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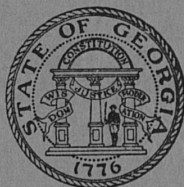


INVENTORY of the COUNTY ARCHIVES OF GEORGIA

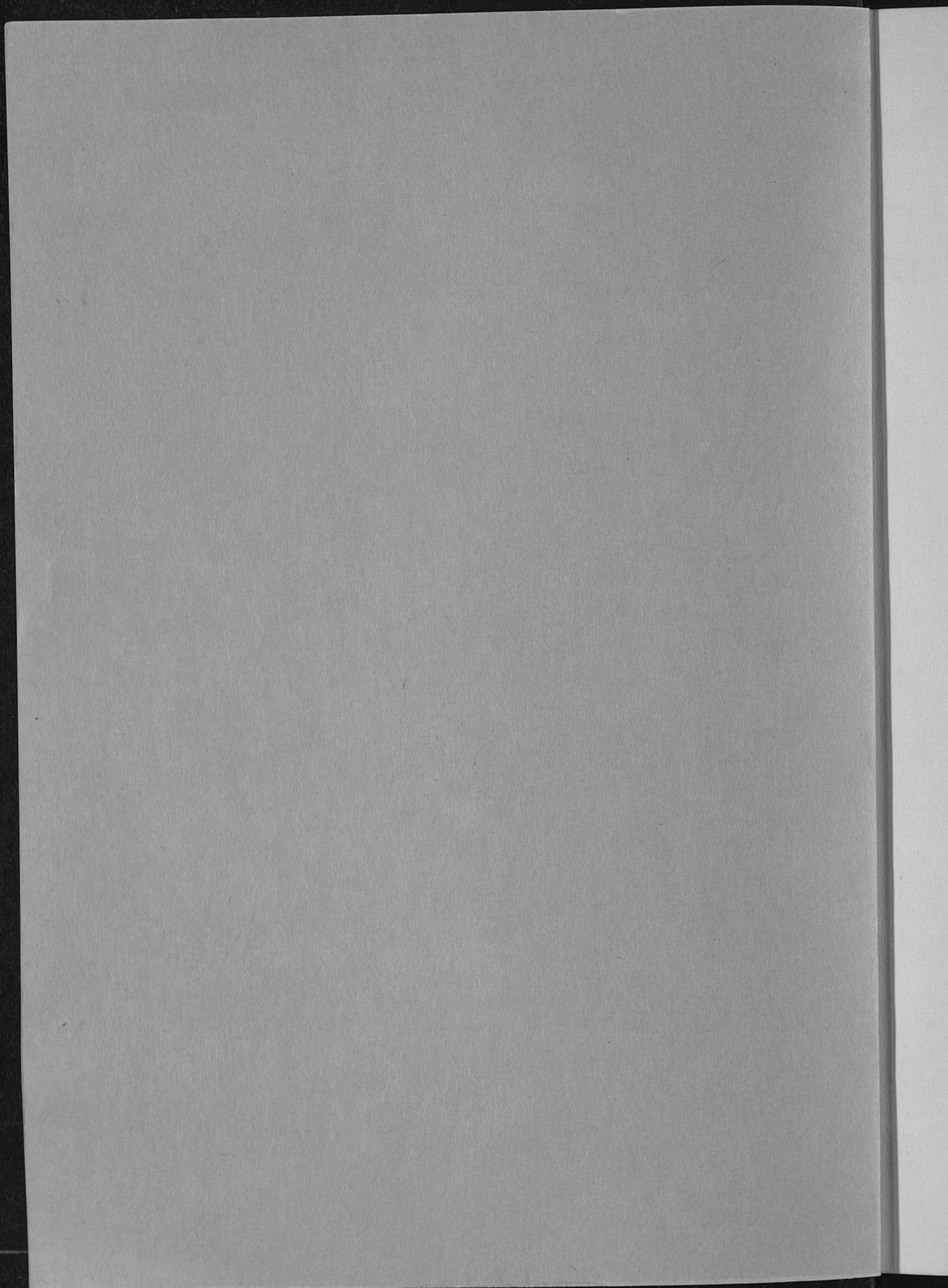
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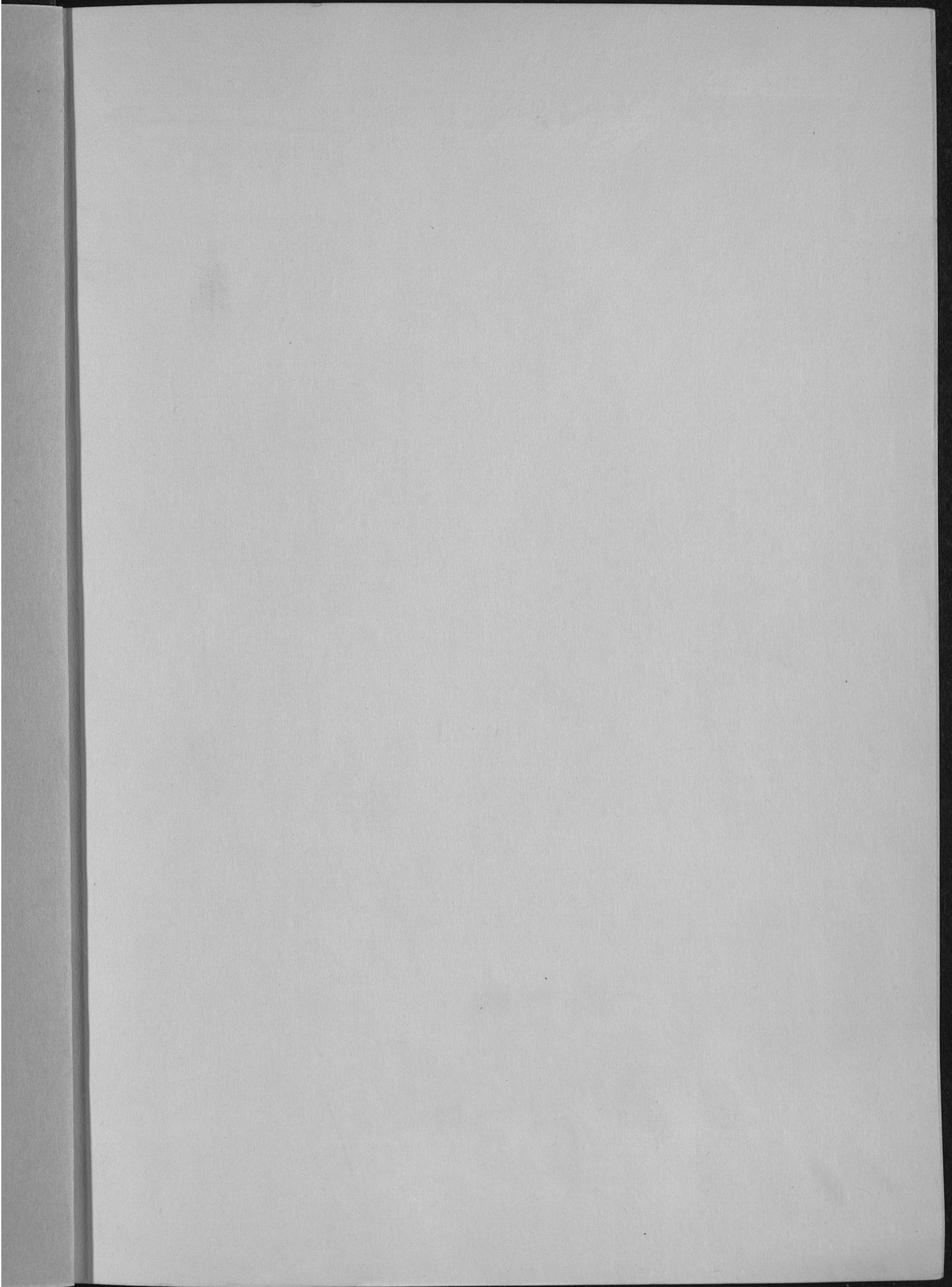
Volume I, Historical Sketch

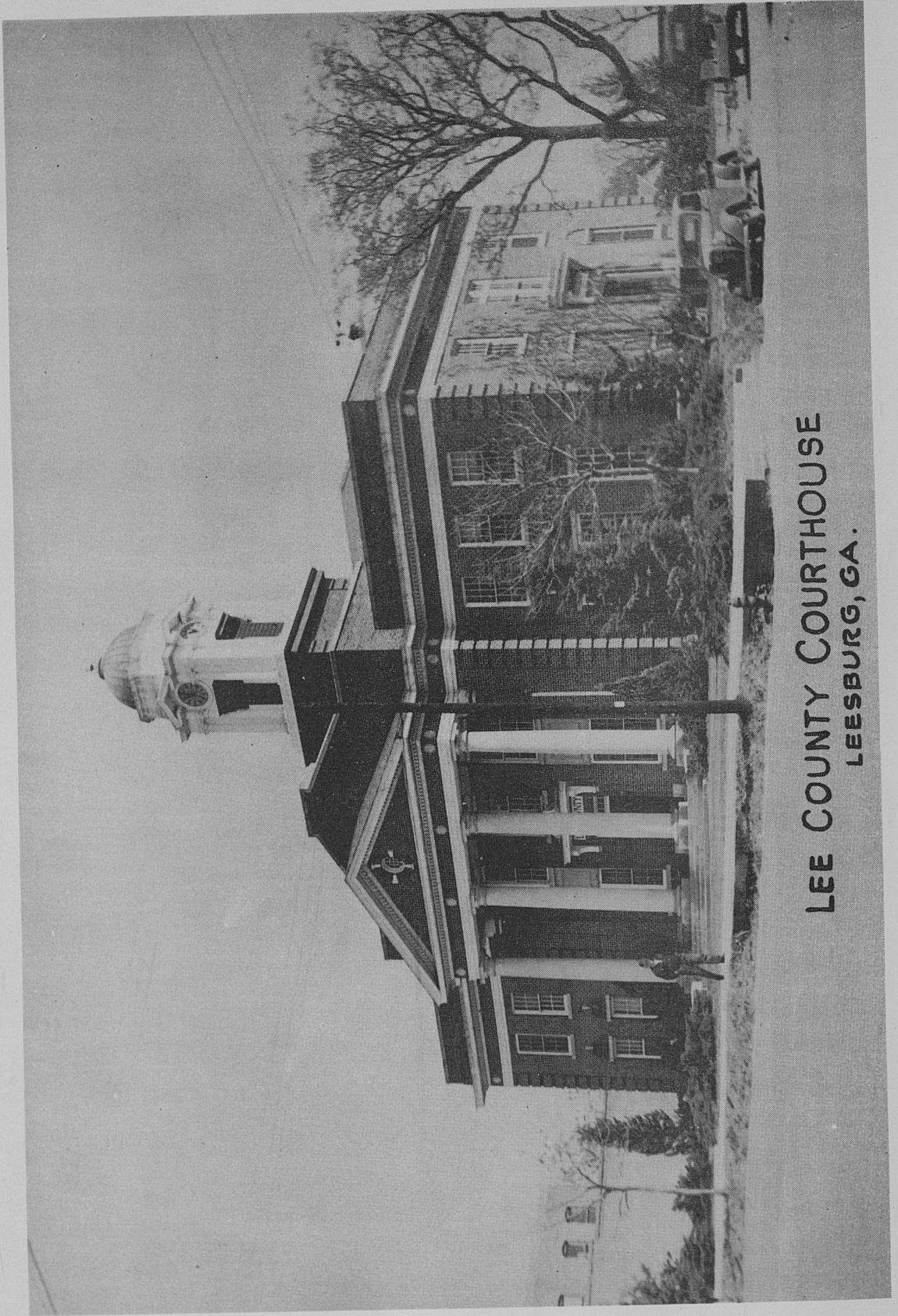
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THE GEORGIA HISTORICAL RECORDS SURVEY
SERVICE DIVISION
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION







LEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
LEESBURG, GA.

INVENTORY OF THE COUNTY ARCHIVES
OF GEORGIA

NO. 88. LEE COUNTY (LEESBURG)
Volume I, Historical Sketch

Prepared by
The Georgia Historical Records Survey
Service Division
Work Projects Administration

Atlanta, Georgia
The Georgia Historical Records Survey
April 1942

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Howard O. Hunter, Commissioner
Roy Schroder, Regional Director
H. E. Harman, Jr., State Administrator

University of Georgia, Sponsor
Lee County Commissioners of Roads and Revenues,
Cosponsor

"To bring together the records of the past and to house them in buildings where they will be preserved for the use of men living in the future, a nation must believe in three things. It must believe in the past. It must believe in the future. It must, above all, believe in the capacity of its people so to learn from the past that they can gain in judgment for the creation of the future."

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

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FOREWORD

The Inventory of the County Archives of Georgia is one of a number of guides to historical materials prepared throughout the United States by workers on the Historical Records Survey projects of the Work Projects Administration. The publication herewith presented, the Historical Sketch of an inventory of the archives of Lee County, is Volume I of Number 88 of the Georgia series.

The Historical Records Survey program was undertaken in the winter of 1935-36 for the purpose of providing useful employment to needy unemployed historians, lawyers, teachers, and research and clerical workers. In carrying out this objective, the project was organized to compile inventories of historical materials, particularly the unpublished government documents and records which are basic in the administration of local governments, and which provide invaluable data for students of political, economic, and social history. Up to the present time approximately 2,000 publications have been issued by the Survey throughout the country. The archival guide herewith presented is intended to meet the requirements of day-to-day administration by the officials of the county, and also the needs of lawyers, businessmen, and other citizens who require facts from the public records for the proper conduct of their affairs. The volume is so designed that it can be used by the historian in his research in unprinted sources in the same way he uses the library card catalog for printed sources.

The inventories produced by the Historical Records Survey projects attempt to do more than give merely a list of records - they attempt further to sketch in the historical background of the county or other unit of government, and to describe precisely and in detail the organization and functions of the government agencies whose records they list. The county, town, and other local inventories for the entire country will, when completed, constitute an encyclopedia of local government as well as a bibliography of local archives.

The successful conclusion of the work of the Historical Records Survey projects, even in a single county, would not be possible without the support of public officials, historical and legal specialists, and many other groups in the community. Their cooperation is gratefully acknowledged.

The Survey program was organized by Luther H. Evans, who served as Director until March 1, 1940, when he was succeeded by Sargent B. Child. The Survey operates as a Nation-wide series of locally sponsored projects in the Service Division, of which Mrs. Florence Kerr, Assistant Commissioner, is in charge.

HOWARD O. HUNTER
Commissioner of
Work Projects

FOREWORD

The inventory of the County Records of Georgia is one of a number of other historical materials prepared throughout the United States by workers on the Historical Records Survey project of the War Relocation Administration. The publication herewith presented, the Historical Record of an inventory of the records of the County, is Volume I of Series 1 of the Georgia series.

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HOWARD F. WHITE
Commissioner of
New York State

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PREFACE

The Historical Records Survey was initiated in Georgia in October 1936, as a unit of a Nation-wide program under the supervision of Dr. Luther H. Evans, National Director. The project at the beginning was set up as a part of the Federal Writers Project, but functioned thereunder for only a few weeks. The Survey became an independent unit of Federal Project No. 1 on November 1, 1936, and operated as such until September 1, 1939, when the transfer of the Survey to the status of a locally sponsored State-wide project was effected. The present State Supervisor of the Survey was appointed on October 10, 1940.

The principal objective of the Survey in Georgia is to prepare complete inventories of the public archives of the State and its political subdivisions, and to make readily accessible to research students and historians this large store of source material. This includes the publication, not only of inventories of county archives, but also of maps, vital statistics, and other important data found both in State and county depositories. Inventories of church archives, of Federal Archives in the State of Georgia, and guides to manuscript depositories have also been or will be prepared. A list of the publications of the Georgia Historical Records Survey appears on page 83. Such a survey should greatly aid and encourage a more systematic study of local governmental structure and point the way to an improvement in the methods of storage and preservation of both current and noncurrent records.

The Inventory of the County Archives of Georgia will, when completed, consist of a separate, numbered volume (or volumes) for each county in the State. Each county unit of the series is numbered according to its respective position in an alphabetical list of Georgia's 159 counties. Thus, the volumes for Lee County are numbered 88, in accordance with this list.

In order to encourage the study of local history in the schools, the publication of the Historical Sketch of Lee County as a separate volume was decided upon. The Survey plans to publish the section containing the county office and governmental organization essays and the record entries at a later date, as a second volume.

The Survey was begun in Lee County in January 1940, and the initial field work was completed in December of that year. The work was rechecked during December 1941. For the completeness and accuracy of the inventory of the records, as well as the transcriptions of the county minutes cited herein, the field workers are responsible. The research was made and the draft of the historical sketch was written by Paul B. Cole, of the project editorial staff, and was edited and revised by Harold Warnell, Project Technician.

The publication of this volume is made possible largely through the assistance rendered on behalf of Lee County by the Commissioners of Roads and Revenues. The valuable assistance rendered by the Superintendent of Schools, the Superior Court Clerk, the Ordinary, and other

Preface

officials of Lee County is gratefully acknowledged. Acknowledgment is also made for the aid given by the various workers and officials of the State and District offices of the Work Projects Administration.

The inventory of the State archives, of county, municipal, and other local records, will constitute separate series of publications. They are in mimeographed form for free distribution to certain State and local public officials, public libraries in Georgia, and to a limited number of libraries and governmental agencies outside the State. Requests for information concerning these publications should be addressed to Julian J. Barfield, State Supervisor, Research and Records Program, Ten Forsyth Street Building, Atlanta, Georgia.

FREDERICK S. HULSE
State Supervisor
The Georgia Historical Records Survey

Atlanta, Georgia
April 1942

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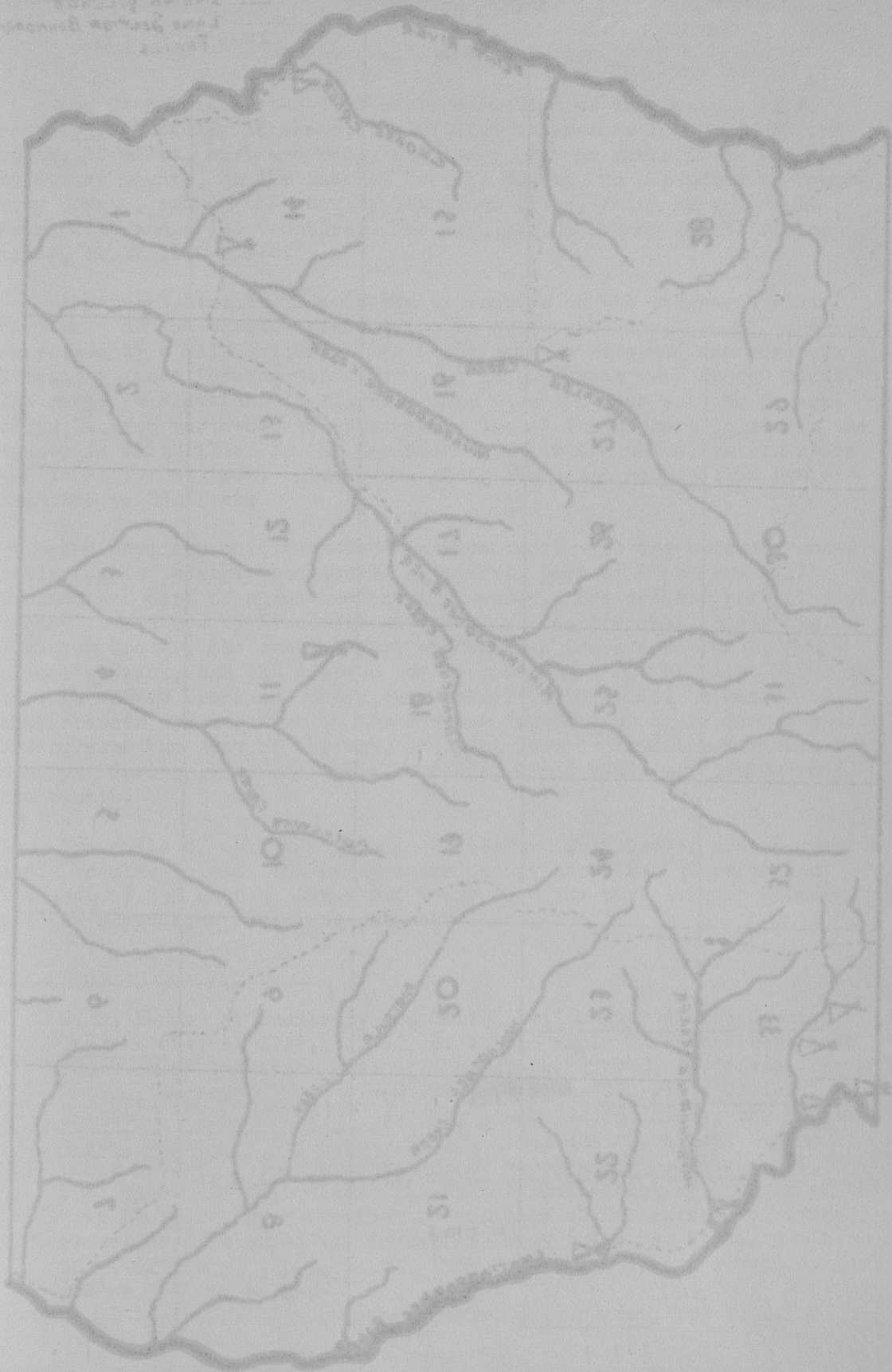
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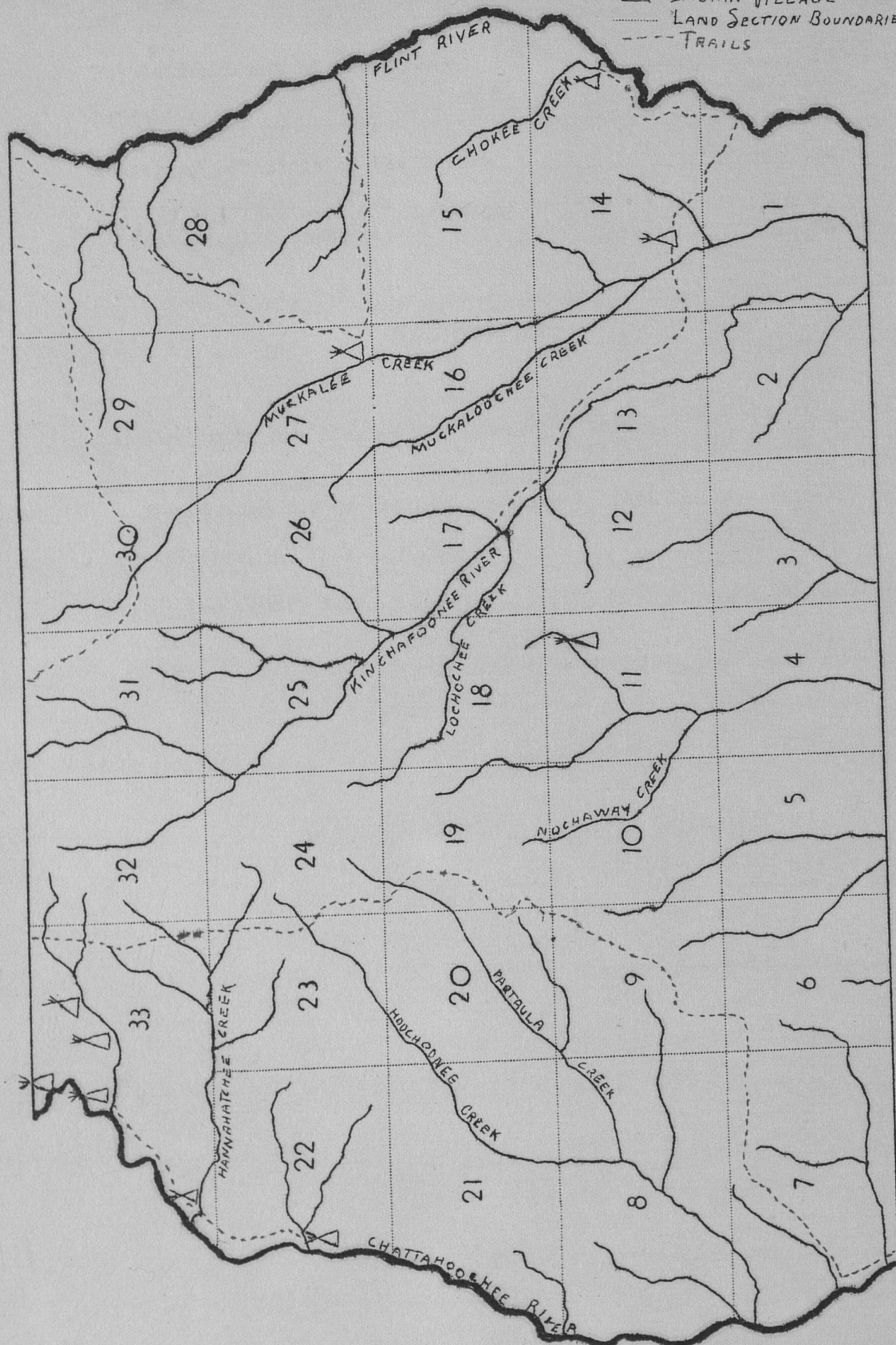
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--- Land Section Boundaries
--- Trails



