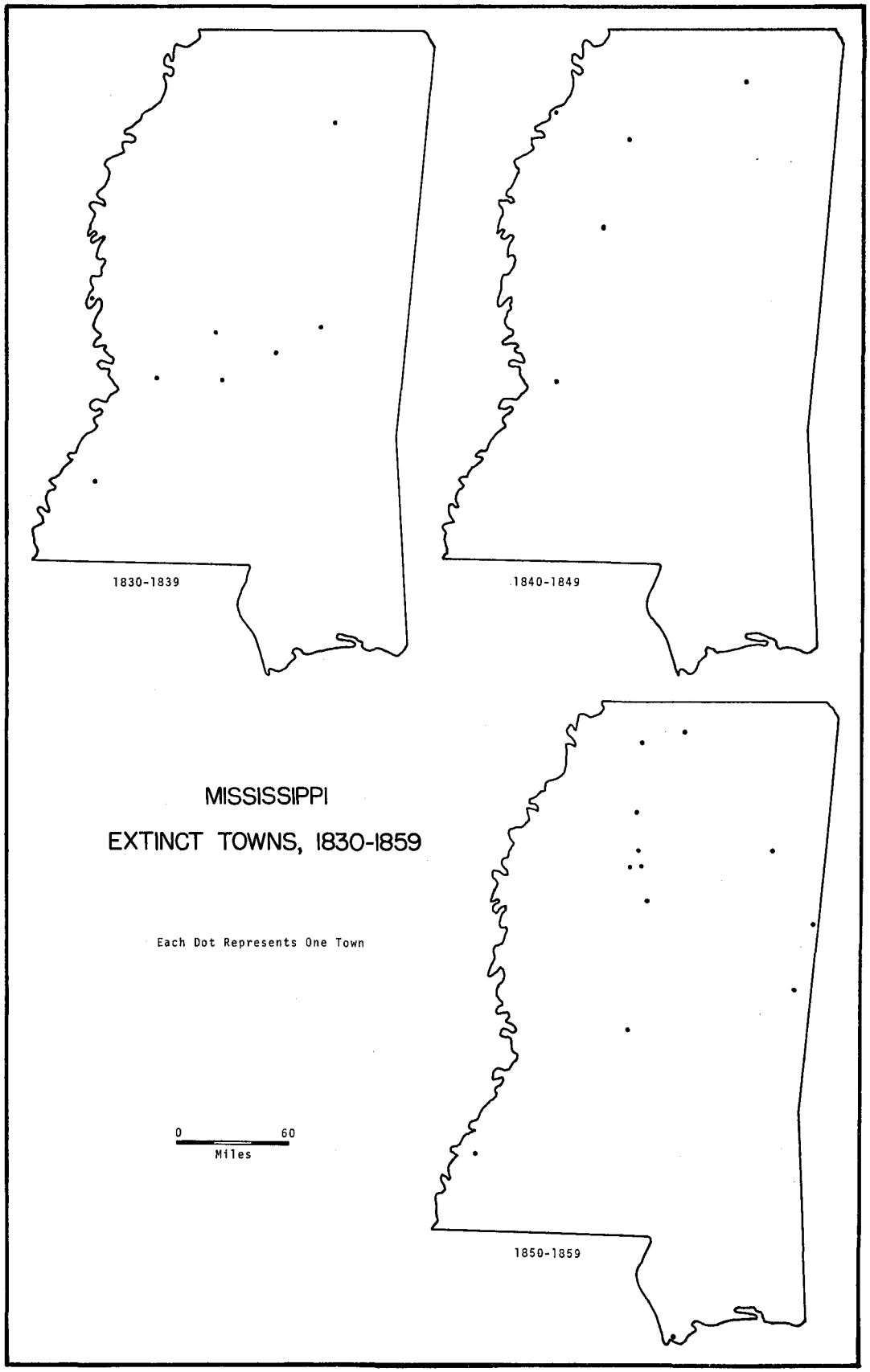


Figure 28. Mississippi extinct towns, 1830-1859.

TABLE XVI

CAUSE OF TOWN EXTINCTION, 1830-1859

Change in County Boundary	Trade & Leadership Loss to Nearby Town	Change in Transportation	Unfavorable River Site
Berryville	Alberson	Amsterdam	Hamburg
Beattie's Bluff	Brooklyn	Choccuma	Nashville
Camden	Tallalossa	Hendersonville	Pearl
Clayton	Union Town	Middleton	Port Royal
Madisonville	Victoria	Pharasalia	Richmond
New Mexico		Pikeville	
		Sardina	
		Selsertown	
		Tatumsville	
		Tuscahoma	

after the river changed its course, thus changing the town's relative site.

C. THE WAR YEARS AND RECONSTRUCTION, 1860-1879

During the 1860's and 1870's towns developed from the needs of an agrarian economy which was changing drastically as a result of the new system of land tenure authorized by crop lien laws enacted in 1867. The Hills continued to register the greatest changes in towns (Figure 29).

When the Civil War ended in 1865 a major problem was to encourage 400,000 freed Negro slaves and an almost equal number of disgruntled whites to resume cotton production. Eastern capitalists extended credit to storekeepers and also sent out representatives to establish stores and purchase cotton. Under this system farmers could pledge anticipated crops for merchandise needed to carry them through the years. Because interest rates were high and the margin of profit low, the crop-lien system was a self-perpetuating debt system which lasted for three quarters of a century.

The extinction of towns shown in Figure 29 was due to changes occurring among trade-based towns along rivers, and to the war and political adjustments during reconstruction. For example, West Port, located on the Tombigbee River, was shipping 30,000 to 40,000 bales of cotton annually in the late 1830's. More than half of this trade and several merchants were lost to Columbus when the Tombigbee was bridged in 1840. After a devastating flood in 1847 destroyed most of the remaining town and altered the site, West Port remained unchanged

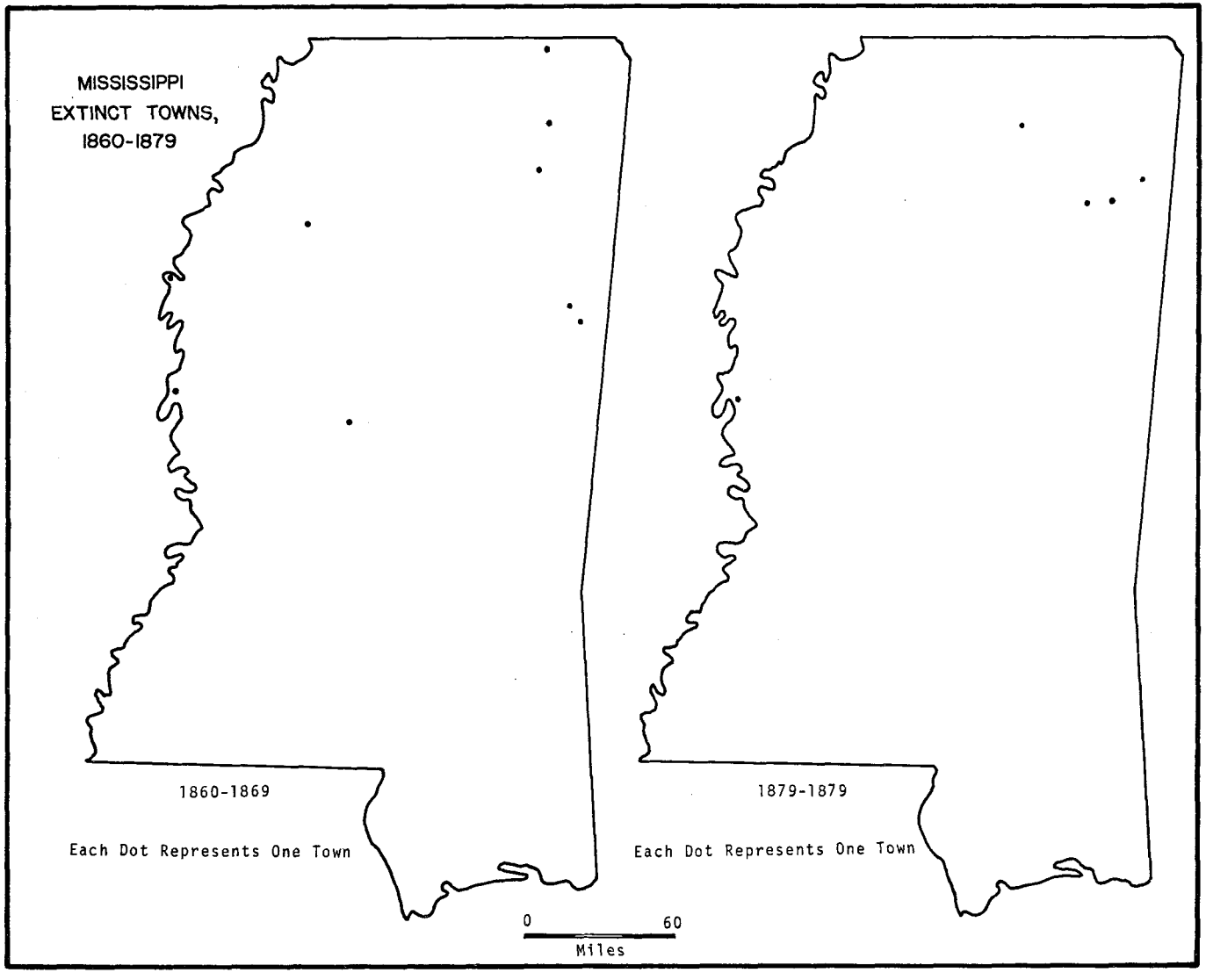


Figure 29. Mississippi extinct towns, 1860-1879.

until 1861 when the last merchant moved to Columbus.[10]

Prentiss, Harrisburg, and Boneyard were destroyed in the War. A Yankee soldier described the destruction of Prentiss, located on the Mississippi River, as follows:

> We burnt everything: pianos, guitars, melodeons, superior household furniture of every kind, a store full of goods, the court house with all the county papers, the jail, the tavern, and about thirty dwellings, some of which cost $15,000, all, all committed to the flame.[11]

Levees protecting Prentiss were neglected during the Civil War, and after a meander of the Mississippi River changed the site and situation of the town all governmental functions were removed to Rosedale. Merchants in Harrisburg were in the process of relocating one and one-half mile west at the new town of Tupelo, on the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, when the war began. What was left of the town was burned in the Battle of Harrisburg in July, 1863.[12] Boneyard, a town in Alcorn County which in 1860 contained approximately 150 inhabitants and the usual business establishments was burned during the war. Merchants and their families relocated at Corinth and Kossuth.[13]

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[10]"West Port," W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi; William L. Lipscomb, A History of Columbus, Mississippi (Birmingham: S. D. Lee Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy, 1909), pp. 70-71.

[11]Quoted in John K. Bettersworth, Mississippi: A History (Austin, Texas: The Steck Co., 1959), p. 304. Prentiss was burned in 1863.

[12]Stephen D. Lee, "The Battle of Tupelo, or Harrisburg, July 14th, 1863," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 6 (1902), 48-50.

[13]Franklin L. Riley, "Extinct Towns and Villages of Mississippi," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 5 (1902), 328-29.

Thirteen new counties were created in the 1870's as a result of gerrymandering in the battle for political control between Republicans and Democrats. The relative position of existing county seat towns changed with each boundary change, and local governments relocated. A fire of undetermined origin destroyed the courthouse and records at Greensboro, Choctaw County. The following year forty acres of land were donated for a new county seat at the town of LaGrange. However, in 1874 dissatisfied parties created Webster (Sumner) County from that part of Choctaw County north of the Big Black River. That same year a fire of undetermined origin destroyed the courthouse at LaGrange and all local government functions relocated at Chester.[14]

D. TRANSITION AND CHANGE, 1880-1919

Trade remained basic to towns throughout the Hills between 1880 and 1919, but was affected by an extension of railroads and the appearance of a public highway system and motor vehicles (Figure 30). Only four towns that are now-extinct were established after 1919.