Lee County at the Time of It's Creation, 1826

- LEGEND -

- △ INDIAN VILLAGE
- LAND SECTION BOUNDARIES
- - - TRAILS



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HISTORICAL SKETCH

Physical Characteristics

Lee County is in the southwestern section of the State. It is roughly rectangular in shape, its maximum dimensions being, north and south, 20 miles, east and west, 24 miles. On the north it is bounded by Sumter County, on the west by Terrell County, on the south by Dougherty County, and on the east by the Flint River, which separates it from Worth and Crisp Counties. The area of the county is 358 square miles, or 229,120 acres.¹

Physiographically, Lee County is located in the Dougherty Plain, that part of the coastal plain lying in southwest Georgia. It is characterized by a mild relief, a few small surface streams, and numerous limestone sinks forming depressions in an otherwise very smooth plain. The range in elevation is slightly less than 125 feet and the general slope is from northwest to southeast. One of the highest points in the county is Smithville, in the northwest part, where the elevation above sea level is 341 feet. Elevations along the south county line range from 225 to 250 feet.

The physiographic divisions include gently rolling uplands, undulating upland plains, and low-lying plains, part of which are well drained and part of which are wet and swampy. The western part of the county is drained by Kinchafoonee Creek and its branches, Reedy and Fowltown Creeks, the central part by Muckalee Creek and branch, Muckaloochee Creek, and the eastern and northern part by the Flint River through Chokey Creek and other and smaller tributaries. A number of subterranean streams flow on the surface for part of their course and underground the rest of the way, changing four or five times within the county. Springs, surface wells, and deep-bored wells are common over the county.

The soils of the county range in texture from loose, coarse, quartz sands to clay loams. The sandy loams occupy more than 50 percent of the area of the county, sands and loamy sand the next largest acreage, and the clay loams, the less extensive area.²

¹ U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey of Lee County, Georgia (Series 1927, No. 4), p. 1, and map. There has been some doubt as to the exact area of the county. The U. S. Census, Population, Georgia, 1940, gives 355 sq. miles; Georgia's Official Register, 1933-1935-1937, p. 491, gives 326 sq. miles; the Educational Survey of Lee County, 1920, gives 426 sq. miles; Lucian Lamar Knight, A Standard History of Georgia and Georgians, II, 125, gives 436 sq. miles. The Fiscal Administrative Program of the Work Projects Administration by addition of the acreage of every parcel of land owned in the county found 352.5 sq. miles. With the addition of public roads, the area of the county would be about 355 or 358 sq. miles.

² U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, pp. 1, 2.

Historical Sketch

An early survey of the soil of Lee County was made prior to 1849 by Dr. L. B. Mercer, a resident of the county and a state commissioner. He found that the sandy soils, believed to be a diluvium transported from the older parts of the continent, rested upon tertiary limestone varying in depths from 20 to 50 feet. The smaller streams, as well as the Flint River, had washed away this diluvium in their course through the limestone, dissolving channels through which the streams flowed. The Indian name for the Flint River was Thornateeska. Rain water, percolating through the diluvium, dissolved here and there subterranean channels and caverns in the limestone, and these, giving away from time to time, formed lime-sinks and ponds. Fragments of burrstone, of the same division of rocks (Eocene) that distinguished the limestone, were embedded in the diluvium and in the streams, forming shoals obstructing stream navigation.¹

The climate of Lee County is temperate, with long warm summers and short mild winters. The average growing season extends from the early part of March to about the middle of November, a period of approximately 8 months. The average rain fall is about 50 inches and is well distributed throughout the year, being heaviest during the growing season and lightest during the fall.²

Territory Prior to the Organization of the County

Until 1825, when the land was procured from the Indians by treaty, the territory was almost unknown to the white men. But the Indians had villages there and were making pottery and chipping flint long before the white men reached North America. Some of the finest examples of the art of stone chipping in America are said to have been found in the lower Flint Valley of Georgia. Nowhere in North America did the materials provided by nature run through such astonishing colors and color combinations. Near every large spring was a village site, and close to the villages were ridges yielding flint material. Of the finer chipping, millions of flakes have been found as fine as violet petals.

One of the most interesting village sites in southwest Georgia is said to be in Lee County, about 8 miles northwest of Albany. Axes, celts, and other implements of ground stone may have belonged to an earlier group of Indians than the Creeks, whom the white men found in Georgia. Later occupants of this site, near a creek and spring, developed the art of pottery making. The material used was a local clay mixed with a black mud from the swamps and a fine gravel from the creek bed. Vessels were baked hard, and ranged in size from bowls the size of a teacup to pots of several gallons. Among the flint collections of this tribe are arrow- and spearheads in varied color combinations, such

¹ George White, Historical Collections of Georgia . . . , pp. 511, 512.

² U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 3.

³ George Gilman Smith, The Story of Georgia and the Georgia People, 1732-1860, pp. 400, 401.

Historical Sketch

as pink with brown or yellow, red with white or pink, cream with chocolate and gray, purple with red and yellow. Sometimes these flint points were of three or four colors and many were translucent, a few transparent. Crude corn mills and other implements of stone are also among the remains of the tribe.¹

Benjamin Hawkins, visiting the Indians of this section in 1799, said: "These people have villages on the waters of the Flint River where they have fine stocks of cattle, cows and horses, and raise corn, rice and potatoes in great plenty."²

One of these villages, called by the Indians Che-au-hau or Cheraw (shortened by the traders to Chehaw) and Au-muc-cul-la, was considered as one of the six most important towns of the Confederacy of Creeks. The village, near present Leesburg and just below and adjoining another Indian village, Oose-co-che, was marked by an immense live-oak tree, 9 feet in diameter and 120 feet from tip to tip, under which the Indians held council meetings.³

In February 1818, when General Andrew Jackson was enroute to Florida in the Seminole War, he stopped at Cheraw, secured supplies for his army and care for his sick and wounded.⁴ But the following month some neighboring Indians, the Felema and Hopaunee tribes on the east side of the Flint River, made incursions among the whites, committing some murders. Governor Rabun at first requested General Jackson for troops to use against the raiders, but later under his own authority dispatched about 270 men under Captains Obed Wright, Robinson, Rogers, Dean, and Childs, and Lieutenants Cooper and Jones. The chief, Hopaunee, was reported to have removed to Cheraw. On this assumption the town was attacked on April 23, 1818.⁵ The destruction of the village was reported to General Jackson by General Glascock in a letter dated April 30, 1818:

"When the detachment arrived at Cheraw an Indian was discovered grazing some cattle. He proposed to go with the interpreter and to

¹ H. T. McIntosh, "Relics of the Red Man," in History and Reminiscences of Dougherty County, pp. 44-46.

² Col. Benjamin Hawkins, "A Sketch of the Creek County, in the years 1798 and 1799," in Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, III, 64.

³ Letters of Andrew Jackson to Hon. John C. Calhoun, Secty. of War, May 7, 1818, and to the Warriors of the Chehaw Village, May 7, 1818, in American State Papers, Military Affairs, August 10, 1789 - Feb. 25, 1819, pp. 774-777.

⁴ Letters from (Governor) Wm. Rabun to Major General Andrew Jackson, U. S. Army, Creek Nation, March 21, 1818, and to Hon. John C. Calhoun, Secty. of War, June 1, 1818, in American State Papers, Military Affairs, 1789-1819, pp. 774, 775.

⁵ White, Historical Collections, pp. 512, 513.

Historical Sketch

bring any of the chiefs for the captain to talk with. It was not attended to. An advance was ordered. The cavalry rushed forward and commenced the massacre. Even after the firing and murder commenced, Major Howard, an old chief, who furnished you with corn, came out of his house with a white flag in front of the line. It was not respected. An order was given for a general fire, and nearly four hundred guns were discharged at him before one took effect. He fell and was bayoneted. His son also was killed Seven men were killed, one woman and two children." The town was destroyed.¹

Captain Wright was arrested by order of General Jackson,² but was released by the civil authorities,³ was rearrested by Governor Rabun and ordered by the President of the United States, President Monroe, to be placed in the custody of the marshal, but he made his escape.⁴

A large granite boulder was unveiled June 14, 1912, on the site of the Indian village. The inscription read: "Chehaw. Large Indian town, home of the Chehaws. A friendly agricultural people of the Creek tribe, who aided our early settlers. They contributed men, food, and horses, to subdue the hostile Seminoles. Here Andrew Jackson rested with his starving army and was given help in 1818. Through misunderstanding were sacrificed seven of this tribe by Georgia troops, for which all possible amends were made. Erected in 1912 by Council of Safety Chapter, D. A. R."⁵

Creation and Organization of the County

Creation

In 1825 the Indian lands between the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers, approximately 5,850 square miles, 130 miles long and 45 miles broad, were procured by treaty.⁶ When laid out in 1825 the territory was almost unknown to white men, and the soil untouched. The land was in tertiary formation, the water was strongly impregnated with lime, and the air was laden with malaria.⁷

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- 1 Letter of Thomas Glascock, Brig. Gen. Com'g. Ga. Militia, U. S. S., to Major General Andrew Jackson, April 30, 1818, in American State Papers, p. 776.
 - 2 Order, Headquarters, Division of the South, Andrew Jackson, Major General, Commanding, May 7, 1818; Order, John M. Davis, Assistant Inspector General, U. S. Army to Captain Obed Wright, Georgia Militia, May 24, 1818, in American State Papers, pp. 776, 777.
 - 3 Writ of Habeas Corpus, Baldwin County, May 28, 1818, in American State Papers, pp. 777, 778.
 - 4 White, Historical Collections, p. 513.
 - 5 Lucian Lamar Knight, Georgia's Landmarks, Memorials and Legends, I, 722.
 - 6 Adiel Sherwood, A Gazetteer of the State of Georgia, 1827, p. 9.
 - 7 Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, p. 400.

Historical Sketch

On March 25, 1818, Major General Henry Lee, universally known as "Light Horse Harry" and the author of the famous characterization of Washington, "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen," died on Cumberland Island, Georgia. His body remained at Dungeness, Georgia, until reinterment in 1913 in the Lee Mausoleum at Lexington, Virginia. It seems plausible that it was in honor of this Henry Lee, 1756-1818,¹ rather than Richard Henry Lee, who first proposed a declaration of Independence of the American colonies, never lived in Georgia, and died in 1794, that Lee County was named on its creation in 1826.²

The act creating the county, passed December 11, 1826, stated "to organize the territory lately acquired from the Creek Indians, lying between the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers, immediately above the old line of Early County, and known as the first section, shall form one county to be called Lee."³ Originally Lee County comprised the subsequently created counties of Quitman, Randolph, Stewart, Sumter, Terrell, and Webster, and parts of Schley, Chattahoochee, Macon, Clay, and Marion.⁴

Lee County was bounded on the north by a large second section composing the county of Muscogee.⁵ The other large counties organized from the territory were Troup, Coweta, and Carroll. The five counties, together with the counties of DeKalb and Fayette, were to be in a new superior court circuit called the Chattahoochee Circuit.⁶ Walter T. Colquitt was the first judge, 1826-32, and Samuel A. Bailey, 1826, the first solicitor general.⁷

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- 1 Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1927, p. 1214; U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 2; Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, p. 401; Knight, Georgia and Georgians, I, 548.
 - 2 Biographical Directory of the American Congress, p. 1215. However, Richard Henry Lee is mentioned as the person for whom the county was named in White, Historical Collections, p. 511; Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1860, p. 89; Allen D. Chandler and Clement A. Evans, Cyclopedia of Georgia, II, 416; and Knight, Georgia's Landmarks, I, 721.
 - 3 Ga. Acts 1826, p. 57.
 - 4 Knight, Georgia's Landmarks, I, 722. See also Thomas R. R. Cobb, A Digest of the Statute Laws of the State of Georgia . . ., p. 1180; White, Historical Collections, p. 511; Ga. Acts 1828, p. 53; 1830, pp. 49, 50; 1831, pp. 76, 77; 1853-54, pp. 288-290, 292-294, 304, 305; 1855-56, pp. 117-121; 1857, pp. 42, 43; 1858, pp. 28-30; Albany Herald, October 24, 1941.
 - 5 Inventory of the County Archives of Georgia, No. 106, Muscogee County, p. 3, and map, p. 53.
 - 6 Ga. Acts 1827, p. 57.
 - 7 Ga. Executive Minutes, 1825-29, p. 236.

Historical Sketch

Under the superintendence of "three free holders," the persons who were in Lee County were to meet on the first Monday in May 1827 to elect five justices of the inferior court, a clerk of the superior court and inferior court, a sheriff, a tax collector, a tax receiver, a coroner, and a county surveyor. The place of election was to be at Pond Town or Williams' Store.¹ Pond Town was in the north central part of later Sumter County.²

Organization and Growth

But expansive Lee County, just acquired from the Indians, was almost unknown to white men, had no stage coach line, and no town nor hamlets, and was slow in organization. The only officers elected in 1827 were five justices of the inferior court: Levi W. Moore, James R. Lyons, E. H. Hall, Elbert Milton, and Axum Webb;³ Nathan Powell, Sheriff; and a clerk of the inferior and superior courts, Joseph White.⁴ The first sessions of the superior court is said to have been held under the giant live oak tree at Chehaw.⁵

There were land grants in 1827 in Lee County to the following: Nathaniel H. Nowlan of Chatham County, Felix Hurst and William P. Ulmer of Effingham, John Egin, R.S., of Richmond, Hugh Edgar of Walton, Balaam Palmer of Laurens, James H. Mizell of Irwin, Moses Herbert of Taliaferro, John Hardie of Washington, James Wilson, Sr., R.S., of Jackson, James Stevens of Hancock, and Everlyn D. Nichols of Jones.⁶ Many of these sold their lands to other parties and never settled in Lee County.⁷ Among the first settlers were William Howard, Asron Jones, Lewis Bond, and John Bullright (or Woolright).⁸ Subsequent early settlers are said to have included a Mr. Woolright, Dr. Mercer, John McClendon, Wm. Spencer, Joshua Clarke, J. O. Edwards, John Lawhorn, John Cook, Abraham Dyson, Lewis Bond, Wm. Janes, E. Janes, D. Janes, and D. Sneed.⁹ They were native-born Americans of principally Anglo-Saxon stock, coming from the Carolinas, Tennessee, and Virginia.¹⁰ Many were descended from the Virginia Cavaliers, the North Carolina Scotch Puritans, and the Huguenots of South Carolina.¹¹ In Lee County

¹ Ga. Acts 1827, p. 57.

² "Bonner's Map of the State of Georgia," in George White's Statistics of the State of Georgia

³ Ga. Justices of the Inferior Court Commission Book, I, 757-759.

⁴ Ga. County Officers' Commission Book, I, 155, 156.

⁵ Knight, Georgia's Landmarks, I, 722.

⁶ Louise Frederick Hays, History of Macon County, Georgia, 98.

⁷ Example in Hays, Macon County, 97. Few of these names recur in Lee County history.

⁸ White, Statistics, p. 368.

⁹ White, Historical Collections, p. 511.

¹⁰ U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 2.

¹¹ General Henry Morgan, "History of Albany," in History and Reminiscences of Dougherty County, p. 16.

Historical Sketch

they first engaged in stock raising, but later found the land fertile and started large plantations.¹

Pinderton

Just across and along the Flint River to the east of Lee County in Dooly County ran the Alligator State stagecoach line² from Milledgeville, Georgia, to Tallahassee, Florida. Pinderton, formerly an Indian village on the Flint River in Dooly County,³ was the half-way point where the stage stopped all night.⁴ Pinder, incidentally, is another name for peanuts, probably indicating some early farm diversification in this section.⁵ Settlers in Pinderton had erected several buildings and had a post office. The stage usually reached Pinderton on Friday night, having left Milledgeville on Wednesday. The route was via Slade's, Gay's, Tyson's, and Bainbridge to Tallahassee. Fare from Milledgeville to Pinderton was \$12, and from Tallahassee, \$13.⁶

On December 22, 1827, Thomas Spalding, a wealthy planter of Sapelo Island, obtained a charter from the legislature to construct a railroad of wood, or dig a canal, from the Ocmulgee to the Flint River under the title of the "Ocmulgee and Flint Railroad and Canal Company." The road had already been surveyed to Pinderton, across the Flint from Lee County,⁷ but was never constructed. Renewal of its charter for 10 years in 1834,⁸ however, probably did influence the legislature in giving the western portion of Dooly County, including this coming village and Slade's, to Lee County. The act also provided that all peace officers in this section of Dooly County were to continue in office in Lee County.⁹

The December 1827 session of the legislature, in which Lee County had a representative, (it being recorded that \$536 was paid to him),¹⁰ also set off a part of this expansive county to Muscogee and Marion,¹¹ and provided that elections should be held in Lee at the place of holding superior courts, and at the houses, respectively, of Axum Webb in the first district, of M. Hunt in the 64th, of Overton Cosby in the 22nd, and of Daniel Little in the 16th.¹²

¹ Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, p. 401.

² Morgan, "History of Albany," loc. cit., p. 15.

³ Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1827, p. 87.

⁴ Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1829, p. 279.

⁵ "Pinder" or "Pender" is a common South Georgia colloquialism for "Peanut".

⁶ Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1829, pp. 148, 279.

⁷ Albany Patriot, April 23, 1845.

⁸ Ga. Acts 1834, pp. 219, 220.

⁹ Ga. Acts 1827, p. 71.

¹⁰ Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1829, p. 39.

¹¹ Act 1827, Cobb, p. 1180.

¹² Ga. Acts 1827, p. 96.

Historical Sketch

As the needs of the county arose, offices were created and filled. In 1828 Abner Holliday was named surveyor, and Gabriel Parker, coroner:¹ and five new justices of the peace were commissioned: Alexander Mares (or Mars), Abraham Lord, James Gay, Phillip Pitman, and Luke H. Smith.² An Act of December 20, 1828, set the western half of Lee County off to form the County of Randolph,³ leaving about 1,000 square miles in the county, 40 miles long and 25 miles wide, or about three times its present size.⁴ Another act of December 1828 changed the time of holding superior courts in the Chattahoochee Circuit, fixed the time of holding the inferior court in Lee County, and provided that the justices in Lee should lay off the county into Captains' districts, two justices of the peace to be elected in each on the first Monday in February 1829.⁵ One of these early militia captains was Captain Jenkins of the 14th district.⁶

Early Leesburg

By 1829 Lee County had within its proper and present borders "a chief town" known as Leesburg to supplant the one, Pinderton, acquired from Dooley.⁷ This was possibly on the site of Chehaw, but more probably on that of later Starkville. Advertisements of public sales were authorized in the gazettes of Macon, the nearest city publishing newspapers.⁸ Election districts approved by the legislature were "at the following five places and no others, viz.: at the place of superior courts; at Axum Webb's in the 14th: at Reuben Wheeler's in the 2nd; at the house of _____ Foose, in the 17th: and at Benjamin Thomas's, the place of justices' courts for the 27th and 28th districts."⁹

In 1830 an additional election district was placed at the house of I. Glover in the 13th district.¹⁰ The population was 1,680 people, white and colored,¹¹ but in 1831 the population was probably cut in half by the setting off of about 589 square miles, comprising the northern part of Lee County, to form Sumter County.¹² Lee County retained an area of over 500 square miles for 25 years.¹³ In 1842

1 Ga. County Officers' Commission Book, I, 350, 351.

2 Ga. Justices of the Peace Commission Book, I, 35.

3 Ga. Acts 1828, p. 53.

4 Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1828, p. 35.