Between 1880 and 1920, 3,330 miles of track were laid in the state. Railroads speeded up commercial transactions, but perhaps were not so vital to the general prosperity of the people as had been generally assumed. In the first place railroads promoted almost no industries other than lumbering. Second, as the farmer viewed it, cotton provided the surest and quickest means of buying what the "outside" world had to offer, and the railroad provided an economic means of

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[14] Riley, op. cit., footnote 13, pp. 328-29.

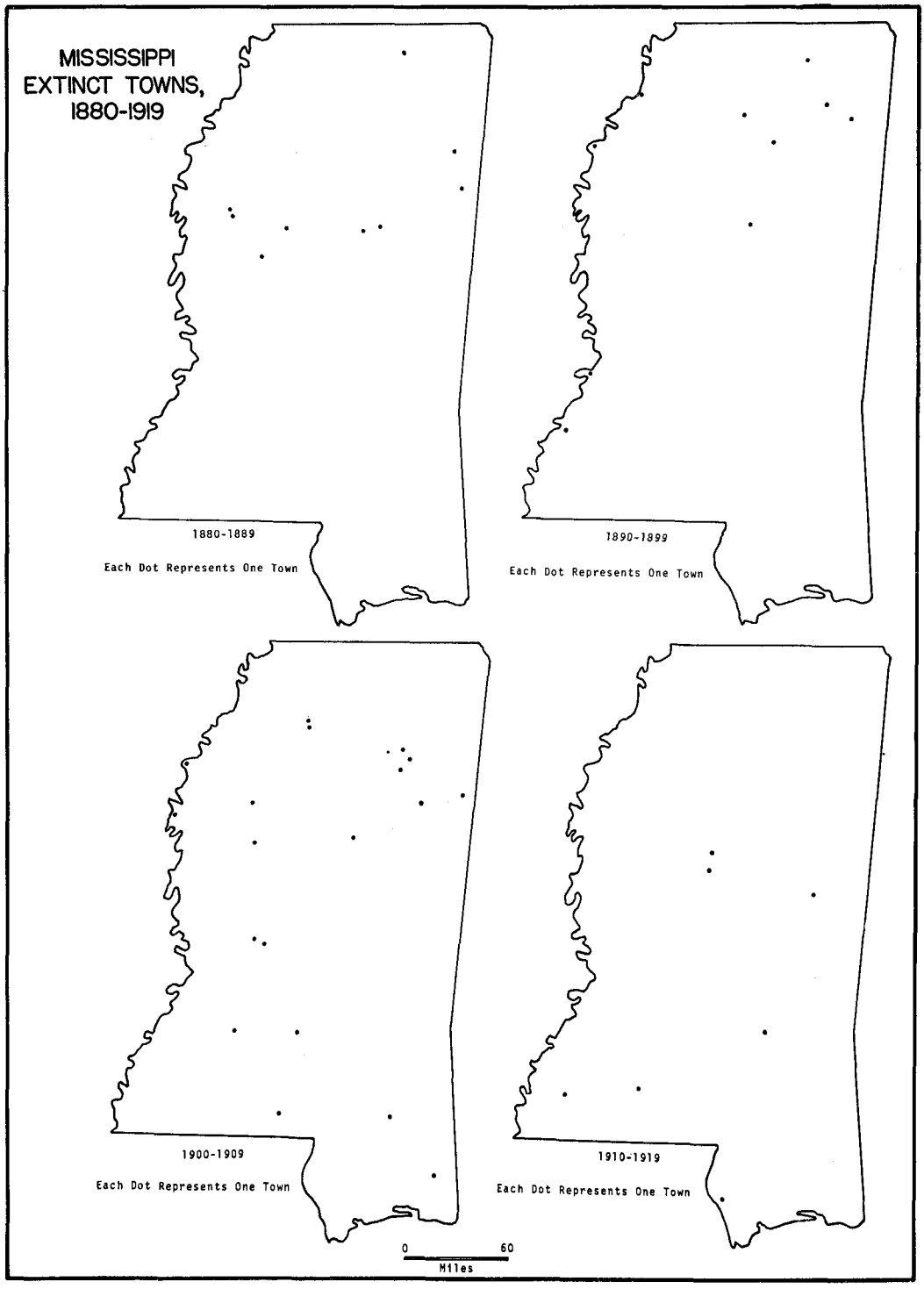


Figure 30. Mississippi extinct towns, 1880-1919.

transportation.[15] However, in an attempt to increase profits, farmers tended to over-produce, resulting in lower prices, increased tenancy, and a further dependence on cotton. Finally, railroads centralized trade by facilitating the collecting, storing, and buying of cotton in the small towns that developed around railroad stations.[16] In 1885 there were twenty cotton markets in the state; by 1903 the number had increased to thirty-three. The number of railroad stations shipping cotton increased from 484 in 1902-1903 to 524 the following year.[17] The myriad of cotton-buying, collecting, and shipping points resulted in many towns of equal size, and no large cities or regional centers with the accumulation of capital necessary to attract industry developed in Mississippi (Table XVII).[18]

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[15]Frank Andres, "Cost of Hauling Crops from Farms to Shipping Points," Bulletin No. 49, U.S.D.A., Bureau of Statistics (1907), pp. 20-21.

[16]Ulrich B. Phillips, "Railway Transportation in the South," The South in the Building of the Nation, Vol. VI (Richmond, Virginia: The Southern Historical Society, 1909), pp. 305-16; M. B. Hammond, The Cotton Industry, An Essay in American Economic History, Part I (Publication of American Economic Association, 1897), p. 117.

[17]Bradstreets', Vol. 11 (1885), 99-100; James L. Watkins, "The Commercial Cotton Crops of 1900-1901, 1901-1902, and 1902-1903," Bulletin No. 28, U.S.D.A., Bureau of Statistics (1904), pp. 43-46; James L. Watkins, "The Commercial Cotton Crop of 1903-04," Bulletin No. 34, U.S.D.A., Bureau of Statistics (1905), p. 34.

[18]In 1908 there were 346 banks in the state capitalized at slightly more than $30,000,000 as compared to 272 in Alabama and 220 in Louisiana, both with a capitalization more than three times that of Mississippi. Davis R. Dewey, "Banking in the South," The South in the Building of the Nation, Vol. VI (Richmond, Virginia: The Southern Historical Publication Society, 1909), p. 429; Franklin L. Riley, School History of Mississippi (Richmond, Virginia: B. F. Johnson Publishing Co., 1900), p. 363.

TABLE XVII

MISSISSIPPI TOWNS, 1854-1960

Year	Number of Places			Number on Railroads
	All Places	500 or More	2,500 or More	
1854	358	25	4	6
1870	393	29	6	21
1900	890	99	23	88
1930	1,191	196	39	187
1960	882	197	70	190

Sources: J. D. B. DeBow, Statistical View of the United States (Washington: Beverley Tucker, Senate Printer, 1854), pp. 338-93; United States Census, "Population," 1870-1960. The number of "all places" in 1854 was obtained from J. H. Colton, Mississippi, ca. 1856; and that for 1870 was obtained from "Map of Mississippi," Gray's Atlas, ca. 1873; Rand McNally Commercial Atlas, 1968; A New Map of Mississippi: With Complete Index Giving Population and Location, The Scarborough Co., 1904.

The large number of small towns indicates a general lack of large-scale retail trade and suggests that basically towns continued to function as supply and market points for nearby farms.[19] Tenants had little control over retail purchasing, as they obtained basic commodities on high-interest credit terms that caused many to end the year in debt. Fluctuating prices resulted in insecurity, and the lack of opportunity for self-direction did not encourage tenants to participate in community affairs.

With some exceptions the structure of most towns remained essentially as in previous decades. The Grange operated cooperative stores in several towns, but prosperity in the 1880's caused a demise of these stores. The first widespread specialty shops in small towns were millinery shops, which specialized in dressmaking, corsets, shawls, gloves, and stockings. The presence of women caused a few towns to provide basic essentials, such as toilets and sidewalks, and to upgrade shopping facilities. But, by and large, they were men-towns, and women came to depend heavily on mail-order catalogues and parcel post. Merchants opposed mail-order catalogues and parcel post, claiming it would create a false economy and undermine the vitality of small towns by "bleeding off" their money, but most continued to depend heavily on staple commodities and did little to make their town more attractive and increase growth potential.

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[19] William F. Switzler, Report on the Internal Commerce of the United States, 1886, 49th. Congress, 2nd. Session, House Executive Document 7, Part 2 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1886), p. 444.

County seat towns gradually absorbed the trade of lesser towns as roads were improved. However, because merchants had other interests, a few businesses remained at dysfunctional town sites and several years were required to complete the extinction process. Quasi-manufacturing activities (artisan shops, newspapers, and sawmills), specialty shops (photography and millinery shops), the professions, hotels, and plenary merchants were the first to relocate in county seat towns.

Lumbering was the occasion for a second boom period in the state. Most lumber towns between 1880 and 1920 were concentrated in the upper Piney Woods, between the Pearl and Pascagoula rivers and beyond reach of streams flowing to the coast. Laborers lived in company-owned sawmill towns established in conjunction with mills capable of cutting 70,000 to 200,000 board feet daily. The economic viability of these towns, which had an estimated 300 to 400 inhabitants and an average life expectancy of fifteen to twenty years, depended upon the sawmills, planning mills, machine shops, and turpentine distilleries. After the timber was exhausted most company towns were dismantled and moved elsewhere. Several towns reverted to short-lived agricultural trade centers as attempts were made to cultivate cotton on cutover land.

The disappearance of towns during this period of transition and change was more pronounced in the Hills than elsewhere in the state. Thinning of trade towns was definitely characteristic after 1900--a process noted to have begun at this time in several states.[20] Towns

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[20]T. Lynn Smith, "Farm Trade Centers in Louisiana, 1901 to 1931," Bulletin 234, Louisiana Experiment Station (1933), pp. 1-56; Paul H. Landis, "South Dakota Town-Country Trade Relations, 1901-1931," Bulletin

disappearing between 1880 and 1919 are listed in Table XVIII according to the prevailing cause of extinction.

E. EXTINCTION AFTER 1920

At one point in the Geography of Market Centers and Retail Distribution, Berry states:

> There have been continued adjustments in the pattern of business and centers in response to changes in the distribution and characteristics of consumers and in the technology of retailing. Progressive settlement was accompanied by spread of centers, and increases in population by increasing numbers of places, to a zenith around 1900.[21]

The same forces that had encouraged establishment and growth of centers led to increased competition among towns, to differential growth, and ultimately to the decline of the 177 towns which have disappeared since 1920 (Figure 31). Thirty per cent of all extinct towns disappeared during the 1950's, a decade of highway expansion, increasing automobile ownership, rising incomes, increasing farm size and declining tenancy, and of urban growth. Many of the towns had been moribund for several decades, but the towns declined as each change affected consumer orientation and the lower order of goods and services were absorbed by the next level of towns.

The business patterns in small trade towns were affected by changes in land tenure and farm income. Tenancy declined from 225,617

274, South Dakota Experiment Station (1932), pp. 1-47; C. J. Galpin, "The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community," Bulletin 34, Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Wisconsin (1915), pp. 1-34; Brian J. L. Berry, Geography of Market Centers and Retail Distribution (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 8.

[21] Berry, op. cit., footnote 20, pp. 4-5.