5 Ga. Acts 1828, pp. 63, 64.

6 Ga. Acts 1832, p. 78.

7 Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1829, p. 46.

8 Ga. Acts 1829, pp. 162, 163.

9 Ga. Acts 1829, p. 26.

10 Ga. Acts 1830, pp. 89, 90.

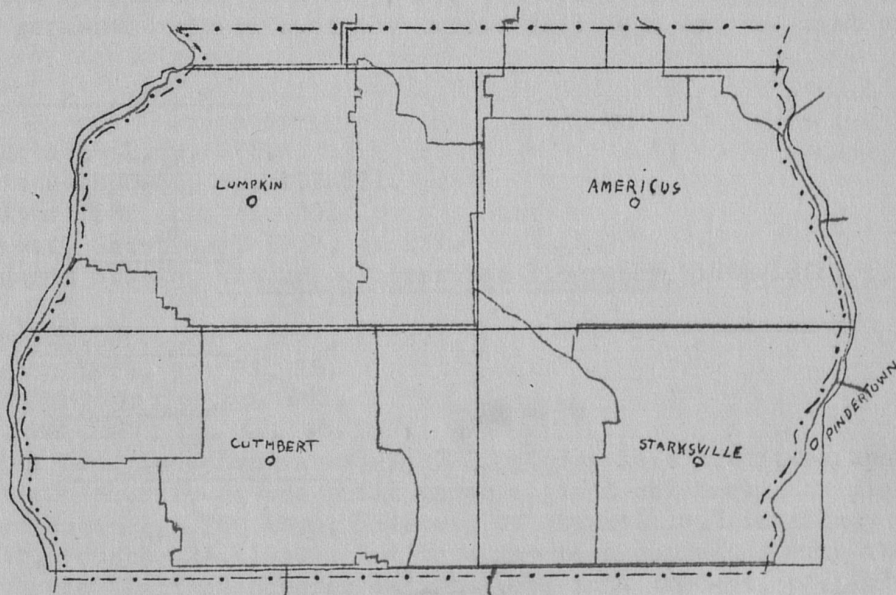
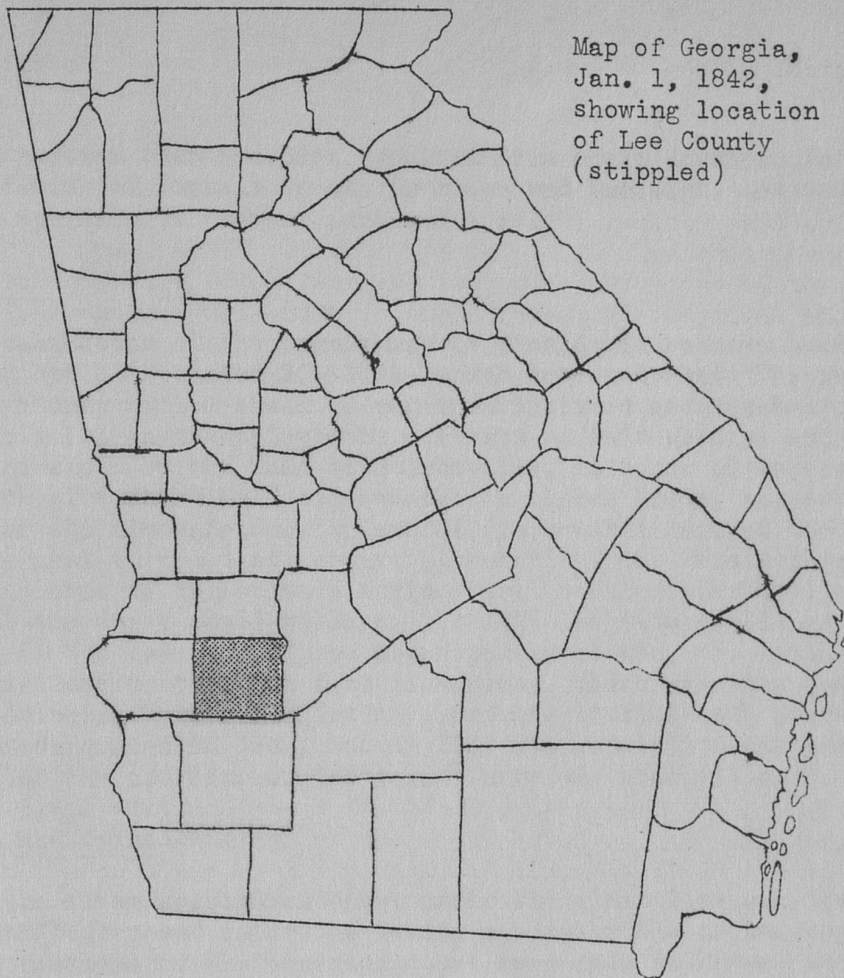
11 Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, p. 401.

12 Ga. Acts 1831, pp. 76, 77; Richard Swainson Fisher, A New and Complete Statistical Gazetteer of the United States of America . . ., p. 828.

13 Fisher, Gazetteer, p. 370.

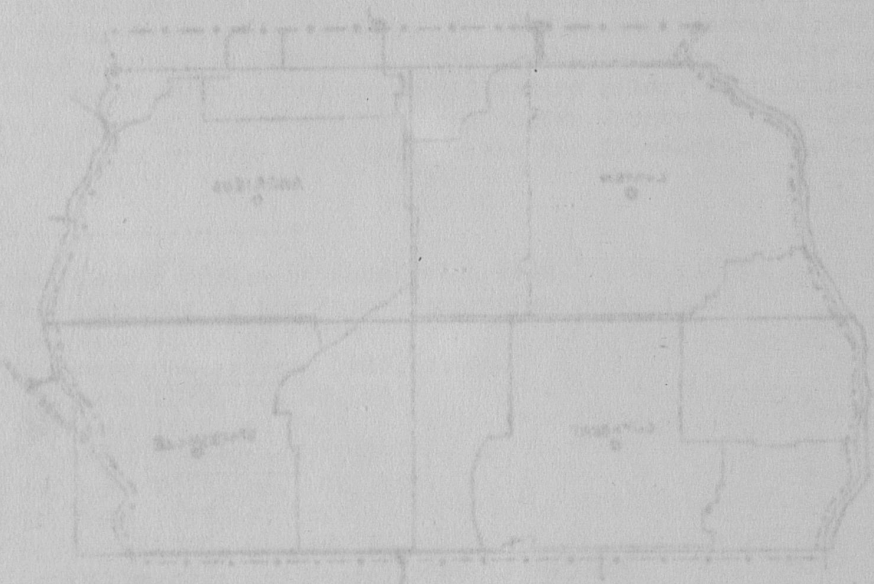
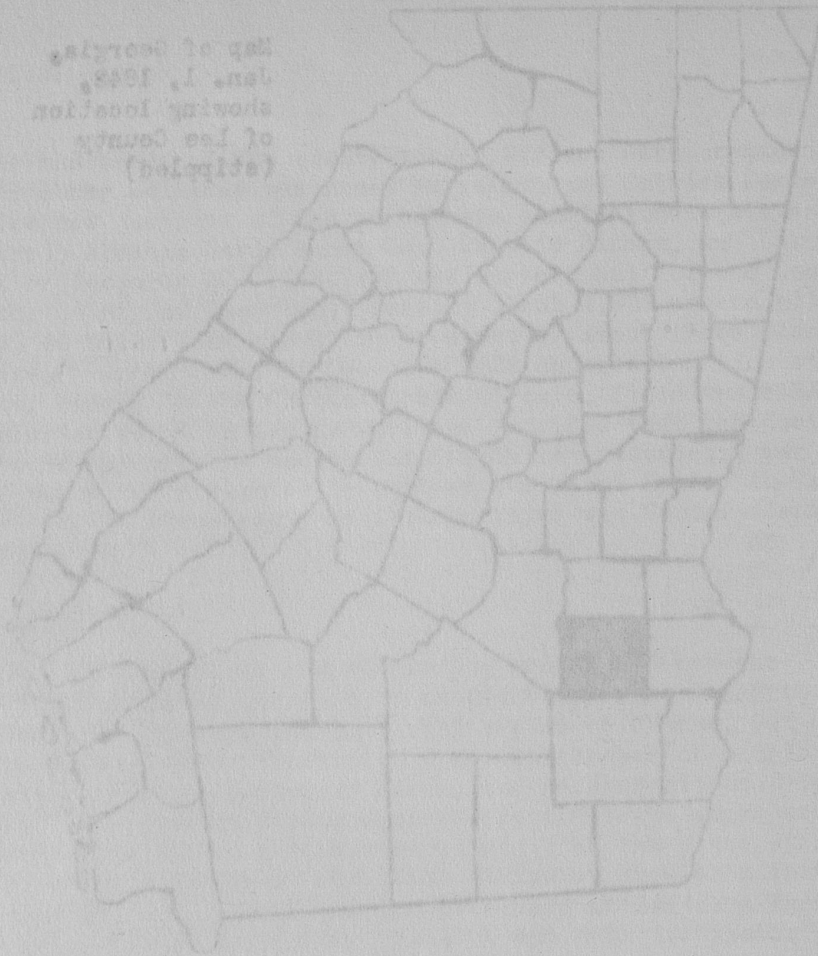
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Map of Georgia,
Jan. 1, 1842,
showing location
of Lee County
(stippled)



Historical Development of Lee County
- - - - - Original County Boundary (1826)
————— County Boundaries, 1827-42
————— Present County Boundaries

Map of Georgia
 Jan. 1, 1822
 showing location
 of Lee County
 (shaded)



Historical development of Lee County
 ----- Original County Boundary (1822)
 - - - - - County Boundary, 1827-42
 _____ Present County Boundary

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Historical Sketch

it lost the portion that had been acquired from Dooly County.¹ In 1856, upon the creation of Terrell County from Lee and Randolph, Lee County assumed its approximate present form and area.²

Stark(s)ville

The organization of the county may be considered to have been completed by an act of December 20, 1832, which sets out that "The public site in the county of Lee shall be permanently fixed and located on lot of land number 241 in the thirteenth district of said county, and shall be called and known by the name of Starksville, in honor of General John Stark"³ This site was a half mile west of Muckalee Creek, and seven miles east of the Kinchafoonee.⁴ General Stark was a hero of the Indian Wars and the next to the last surviving general of the Revolutionary War.⁵ As the seat of an entirely agricultural county, Starksville remained until the war a small village. In 1837 the five dwellings and two taverns of the town housed, as principal residents, the families of one lawyer, one doctor, and four mechanics. There was also one store, two drinking houses, an academy, and the courthouse.⁶ Starksville was incorporated in 1839,⁷ and in 1849 its population was only 100.⁸ By 1847 the spelling of the town's name was Starkville.⁹

Courthouses and Jails

After the first session of court under the giant live oak tree at Chewhaw, both before and after the fixing of Starkville as the county site, early sessions of the superior court were held in homes, stores, or other rented quarters.¹⁰ By 1837 a courthouse seems to have been erected, and a primitive jail must have been built in 1840.¹¹ An act of 1839 made permanent the site of the public buildings and the seat of

¹ Ga. Acts 1842, p. 370.

² Ga. Acts 1855-56, pp. 117-121.

³ Ga. Acts 1832, pp. 48, 49.

⁴ Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1837, p. 237.

⁵ See Jared Sparks, Library of American Biography, 1860-1865, I, 3-116.

⁶ Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1837, p. 237.

⁷ Ga. Acts 1839, pp. 94, 95.

⁸ White, Statistics, p. 367.

⁹ Ga. Acts 1847, pp. 45, 46.

¹⁰ Knight, Georgia's Landmarks, I, 722. There is a tradition that the first courthouse was built under a giant oak tree at a place called Webster, (Tom Love, "History of Starkville," in Albany Herald, October 24, 1941), but this may be a confusion with the courthouse built at Webster in 1854 (Ga. Acts 1853-54, pp. 268, 269; Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 21, see entry 76).

¹¹ Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1837, p. 237.

Historical Sketch

justice for the county at Starkville,¹ but dissatisfaction with Starkville seems to have arisen. An act of 1847 repealed the act of 1832, and provided for an election to determine whether the grand jury in the spring of 1848 should select "some eligible place in the centre of the county."² The election was evidently lost since George White, in 1849, described the county courthouse and jail at Starkville as "inferior buildings, constructed of wood."³ An act of 1851 definitely made Starkville the permanent public site of Lee, and authorized, if the grand jury would recommend it, that the inferior court let out by contract or otherwise the building of a courthouse and jail there, with authority to levy an extra tax not exceeding 100 percent on the state tax for that purpose.⁴ The inferior court in July 1858 recalled that the court of 1854 provided a sufficient amount of money to pay an indebtedness to Wm. Love "for the building of the courthouse."⁵

But no sooner was this courthouse built than dissatisfaction with Starkville as the county seat arose again. The legislature of 1854 repealed the act of 1851 and provided a commission composed of James Rouse, Griffin Smith, Robert Reeves, William J. Parker, and Robert T. Bradley to select an "eligible site as near the centre of the county as possible," the new site to be used from the 15th day of October, 1854.⁶ The Lee County site was evidently removed to Webster during the period 1854-56, since the act of February 16, 1856, organizing the new county of Terrell, provided for making permanent the public site of Lee at Starkville and for reimbursing the owners of town lots in the town of Webster in Lee County in consequence of the removal of the county site.⁷ A courthouse was built in Webster by Chas. P. Kelley.⁸

Two years after the return to the Starkville site the courthouse there, containing the early records of the county, burned. The first session of the superior court after the burning met March 22, 1858.⁹ During 1858 and 1859 a storeroom was rented from Eureka Lodge F. & A. Masons for court purposes.¹⁰ In December 1858 a contract was let for a new courthouse at a cost of \$3,900.¹¹ A committee was appointed May 3, 1859, to superintend the building of the courthouse,¹²

1 Ga. Acts 1839, pp. 94, 95.

2 Ga. Acts 1847, pp. 45, 46.

3 White, Statistics, p. 367.

4 Ga. Acts 1851-52, pp. 457, 458.

5 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 9, see entry 76.

6 Ga. Acts 1853-54, pp. 268, 269.

7 Ga. Acts 1855-56, pp. 117-121.

8 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 21.

9 Minutes (Superior Court), vol. C, p. 25, see entry 55.

10 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, pp. 22, 48.

11 Ibid., p. 16.

12 Ibid., p. 36.

Historical Sketch

and it was completed by February 21, 1861.¹ In 1862 the grounds were fenced at a cost of \$250.²

On account of the insufficiency of the jail in Lee County the jail in Albany was used for special cases during the war and reconstruction.³ The Sumter County jail in Americus was also used for Lee County prisoners in the late 60's and early 70's.⁴ The grand jury in March 1867 found that the jail was unfit for a prisoner in a civilized community,⁵ and that three months imprisonment would endanger a prisoner's life,⁶ but in 1869, "in view of the probability of the removal of the county site," it recommended only repairs.⁷

The legislature, on August 20, 1872, appointed the commissioners Isaac P. Tison, Henry L. Long, Fred H. West, William T. Sadler, and Virginius G. Hill to select an eligible spot for the county site at or near Wooten Station or near Adam Station on the Southwestern Railroad. The name of the new county site was to be Leesburg.⁸ Three days later, August 23, 1872, the legislature incorporated the town of Wooten with Isaac P. Tison, L. A. Stokes, T. J. Mason, John M. Martin, and Henry H. Coleman as commissioners. The corporate limits extended 3 miles in every direction from the Baptist Church in said town.⁹ Wooten Station was selected as the county seat, but its name was not changed to Leesburg until 1874.¹⁰

In May 1873, \$10,000 in bonds were issued for the erection of a courthouse and jail at Leesburg.¹¹ The grand jury in November 1873 complained that the temporary courthouse was not suitable "on account of the want of chimneys, both of our courts being held in cold weather," and that the erection of a permanent courthouse and jail was delayed by a bill of injunction.¹² This temporary courthouse seems to have been burned in 1872, destroying the weights and measures.¹³ In November 1874 the grand jury recommended that the building of the brick courthouse be discontinued and that all the material connected with the building, including the bricks, wagons, mules, carts, etc., be sold. It further

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 77.

² *Ibid.*, p. 110.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 148, 222, 234, 276, 277, 279.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 349; Records (Ordinary's Minutes - County Purposes), vol. 1, pp. 38, 81, *see* entry 81.

⁵ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. D, p. 78, *see* entry 55.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

⁸ Ga. Acts 1872, pp. 264, 265.

⁹ Ga. Acts 1872, pp. 281, 282.

¹⁰ Ga. Acts 1874, p. 201.

¹¹ Records (Ordinary's Minutes - County Purposes), vol. 1, pp. 199.

¹² Minutes (Superior Court), vol. E, p. 145.

¹³ Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, p. 486, *see* entry 1.

Historical Sketch

recommended that the proceeds thereof be applied to the payment of the damages at Starkville and that their representatives in the legislature be requested to have a bill passed repealing so much of the removal act as authorized the building of a new courthouse.¹ The March 1875 grand jury recommended the changing of the location of the brick courthouse at Leesburg to a point out on the hill, the making of a contract to complete said courthouse, and the removal of the foundations thereof to the same point.² The jail was completed by June 1875, since \$80 was paid for a fence around it at that time.³ Various rented quarters were used by the courts and county officials until the new courthouse was completed. The Baptist Church at Leesburg was paid \$65 on November 22, 1876, for rent for the use of its building as a courthouse for 6 months.⁴ In February 1878 bricks and bats on the site of the old courthouse were sold,⁵ and in December 1880 the courthouse and contents were insured for \$10,000.⁶ A contract for a vault at a cost of \$585 was let July 4, 1893,⁷ and in November 1893 sign boards were placed throughout the county to indicate the distance to the courthouse.⁸

A contract for a new jail was let July 10, 1896, at about \$7,000.⁹ The jail was almost completed by December 1896 at a cost of \$6,930,¹⁰ and the old jail property was sold in November 1903.¹¹ The county commissioners in May 1911 ordered that an election be held the following November to determine whether a new courthouse should be built by the issuance of bonds.¹² The election evidently lost since the commissioners during the wartime boom ordered another election March 23, 1916, for an \$80,000 bond issue - \$30,000 for roads and \$50,000 for a courthouse.¹³ The election carried 363 to 52.¹⁴ The bonds issued were made payable at the Mechanics and Metal National Bank, New York City,¹⁵ and were sold to Harris, Forbes & Co., of New York, September 14, 1916, \$75,000 at \$103.371 per bond and the balance at par.¹⁶ A committee, with

1 Minutes (Superior Court), vol. E, p. 216, see entry 55.

2 Records (Ordinary's Minutes - County Purposes), vol. 1, p. 347, see entry 81

3 Ibid., p. 349.

4 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 408, see entry 76.

5 Ibid., p. 474.

6 Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, p. 444, see entry 1.

7 Ibid., p. 789.

8 Ibid., p. 803.

9 Ibid., vol. B, p. 127.

10 Ibid., p. 163.

11 Ibid., vol. F, p. 514.

12 Ibid., vol. D, p. 48.

13 Ibid., pp. 506, 507.

14 Ibid., p. 514.

15 Ibid., p. 523.

16 Ibid., p. 577.

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authority to appoint an additional member who was to be an architect or builder, was appointed to go and look at courthouses in different parts of the State and ascertain the approximate cost of such courthouses.¹ A resolution was passed authorizing the purchase of a site in Leesburg on the east side of the Central of Georgia right-of-way in November 1916.² The site was purchased on the recommendation of the May 1916 grand jury "in plain view of the passer-bys (sic) on the Dixie Highway and Railway. - To put it on the present site would be merely to hide it, while to build it on a more central location would be to benefit the city and advertise the progressive spirit of the county."³

The county commissioners accepted on December 5, 1916, the plans of the Carolina Architectural Society for the county courthouse at a cost of about \$40,000.⁴ On May 15, 1917, \$1,460.23, $3\frac{1}{2}$ percent of the cost (\$41,721), was paid to J. J. Baldwin, architect. At the same time the bid of \$45,000 of R. W. Wimbish of Savannah for the construction of the courthouse, including heating at \$1,725, plumbing at \$1,200, and electrical work at \$677, was accepted.⁵ The completed new courthouse was accepted July 2, 1918.⁶ In 1920 the old courthouse building was being used by the Leesburg High School.⁷

Election Precincts

The legislature which fixed the county seat of Lee at Starkville on December 20, 1832,⁸ had on the first of the month designated the counties of Talbot, Marion, Sumter, Baker, and Lee as forming the second brigade of the tenth division of the Georgia militia.⁹ On December 24, the legislature amended this act to permit the people to elect not only the field but also the general officers of the militia.¹⁰ Captain Jenkins is mentioned this year (1832) as having one of the districts with an election place at Axum Webb's.¹¹ In continuing adjustment to the population, the election precinct at Reuben Wheeler's was discontinued in 1834 and two new precincts were established, one at the house of Isaac O. Edwards in the 12th district, and the other at Samuel Berry's in the 3rd.¹² In 1835 an additional precinct was placed at the house of Elias Hodge.¹³ These houses were convenient gathering places during

¹ Ibid., p. 578.

² Ibid., p. 587.

³ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. I, p. 380, see entry 55.

⁴ Commissioners Minutes, vol. E, p. 11, see entry 1.

⁵ Ibid., p. 47.

⁶ Ibid., vol. F, p. 14.

⁷ Educational Survey of Lee County, p. 5.

⁸ Ga. Acts 1832, pp. 48, 49.

⁹ Ga. Acts 1832, p. 137.

¹⁰ Ga. Acts 1832, p. 45.

¹¹ Ga. Acts 1862, p. 78.

¹² Ga. Acts 1832, pp. 110, 111.

¹³ Ga. Acts 1835, p. 82.