TABLE XVIII

CAUSES OF TOWN EXTINCTION, 1880-1919

Changes in County Seats	Sawmill and Manufacturing	Changes in Trade Attributed to: Railroads	Roads	Rivers
Americus	Bankston	Cotton Gin Port	Barton	Belmont
Augusta	China Grove	Eureka	Coleville	Concordia
Delta	Cold Springs	Franklin	Houlka	New Town
Gallatin	Gilford	Huntington	Huntsville	Sheppardtown
Greenville	Ozone City	Leighton	Ruckersville	Victoria
Hamilton	Seven Pines	Milesville	Vernon	
Hartford		Orizaba		
Johnsonville		Palo Alto		
Livingston		Redlands		
McNutt		Richmond		
Panola		Shongelo		
Westville		Snowsville		
		Springdale		
		West Station		
		Whitefield		
		Winstonville		

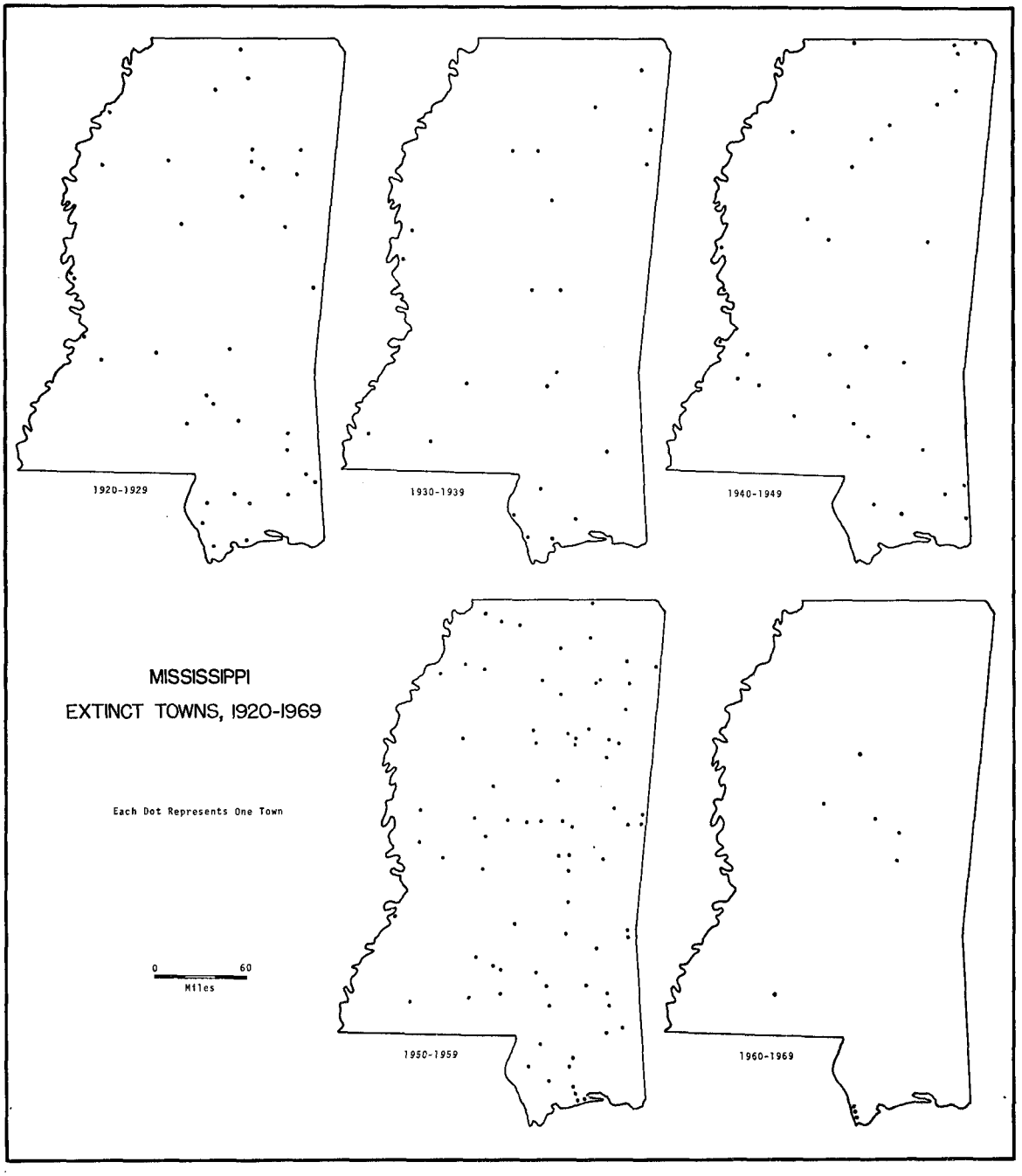


Figure 31. Mississippi extinct towns, 1920-1969.

in 1930 to 25,634 in 1964. Farm ownership increased from 77,383 in 1930 to 103,053 in 1950, but declined to 64,557 in 1964. The average size of farms in Mississippi increased from 55 acres in 1930 to 163 acres in 1964 (Table VI, page 68). The average net income per farm also exhibited a similar change (Table XIX). The result was fewer farm people, but people who had a larger amount of money to spend, whose preferences were changing, and who were willing and able to travel farther to satisfy these desires.

Data also suggests a strong connection between the automobile and schools, the postal system, and retail trade, three functions centripetal to the town. In contrast to railroads, the automobile created an infinitely smaller number of towns and was the impetus for differential growth as farmers had a wider choice of trade centers.

Motor vehicle registrations and the mileage of roads by type are shown in Table XX. Between 1930 and 1950, years for which data are available, the number of farms on all-weather roads increased from 119,627 to 171,735. During this same period, the number of farms on unimproved roads declined from 180,045 to 68,829.[22] The struggle for good roads was a difficult one, and only elements essential to the process of extinction will be emphasized.

Interest in securing an adequate highway system developed as the advantages roads could bring to an area became apparent. The following excerpts from The American City illustrate the changes an improved road system brought to West Point, Mississippi.

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[22]United States Census, "Population," 1930 and 1950.

TABLE XIX

AVERAGE NET INCOME PER FARM IN MISSISSIPPI, 1930-1966

Year	Income ($)
1930	605
1940	530
1950	1,289
1955	1,851
1960	1,818
1964	3.355
1966	4,049

Source: Mississippi Statistical Abstract, 1969, Division of Research, College of Business and Industry, Mississippi State University, 1969, p. 285.

TABLE XX

MISSISSIPPI: MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS, TOTAL ROAD MILEAGE, AND MILES OF SURFACED ROADS, 1900-1966

Year	Motor Vehicles	Total Road Mileage	Miles of Surfaced Roads
1900	20	N.A.	N.A.
1916	25,000	N.A.	N.A.
1920	68,000	53,000	5,700
1930	239,000	61,000	17,000
1940	264,000	60,600	31,900
1950	484,000	61,600	34,000
1960	723,000	63,700	53,200
1966	1,012,000	65,400	56,000

Sources: "Mississippi State Highway Department Report," Today and Tomorrow, an Engineering Analysis of the Highway Transportation System in Mississippi (Jackson, Mississippi: Hederman Brothers, October, 1949), p. 16; United States Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1968, 89th edition (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 553.

> Prior to 1910, Clay County, . . . was strictly a one crop section, . . . and business was conducted on the old credit system. The first macadam road in Mississippi was constructed in 1909 and extended four miles to the Sakatonchee River from West Point. The Merchants' Association was largely instrumental in securing this important beginning in road development.
>
> Rapid changes followed. . . . Good dairy cattle were rapidly acquired by the farmers, and rural schools were consolidated. . . . Rock roads were extended to the county line in six different directions.
>
> Clay County has had an immense yield this year of corn, alfalfa, clover and other hay, besides large quantities of velvet and soy beans, peas, peanuts, wheat, oats and other crops. This diversification . . . is also due largely to the improved roads. . . . It has also placed the business of West Point practically on a cash basis. The banks have more cash deposits on hand than at any time in their history.[23]

Similar results were noted in Lee County where the first concrete road was constructed between Tupelo and Verona.[24]

The Mississippi Constitution of 1890 provided that each county be divided into five districts (called beats) and that each be headed by an elected official with exclusive control over building and maintaining roads in his district. As yet no provision was made for statewide coordination or planning to facilitate intercounty or interstate travel.

In 1916, assuming states were either unable or unwilling to finance roads, Congress passed the Federal Highway Act (Rural Post Road Act) which provided up to 50 per cent of the cost of constructing roads in states having a highway commission to supervise the federal funds,

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[23] The American City, Vol. 17 (1917), 455.

[24] Marsha P. Hataway, "The Development of the Mississippi State Highway System, 1916-1932," Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. 28 (1966), 287.

Since Mississippi had no commission, the state legislature authorized the governor to appoint a three man commission to supervise the administration of federal funds and to carry out the regulations.[25] The following year Mississippi received its first federal aid appropriation of $88,905; in 1919, the amount received was $268,751.[26]

In 1922 a system of state highways was authorized to connect the county seats of the state.[27] Eight years later the Stansel Act authorized a 4,000 mile primary road system to connect county seats, principal highways of adjoining states, state institutions and places with a population of five hundred or more. A secondary road system of 2,000 miles was also established.[28] In 1946 the Farm-to-Market road bill provided aid to upgrade the secondary system. For this study, however, it is most important to note that to the extent they developed spatial monopolies the acts discriminated in favor of county seats and other towns containing more than 500 persons. As the network of highways evolved, roads were straightened and numerous towns were bypassed.

The centrality of county seat towns became increasingly important as the state highway system developed. The population in county seat towns increased from 364,947 in 1930 to 733,873 in 1960, an increase

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[25] Road Laws of Mississippi (Jackson, Mississippi: Hederman Brothers 1916), pp. 160-61; Mississippi State Highway Department Pictorial Review, Jackson, Mississippi, 1939, pp. 32-33.

[26] Seventh Biennial Report of the State Highway Department, Jackson, Mississippi, 1929, p. 3.

[27] Laws of Mississippi, 1924, pp. 190, 403.

[28] Today and Tomorrow, An Engineering Analysis of the Highway Transportation System in Mississippi (Jackson, Mississippi: Hederman Brothers, October, 1949), pp. 18-19.

exceeding the total urban growth by 20,000 and the decline in farm population by 94,000. A percentage of this increase must have come from small towns, since the state also experienced a net population loss due to out-migration during the period. One spatial aspect of towns disappearing since 1940 has been their proximity to county boundaries. The average distance between towns that disappeared and their county seat town was 12.8 miles.[29] Moreover, almost two-thirds of the towns that disappeared were located on inferior roads.

An additional element of centrality was added to the county seat towns when the cooperative gin movement, motivated by the farmers' dissatisfaction with services at private gins, was initiated in 1912. County seat towns were selected as the sites of cooperative gins because they were the towns most accessible to the greatest number of people. By 1948, the county seat of every cotton-growing county had at least one cooperative gin.[30] After ginning, farmers sold their cotton to buyers concentrated in county seat towns, which also had the best communication, transportation, and banking facilities.

The first change in the postal system to have a negative effect on trade towns occurred in 1902 when rural free delivery routes were established along roads passable the year around and where one hundred

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[29]Distances computed from U.S.G.S., Mississippi Quadrangles, Scale, 1:250,000.

[30]B. K. Doyle and R. W. Shaw, "Mississippi Co-operative Gins," Bulletin 479, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station, 1951, pp. 1-35.

[31]Wayne E. Fuller, "The South and the Rural Free Delivery of Mail," The Journal of Southern History, Vol. 25 (1959), 511.

families could be served along a twenty-five mile route.[31] This encouraged better roads and eliminated frequent trips to the post office in nearby towns. The number of post offices declined from 2,048 in 1905, to 1,020 in 1920, 766 in 1940, 540 in 1960, and 494 in 1969.[32] After the parcel post system was established in 1913 it was possible to purchase goods from mail-order houses. This weakened the monopolistic hold of local merchants.

In an attempt to improve education for children on scattered farms and in small villages, a law was passed in 1910 to consolidate schools and transport pupils at public expense. Many small towns lost their school and their community identity as family interests and social life gradually focused upon county seat towns.[33]

Retail trade was affected by several interrelated factors. Mississippi's population was dispersed, requiring a similar dispersion of retail stores. The first Census of Retailing, taken in 1929, noted that 77 per cent of the stores, with 68 per cent of the total retail sales, were located in small towns or in rural areas, and that 67 per cent of all stores sold on credit. The parcel post system had already weakened the hold of local merchants in retail trade, and the automobile provided people with a convenient means of transportation that enabled them to break the hold of local merchants who offered credit at high interest rates. The per capita income of Mississippians has almost

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[32] United States Official Postal Guide, "Mississippi" (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1905-1969).