Historical Sketch

the Creek War of June-July 1836, when hostile Indians passed through the county.¹ After the county had been definitely freed from the danger of Indians by that war, people began to settle in the county in increasing numbers.² In 1837 the election places were changed in the 909th and 687th districts.³ In 1838 the legislature authorized the inferior court to lay out the county into more definite militia districts,⁴ and the following year a precinct was established at the new flourishing village of Palmyra.⁵ In 1842 one was placed at J. Wales' house, and two were abolished, respectively at E. Hodges' and I. O. Edwards'.⁶

By 1843 justice of the peace courts had begun to function in the districts. In this year an election precinct was placed at the court ground of the 687th district,⁷ in 1845 at the court ground of the 966th district,⁸ and in 1847 at the court ground of the 976th district.⁹ By 1866 the election or militia districts had assumed approximately their present boundaries: the Chokey or 1238th G.M. district, extending west to Muckalee Creek; the Red Bone or 975th G.M. district; the Starkville, or 915th G.M. district; the Palmyra or 738th district, extending east to Muckalee Creek; and the Smithville or 976th district, also extending east to Muckalee Creek.¹⁰ The Starkville district was changed to the Leesburg district after the founding of Leesburg in 1872.¹¹

Agricultural Development before the Civil War

The Creek War

Prior to 1836 danger from Indian marauders, the Seminoles of lower Alabama, and particularly the Cussetuhs, who had lived partially in the northwest section of original Lee County and who had not agreed to the cession of lands in the treaty of Indian Springs in 1825,¹² had prevented many settlers from coming to Lee County.¹³ These Indians had been making numerous hostile demonstrations throughout Alabama and

¹ Clement A. Evans, "Military History," in Memoirs of Georgia, I, 98.

² Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, pp. 400, 401.

³ Ga. Acts 1837, p. 103.

⁴ Act 1838, Cobb, p. 1180.

⁵ Ga. Acts 1839, p. 180.

⁶ Ga. Acts 1842, pp. 76, 77.

⁷ Ga. Acts 1843, p. 52.

⁸ Ga. Acts 1845, p. 94.

⁹ Ga. Acts 1847, p. 99.

¹⁰ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 223, see entry 76; Population of the State of Georgia - Final Figures: 1940 (Release of February 14, 1941).

¹¹ Ga. Acts 1872, pp. 264-266.

¹² White, Historical Collections, p. 128.

¹³ Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, 400.

Historical Sketch

on the borders of Georgia.¹ The approximately 1,000 settlers, white and colored, in the county were mostly stock raisers.² The land had been received in the lotteries of 1827-33 on a strickly equalitarian basis, but later many transfers and consolidations occured.³ A typical instance was that of Isaac Huston, who drew his land in 1829, sold it the same year to Wilson Collins for \$35, who in turn sold it to Sampson English in 1833 for \$500. In 1836 Sampson English bought the adjoining lot.⁴ The fertility of the hummock lands for farming had been discovered.⁵

In May 1836 Roanoke, in the adjoining county of Randolph, was attacked twice by the Indians and taken on the second attack. The Indians, however, were routed by soldiers who had hurried to the relief of the garrison. This and other attacks created such alarm that many families fled to middle Georgia. Several battles occurred in Stewart County. The Indians in large numbers began a march down the Chattahoochee, turning through Randolph County in an effort to reach the Seminoles on the borders of Florida and Georgia. As they were passing through Randolph and Lee Counties they were pursued by Capt. Jernigan with the companies of Captains Wood, Mathews, Guilford, Snellgrove, Wills, and Smith, making a regiment of about 300 men. A short and bloody encounter occured on July 25th at the Ichiwaynochiway Creek and the Indians, retreating at night, were followed until July 27th when they were again overtaken. General Wellborn, arriving from Eufaula with troops, was placed in command and continued the battle. The Indians, numbering over 300, secreted themselves in the depths of the swamp and awaited the advance of the Americans. Dividing the command so as to secure the advantage of moving toward a common center, General Wellborn and Captain Jernigan charged the Indians from several directions, but met with desperate resistance at all points. Finally, through a flank movement by Captain Wood and a simultaneous direct attack by the companies of Captains Ball and Clifton, the whole line assailed the Indians and so impetuously scattered them that, contrary to their custom, they left many of their dead and wounded behind. A similar battle occurred in Chickasawhatchee swamp in Baker County, in which settlers from Lee undoubtedly took part.⁶

Palmyra

With the elimination of danger from the Indians, agricultural settlement in Lee County increased. By 1840 the population was 5,076; 2,370 white and 2,706 colored.⁷ This was distributed throughout

¹ Evans, "Military History," loc. cit., I, 98.

² Cf. Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, p. 401, with Ga. Acts 1831, pp. 76, 77, and Fisher, Gazetteer, p. 828.

³ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South, p. 345.

⁴ Hays, Macon County, 97.

⁵ Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, p. 401.

⁶ Evans, Military History, "loc. cit.", I, 98.

⁷ White, Statistics, p. 368.

Historical Sketch

the county, but the most significant and probably largest group of settlers located around Palmyra Springs in the southern section of the county.¹ This section was the most fertile in the county, having a large proportion of red oak and hickory land, supposed to contain lime. These "fine" lands lay mostly in the fork of Fowl Town and Kinchafoona Creeks, and along Fowl Town Creek, and were said to equal "any land in the world" in richness.² Most of the settlers came from Greene and Taliaferro Counties.³ They were principally Baptists and may have named the town for the Biblical city of Palmyra northeast of Damascus.⁴ Their minister, the Reverend Johathan Davis from Crawfordville, Taliaferro County, who later founded the Baptist Church of Albany, is said to have founded at Palmyra in 1836 the first Baptist church in southwest Georgia.⁵ However, there seems to be some confusion on this point since a Reverend Jessie M. Davis, of Wilkes and Elbert Counties, is said to have moved to Lee in 1835, then "a frontier of the state and infested by Indians," and built upon his own land at his own expense a Baptist house of worship named Hebron.⁶ Hebron was also the name of a Biblical town, located in the south of Palestine.⁷

Among the settlers at Palmyra about 1837 were Dr. John B. Gilbert of Crawfordville, and Dr. Jeremiah Hilsman.⁸ Dr. Hilsman's son, Palaemon L. Hilsman, born at Palmyra in 1847, also practiced medicine in this section.⁹ Though the western portion of the county was considered healthy for this part of Georgia, "intermittent," "remittent," and "congestive" fevers, particularly malaria, were prevalent in the county,¹⁰ and the work of pioneer doctors was as necessary as that of the pioneer families conquering the soil.¹¹ Lott Warren, when elected to congress in 1839, was listed as a resident of Palmyra.¹² In 1841 he was instrumental in having the stagecoach line transferred from the east to the west side of the Flint River,¹³ thus keeping the stagecoach line in Lee County even after that section of the county east of the Flint was returned to Dooley County in 1842.¹⁴

- 1 U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 2.
- 2 White, Statistics, pp. 367, 368.
- 3 Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1860, p. 89.
- 4 Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth edition, p. 1211.
- 5 John A. Davis, "A History of the Albany Baptist Church," in History and Reminiscences, p. 239.
- 6 History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia, p. 177.
- 7 Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth edition, p. 1200.
- 8 History and Reminiscences, p. 6.
- 9 Rosa Jackson Hilsman, "Dr. Palaemon L. Hilsman," in History and Reminiscences, p. 135.
- 10 White, Statistics, p. 367.
- 11 History and Reminiscences, p. 123.
- 12 Biographical Directory of the American Congress, pp. 191, 192.
- 13 Morgan, "History of Albany," in History and Reminiscences, p. 15.
- 14 Ga. Acts 1842, p. 64.

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In 1840 Palmyra was incorporated with John Woolbright, John Mercer, Burch M. Roberts, Edward Janes and George S. Oglesby as commissioners.¹ Palmyra was long known as "old Albany," and seems to have been the first local settlement of many of the commercially-minded citizens of later Albany, who were interested in the marketing aspects of agriculture.² On February 3, 1841, nearly all the citizens of Palmyra were said to have turned out at Albany for the arrival of the steamer, Louisa.³ Growth of Palmyra had stopped by this time.⁴ By 1849 the town had only ten families.⁵ In 1854 a meeting was held there at which more than a hundred citizens of the section united in petition to annex a part of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd districts of Lee County to Dougherty,⁶ but the annexation was defeated because of the efforts of Mr. Richardson of Lee.⁷

Plantations and Farms

In addition to the fertile lands around Palmyra, the hammock lands northward along Kinchafooa and Muckalee Creeks were found to be rich. With increasing settlement and cultivation the pine high lands, on both sides of the territory drained by the Kinchafoona, Muckaloochee, and Muckalee Creeks, were found to be also almost equal to the hummocks in fertility.⁸ The soil of the county came to be considered as mostly fertile.⁹ Only the western part, having a reddish, thirsty, sandy soil,¹⁰ and a belt along the Flint River in the eastern part were found to be of inferior quality.¹¹

Prospects of ready transportation by railroad through Macon and by steamboat from Albany to cotton markets throughout the world caused rapid transfer of the cotton-planting interests from the upper counties to Lee. Although the first steamboat reached Albany in 1837,¹² the river was not used for much commercial navigation until after Dr. L. B. Mercer of Palmyra eliminated in 1847 the worst shoal on the Flint River

1 Ga. Acts 1840, pp. 107, 108.

2 Adelaide E. Jackson, "What Life was Like in Albany in the 'Forties," in History and Reminiscences, p. 33; loc. cit., p. 109.

3 "Diary of A. J. Swinney," in History and Reminiscences, p. 38.

4 Jackson, "What Life was Like in Albany in the Forties," loc. cit., p. 33.

5 White, Statistics, p. 367.

6 Albany Patriot, January 6, 1854.

7 Albany Patriot, February 17, 1854.

8 Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, p. 400; White, Statistics, p. 367.

9 Fisher, Gazetteer, p. 370.

10 White, Statistics, p. 367.

11 U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 2.

12 Journal of Nelson Tift, pp. 27-29. See Inventory of the County Archives of Georgia, No. 47, Dougherty County (Albany), p. 4.

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between Albany and Apalachicola (Florida).¹ In 1848 the proposed railroad from Macon through Lee County to Albany, which had been authorized by the legislature in 1845,² had been legalized by sufficient subscriptions, including some from Lee County.³ The newspapers, the Southwestern Georgian (later the Albany Courier), founded in 1841, and the Albany Patriot, founded in 1845, also had some influence in publicizing the section for settlers.⁴ The June 30, 1847, issue of the Patriot had the following item:

"We were shown on Monday last, two stalks of cotton from the plantation of Mr. Robert Thompson, of Lee County. One stalk was of the Grand Gulf Cotton, . . . was about six feet high, and had some eight or ten full grown bolls on it. We were assured that there were several bolls opened in the field from which this was taken. The other stalk was nearly six feet high, and had on it upwards of one hundred bolls and forms. It was not quite so forward on the other stalk. There is said to be two hundred acres of cotton on the same plantation as good as these specimens"⁵

With such inducements large numbers of settlers came in from Liberty, Burk, Baldwin, and Putnam Counties.⁶ Rich plantations of hammock land grew up along the Kinchafoona and Muckalee Creeks.⁷ By 1849 the distribution of cultivated farming lands was shown by agricultural settlements to the north of Palmyra: Cotton Bluff (probably so named as a collection point for shipping cotton to Albany), Starkville with new settlers, Ocoola and Chenuba, to the northwest, and Sumterville, to the northeast.⁸

Despite the transfer of a strip of the county's lands to Dooly County in 1842,⁹ population increased from 2,370 white and 2,706 colored in 1840¹⁰ to 3,025 white and 3,634 colored, including 7 free colored, in 1850.¹¹ The white population was the largest the county has ever had.¹² There were 387 farms, averaging 7 whites with 9

¹ Albany Patriot, November 10, 1847.

² Ga. Acts 1845, pp. 132, 138; Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, A History of Transportation in the Eastern Cotton Belt to 1860, p. 275.

³ Phillips, Transportation, p. 277.

⁴ Woolfolk, "Trials of Pioneers," in History and Reminiscences, p. 24.

⁵ Albany Patriot, June 30, 1847.

⁶ Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, pp. 400, 401.

⁷ White, Statistics, p. 367.

⁸ "Bonner's Map of the State of Georgia," 1849, in White Statistics.

⁹ Ga. Acts 1842, p. 64.

¹⁰ White, Statistics, p. 368.

¹¹ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census, 1850, p. 511.

¹² See Ninth Census, I, 21; Tenth, I, 366; Eleventh, II, 406; Twelfth, I, 534; Thirteenth, II, 1256; Fourteenth, III, 215; Fifteenth, III, part 1, 471; Sixteenth, First Series: Georgia population, p. 4.

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slaves to the farm, and 550 dwellings. Since the county contained 506 square miles or 323,841 acres, the landholdings in and adjacent to each farm average 837 acres.¹ The major portion of the land was the unpeopled pine and swampy land surrounding the plantations.² Real estate in the county had a tax valuation of \$1,148,224,³ and an average sale value of \$10 per acre.⁴ Personal estates, largely slaves, were valued at \$2,207,702. Since there were 3,626 slaves, the average value per slave was about \$600.⁵ The ordinary crop of a county planter was 100 to 2,000 bales of cotton.⁶ Average yield of the land per acre was 800 pounds of cotton, 20 bushels of corn, and 10 bushels of wheat. Little attention was paid to orchards.⁷

The history of farming in Lee County was probably similar to that generally of the cotton belt in southwestern Georgia. There was an influx of small farmers interested in growing cotton. Some chanced upon rich lands, others upon poor; some were near navigation, others were far; some were expert, vigorous, frugal and farsighted, others were slack, spendthrift or merely perhaps unlucky. Profits from efficiency and good fortune enabled some to buy slaves and then to buy neighboring lands and attain eventually the scale and rank of planters. For their added lands they paid prices acceptable to those who heard the loud call of the West; but they could force no man to sell who was not so minded. There were several farmers to every planter, throughout the best cotton zone, each producing cotton in sturdy competition with his neighbor, great or small. "Divergencies were of continuous gradation from the wealthy to paupers."⁸ In the last instance only does Lee County differ. There is little record of poverty among the white people in Lee County before the War.⁹

Lee County's comparative wealth was due to early climatic conditions. The swampy lands interspersed in the county and the drinking water produced fevers among white people. The blacks, however, were immune to the fevers and thrived in the semi-tropical climate.¹⁰ The large white population of 1850 dwindled. Many sold their lands to those who had the financial resources to consolidate the lands into large plantations and to buy slaves to work them. Many of the owners lived away from their plantations, in Starkville, Palmyra, and in cities

¹ Fisher, Gazetteer, p. 370.

² Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, p. 400.

³ Fisher, Gazetteer, p. 370.

⁴ White, Statistics, p. 368.

⁵ Fisher, Gazetteer, p. 370.

⁶ Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, p. 400.

⁷ White, Statistics, p. 368.

⁸ Phillips, Life and Labor, pp. 345, 346.

⁹ E.g., unlike most Georgia Counties, Lee County in 1838 had no poor schools (Ga. Acts 1838, p. 33). Few references to ante-bellum paupers occur in the minutes of the inferior court.

¹⁰ Phillips, Life and Labor, pp. 346, 347.

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outside the county, such as Albany, Americus, and Macon. Agriculture was the county's only source of income, and slaves did this work. There were no possible opportunities to induce poor people to remain.¹ By 1860 the white population was only 2,242, but the colored had increased to 4,954.² Partly responsible for the white decrease was the setting off of about 180 square miles, comprising the western part of Lee County, to Terrell County in 1856, but this contraction made even more significant the increase in the number of slaves.³ The "last blow" for some of the small farmers may have been the storm of September 1856 which was said to have been "almost ruinous" to the farmers. One-third of the cotton and corn crops was totally destroyed.⁴

Three points which by 1860 had gained sufficient importance to be included in Sherwood's Gazetteer were significant of the changing means of transportation. Slade, said to be in the northeast corner of Lee County, was a point on the old stagecoach line. Hook's Ferry was below Cotton Bluff on the cotton wagon route to the steamships at Albany, and Adams was a station on the railroad.⁵

Commercial Development before the Civil War

Transportation, Roads, and Bridges

The Alligator stagecoach line from Milledgeville to Tallahassee furnished the county with mail and travel services from about 1827 to 1857.⁶ Pinderton, on the east side of the Flint River, had been the main stop in the county from the earliest years. Some time prior to 1849, probably about 1832 when Starkville was created,⁷ mail and travelers may have left the stage above present Hawkins' Branch at a point above the big bend in the Flint River. In 1849 a road led from this point to Starkville. On an 1849 map of the county the only other roads indicated were one from this point on the stagecoach line to Sumterville, and roads leading from Starkville south to Palmyra and Albany, southwest to Eutaw in Randolph County, west to Cuthbert with branches northwest to Oceola and Chenubs, a road northwest between Muckaloochee and Kinchafoonee Creeks into Sumter County, and from a point a few miles east of Starkville north to Americus.⁸ There were post offices in the county in 1849 at Starkville, Palmyra, Chickasawhatchee, Sumterville, and Chenuba.⁹ Slade had one by 1853.¹⁰

1 Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, pp. 400-402.

2 U. S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census, p. 73.

3 Ga. Acts 1855-56, pp. 117-121.

4 Albany Patriot, September 4, 1856.

5 Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1860, p. 89.

6 Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1827, p. 87; 1829, pp. 148, 279; 1837, p. 215.

7 Ga. Acts 1832, pp. 48, 49.

8 "Bonner's Map of Georgia," in White, Statistics.

9 White, Statistics, p. 368.

10 Fisher, Gazetteer, p. 792.

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After 1837 the cotton not only of Lee but also of Sumter County was hauled down the road from Starkville through Cotton Bluff to Albany for shipment by steamer to the Gulf and ports throughout the world.¹ It is possible that a type of water transportation may have been used from Cotton Bluff to the steamships. This is the more probable since the first cotton box used for river transportation was built at Danville, above Albany.² The first steamboat, the Mary Emeline, which came up the Flint River stopped at Hell's Gate Shoal in January 1837.³ In March 1837 the steamboat reached Albany for the first time.⁴ But until the late 40's, because of the hazards of Hell's Gate Shoal, river transportation was comparatively infrequent and irregular.⁵ It was Dr. L. B. Mercer of Palmyra, Lee County, a commissioner of the state, who made the experiment in 1847 on this "worst shoal" on the Flint River between Albany and Apalachicola, widening it to 80 feet with a depth of 4 feet at low stage, which made it perfectly safe for navigation. Enthusiastic citizens even proposed eliminating all shoals from the "Old Agency," just below Macon, to the junction of the Flint with the Chattahoochee, but with the coming of the railroads this ambitious scheme never materialized.⁶

A railroad from Macon through Lee County to Albany was authorized by the legislature in 1845, and legalized by sufficient subscriptions by February 1848.⁷ By July 1852 it was completed to the west bank of the Flint River where the town of Oglethorpe was laid out.⁸ In 1852-53 the citizens of Americus and vicinity subscribed and paid for \$75,000 in stock to secure an extension of the road to their town which cost about \$125,000 in addition to that amount.⁹ The cost of the road to Americus caused some delay in the extension to Albany. In 1852 the citizens of Lee joined with the citizens of Dougherty and other counties situated between Macon and Albany for cooperation with the city council of Macon in plans for a plank road between Macon and Albany as "cheap and practicable means of improving this section of the country."¹⁰ Hope continued, however, and in 1853 a meeting of persons interested in the Southwestern Railroad, including citizens of Lee County, took place at Steam Mills in Baker County.¹¹

¹ Phillips, Transportation, pp. 125-126.

² Journal of Nelson Tift, p. 37.

³ Ibid., pp. 27-29.

⁴ See Inventory of the County Archives of Georgia, No. 47, Dougherty County, p. 4.

⁵ Jackson, "What Life was like in the 'Forties," in History and Reminiscences, p. 31.

⁶ Albany Patriot, November 10, 1847.

⁷ Ga. Acts 1845, pp. 132-138.

⁸ Phillips, Transportation, p. 279.

⁹ Ibid., p. 278.

¹⁰ Albany Patriot, February 27, 1852, and March 5, 1852.

¹¹ Albany Patriot, November 25, 1853.

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The first section of the railroad from Americus to Albany was opened to Sumter City, in Sumter County, just above the site of later Smithville, on December 1, 1855, regularly carrying passengers and freight.¹ On reaching the site of Smithville the road branched, one line going to Fort Gaines on the Chattahoochee, and the other continuing on to Albany.² Certain citizens of Lee County promised to subscribe \$50,000 in stock if the Albany line would run near Starkville,³ but, following the high land between the Kinchafoonee and Muckalee Creeks, the railroad was laid some 3 or 4 miles west of Starkville.⁴ The road was completed to Albany by September 5, 1857.⁵ Albany, the market of Lee and other counties, had cotton receipts of 30,000 to 40,000 bales.⁶

Early records of road development in Lee County were destroyed in the courthouse fire about 1857,⁷ but records after that time indicate that because of the county's five creeks and adjacent swampy lands building bridges and turnpikes across this difficult terrain had for some years been the major activity of the county in its road construction.⁸ Bermuda grass was sometimes planted on these turnpikes to prevent washing,⁹ and wooden culverts were built to drain stagnant water.¹⁰

Thirty percent of the state tax in 1860 was levied for the turnpike fund,¹¹ and in 1861 35 percent was levied for the bridge and turnpike fund, while only 10 percent was levied for general purposes.¹² Hook's Ferry across Muckalee Creek, below Cotton Bluff, seems to have been the county's most prominent early ferry.¹³

Early bridges in the county included the Starkville, Palmyra, Jackson's, Exum's, and bridges across the Chokefichicka Creek near James S. Green's, Nine Bridges, Middle Creek Bridge, Tiller's Bridge, Wright's Bridge, and minor bridges across the Muckalee and Muckaloochee Creeks. Both the Starkville Bridge 1 mile east of the town, across Muckalee Creek, and the Palmyra Bridge across the Kinchafoonee, probably dated from the founding of the towns in 1832 and 1836 respectively.¹⁴ In

¹ Phillips, Transportation, p. 279; Albany Patriot, Nov. 16, 1856.

² E. Merton Coulter, A Short History of Georgia, pp. 245, 247.

³ Albany Patriot, May 8, 1856.

⁴ See railway line on Soil Survey map in Soil Survey, Lee County.

⁵ Albany Patriot, September 5, 1857.

⁶ Morgan, "History of Albany," in History and Reminiscences, pp. 17, 18.

⁷ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. C, 25, see entry 55.

⁸ Ga. Acts 1860, p. 228; Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, pp. 92, 93, 123, 136, 248, 251, 255, see entry 76.

⁹ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 82.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 123.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 62.

¹² Ibid., p. 88.

¹³ Ibid., p. 44; Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1860, p. 89.

¹⁴ Ga. Acts 1832, pp. 48, 49; History and Reminiscences, p. 239.

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1860 a new Starkville bridge was ordered,¹ and the Palmyra Bridge was repaired.² A bridge was mentioned as existing at Jackson Ford on the Kinchafoonee Creek in 1858,³ and was called Jackson Bridge by 1860.⁴ Exum's Bridge was built across Muckalee Creek near the home of S. W. Exum in 1858 by John W. Wilkerson.⁵ An old bridge across Chokefichicka Creek near James S. Green's was repaired in 1859, and was supplanted by three bridges in 1861.⁶ Minor bridges were built across the Muckalee and Muckaloochee Creeks by Moses J. Barrow and Annias Newsom in 1859.⁷ The first of the nine bridges across Muckalee Creek about 3 miles east of Smithville was repaired and supplied with culverts and a turnpike in 1860 by John T. Brown at a price of \$1,600.⁸ Middle Creek Bridge was built in 1860 by C. P. Huckaby for \$100.⁹ Tiller's Bridge across Kinchafoonee Creek on Warren Tiller's place was mentioned in 1860.¹⁰ Wright's Bridge across Kinchafoonee Creek between Lee and Terrell Counties was mentioned in the inferior court minutes as one of the five principle bridges in Lee County in 1866.¹¹

Industry, Manufacture, and Trade

Industry, manufacture, and trade in Lee County was incidental to the growth and development of agriculture. In all of southwestern Georgia the turpentine and lumbering industries, the clearing of land for farming, and the building of farm houses were primary activities.¹² Grain mills for meal and flour were also needed and several were soon erected. In the 1840's there were eight sawmills, eight gristmills, and one merchant mill. Starkville had stores, shops, and one hotel.¹³

Palmyra had a revival in the 1850's with the county's chief factory. An advertisement in the Albany Patriot in December 1853 stated: "J. B. Watson makes Cotton Gins at Palmyra . . . in the midst of one of the best cotton growing regions in the world . . . a southern man, born and raised in our glorious Georgia, and has not a Northern man in his employ."¹⁴ The articles manufactured were said to be "unrivalled in performance and durability." The machinery was propelled by water

¹ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 62, see entry 76.

² Ibid., p. 49.

³ Ibid., pp. 11, 24.

⁴ Ibid., p. 58.

⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 20, 63, 87.

⁷ Ibid., p. 44.

⁸ Ibid., p. 74.

⁹ Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 68.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 206.

¹² U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 4.

¹³ White, Statistics, p. 367.

¹⁴ Albany Patriot, December 2, 1853.

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power taken from a subterranean stream which ran by the place from 12 to 15 feet under the surface of the earth. The limestone was excavated down to the stream, and a head of water was raised to a height sufficient to run the machinery in the gin factory and also a gristmill. The creek upon which the factory was built ran into the Kinchafoonee Creek about 300 yards distant.¹

Another important part of early agricultural industry was the giant cotton presses scattered over southwest Georgia. The press at Palmyra, which survived until the early twentieth century, may have been built in the town's industrial heyday. Gins were sufficiently removed from the presses to reduce fire hazards. Palmyra's stood in a bottom 100 yards west from the road. Lint cotton was brought by wagon from the gin to the press. It was packed into the cotton box with the bare feet of negro laborers. Then a mule each at the ends of two long sweeps rotated a giant screw which turned the upper shelter of the cotton press until the bale could be packed no tighter. The sides of the box were then sprung and the bale rolled out. After the bales were bound they were carried on 10 -bale, 6-mule-team plantation cotton wagons, with a colored hand riding the right rear mule, to the warehouse to be weighed and stored.

The heart of the cotton press was the great screw. It was the long straight trunk of a carefully selected longleaf yellow pine tree. After it had gone through a period of careful drying and seasoning designed to toughen its fibers, a screw pattern was marked on its outer surface, and the threads were laboriously cut by chisel and mallet. Few men on the big plantations were entrusted with the painstaking cutting job. The screw socket above the cotton box was iron, the only part not made on the plantations.²

In 1850 there were seven manufacturing establishments in Lee County.³ In 1860 there were six, with a capital of \$39,440 and an annual payroll of \$14,988. There were 49 male employees. Annual cost of raw materials was \$31,710, and the value of manufactured products was \$81,373.⁴ One of the plants was the gristmill of William Wells on the future site of Smithville. He settled there in 1856.⁵

Ante-Bellum Social Life and Culture

During the early years the pioneers were too widely separated, too busy locating their land in the virgin forests, clearing plats for farming, and at the same time guarding against danger from the Indians who still roamed through the county, to attend to any except the most

1 White, Historical Collections, p. 511.

2 Albany Herald, October 24, 1941, p. 11 F.

3 White, Historical Collections, p. 511.

4 Memoirs of Georgia, I, 170.

5 Ibid., II, 459.

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primitive educational, religious, and cultural needs. The religious and educational life on the isolated farms consisted chiefly of family prayers and Bible reading and family instruction of children. Some planters may have had tutors or sent their children abroad. Advertisements of the county's lands and other news items appeared in the Macon newspapers,¹ which were brought down every Wednesday to Pinderton and picked up there by settlers from over the county.² Meeting the stage, the newspapers, court sessions, elections, herding and locating stray cattle, Indian visitors, and other pioneer conditions were the material for the conversation and drama of the time. In the malarial climate the taverns were not ignored.³

With the settling of the county site at Starkville in 1832 the second thought was the organization of an academy. The Starkville Academy, with Asmuel Hiceler, John Ritcherson, Dudley Sneed, and Joshua Clark as trustees, was incorporated December 21, 1833.⁴ In 1833 Dr. James L. Manning, Daniel J. Thomas, William Smith, John R. Cane, and Mordecai Alexander were appointed as additional trustees,⁵ and a suitable lot of land near the town was ordered selected "for the purpose of erecting an academy building."⁶ In 1837 the town had a lawyer, a doctor, and two taverns.⁷ In 1838 the receipts for the academy were \$1,786 and the expenditures, \$1,795. Various subjects were taught, and there were 32 students, 18 male and 14 female.⁸ The increasing number of female students is especially significant in that this was just 5 years before the incorporation of the first female college in the world in Macon,⁹ a city whose gazettes furnished Lee County with news.¹⁰ The business of conducting plantations and caring for slaves required both educated men and women.

After the Indian war of 1836 had removed the danger of losing scalps, a comparatively large number of brainy and cultured men came in to the county, particularly to settle around Palmyra. The Reverend Jonathan Davis is said to have founded here in 1836 the first white Baptist church in southwest Georgia.¹¹ Methodist and Baptist preachers were said to have had churches and members among the slaves before the white settlements were numerous enough to support churches.¹² One of

¹ Ga. Acts 1829, pp. 162, 163.

² Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1829, pp. 148, 279.

³ This paragraph is based on deductions from material authenticated elsewhere in the sketch.

⁴ Ga. Acts 1833, pp. 8, 9.

⁵ Ga. Acts 1835, pp. 15, 16.

⁶ Ga. Acts 1835, p. 270.

⁷ Sherwood, Gazetteer, 1837, p. 237.

⁸ Ga. Acts 1838, p. 27.

⁹ Ga. Acts 1843, pp. 41, 42.

¹⁰ Ga. Acts 1829, pp. 162, 163.

¹¹ John A. Davis, "A History of the Albany Baptist Church," in History and Reminiscences, p. 239.

¹² Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, pp. 400, 401.

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these probably was the baptist house of worship, called Hebron, which the Reverend Jessie M. Davis built on his own land at his own expense in 1835.¹ At least by 1840 the community of Palmyra also had a colored Baptist church.²

Palmyra was said to be one of the most beautiful spots in this fertile region of the county. The Kinchafoonee flowed between steep limestone banks covered with maidenhair fern. Fowltown Creek in its juncture with the Kinchafoonee cascaded over a rocky cliff. On the high banks above the Kinchafoonee were giant oaks festooned with Spanish moss, and great stone boulders gave an impression of age and permanency. Here, well above the flood waters of both creeks, the early settlers built their residences, churches, and schools.³

The Palmyra Academy was incorporated in December 1837 with the Reverend Jonathan Davis, George S. Oglesby, Needham W. Cotton, Wm. Janes, and Leonidas B. Mercer as trustees.⁴ English was the principal subject taught. By 1838 an edifice had been built by popular subscription and there were 31 students.⁵ Besides the Baptist minister, one of the other cultured members of this board was Dr. Leonidas B. Mercer. Dr. Mercer was a commissioner of the State and seems to have been a geologist of some note. He made a resume of the geology of Lee County, with recommendations as to practical uses, for publication in George White's Historical Collections in 1854. Dr. Mercer's knowledge must have been very useful in placing early agriculture on a scientific basis, as well as contributing to the cultural intelligence of Lee County society.⁶ His knowledge was further applied in rendering the Flint River navigable to Albany by eliminating Hell-Gate shoal.⁷

Among other cultured families resident at Palmyra were the minister's family, the Davis es, the doctors' families, the Hilsmans and the Gilberts, and the Randalls.⁸ Lott Warren, when a member of Congress, was listed as a resident of Palmyra.⁹ The hospitality of the town was said to have been proverbial. There were interesting social gatherings and no dearth of musical talent. One young lady was said to have had such graces of mind and person that many of the young men laid their adoration at her feet.¹⁰

¹ History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia, p. 177.

² Historical Records Survey, Department of Church Archives, in Lee County file.

³ Albany Herald, October 24, 1941, p. 11 F.

⁴ Ga. Acts 1837, p. 4.

⁵ Ga. Acts 1838, p. 27.

⁶ White, Historical Collections, pp. 511, 512.

⁷ Albany Patriot, November 10, 1847.

⁸ Albany Herald, October 24, 1941, p. 11 F.

⁹ Biographical Directory of the American Congress, pp. 191, 192.

¹⁰ Albany Herald, October 24, 1941, p. 11 F.

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Migration of the citizens of Palmyra began with Albany's industrial and cultural growth. The first of the Albany newspapers also serving Lee County was the Southwestern Georgian, issued at Albany May 25, 1841.¹ As the Palmyra Academy declined, a new academy known as Level Green Academy began school terms elsewhere in the county, probably in the section later set off to Terrell County. It was incorporated December 28, 1842, with Turner Hunt, Josey Stanford, Deril Hunt, Thomas Martin, and Joseph Jourdin as trustees.² Though the Baptist were first at Palmyra, the Methodist seem to have been first in religious interests near Starkville. A Methodist church, near the residence of Green Knowles in the 13th district, was incorporated in December 1842 under the name and style of Cany or Caney Head Methodist Church, with Isaac O. Edwards, Edward Moreland, Leroy Stanford, Almerena Brunson, John W. Jordan, George C. Tignor, Thomas High, and their successors as trustees.³ The minister probably was Reverend Thomas Godwin, who had a daughter, Janie, later Mrs. Janie Godwin Mayo, born near Starkville in 1847.⁴ By 1849 Starkville also had a Baptist church. There were at this time also some Presbyterians and Episcopalians in the county,⁵ who worshipped in Albany. An Episcopal missionary, the Reverend Mr. Ellis, began holding services in Albany in the early 1840's⁶ and the Reverend Dr. Talmadge, from Milledgeville, formed the First Presbyterian Church in Albany May 20, 1849.⁷ One of the first Methodist churches in Lee County for the slaves was New Hope Methodist, established in 1853 some 2 miles west of the later site of Smithville.⁸

Life during the 1840's was especially social. The white population was on the increase. The plantations furnished everything needed, and hospitality flourished. There was an abundance of wild game: bear, catamount, deer, and turkey. Bears were killed throughout the year; deer and turkey in season.⁹ All roads led to Starkville, the social, political, intellectual, and sporting center,¹⁰ but its resident population was only 100, and it had only 1 hotel.¹¹ One of the teachers in Starkville in the 1840's was Mrs. Marianna Hutchinson.¹²

1 Woolfolk, "Trials of Pioneers," in History and Reminiscences, p. 24.

2 Ga. Acts 1842, p. 7.

3 Ga. Acts 1842, pp. 40, 41.

4 History and Reminiscences, p. 162.

5 White, Statistics, pp. 247, 248.

6 History and Reminiscences, pp. 247, 248.

7 "Diary of A. J. Swinney," in History and Reminiscences, p. 39.

8 Historical Records Survey, Department of Church Archives, in the Lee County file.

9 Jackson, "What life was like in . . . the Forties," in History and Reminiscences, pp. 34, 36.

10 Tom Love, "History of Starkville," in Albany Herald, October 24, 1941.

11 White, Statistics, p. 367.

12 Minutes (Superior Court), vol. C. p. 566, see entry 55.

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Taking on new life with the expanded white population and the probable cessation of the Palmyra and Level Green Academies, the Starkville Academy was reincorporated in January 1852, with William E. Gilmore, George C. Ticknor, Edward V. Munro, Willis A. Hawkins, and Eason Smith as trustees.¹ In the smaller area of 1860, after about one-third of the county was set off to Terrell in 1857,² the white population was 2,242,³ showing that it was either static or had declined.⁴ The white settlers had found that their health did not stand up in the malarial climate as well as that of the colored people. During this period, the 1850's, and probably throughout the early history of the county, some planters employed private tutors for their children, some sent them abroad, and others with their families lived away from the county. Sons of wealthy planters were usually sent to college.⁵ With the county's system of large plantations it is doubtful if there were ever any early ante-bellum "poor schools." There was none mentioned in the state report of 1838.⁶

There is a brief reference to a "poor school fund" in the grand jury presentments of April 1859.⁷ The inferior court in January, pursuant to an act of the General Assembly of December 11, 1858, however, appointed Gilbert M. Stokes, Robt. W. Pearman and Fred H. West as "Commissioners to examine school teachers."⁸ The grand jury, however, had come to the conclusion that the system of district schools for the elementary branches alone was not adapted to the scattered population of Lee, whose taxpayers desired academies and high schools rather than just elementary schools. As provided by the act, the grand jury, in substitution, let the money (which amounted to only \$157) go to the "poor school fund" to aid those who were unable to educate themselves.⁹ In 1860 the inferior court appointed George Kimbrough, later a judge, to cooperate with the justices of the inferior court and the ordinary as a board of education.¹⁰

In the political and social excitement of the year before the war, Starkville was said to have begun a career as a "wide open," "rip-snorting" town, the mecca for all kinds of sporting events, which were to have their full play in the years after the war.¹¹

1 Ga. Acts 1851-52, pp. 329, 330.

2 Ga. Acts 1857, pp. 42, 43.

3 U. S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, p. 73.

4 White population in 1850 was 3,025 - Seventh Census, p. 511.

5 Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, pp. 401, 402.

6 Ga. Acts 1838, appendix, p. 22.

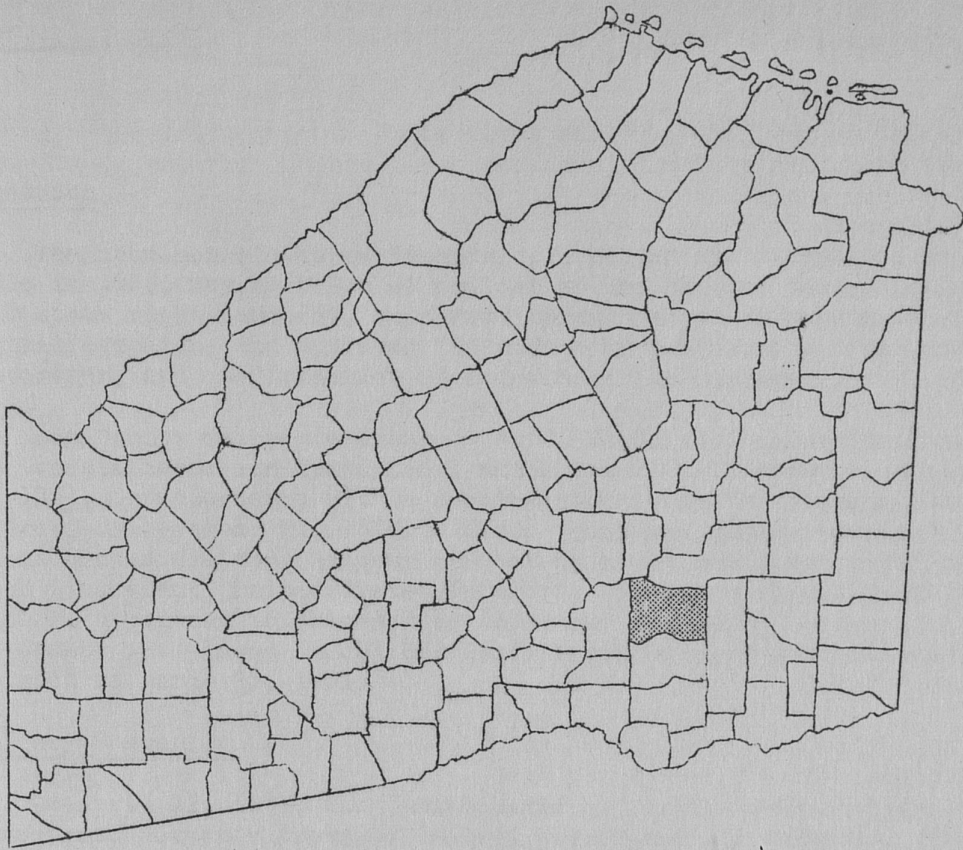
7 Minutes (Superior Court), vol. C, pp. 255, see entry 55.

8 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 27, see entry 76.

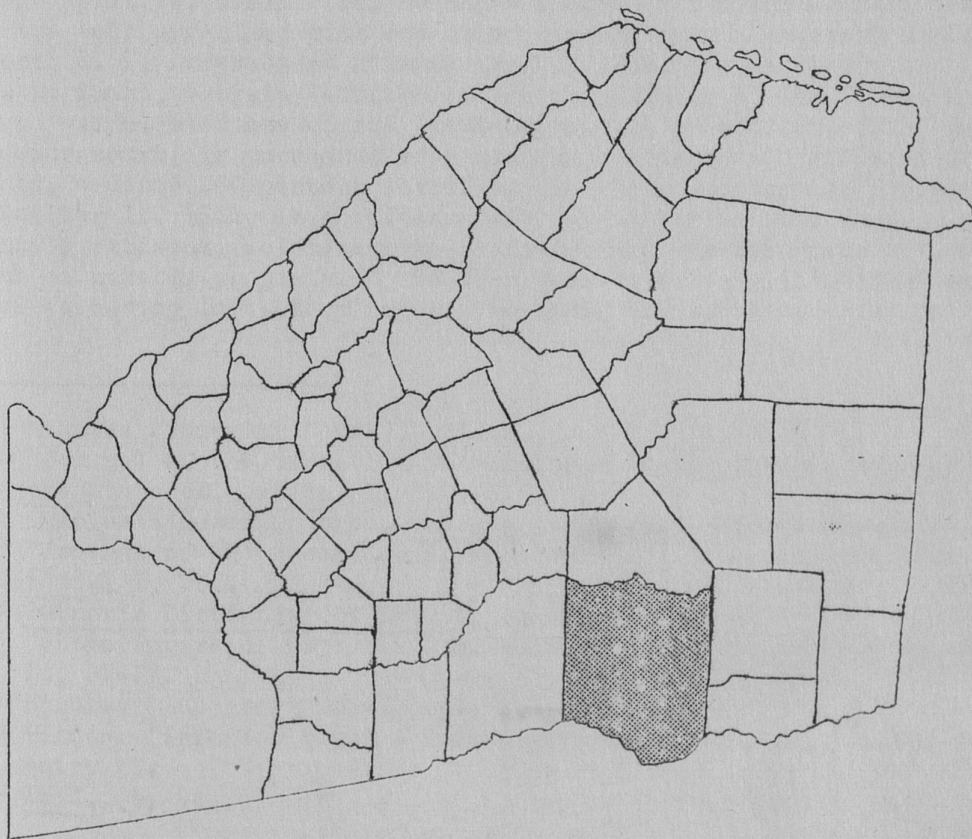
9 Minutes (Superior Court), vol. C, p. 255.

10 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 53.