[33] Mississippi, A Guide to the Magnolia State, American Guide Series (New York: The Viking Press, 1938), p. 12.

always been among the lowest in the nation; consequently, they have depended heavily on credit, which was more easily obtained from local merchants until credit at lower interest rates was extended through banks in county seat towns during the late 1930's. As the credit-based system changed to cash sales during the 1930's and the 1940's, the number of general mercantile stores declined, indicating a passing dependence on such services (Table XXI).

Between 1948 and 1968, the number of retail stores in towns over 2,500 population increased by 2,195. In the same twenty years, the number of retail stores at other locations decreased by 3,198. By 1968, 73 per cent of retail sales were in towns over 2,500.[34] The range of goods and services offered in county seat towns increased as income and transportation improved, and small towns declined as shopping centers even for convenience goods.

The pace of extinction has slowed considerably since 1960. By mid-decade farms had declined by 29,000; in the 1950 decade the decline exceeded 113,000 (Table VI, page 68). The net income per farm was stagnant during the 1950's, but gained significantly between 1960 and 1966 (Table XIX, page 193). During the 1950 decade, 19,200 miles of roads were surfaced, but only 2,800 miles of roads were surfaced between 1960 and 1966 (Table XX, page 194). The number of stores in towns exceeding 2,500 population increased and general stores, characteristic of small towns, had virtually disappeared by 1960; however, stores in towns less than 2,500 population declined significantly less during the

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[34] United States Census of Business, Retail Trade, "Mississippi," 1968.

TABLE XXI

RETAIL STORES IN MISSISSIPPI, 1929-1968

	1929	1939	1948	1958	1968
Total Stores	13,337	18,032	21,541	18,475	20,543
No. in Towns Over 2,500	N.A.	6,903	9,499	8,890	11,694
No. at Other Locations	N.A.	11,129	12,047	9,585	8,849
No. of General Stores	3,950	1,624	954	277	N.A.

Source: United States Census of Business, Retail Trade, "Mississippi," 1929-1968.

1960's than during the 1950's (Table XXI). Possibly the extinction processes will now began to affect larger towns. As the economic reach of the more favored centers increase, the maximum trade areas of towns less fortunate will embrace fewer consumers and they will decline.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

A. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Towns are places of agglomerated settlement having economic interaction with a supporting hinterland. From the outset of the study, it was apparent that the term "town" lacked consistency in its usage. Invariably towns are defined in a contemporary context which creates problems when applied historically. Therefore, the definition used here combined population, function, legality, and vernacular usage. Extinction was considered complete once the urban functions were no longer present in the town.

A functional grouping of towns was essential because of inconsistencies in data and because it aided the investigation of spatial and temporal interactions of towns with their hinterland. This classification became even more important as the investigation progressed, since towns included in this study tended to be small and similar in function. It was possible to class all extinct towns as either trade or manufacturing centers. In the first category, where trade was the basic support, there were 101 typical trade towns, 29 county seat towns, 29 river port towns, and 28 railroad towns. The second category consisted of 67 sawmill towns and 8 manufacturing towns. Altogether, 262 towns in Mississippi have disappeared since 1830.

Mississippi was settled primarily by agriculturalists from the Atlantic seaboard states of Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia. The

first effective settlements occurred in the Natchez District under colonial governments which encouraged immigration through large land grants.

By 1840 cotton had become the state's main economic support. It was the main cash crop of both yeomen farmers and plantation owners. Cotton production attracted large numbers of settlers to the state, but was detrimental to urban development. Profits from cotton were reinvested in its production rather than in urban industries. Antebellum planters utilized factors in marketing cotton and in purchasing commodities. They had no interest in supporting local commercial development, and the low income of small planters and farmers was not conducive to the development of commercial centers. After 1865 farmers were burdened with a debt system limiting both their purchasing power and the size of their trade centers.

Unlike many agricultural commodities, cotton does not deteriorate in storage and shipping; hence it can be transported at the producer's leisure or when the weather permitted. This did not encourage road-building in the pre-automobile years. Furthermore, railroads saturated the area with stations to facilitate the movement of cotton and to eliminate competition, thus preventing concentration of the collection and distribution of goods and services in fewer, but larger, towns.

The large marketing centers at Vicksburg, Natchez, Mobile, New Orleans, and Memphis were all on the state's periphery, while interior trade towns were ubiquitous, small, and similar. Few changes occurred in most trade towns during their existence. They did not generally increase in size, function, or services offered. They remained small and

hypersensitive to adverse changes affecting their economic base. In fact, the base of Mississippi's urban pyramid expanded in relation to the apex until the automobile changed the trading habits of the people, thereby reversing the process.

Lumbering has been a significant economic activity in the southern part of the state ever since the first French colonizers at Biloxi sought timber for ship construction. For many years the activity was restricted to areas along rivers and the Gulf Coast, but in the 1880's railroads, northern capital, and expanding markets caused the industry to develop in the interior Piney Woods. It was an activity concentrated in a town; it provided the inhabitants with year-around employment; and it provided employees with a cash income rather than with a high-interest commodity loan. Many sawmill towns were company-owned and existed only as long as the timber resource lasted.

The spatial distribution of extinct towns is the result of several processes. The large number disappearing in northern Mississippi reflects changes in methods of producing cotton, which lessened the need for a rural labor force, rather than a decline in cotton produced. Transportation increased the mobility of farmers and the competition between towns. Those more centrally situated were able to survive while others declined.

Conditions contributing to the demise and extinction of towns in Mississippi were many and varied and frequently inter-related. (1) In the initial stages of settlement, settlers rushed in, claimed the land, and established towns. Subsequent adjustments in settlement sites caused some towns to disappear. (2) Occasionally the loss of key local

leadership led to business failure and inadvertently encouraged prospective merchants to migrate. (3) As the range of the farmer's needs widened, he tended to rely on the greater range of services and goods offered in county seat towns. (4) After 1940 the economic base of many towns was undetermined when tenancy declined and farms were consolidated, especially in north Mississippi. (5) Railroads and highways established a high degree of competition between towns, and those at less favored locations declined. (6) Lumber towns were deprived of their basic support after forests were exhausted and mills dismantled. Most of the sawmill towns were in South Mississippi. (7) Of those factors that decide the fortune of towns, perhaps none were more effective than political changes, such as the decision to remove the county seat to a new location. By the 1940's all of these conditions had been expressed to some degree on many towns, and as a result more towns disappeared during the 1950's than in any previous decade.

B. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The pace of extinction has slowed since 1960. However, a large number of towns were observed to be declining in population, function, and services. Their demise may take several years or even decades. The towns listed in Table XXII have declined in population since 1930, and exhibit behavorial patterns similar to those towns that have disappeared. For example, those towns marked with an asterisk were visited by the writer in the summer of 1969, and a significant portion of the population was estimated to be over 50 years of age. Since they lack the leadership of youth, it does not seem logical to assume these towns will

TABLE XXII

DECLINING SMALL TOWNS IN MISSISSIPPI

Artesia*	Ethel*	McLaurin	Satartia
Ashland	Fannin*	Mantee*	Saucier*
Baird	Fernwood	Marietta	Scobey
Baxterville	Fitler	Matherville	Scooba*
Beauregard*	Gallmann*	Mattson	Sebastopol*
Beulah	Gatesville	Meadville	Seminary*
Bogue Chitto	Gillsburg	Minter City	Sherman
Bond*	Golden	Mize*	Shubuta*
Braxton	Grand Gulf	Montrose*	Sidon
Buena Vista	Gunninson	Moss*	Silver City
Caledonia	Hamburg*	Mt. Pleasant	Slate Springs
Carpenter	Hardy	Myrtle	Soso*
Carrollton*	Harpersville	Nesbitt	State Line
Carson	Hermanville	Nicholson	Star*
Cascilla	Hillsboro	Ora	Stewart*
Cedarbluff	Holcomb*	Osyaka	Strayhorn
Chester*	Homewood	Ovett*	Sturgis
Chesterville	Hub	Pachuta	Taylor
Chicora	Ingomar	Paden	Thaxton
Coahoma	Isola	Paulding*	Tillatoba
Coila	Johnston Station	Paulette*	Tylersville
Crandall	Kiln*	Phoeba	Toccopola
Crosby	Knoxo*	Philipps	Tomnolen*
Deemer*	Knoxville*	Pinola	Tula
Dennis	Lake Shore	Pittsboro	Vaughan
D'Lo*	Learned	Pleasant Hill	Vossburg*
Duffee*	Leaf	Pope	Wallerville
Dumas	Leflore*	Prairie*	Walls
Duncan	Lena	Prairie Point	Walnut Grove*
Ebenezer	Louin*	Pulaski	Waterford
Ecru	Louise*	Rienzi*	Weathersby
Eden	Lula	Robinsonville	Weir*
Edinburg*	Lyman*	Rodney*	Williamsburg
Electric Mills*	Lyon	Rome	Williamsville*
Enid	McCool*	Sallis	Winchester
Enterprise*	McHenry*	Sarepta	Woodland*

*Towns visited, summer, 1969.

Source: United States Census, 1930-1970; Rand McNally Commercial Atlas, 1941, 1953, and 1968.

be revitalized. Moreover, several stores were abandoned; those remaining provided only lower-order goods and services. At most, they were partial shopping centers. They are located in former farming communities on inferior state highways and have almost no social amenities beyond those provided by the church, since schools have been consolidated and television has eliminated the local theater. Perhaps a few will be successful in their bid to attract "footloose" industries. Many will undoubtedly continue declining and ultimately cease to function as trade centers.

While this study is limited to extinct towns in Mississippi, it suggests an apparent need to re-examine the role of transportation (especially railroads and automobiles) on urban places in agricultural areas and to examine the effects of legislation on central place development. County seat towns in Mississippi, which were required by law to be centrally located in the county and to be connected to other county seats by state highways, were the first to increase in population, services, and functions.

As long as an open societal system remains, changes will affect existing towns, and it is logical to assume that forces unforeseen at the present will also affect towns. Whether small and declining towns should be preserved is a philosophical question but if the answer is affirmative, then an awareness of factors contributing to the decline of small towns is desirable in future planning if migration to the cities is to be retarded.

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Mr. C. Clark, Philadelphia, Mississippi.

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Miss Mary L. Holman, Louisville, Mississippi.

Mr. A. Robinson, Neshoba, Mississippi.

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VITA

Howard G. Adkins was born in Neshoba County, Mississippi, on November 11, 1933. He received his public education in Neshoba County schools, graduating from Linwood High School in 1952. After graduation he farmed and was also employed by the Wells Lamont Corporation in Philadelphia, Mississippi. In 1953 he entered the United States Navy and served in the Pacific until released from active duty in 1957.

Following a brief employment with the General Electric Corporation in Jackson, Mississippi, he entered East Central Junior College at Decatur, Mississippi, in September, 1957. In the summer of 1959 he transferred to the University of Southern Mississippi where he majored in history and education. After receiving the Bachelor of Science degree in August, 1960, he was employed to teach history at Runnelstown High School in Perry County, Mississippi. During this period of employment, he also worked toward the Master of Secondary Education degree which was conferred by the University of Southern Mississippi in June, 1963.

In September, 1963, he was employed as an Instructor of Geography at the University of Southern Mississippi. During the summer of 1964 he studied geography at Louisiana State University. During the academic year, 1964-1965, he was employed as an Instructor of History at Meridian Junior College, Meridian, Mississippi.

He entered Graduate School at The University of Tennessee to work on the Doctorate in September, 1965. While at The University of Tennessee he served as a Teaching Assistant in 1965-1966 and was an instructor in

Geography from September, 1966, to August, 1970. In September, 1970, he accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Geography at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia, a position he holds today.

The Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in geography was conferred in March, 1972. He is a member of the Association of American Geographers, the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers, The American Geographical Society, the West Virginia Geographers' Association, and The Mississippi Historical Society.

He married the former Dorothy Ann Wells of Neshoba County, Mississippi, in 1956. They have two sons, Steve and Clark, and one daughter, Gail.