11 Love, "Starkville," in Albany Herald, October 24, 1941, p. 11 F.

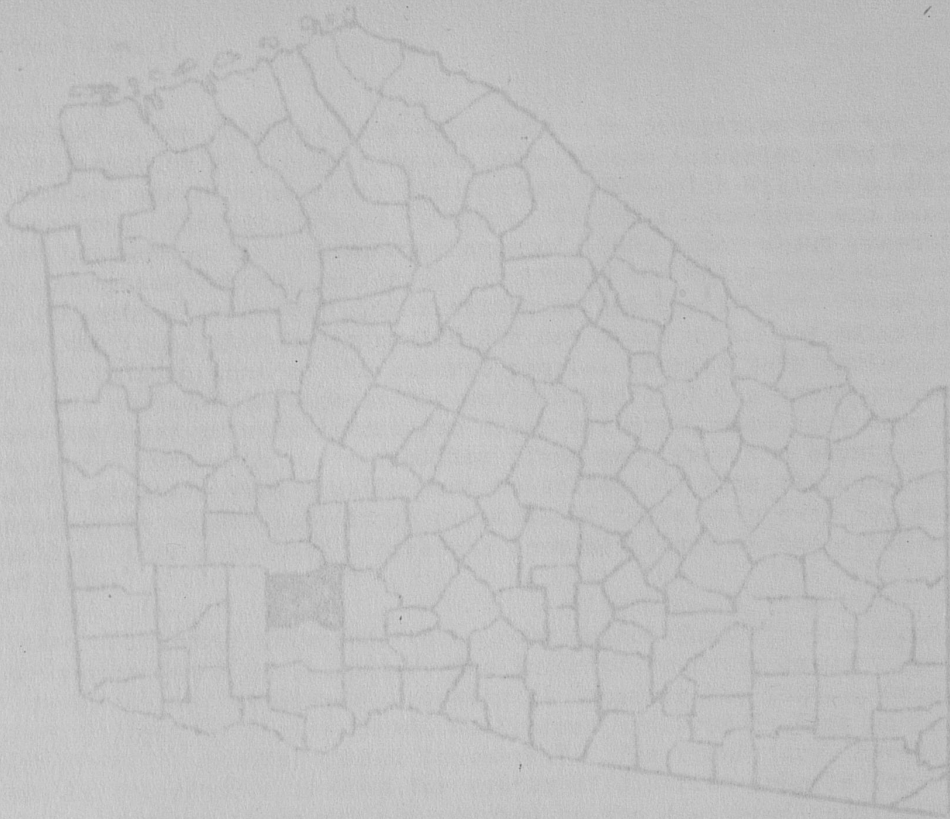


Map of Georgia, 1942
(Lee County stippled)

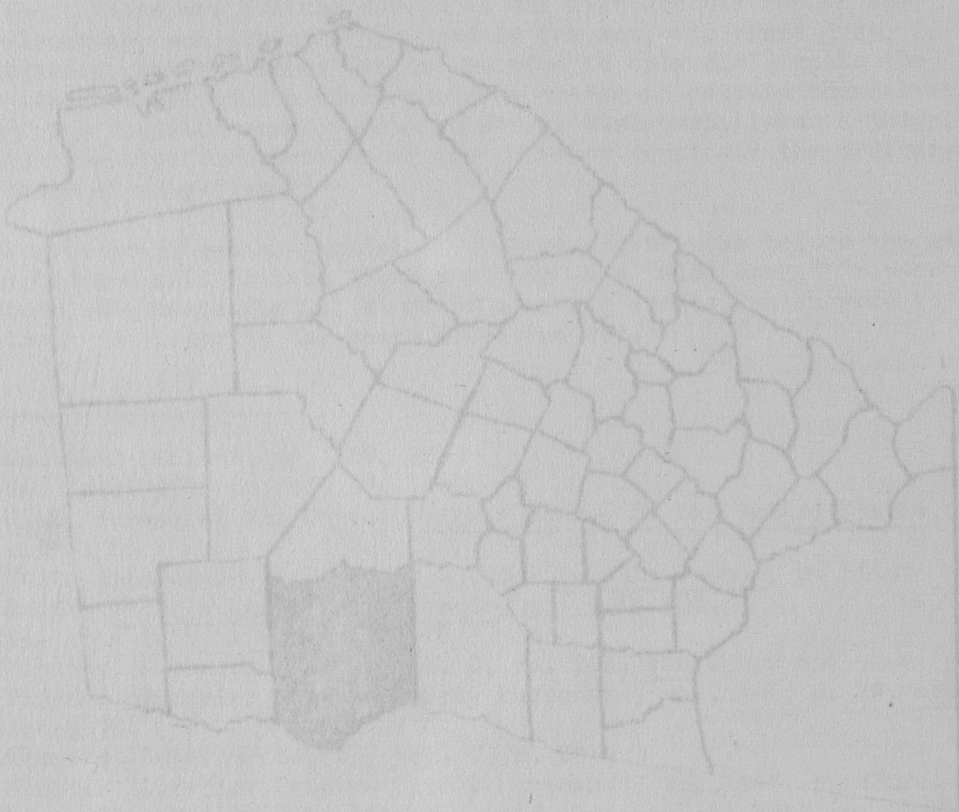


Map of Georgia, Dec. 11, 1820
(Lee County stippled)

(For County arbitrary)
Map of Georgia 1845



(For County arbitrary)
Map of Georgia Dec 17, 1856



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Historical Sketch

The Civil War

Secession

The opinions of George Kimbrough, a lawyer who settled in Starkville in 1854, may be taken as typical of the county. He was an original state right democrat, supported Breckenridge and Lane in the presidential campaign, and approved the action of secession at the Charleston Convention, and the formation of a Southern Confederation.¹

Lee County was represented by W. B. Richardson and Goode Bryan in the Georgia Secession Convention, which met in Milledgeville January 16, 1861, in accordance with a proclamation issued by Governor Joseph E. Brown on November 21, 1860.² Goode Bryan was graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1854, and commissioned a 2nd lieutenant, United States Infantry, but had resigned in 1860.³ Both Mr. Bryan and Mr. Richardson voted for secession January 19, 1861.⁴ Lee County was placed in the 2nd Confederate Georgia Congressional District on March 23, 1861.⁵

Military Companies

On April 12, 1861, the Confederates in South Carolina fired on Fort Sumter⁶ and Governor Brown of Georgia proclaimed the existence of a state of war April 22, 1861.⁷ Lee County's first Confederate company was said to have been organized with one other company into a regiment under Colonel G. T. Anderson at Atlanta in July 1861, and was known as the 11th Regiment, Georgia Volunteers. It was Company B, and George Kimbrough was elected one of its lieutenants.⁸ On August 22, 1861, the inferior court, in pursuance of a recommendation of the citizens of the county, ordered 200 percent levied on the state tax for war purposes.⁹ On October 12, 1861, in accordance with a resolution at a meeting of the county's citizens, soldiers were exempted from war tax up to \$10,000 worth of taxable property.¹⁰ On this same date George Kimbrough was noted as having left his place on the board of education to go to war.

¹ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. E, p. 438, see entry 55.

² "Journal of the Secession Convention," in Confederate Records of the State of Georgia, I, 212, 215.

³ Charles Edgeworth Jones, Georgia in the War, 1861-1865, p. 77.

⁴ "Journal of the Secession Convention," loc. cit., I, 257, 258.

⁵ Ibid., I, 732.

⁶ Putnam's Dictionary of Events, p. 222.

⁷ "State Papers of Governor Jos. E. Brown," in Confederate Records, II, 32-37.

⁸ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. E, p. 438.

⁹ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 88, see entry 76.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 94.

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The company's preliminary training must have been completed by this time.¹ March 1862 was designated as the time to make final returns on the county war tax.²

It was stated that one company had "already gone and one (was) about to go into service" on December 2, 1861. Since taxes were not coming in fast enough to equip the companies and help support the soldiers' families, \$3,000 in bonds were ordered issued, redeemable on June 1, 1862, with the funds raised by the taxes.³ On March 11, 1862, bonds were issued, payable in 90 days, in amounts to suit parties who had advanced money to equip the Lee Guards, the whole amount of which was not to exceed \$3,000. Separate bonds, payable in 60 days, and in any amount not to exceed \$1,000, were issued to pay for the uniforms of Captain F. H. West's company.⁴ Judge Ware, of the inferior court, was noted May 21, 1862, as absent in the Confederate service,⁵ and F. H. West as absent in the state service during the year 1862.⁶ The bonds (\$3,000) ordered issued by a public meeting "to furnish with suitable clothing and other equipment the companies of Capt. Ware and Capt. West" were due about June 18, 1862.⁷

But in the records of the actual military campaigns of Company B, 11th Georgia Regiment, John W. Stokes⁸ or Stocks was listed as captain, Will C. Gill as 1st lieutenant, H. B. Lipsey, 2nd lieutenant, and George Kimbrough as 2nd lieutenant.⁹ William C. Gill in 1862 was discharged for disability.¹⁰ At Gettysburg Captain John W. Stokes was killed and George D. Kimbrough was elected captain in his place. At different times it was said every man in company B was killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. But they continued to reorganize and were "with Lee at Appomattox when the Stars and Bars were furled forever."¹¹ The company had 4 sergeants, 4 corporals, 40 privates, 28 recruits, 19 discharges, and 25 deaths.¹² An F. H. West, possibly the Captain F. H. West who organized the company, was one of the signers of the obituary for Captain George W. Kimbrough in 1878. In this obituary the following incident was recorded:

"He was on Gen. Lee's right wing, under Lieutenant Gen. Longstreet, advancing upon mountainous heights, bristling with artillery and covered

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 95.

² *Ibid.*, p. 100.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 98.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 116.

⁸ Love, "Starkville," in *Albany Herald*, October 24, 1941.

⁹ Minutes (Court of Ordinary), vol. B, pp. 754, 755, *see* entry 82.

¹⁰ *Memoirs of Georgia*, II, 455.

¹¹ Love, "Starkville," *loc. cit.*

¹² Minutes (Court of Ordinary), vol. B, pp. 754, 755.

Historical Sketch

with Federal infantry, when a soldier of his company remarked, 'We are entering the jaws of death,' to which he promptly replied - 'Yes, boys, we are entering the jaws of death, but we must enter gracefully.'"¹

The regiment of this first company from Lee, the 11th Georgia, had as commanders Colonel George Tige Anderson and Colonel Francis H. Little.² The second company from the county seems to have been the Lee Guards, "Captain Ware's company," Company B, 51st Georgia Infantry.³ On April 15, 1863, the balance of \$21.70 was ordered paid to Wm. A. Love in final settlement with the uniform committee of Captain Ware's company.⁴ The 51st Georgia Infantry had as commanders Colonel W. M. Slaughter and Colonel E. Ball.⁵

After his discharge from Company B, 11th Georgia Regiment, for disability, William E. Gill was said to have served as captain of Company B, 5th Georgia State Troops.⁶ This outfit probably later became the Company G, 10th Regiment of McKays' Brigade, which listed as its officers: Wm. C. Gill, captain, Addison A. Paul, 1st lieutenant, George C. Edwards, 2nd lieutenant, and James Garrett, 1st sergeant.⁷ The county may have had more companies since a number are listed under the title "Lee" in the official register. Lee's Volunteers, Company D, 1st Battalion, Georgia Infantry, seems a likely possibility.⁸

Most of the county's prominent citizens seem to have taken part in the war. On August 26, 1861, Ulysses Sullivan, road commissioner for the 915th G. M. District, was mentioned as "gone to war,"⁹ March 11, 1862, the county treasurer, S. V. Gay,¹⁰ and May 20, 1863, the surveyor, the coroner, and the constables in all districts were likewise mentioned.¹¹ General James P. Graves, father of John Temple Graves, was said to have been a distinguished soldier of the Civil War,¹² but his services were hampered by a smallpox quarantine at his home in Lee County in 1863, which cost \$2,866.20.¹³ Goode Bryan, graduate of West Point, was first appointed

1 Minutes (Superior Court), vol. E, p. 438, see entry 55.

2 Charles C. Jones, A Roster of General Officers, Heads of Departments, Senators, Representatives, Military Organizations in Confederate Service during the War between the States, p. 81; Charles Edworth Jones, Georgia in the War, 1861-1865, p. 25.

3 Minutes, (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, pp. 97, 98, 109, 114-116, see entry 76.

4 Ibid., p. 140.

5 C. C. Jones, Roster, p. 83.

6 Memoirs of Georgia, II, 455.

7 Minutes (Court of Ordinary), vol. B, p. 753, see entry 82.

8 Jones, Georgia in the War, p. 146.

9 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 91.

10 Ibid., p. 109.

11 Ibid., p. 142.

12 Men of Mark in Georgia, IV, 307.

13 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 141.

Historical Sketch

lieutenant colonel of the 16th Infantry Regiment (Sallie Twiggs Regiment), succeeded Howell Cobb to the colonelcy February 15, 1862,¹ and was promoted to brigadier general, reporting to General R. E. Lee August 31, 1863. The date of his rank, August 29, 1863, was confirmed on February 17, 1864.² His brigade was composed of the 10th, 50th, 53rd, and 55th Georgia Regiments of Infantry, McLaws' Division, Longstreet's Corps, Army of Northern Virginia. He resigned September 20, 1864.³ A later resident of Lee County, Phil Cook, succeeded General Doles in command of a brigade composed of the 4th, 12th, 21st, and 44th Georgia Regiments of Infantry, Army of Northern Virginia.⁴ Medical doctors from Lee County who served the Confederacy included Drs. H. B. Lipsey,⁵ E. J. Eldridge, W. A. Green,⁶ and Wm. A. Love.⁷

Care of soldiers' Families

From May 1, 1861, to May 23, 1862, the treasurer of the indigent soldiers' fund, G. M. Stokes, received the sum of \$13,917.60. On hand on the latter date was \$3,434.97, showing an expenditure of "\$10,482.70." Indigent soldiers' families, including 100 grown females, had been granted an allowance of \$8 per month. To 216 children an allowance of \$2 each per month was granted. These figures indicate that it was necessary to raise \$14,474 annually by taxation for the support of indigent soldiers' families.⁸ Thomas F. Porter was appointed treasurer July 16, 1862.⁹ The grand jury of September 1862 recommended that Lee County be placed on the same footing as Monroe, Burke, Pickens, Wayne, Taylor, and other counties in levying a tax for indigent soldiers' families.¹⁰ In March 1863, \$4,028 was collected from the state fund for paupers.¹¹ By March 25th, a total of \$11,338.52 from taxes and the state fund had been received for soldiers' relief fund, and \$8,211.46 had been expended, leaving a balance of \$3,127.06.¹² In June 1863, to fulfill legislative requirements to furnish thread to soldiers' families, an order was submitted to the governor for 10 bales of thread of 50 bunches each.¹³ The cost was \$600.¹⁴ In October 1863, 125 percent on the state tax was assessed for the relief of soldiers and their families.¹⁵

¹ C. E. Jones, Georgia in the War, p. 26.

² C. C. Jones, "Roster of Confederate Generals," in Southern Historical Society Papers, p. 30.

³ C. E. Jones, Georgia in the War, p. 77.

⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

⁵ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. C, p. 620, see entry 55.

⁶ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 147.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 133, 141.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 115, 116.

⁹ Ibid., p. 117.

¹⁰ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. C, p. 588.

¹¹ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 137.

¹² Minutes (Superior Court), vol. C, p. 596.

¹³ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 144.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 145.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 149.

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In January 1864 the amount paid to soldiers' wives and children was raised to \$26 and \$12 per month respectively.¹ In March the grand jury recommended that should there be any probability at any time of the soldiers' families being unable to buy food, or fail to get it from scarcity or any other cause, the court employ a suitable person or persons to procure provisions for them at any price.² At this time in the nearest large town, Albany, lard was selling for \$3 per pound, turpentine at \$12 per gallon, brandy at \$50 per bottle, and shoes at \$80 per pair.³ With poverty, medical aspects became important and the following physicians and agents of the soldiers' relief fund were appointed in July 1864 in accordance with a proclamation of the governor: Doctors P. S. Hale, J. N. Smith, and Malcomb Carmichael; Thomas F. Porter and B. R. Rivers; and John H. Pope, tax collector.⁴

On March 7, 1865, the following persons were appointed to report monthly to the court the conditions and needs of the soldiers' families in their respective districts: Starkville - S. C. Wyche and Wm. C. Gill; Red Bone - H. A. Hooks and A. W. Breedlove; Palmyra - Wm. Newsom; Choakee - Hardy Morgan and Thomas Green; Smithville - G. C. Edwards and J. G. McCrary.⁵ But on March 15th the treasury was empty, and any citizen taxpayer who would furnish meat and corn to soldiers' families was allowed to deduct the market price thereof from his taxes when paid.⁶ The grand jury on March 29th recommended \$160,000 for the support of indigent families of soldiers, and only \$3,000 for education, and \$1,750 for the pauper fund.⁷ On April 5th taxpayers were given permission to pay in corn at \$15 per bushel or in bacon at \$4 per pound,⁸ but the next day the provision was changed to corn at \$1 per bushel, wheat at \$1.50 per bushel, bacon at 15¢ per pound, and cane syrup at 60¢ per gallon, provided that all persons who were excepted from the soldiers' relief tax in 1864 would be exempt from the payment of this tax.⁹

In March 1866, 57 disabled soldiers and 116 orphan children of soldiers were reported in need.¹⁰

Military Supply

Captain, later Major, John A. Davis, son of the Reverend Jonathan Davis of Palmyra, was commissioned captain in the commissary department

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- ¹ Ibid., p. 152.
 - ² Minutes (Superior Court), vol. C, p. 621, see entry 55.
 - ³ "Diary of A. J. Swinney," in History and Reminiscences, p. 40.
 - ⁴ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 151, see entry 76.
 - ⁵ Ibid., p. 164.
 - ⁶ Ibid., p. 167.
 - ⁷ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. C, p. 630.
 - ⁸ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 169.
 - ⁹ Ibid., p. 171.
 - ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 190.

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with headquarters at Albany. He was in charge of nearly all of southwest Georgia below Macon. This rich agricultural region, of which Lee County with its large slave plantations was a notable part, contributed largely in foodstuffs to the Confederate soldiers. Until Sherman cut his swath of destruction disrupting communications, train load after train load of southwest Georgia provisions went as far north as the army of Virginia. From this depot the 33,000 prisoners at Andersonville also were fed. The government expended vast sums of money in the region.¹

The March term of the grand jury in 1863 stated: "In view of the condition of our country, invested as it is upon almost every border by a powerful, wicked, and fanatical enemy; not only this, but they are in actual possession of a considerable portion of our best provision territory. We feel that we cannot urge upon our people with too much warmth the vital importance of planting every rod of land in something that will produce food for man and beast, and to be diligent and industrious in making every acre yield all it can, for should provisions fail, we will fall an easy prey to our foes, for hungry men can't fight, nor they ought not to if selfishness and a spirit of speculation and gain amongst those who ought to be their friends and friends of the common country is the cause of the want of provisions."²

However, there was little inducement for "selfishness" since there were no foreign markets for cotton. The planters devoted most of their labor to the raising of breadstuffs, provisions, clothing, and all the necessary supplies for living. Mills were built and slaughter houses erected.³ A tannery was established at Palmyra by Nelson Tift, and as late as April 1865, Colonel Tift was advertising for "tanbark for the Government tannery at Palmyra," offering "two pairs of shoes for one cord of tanbark."⁴ What surplus cotton did accumulate was stored in the warehouses at Albany. Captain Davis, through General Howard's Headquarters in Augusta, secured the release of one lot of 2,500 bales after the war.⁵

Military Police

During the war there was little lawlessness among the citizens. The negroes maintained their usual fidelity to their owners.⁶ The few exceptions only emphasized the loyalty of the large slave population. In 1861 Jack, a slave, was found guilty of voluntary manslaughter, was whipped with forty lashes⁷ at a post especially erected for the one

¹ History and Reminiscences, pp. 179, 180.

² Minutes (Superior Court), vol. C, p. 597, see entry 55. (Quotation edited)

³ Woolfolk, "Trials of Pioneers," in History and Reminiscences, p. 26.

⁴ Albany Patriot, April 6, 1865.

⁵ History and Reminiscences, p. 181.

⁶ Woolfolk, "Trials of Pioneers," loc. cit., p. 26.

⁷ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. C, p. 529.

Historical Sketch

case at a cost of \$2,¹ was branded with the letter "M" and returned to his master.²

The elaborate preparations with which one named Dora was finally hanged in 1863 marked the rarity of the occasion: bill of April 15th, "Sheriff's Breakfast 1.00 Dinner for Dora .40 Putting Dora in Jail .75 One mule two feeds .75 2 meals for Dora .75 Service in Carrin Dora to Albany Jail 3.00 R.R. Fare .75 Hire of Hack 1.00 Board for self 1 Knight 2.50 Taking Dora out of Jail .75 Buggy Hire to Albany 5.00 Expenses at Albany 2.50 Sheriff Each 15.00 \$30.00 Bailiff of Grand jury 6.00 Three Bailiffs to Petit Jurors Six dollars each 18.00 Extra Bailiff to Summons Talis Jurors 3.00";³ bill of May 21-22, "on account of expenses in hanging Negro Dora - 7 yards Bleached 3.00 - 21.00 1 pr Socks 1.50 Hotel bill in Albany 6.00 - R. R. fare to & from Albany 1.25 from & to Station R. R. 6.00 Making pants & shirt 2.00 Burying Negro 4.00 digging grave 3.00 R. R. fare to Macon & back 8.30 Rope 4.10 12 yards Bleached 3.00 - 36.00 Hotel bill in March 7.50 Dinner & supper 3.00 Taking Negro to Albany Jail at Court 10.00 Hanging 10.00 total \$124.05";⁴ and an order of October 19, 1863, that "the treasurer pay to the Jailor of Dougherty County ninety-three 40/100 dollars Jail fees for Dora A. Stone."⁵

Most of the slaves were docile, yet because of their large number, about 5,000 slaves to the 2,200 whites,⁶ and because of the absence of so many of the white men, including the constables, in the war, patrol commissioners were appointed for the districts on February 22, 1862. They were: A. Newsom, J. D. Griffin, and W. J. Tillman in the 976th district; 738th, A. W. Breedlove, W. H. Walden, A. J. Tison; 687th, Hardy Morgan, W. M. Bryan, J. L. Laramore; 915th, M. R. Calloway, W. C. Gill, John W. Jones.⁷ District patrol commissioners appointed in February 1864 were: Starkville - W. C. Gill, B. R. Rivers, C. H. Calloway; Smithville - T. B. High, E. D. Watson, Geo. C. Edwards; Palmyra - C. C. Shepherd, Willis Jones, T. A. Clears; Chokee - M. W. Bryan, T. J. Bryan, W. H. Green; Red Bone - W. H. Walden, A. W. Breedlove, J. P. Graves.⁸

When Sherman came through Georgia in July 1864 the Governor assigned Colonel E. T. Jones to duty in the military district embracing the counties of Dougherty, Worth, and Lee, and requested the inferior court of Lee to call the citizens together to be organized into a police

¹ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 83, see entry 76.

² Minutes (Superior Court), vol. C, p. 529, see entry 55.

³ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 139.

⁴ Ibid., p. 146.

⁵ Ibid., p. 148.

⁶ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, p. 73.

⁷ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 105.

⁸ Ibid., p. 155.

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force.¹ Already having patrol commissioners, Lee County did not take further action until November when the inferior court appointed the following district patrolmen: Smithville - E. D. Watson, W. J. Tillman, A. Newsom; Palmyra - J. Tucker, C. H. Conoly, A. James; Red Bone - H. A. Hooks, E. P. Boyd, W. H. Walden; 14th district - W. H. Green, Philip West, Sol Page; Starkville - B. R. Rivers, J. H. Stone, John Bailey.²

Reconstruction

Political and Social Conditions

After the surrender of Lee and Johnston a regiment of United States troops, the Fourth Kentucky Cavalry, was stationed at Albany, and vested with military rule of the surrounding counties. The regiment was said to have been composed of the "lowest and most dissolute, unprincipled roughs of Louisville, Cincinnati and Indianapolis." They were soon removed, and in their place came an Illinois regiment composed of a much better class of Western men.³

Trouble from the unfettered blacks seems to have occurred mostly in 1865-66, but even then records indicate only about 10 jailed.⁴ Judge E. D. Watson, the county ordinary, wrote on January 2, 1867, the following report for Hon. Nelson Tift, who presented it in 1869, together with all other evidence from Georgia, to the Reconstruction Committee of the House of Representatives of the United States:

Dear Sir:

The laws of Georgia are impartially administered. There is no organized resistance to the laws The officers are faithfully executing the laws The whites, as far as I know, are treating all people with respect, and more especially the northern men that come among them, and I think all people desire peace; and in my opinion and judgement there is no use for a destruction of the Union; but if they can be let alone, both colors will prosper and do well.

Yours, most respectfully,
E. D. Watson,
Ordinary, Lee County, Ga.⁵

Hon. N. Tift.

¹ Albany Patriot, July 28, 1864.

² Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 161, see entry 76.

³ Morgan, "History of Albany," in History and Reminiscences, p. 20.

⁴ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, pp. 215, 234, 258, 260, 292.

⁵ House of Representatives, U. S. Congress, Feb. 18, 1869, The Condition of Affairs in Georgia, Statement of Hon. Nelson Tift to the Reconstruction Committee of the House.

Historical Sketch

The March 1867 grand jury stated: "Believing it to be as much the duty of grand jurors to warn the people of dangers and guide them clear of breakers as it is to bring criminals to justice, we do not feel willing to close our labors without a word of advice to our fellow citizens in relation to our duties in the present unsettled conditions of society. In a short time the South will be controlled by five generals, whose authority will be supreme, under whose directions delegates will be elected in each state for the performing (sic) a new Constitution, for whom all classes are allowed to vote except a few disfranchised.

"Now there is more terror and oppression in contemplation of the future than there will be in the reality, provided we do our duty actively - quietly and unitedly. We may bring about the very most (sic) desponding anticipate either by apathy or improper action. Let every man who is not disfranchised be sure to inform himself the best he can and certainly go to the polls with his vote and all his influence with his eyes upon the good of his country as his guiding star. Let us not place ourselves upon our dignity and refuse to perform our duties, apathy will certainly ruin us, but let us apply ourselves to our moral association quietly, prudently meting out justice to all with whom we come in contact, with the assurance that communities and commonwealths composed of honest religious and intelligent people cannot be oppressed."¹

Georgia was placed under military rule in the spring of 1867. A radical party was organized in adjoining Dougherty County by May. Negro voters outnumbered the white five to one in that county and gained control.² An Albany paper of August 10, 1867, reported registration completed, that every one entitled to the privilege had been permitted to register, and that the majority in Lee County in favor of the colored vote was 1,752 black to a white vote of 355.³

Political conditions, however, must not have been as bad in Lee as in Dougherty County. The grand jury of Lee County, at the November 1867 term of the superior court, returned a true bill against one William M. Thomas, a free person of color. But the said William M. Thomas presented a paper signed by Colonel D. H. Howard and Captain C. C. Hicks, both agents of the R. R. F. & A. L., forbidding the arrest of Thomas unless the papers should be served at the R. R. F. & A. L. office in Albany. The grand jury sent representatives to Albany to report to the agents the facts of the case and ascertain from them in regard to the meaning and intent of the order, and particularly whether it was the intent of the order to protect Thomas from arrest by civil authority for criminal acts.⁴

¹ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. D, pp. 80, 81, see entry 55.

² Inventory of the County Archives of Georgia, No. 47, Dougherty County, pp. 49, 50.

³ Albany Tri-Weekly News, August 10, 1867.

⁴ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. D, p. 101.

Historical Sketch

Some of the citizens were ruined financially by the war. The distinguished Civil War leader, General Goode Bryan, was forced into bankruptcy. His plantation changed hands many times during the period 1867-69.¹ However, poverty also worked in the disfranchisement of colored citizens, too naive to know what to do with their ballots. The inferior court of April 13, 1868, listed 368 citizens as insolvent and unable to pay state and county taxes amounting to only one and two dollars.²

The grand jury presentment of September 1868 stated: "Owing to the general disturbance in the county for several years our financial affairs have been neglected, weakening the credit of the county and forcing it to pay more for work because contractors do not know when they will be paid"

"We regret that we cannot report any abatement of the commission of petit crimes in our county, which is a great source of expense to our citizens and annoyance to our courts. While we would suggest to the good citizens to prosecute all cases of willful crime with the utmost promptness and vigor, we recommend a kind forbearance (for) ignorance coupled with general efforts to enlighten the minds of the ignorant and stimulate that kind of genuine pride, the possession of which will make all good citizens. The troubled and demoralized condition of our society admits all good citizens to be kind in manner, always on the alert and prompt in prudent action."³

On March 19, 1869, "a wondering Ku-Klux" submitted the following letter, believed to have been written by Captain Pierce, but signed by Robert Crumley, President of the Civil and Political Rights Association, 2nd Congressional District, Georgia.

Rev. Sam'l Lamar,
Starkville, Ga.

Dear Sir:- On the 15th day of this month this association met in convention at this place (Albany), and resolved to request Capt. Wm. Pierce to go to Washington City and represent to Congressmen if possible, such legislation as is suited to the necessities of the country - protecting the lives and property of all the people. Capt. Pierce has agreed to go to Washington and do all he can for us; and it now becomes our duty to raise money enough to defray his expenses there and back.

You have been recommended to me by Capt. Pierce and others, as a suitable person to raise money for this purpose in Lee County; hence I authorize you to receive contributions there. I hope

¹ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 348, see entry 76.

² Ibid., pp. 321-330.

³ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. D, pp. 250, 251, see entry 55.

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you will turn your attention to this matter at once, and raise as much money as you can. We want him to start as soon as he can. In many of the lower counties of the district no money can be raised, because of the violent passions of our political opponents. We expect to get not less than ten dollars from your county. We hope to get fifteen or twenty. Don't fail, if you please, to attend to this matter. What money you raise please send either to myself or Philip Joiner, our treasurer.

The Albany paper branded the lawlessness implied by this letter as false and doubted if more names than Crumley, Joiner, Pierce, Murphy, Putney, Reid, F. O. Welch, "and two or three other niggers" were recorded in the red book of the Ku Klux, but all of these still lived - proof that freedom of thought and action still prevailed in the section.¹

The grand jury of March 1869 summarized the county's condition: "We congratulate our citizens upon their general prosperity in their increased productions and the high prices received for their surplus - We think that they should feel cheered by this as well as by the usual peace and quiet among our people, not a single aggravated case having been brought before our body. Taking the whole in review we think our people have everything to stimulate them to extraordinary exertions in order that our untold resources may be developed. Let them compromise and retell other more difficult matters and in a few years with proper industry, economy, etc., we will be in that condition which will make us independent of politicians, commanding that respect and esteem to which a virtuous and powerful community is justly entitled."²

The September 1869 grand jury decided that several of the grand jurors on the bills of indictment and presentments were incompetent and replaced six jurors.³ This jury reported: "We find much to encourage us and render us hopeful for the future of our community in the improved and elevated moral turn of society - while crimes have been perpetrated in some places and evilness and disregard for moral and legal obligations and restraints manifested by particular individuals, yet laborers generally are discharging their duties with the most laudable fidelity - unanimity and concord prevails between employers and employees - and the agricultural as well as moral and social conditions of our county is improving."⁴

The March 1870 grand jury stated: "We find much to encourage us to render the future hopeful as to an elevated - enlightened tone of moral society. In referring to the past to our regret many crimes have been perpetrated on many of our dearest friends - actuated by the disregard of our laws or moral obligations notwithstanding the restraints

¹ Albany News, March 19, 1869.

² Minutes (Superior Court), vol. D, p. 309, see entry 55.

³ Ibid., pp. 364, 366.

⁴ Ibid., p. 379.

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manifested by many of our noblest citizens - such has been past issues. We feel proud to proclaim the improvements that daily develop themselves legally, morally, and socially - and hope that our laws are such as when administered will soon prove to every violator its great importance, ere long introducing unanimity - concord throughout our midst. We find generally our laborers faithfully performing their duties - possessing fidelity and obedience to their employers. In total we find our moral, social, and agricultural condition improving."¹

However, Lee County, in the second congressional district, was still served by a republican, Richard Henry Whiteley.² Although Nelson Tift was elected in 1867 and took his seat on July 25, 1868,³ Georgia was not formally readmitted to representation until July 15, 1870.⁴ Tift presented credentials to the forty-first congress in 1869 but was not permitted to qualify.⁵ Richard Henry Whiteley was elected as a republican to this congress to fill the vacancy caused by the House declaring Nelson Tift not entitled to the seat,⁶ but he did not enter until February 9, 1871, because his election in turn was unsuccessfully contested by Tift.⁷ In this election Lee County, with its large colored vote, gave Whiteley 2,230 and Tift 418.⁸ Whiteley was also reelected to the forty-second congress this year, and the election was again unsuccessfully contested by Tift.⁹ But in the election for the forty-third congress 1873-75, the second district elected a democrat, the distinguished leader of the Civil War, General Philip Cook, who was a resident of Americus,¹⁰ but had a plantation in Lee County.¹¹

The grand jury of November 1874 stated: "We take great pleasure in congratulating our people upon the great restoration of public sentiment as indicated in the recent elections. May we not hope that a brighter future may and now dawns upon this scourged county and suffering people. We feel that the lovers of continental liberty have good reason to rejoice - and for many years past despaired of its returning This is a great Victory of truth and right - let us enjoy it as becomes a free and great people - as by our good conduct in the past, we have proven ourselves deserving their blessings, so let it be in the future that our wisdom, practice and love of law and order, shall entitle us to its continuation - Let us be as wise in our Victory as we have grief in

¹ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. D, p. 459, see entry 55.

² Albany News, January 20, 1871.

³ Biographical Directory of the American Congress, p. 294.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 1618.

⁶ Ibid., p. 1694.

⁷ Ibid., p. 303.

⁸ Albany News, January 20, 1871.

⁹ Biographical Directory of the American Congress, p. 313.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 322.

¹¹ Memoirs of Georgia, II, 454.

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our suffering - We must reconstruct our county - our agriculture must be brought up, or we are gone as a great people."¹

Health and Morale

Liquor had long been used as a preventative against the malaria prevalent in swampy sections of the county. With the lowered morale of weary, wounded soldiers of the lost cause, and of troublous times, liquor became after the war even more a surcease and a fortification of the spirit. "A large majority of the citizens of Smithville and immediate vicinity" endorsed a request for a retail license for spirituous liquors February 22, 1864.² On March 7, 1865, in accordance with orders from the governor, the inferior court appointed district inspectors for the stills. Those who belonged to the reserve militia were charged to perform their duty faithfully under penalties, and those who did not belong to the reserve militia were earnestly requested to perform said duties, visiting the stills and reporting every week.³ On April 4, 1865, the inferior court informed the governor that 500 gallons was the least which the county could use for medicinal purposes and that they had contracted for this amount.⁴ Licenses were issued in 1866 to two Starkville bars,⁵ another to sell in quantities of less than one gallon not by retail,⁶ and one each for Adam's Station,⁷ Smithville,⁸ Wooten Station,⁹ and Sumterville.¹⁰ In 1867 two were issued for Palmyra,¹¹ two more for Starkville,¹² and two for unnamed places.¹³

Starkville was said to have been the center of the drinking fraternity, a factor which may have contributed to the removal of the county site to Leesburg in 1872. A writer whose family lived at Starkville during the time stated: "During the year preceding the Civil War and afterwards Starkville was a 'wide open', 'rip-snorting' town, and was the mecca for all kinds of sporting events. Twelve saloons supplied the thirsty. Four wide-open gambling halls were in operation There was no curfew to ring and bars and joints were 'all nighters'. Walking the streets at midnight by the saloons and gambling halls, one could hear the sibilant shuffle of the pasteboards and the flip of the

¹ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. E, p. 217, see entry 55.

² Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 155, see entry 76.

³ Ibid., p. 165.

⁴ Ibid., p. 168.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 230, 263.

⁶ Ibid., p. 242.

⁷ Ibid., p. 253.

⁸ Ibid., p. 254.

⁹ Ibid., p. 267.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 270.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 276, 301.

¹² Ibid., p. 294.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 281, 282.

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chuck-a-luck drum. Merrily greeting your ears also inside were stud and draw poker, the old faro dealer manipulating his cards, and the rattle of a high dice game, the irresistible lure of chance. Down near Muckalee Creek the brilliant lights of the 'Primrose Path' flashed and blinked, and the blare of music and the sounds of revelry caught the ear of the fellow feeling his way home at the first flush of dawn.

"The most popular sporting amusements in the town were target shooting with rifle and pistol, horse racing, fighting and chicken fighting. Starkville attracted visitors from a wide area and long distance, who went to enjoy themselves. Hospitality and a glad hand greeted them; the men of Starkville 'toted' guns, shot straight, drank good liquor, and voted democratic tickets. The old town was the scene of many heart-breaking tragedies, and homicides were of frequent occurrence. Old residents tell of the bloody fights and exciting times, and on the streets the crack of a pistol and the death groan of a victim many times during a year was nothing unusual at this period. The homicide record of Old Starkville rivalled the wild western town of Cripple Creek, California."¹

Some of these and other conditions were reflected in the grand jury presentments of September 1868: Continuing "petit crimes," "willful crime" and the "Troubled and demoralized condition of our society" were noted and condemned. The jury recommended that the people educate the ignorant for enlightened citizenship and admonished them "to be kind in manner always on the alert and prompt in prudent action."² Much of the excesses of "gun-toting," etc., were undoubtedly excesses to combat worse excesses which might have arisen among the 5,000 inexperienced, newly-freed colored people who were misguided by the trouble-making carpet-baggers. The white population was only about 2,000.³ Something more than prayers was necessary to preserve the lives of both white and colored people and prevent the community from falling into a state of anarchy.

The March 1870 presentments stated: "In referring to the past to our regret many crimes have been perpetrated on many of our dearest friends - actuated by the disregard of our laws or Moral obligations notwithstanding the restraints manifested by many of our noblest citizens."⁴ Among those citizens of Starkville who were awarded property damages when the court site was moved to Leesburg in the 1870's were: Fannie Lindsey, hotel \$500,⁵ John H. Boatwright, \$150,⁶ E. D. Watson, \$100,⁷ Thomas F. Porter, \$525, Wm. H. Baldy, \$350, and S. B. King, \$125.⁸ Fannie Lindsey

¹ Love, "Starkville," in Albany Herald, October 24, 1941, p. 11F

² Minutes (Superior Court), vol. D, p. 251, see entry 55.

³ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census, p. 73; Ninth Census, I, 21.

⁴ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. D, p. 459.

⁵ Minutes (Court of Ordinary), vol. I, p. 263, see entry 82.

⁶ Ibid., p. 302.

⁷ Ibid., p. 305.

⁸ Ibid., p. 310.

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afterwards had a hotel at Leesburg.¹ The old church in the cemetery was the only building of old Starkville which remained in 1940.²

Churches

One of the first and most significant trends among both the white and the colored people after the Civil War was their interest and activity in churches. The unsettled conditions and some hardships and want during the period of freedman reconstruction and the transition between the large slave plantations and the later large plantations operated by hired labor, as usual in times of stress, brought increased interest and appeal to spiritual as well as material matters. Furthermore, the plantations had been largely the social system of both the whites and colored. It was true there were the villages, Palmyra and Starkville, with two or three churches, but for the most part the white landowners were too isolated and involved with the operation of the plantations to build either churches or schools.³ The lives of the slaves, of course, were bound up with their plantations, and the early churches formed for them by Methodist and Baptist ministers were on those plantations.⁴ Though even the vast majority of the colored people may have stayed on their old masters' places, their center of life was disturbed, and the situation was not made easier by an increase between 1860 and 1870 of over 2,500 colored people.⁵ Some of the latter may have come in during the war to engage in agricultural pursuits, others in connection with the carpet-bagger activities, and others in naive escape from similar or worse conditions in more populous counties. The churches became the constructive social centers for both the white and colored people, and they have remained as such to the present.

White Churches

Leesburg Presbyterian Church is said to have been formally organized on March 3, 1873, with the Reverend J. S. White as pastor,⁶ but records indicate that there was a church on about the same site in January 1864.⁷ In 1866 there was a Union Church located near the north county line,⁸ a Thundering Springs Baptist Church in the Red Bone District,⁹ and a

¹ Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, p. 42, see entry 1.

² Love, "Starkville," in Albany Herald, October 24, 1941.

³ Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, p. 402.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 400, 401.

⁵ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census, 1860, p. 73; Ninth Census, I, 21.

⁶ Historical Records Survey, Department of Church Archives, in Lee County file.

⁷ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 153, see entry 76.

⁸ Ibid., p. 207.

⁹ Baptist Denomination in Georgia, p. 406.

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Methodist Church at Smithville.¹ The Reverend William H. Norton, reared in Lee County, was ordained to preach in 1866 by the Thundering Springs Church, and at that church's request was ordained to the ministry in 1873.² In 1871 the Smithville Methodist Church was considered so important that the road was changed to run direct from Cotton Street in Starkville to the Methodist church in Smithville "as a convenience."³

In 1871 Callaway Memorial Baptist Church was organized on the later site of Leesburg. McAfee Baptist Church at Neyami was organized about 1875, and Smithville Baptist Church in 1876.⁴ On March 31, 1877, the grand jury recommended that the county commissioners donate a suitable lot for a Methodist house of worship in Leesburg.⁵ In April 1881 there was a Wesley Chapel Methodist Church somewhere in the county, but the exact location cannot be ascertained.⁶ In 1888 the commissioners donated lot number 160 on the south side of the Hillyer Academy lot to the Methodist Church at Leesburg,⁷ and a building was dedicated in 1894.⁸ Since those post-bellum decades two other white churches have been in the county: New Hope Baptist Church in 1916 moved from Sumter County to about 12 miles northeast of Leesburg, and Saint Paul Baptist, R.F.D., Smithville, was organized in 1920. In 1926 there were 581 Southern Baptist, 37 Primitive Baptist, 240 Methodists, 43 members of the Church of Christ, and 33 Presbyterians in the county.⁹

Colored Churches

The Hebron Baptist Church established by the Reverend Jessie M. Davis in 1835 on his own land was probably for the slaves.¹⁰ Periodically, at least, the colored people had other churches, including the Palmyra Baptist, 1840---. The New Hope Methodist Church, 2 miles west of Smithville, seems to have continued to function from its founding in 1853. Its old building was replaced in 1923, and the Palmyra Baptist was rebuilt in 1871.¹¹

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- 1 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 256, see entry 76.
 - 2 Baptist Denomination in Georgia, p. 406.
 - 3 Records (Ordinary's Minutes - County Purposes), vol. 1, p. 77, see entry 81.
 - 4 Historical Records Survey, Department of Church Archives, in Lee County file.
 - 5 Minutes (Superior Court), vol. E, p. 383, see entry 55.
 - 6 Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, p. 132, see entry 1.
 - 7 Ibid., p. 464.
 - 8 Historical Records Survey, Department of Church Archives, in Lee County file.
 - 9 Georgia Public Forum, Statistical Survey of the Counties of the State of Georgia, pp. 181, 182.
 - 10 Baptist Denomination in Georgia, p. 177.
 - 11 Historical Records Survey, Department of Church Archives, in Lee County file.

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Antioch Baptist Church, about 11 miles northeast of Leesburg, was in existence in March 1863.¹ It was the original church serving the eastern part of Lee County, and for a number of years was the only church. From it a number of the other churches originated. It is said to have been formally organized in 1869. Macedonia Baptist Church, R.F.D. Leesburg, was organized in 1865 and first pastor was Ephraim Bass. Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Smithville, was organized about 1867-70. It was first located about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of the present location and was known as the Bush Arbor Baptist Church.²

Jordan Grove Baptist Church is said to have been established before the war, but was reorganized in 1867. It has had only three pastors, all former slaves: Austin Whitaker, 1867-70, Willis Warren, 1870-99, and Tillman Sims, 1899-1938.³ Membership in the church is for life. At one time the rolls contained more than 3,000 names with members living in nearly every part of the United States. It was destroyed by a storm in 1939.⁴

New Jerusalem Baptist Church, 2 miles west of Smithville, was organized about 1870, and George Marlin was its first pastor; Wooden Grove Baptist Church, R.F.D. Leesburg, organized about 1872; and Green Grove Baptist, 1873, with Sam Lamar as first pastor.⁵

As the political glories of carpet-bagger preaching faded and the lot of the colored people became drab and difficult, they organized more and more religious communities. On later route one, Leesburg, St. Mathew Baptist Church, with Thornton Carter as pastor, was organized in 1878; Shady Grove Baptist, with Ben Milton as pastor, in 1880; and Mt. Hope was organized in 1880.⁶ The county's Negro population in this year was 8,837, 1,194 more than in 1870.⁷ Route one from Leesburg continued to develop. Old Pine Grove and Zion Hope Baptist Churches were organized in 1885; and Spring Hill Baptist with J. S. Sanford as pastor, Pleasant Green Baptist with B. L. Lundy as pastor, and Mt. Cavalry Baptist were all organized in 1890.⁸ However, the colored population, 7,642, had actually decreased over 1,000 from 1880 to 1890.⁹ Times must have been hard.¹⁰

¹ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 137, see entry 76.

² Historical Records Survey, Department of Church Archives, in Lee County file.

³ Albany Herald, February 28, 1939.

⁴ Ibid., April 17, 1938.

⁵ Historical Records Survey, Church Archives, in Lee County file.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census, I, 366; Ninth, I, 21.

⁸ Historical Records Survey, Church Archives, in Lee County file.

⁹ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Eleventh Census, II, 406.

¹⁰ For the only time in the county's history, in the late 80's, tax valuation were below a million dollars (Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, pp. 379, 437, 500, see entry 1).

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The next section of the county to develop colored religious communities was the northern, on the later mail route one from DeSoto (Sumter County): Mt. Able Baptist with Dan Mathis as pastor in 1893, and Burke Grove Baptist in 1895, and New Beulah with Henry Stile as pastor in 1803. A County Line Baptist Church was organized with Manuel Jackson as pastor in 1895, and Marthana Grove Baptist, with Clem Raines as pastor, in 1905.

On route one from Smithville, Piney Grove Baptist Church with Nelson Talley as pastor was organized in 1907, and Rose Hill Baptist with W. D. Davis as pastor in 1910.¹ On the mail route from Leesburg, Phillip Grove Baptist was organized in 1908, and Mt. Milton Baptist, with Josiah Talley as pastor, in 1910. The 1910 colored population, 9,992, was the largest in any census of the county.²

Later colored churches organized were: St. John Baptist on route two from Leslie (Sumter County) in 1914 with C. B. Butler as pastor, and New Pine Grove Baptist, R.F.D. Leesburg, in 1928, with S. M. Holton as pastor.³ In 1917 the colored Ministers' Association of Lee County was organized by Mr. W. J. Sorrells, the agent from the State Department of Agriculture, for the purpose of assisting the negroes of the county in their agricultural development.⁴ In 1926 a partial census listed 2,557 colored Baptist and 96 African Methodists in the county.⁵

Agricultural Development

The settlement of the agricultural center in the northwestern part of Lee County, around Smithville, began about 1856 with the construction of the railroad junction at that point, one line going to Albany and the other to Eufaula, Alabama.⁶ William David Wells, one of the first settlers, operated a farm and established a grist mill.⁷ The town of Smithville, "alias Renwick," was incorporated April 18, 1863, with the request that Thad D. Butler, O. C. Clark, Council Clark, J. G. McCrary, and others hold an election for five commissioners. This section with the railroad junction came into prominence during the war in the raising and shipping of foodstuffs.⁸ That at least some of the lands in the section were in the original lottery parcels and had not been consolidated into large plantations was indicated by the fact that John L.

¹ Historical Records Survey, Department of Church Archives, in Lee County file.

² U. S. Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census, I, 233.

³ Historical Records Survey, Department of Church Archives, in Lee County file.

⁴ Willis, "Lee County," in Atlanta Journal, November 17, 1918.

⁵ Georgia Public Forum, Statistical Survey, pp. 181, 182.

⁶ Coulter, A Short History of Georgia, pp. 245, 247; Willis, "Lee County," in Atlanta Journal, November 17, 1918.

⁷ Memoirs of Georgia, II, 459.

⁸ Ga. Acts 1862-63, pp. 189, 190.

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Wilkerson, born here in 1866, later inherited a lottery parcel of 202 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres, and built up his plantation to 1,455 acres in subsequent years.¹ The telegraph lines came through the county along the railroad lines in 1866.² Cotton resumed its role as the one cash crop raised on large plantations with cheap labor.³

Availability of the freedmen labor, no longer restricted to the plantations, however varied. That Jordan Grove Colored Baptist Church had its sometime 3,000 members scattered in almost every part of the United States in 1938, is some indication of the migration of the colored people throughout the latter nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁴ Others, of course, came into Lee County. The variation in the colored population was 7,643 in 1870;⁵ 8,837 in 1880;⁶ 7,642 in 1890;⁷ 8,837 in 1900;⁸ 9,992 in 1910;⁹ 8,977 in 1920;¹⁰ and 6,489 in 1930.¹¹

In July 1870 the quality of the cotton was said to be poor, the crops in grass and the possession of lice, the freedmen not having worked as well as usual.¹² Some indication of other employment of the freedmen was the order of the chief engineer in charge of the B. & A. R. R. construction east of the Flint River that "in consideration of the needs of the farmers" positively "no farm hands were to be hired, laborers from plantations who imposed themselves upon the contractors to be discharged" as soon as the fact was ascertained, and their wages withheld.¹³

In 1872 the crop preparations were reported to be splendid. "We have not, since the war, observed so much plantation improvement. The negroes have at last consented to split rails, and fences have been repaired extensively. We saw more evidence of industry on the farm than for years past, and in but few instances heard complaint on the labor question. The negroes generally are working well and cheerfully. We discovered a prevailing disposition to put in plenty of corn as well as a purpose to make 'heaps upon heaps' of cotton."¹⁴ To discourage indolence and theft by laborers a state act was passed in August 1872 prohibiting the sale between sunset and sunrise of any farm products, "such

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- 1 Willis, "Lee County," in Atlanta Journal, November 17, 1918.
 - 2 "Diary of A. J. Sweeney," in History and Reminiscences, p. 41.
 - 3 U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 4.
 - 4 Albany Herald, February 28, 1939.
 - 5 U. S. Bureau of the Census; Ninth Census of the United States, I, 21.
 - 6 Tenth Census, I, 336.
 - 7 Eleventh Census, II, 406.
 - 8 Twelfth Census, I, 534.
 - 9 Thirteenth Census, I, 233.
 - 10 Fourteenth Census, III, 215.
 - 11 Fifteenth Census, III, Part 1, p. 471.
 - 12 Albany News, July 8, 1870.
 - 13 Albany News, April 14, 1871.
 - 14 Albany News, June 18, 1874.

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as cotton, corn, wheat, peas, oats, rye or barley, without the permission of the owner or employer of the land" on which the products were raised.¹ Tax values for the year were \$1,536,295,² about the largest by a \$250,000 to a \$500,000 margin until 1910.³

In June 1874 Lee County farmers took part in a council of "Patrons of Husbandry" in Albany at which 9 counties and 20 granges were represented. The object of the council of granges, among other things, was "by a multitude of council to more wisely promote the objects and interests of the Patrons of Husbandry." Leesburg Grange No. 18 was represented by Henry L. Long, worshipful master, one of the secretaries of the council, and R. J. Reagan, C. W. Randall, W. H. Newsom, G. M. Bynes, and R. O. Thomas. Honorable Thomas Hardeman, Jr., gave "one of his noblest and ablest efforts of oratory, logic, and statistics." There was a barbecue. A permanent central council, constitution, and bylaws were planned, and the Grange Convention ended with a Calico Hop.⁴

The grand jury of November 1874, though rejoicing in the election of a democrat to congress, stated: "Our agriculture must be bought up, or we are gone as a great people. The land holder is now the poorest man in all the land - he ought to be the most prosperous - He pays tribute to all he gets now for himself - this must be changed. Let our legislature do this good work. Let all shackles be removed, let all proper encouragement be given to the fostering of this great permanent interest, so that the Husbandmen shall Rejoice in his plenty, and all classes shall share in his prosperity.

"We are satisfied that the repeal of the usury laws was a great error and increased greatly the burdens of the planters, and we most respectfully urge their restoration, and upon such rigid provisions that they shall be observed - Let us not fear that money will become more scarce--the history of the success of our fathers in conducting the great agriculture of the South before the War demonstrates clearly the fallacy of this saying, and the wisdom of these laws.

"Let us go back into the well beaten tracks of the past, and avail ourselves of the practical wisdom of our fathers."⁵

The agricultural depression continued. In November 1875 the grand jury stated: "It is patent to every one that financial gloom overshadows every department of business, arising chiefly from the overproduction of

1 Ga. Acts 1872, pp. 484, 485.

2 Records (Ordinary's Minutes - County Purposes), vol. 1, p. 159, see entry 81.

3 Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, pp. 326, 379, 437, 500, 564, 728, 799; vol. B, pp. 208, 373, 412, 450, 503; vol. C, p. 502, see entry 1.

4 Albany News, June 18, 1874.

5 Minutes (Superior Court), vol. E, p. 217, see entry 55.

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cotton and a deficiency of meat and bread - past experience plainly teaches that this system if pursued will rapidly culminate in utter paralysis of trade and general bankruptcy of the planting community.

"We therefore earnestly beseech the farmers and planters to curtail the prospective cotton crop within such limits and correspondingly amplify the production of meat and the grain and grasses, that we once more may be liberated from the dread incubus of debt and experience a return of those days of prosperity and happiness that once blessed our land."¹ The depression, however, seems to have continued. The white population decreased over 200 between 1870 and 1880, but the colored increased over 1,000.² Property tax valuation continued to decline until in 1887 they reached the county's lowest rating, \$941,906.³

With the depreciation of land values, and the availability of more negroes, lands were consolidated into larger plantations.⁴ Health conditions due to the difficulty of securing good drinking water had possibly been one of the causes of the decline in white population.⁵ Smithville's medical practitioner at this time was Dr. Louis A. Peacock.⁶ In 1881 another doctor, Captain John Porter Fort, solved the water problem for all southwest Georgia by boring on his plantation in Dougherty County the first artesian well in this section. The boring took from February to August 4, 1881. The depth was 450 feet, and the rate of flow 7 gallons per minute.⁷ With this health factor solved, a number of prominent planters moved into the county for residence. Among these in 1881 were Captain Francis N. Heath, who stated that "no county in southwest Georgia" bore a better reputation for the fertility of its soil than Lee,⁸ and J. P. Calloway, who established the largest business in Leesburg, and as a planter and fruit grower cultivated 4,000 acres.⁹ In 1885 General Philip Cook moved to Americus near his plantation in Lee County.¹⁰ On April 6, 1886, the town council of Leesburg issued scrip for \$500 for an artesian well.¹¹ About 1888 Philip Cook, Jr., moved to Lee County to cultivate his father's plantation.¹²

Culture of the "New South"

In 1865 for a short time there seems to have been in Lee County the

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- 1 Minutes (Superior Court), vol. E, p. 285.
 - 2 U. S. Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census, I, 21; Tenth, I, 366.
 - 3 Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, pp. 326, 379, 437, see entry 1.
 - 4 e.g., Memoirs of Georgia, II, 454.
 - 5 U. S. Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census, I, 366; Eleventh, II, 406.
 - 6 History and Reminiscences, pp. 118-122.
 - 7 Ibid., p. 175.
 - 8 Memoirs of Georgia, II, 456.
 - 9 Ibid., II, 454.
 - 10 Biographical Directory of the American Congress, p. 843.
 - 11 Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, p. 362.
 - 12 Memoirs of Georgia, II, 454.

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Telegraph and Confederate, H. L. Flash, editor,¹ but thereafter for the next two decades news was furnished and the social and agricultural life of the county recorded in the Albany Patriot and the Sumter Republican.²

In Lee County during the years of the war and afterward was the paternal home of John Temple Graves.³ The first record of the residence of his father, General J. P. Graves, was during the wartime epidemic of smallpox: the payment, February-March, 1863, of \$2,866 by the State, in whose service the general was probably serving, for quarantine at his home.⁴

Some indication of the rigorous temper of the time, which produced such statesmen as John Temple Graves, akin and contemporary with the English Victorian Era and typified in the South by the development of churches as symbols of social influence in the serious work of rebuilding the South, was in the minutes of 1877. The county commissioners ordered the sheriff to deny the use of the courthouse to any persons, white or black, for the purpose of dancing, exhibitions, or any like purpose without the consent of the board.⁵ Pleasure of the emotions was directed into the fields of eloquent oratory dealing with living needs. The dignity of the more local county leader was exemplified in the tribute paid to James M. Clark, Judge of the Circuit Court in the decade after the war: "Judge Clark exhibited many qualities that eminently illustrated the distinguished position he so ably and honorably filled. With a just appreciation of the onerous responsibilities that rested upon him, he maintained the balance of justice with an even hand. Affable and genial in his private and social relations and in the discharge of his official duties - though inflexible in enforcing the demands of truth and equity, he never was insensible to the promptings of sympathy and respect for the feelings of others.

"Though impressed with a conscientious conviction of the moral turpitude of crime, he was ever mindful of the sublime truth that the object of law is not the gratification of feelings of revenge; but the reformation of the culprit and the general safety and welfare of society.

"In his judicial decisions, therefore, he exhibited the qualifications of the erudite expounder of law; and he exhibited and executed its discussions in justice tempered with mercy.

"In his demeanor towards us as jurors, he was ever courteous and liberal

"We will ever aspire to the possession of that sublime Christian

- 1 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 166, see entry 76.
- 2 Minutes (Superior Court), vol. D, p. 12, see entry 55; commissioners Minutes, vol. A, p. 191, see entry 1.
- 3 Albany Herald, October 24, 1941.
- 4 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, pp. 133, 141.
- 5 Ibid., p. 435.

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faith, that sustained and comforted him in the trials, disappointments of life, and secured for him, as we trust, the rich fruition of eternal joys."¹

In 1887 Frank L. Stanton settled at Smithville in his thirtieth year, married Leona Jossey, and became also the owner and editor of a newspaper, the Smithville News.² Here he had full opportunity for publication of his poetry.³ In 1888 he joined John Temple Graves on the staff of the Rome Tribune, Graves being editor and manager.⁴

Roads

The county records during the latter half of the nineteenth century are replete with requests, investigations, changes, and authorizations of roads throughout the county.⁵ One of the earliest of these was a road "commencing north at the county line near the Union Church, thence crossing the Webster (Lee's 1854-56 county seat) road leading west from Smithville" to be changed to "commence at the Sunter County line near Wells' mill dam," another old landmark.⁶ The change was made, but the road from the Methodist Church toward Dawson remained.⁷ In 1859 there was a road from Starkville to Antioch Church.⁸ Starkville needed roads to religion.⁹

A road was requested in 1866 leading west from General Graves' place in the Red Bone District to the Starkville-Albany Road.¹⁰ In 1872 a road was also proposed from his place to Wooten's Station,¹¹ and in 1879 mention was made of Graves' bridge.¹²

In April 1867 a road was requested from the Flint River "at a point most suitable for a ferry" to Wooten Station. The proposed road would

¹ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. E, p. 435, see entry 55.

² Walter Gerald Cooper, The Story of Georgia, IV, 351.

³ Marcelle Stanton Megahee, "Preface" in Frank L. Stanton's Just from Georgia, compiled by his daughter, Mrs. Megahee (supra).

⁴ Memoirs of Georgia, II, 43, 308.

⁵ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, pp. 207, 255, 256, 299, 338, see entry 76; Records (Ordinary's Minutes - County Purposes), vol. I, pp. 8, 24, 34, 121, 130, 146, 158, 287, 350, see entry 81; Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, pp. 11, 25, 30, 42, 43, 80, 132, 133, 143-146, 176, 207, 214, 266, 290, 291, 455, 465, 685, 804, 816, 817, 831, 855; vol. B, pp. 308, 426, 449, 480, 529, 534, 695, see entry 1.

⁶ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 207.

⁷ Ibid., p. 256.

⁸ Ibid., p. 338.

⁹ Love, "Starkville," in Albany Herald, October 24, 1941.

¹⁰ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 255.

¹¹ Records (Ordinary's Minutes - County Purposes), vol. 1, p. 130.

¹² Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, p. 42.

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bring in the trade of Worth and Dooly Counties to the railroad in Lee, and would enable citizens of Lee to visit these counties without having to go to Albany or Cork's Ferry.¹ The road was so ordered in July 1867.² Cork's Ferry was probably Cox's Ferry in the northwestern part of the county. This road may have been the present road leading to Oakfield's Ferry.³ However, a similar road as the "best location with a view to a road crossing the Flint River from Wooten Station" was ordered in January 1872.⁴ But immediately property owners along the route began to file damage claims: Mrs. E. A. Durham for a $2\frac{1}{2}$ - to 3-mile fence, Fred H. West \$300 for a fence,⁵ John Whitsett, \$5,000 for a 5-mile fence. Whitsett was awarded \$6,000.⁶ By March 18, 1872, juries had rendered verdicts amounting in the aggregate to \$11,150 and there was still an untried application. The proposed road was abandoned.⁷

In 1872 a "church and mill road" passing Antioch Church was made public.⁸ In 1879 a road from the courthouse in Leesburg to Adam's Station via the Presbyterian Church and McAfee's Railroad which had been in use for 7 years was made public;⁹ in 1880 likewise, two roads passing Wesley Chapel Methodist Church were made public.¹⁰

In 1892 a road was ordered along the Reid, Wright, Barfield, and McWilliams places, by the "Eagle Pond Schoolhouse," to the lands of O. Hays on the Leesburg road.¹¹

Bridges

Jackson Bridge was rebuilt by W. O. Martin in 1867 for \$2,400;¹² in 1883 by J. E. Newsberry for \$1,369.65;¹³ and in 1888 a temporary structure for \$975.¹⁴ Nine Bridges was rebuilt in 1867-68 by M. J. Barrow for \$1,490.¹⁵ Hollis Bridge, near the Hollis place, was

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- 1 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 299, see entry 76.
 - 2 Ibid., p. 300.
 - 3 U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, map.
 - 4 Records (Ordinary's Minutes - County Purposes), vol. 1, p. 121, see entry 81.
 - 5 Ibid., p. 126.
 - 6 Ibid., pp. 131, 133.
 - 7 Ibid., p. 133.
 - 8 Ibid., pp. 146, 158.
 - 9 Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, p. 30, see entry 1.
 - 10 Ibid., pp. 132, 133.
 - 11 Ibid., p. 695.
 - 12 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, pp. 206, 308, 315-316.
 - 13 Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, p. 221.
 - 14 Ibid., pp. 473, 480.
 - 15 Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, pp. 307, 312.

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constructed in 1869 for \$1,800.50.¹ It was replaced by a temporary structure in 1888 for \$975.² Small bridges and a turnpike across Muckalee Creek near Dr. Sanderer's place were constructed in 1870 for \$2,350.³ Ball's Bridge having been washed down, was replaced by a temporary structure in 1872 for \$150.⁴ Palmyra Bridge was rebuilt in 1880 by J. T. Barrow for \$690.⁵ A new Palmyra Bridge was recommended above Randall's Mill in 1886.⁶ In 1885 Graves' Bridge across Muckalee Creek was contracted to R. W. Scoggins for \$950.⁷ In January 1895 G. M. Stokes was given the exclusive right to maintain the ferry on the Flint River in the eastern point of the county.⁸ In 1897 contract was made for a "new bridge," Forrester Bridge, about 2 3/4 miles east of Leesburg for \$350.⁹

Early Twentieth Century

In the decade around the turn of the century Lee County resumed its place in the progress of industrial connections within the nation, a progress which had been interrupted by the Civil War and had been dormant during reconstruction. As always, of course, the county remained agricultural, but increased and more permanent and convenient transportation facilities and subsidiary utilities placed the agricultural products of the entire county at the disposal of the markets of the world. Tax valuations increased from the low of \$941,906 in 1887¹⁰ to \$1,329,415 in 1893,¹¹ and after a slight drop to \$1,057,906 by 1900¹² rose gradually to the all-time high of \$3,042,259 in 1917.¹³ The population of the county, both white and colored, likewise increased to about this date. Population in 1890 was 1,432 white, 7,642 colored;¹⁴ in 1910, 1,687 white and 9,992 colored.¹⁵ In 1920 the white population was 1,927 but the colored dropped to 8,977.¹⁶

¹ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, p. 367, see entry 76.

² Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, p. 473.

³ Minutes (Inferior Court - County Purposes), vol. A-1, pp. 13, 19.

⁴ Records (Ordinary's Minutes - County Purposes), vol. 1, p. 145, see entry 81.

⁵ Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, p. 112.

⁶ Ibid., p. 363.

⁷ Ibid., p. 325.

⁸ Ibid., p. 864.

⁹ Ibid., vol. B, p. 188.

¹⁰ Ibid., vol. A, p. 437.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 799.

¹² Ibid., pp. 208, 373.

¹³ Ibid., vol. B, pp. 412, 450, 502, 503; Knight, Georgia and Georgians, II, 1256.

¹⁴ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Eleventh Census, II, 406; Twelfth, I, 534.

¹⁵ Thirteenth Census, I, 233.

¹⁶ Fourteenth Census, III, 215.

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Transportation and Communications

The rise in tax values in 1893 had been largely due to a "boom" from construction of two new railways in 1890, respectively through the southeastern and the southwestern sections of the county. The Albany & Northern Railroad, now called the Georgia Southwestern & Gulf, was built from Cordale to Albany, principally by Albany capitalists, headed by Colonel Nelson Tift, in 1890. The other through southwestern Lee County to Albany, was known as the Columbus Southern.¹ It is now a part of the Seaboard Air Line Railway,² and passes through Armenia, Oakland, and Palmyra,³

Iron bridges began to supplant the easily washed-out wooden covered bridges: one for Ball Bridge on Muckalee Creek, on the line of Lee and Dougherty County, in 1893,⁴ a group at Nine Bridges in 1895,⁵ and one for Jackson Bridge, 205 feet long and costing \$2,159, in 1902.⁶ By 1901-2 bridges were in such satisfactory condition that repairs for 1 year were arranged for only \$600.⁷

Under a state road law approved October 21, 1891, which became of force in Lee County upon recommendation of the grand jury of March 1894 - the road system of the county was abolished, and road commissioners were appointed for the several districts.⁸

On May 23, 1898, the Postal Telegraph-Cable Company, a corporation chartered in the State of New York, was given approval for "contracting and maintaining a line of Telegraph, along the County Road, through Lee County, on the road from Americus to Albany," provided that said telegraph line not be placed nearer than 10 feet to any public road of said county.⁹ The horse-and-buggy days were properly wary of electricity and lightning.

The population of the county in 1900 was 10,344, or 1,507 white and 8,837 colored.¹⁰ On July 2, 1901, the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company was granted permission "to set its poles and string its wires" along the public roads of Lee County.¹¹ Tax values for this year increased to \$1,170,073,¹² an addition of \$112,067 over values for 1900.¹³

¹ History and Reminiscences, p. 316.

² U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, map.

³ Seaboard Railway, (time table), June 6, 1941.

⁴ Commissioners Minutes, vol. A, p. 789, see entry 1.

⁵ Ibid., vol. B, pp. 58, 59.

⁶ Ibid., p. 441.

⁷ Ibid., p. 412.

⁸ Ibid., vol. A, p. 58.

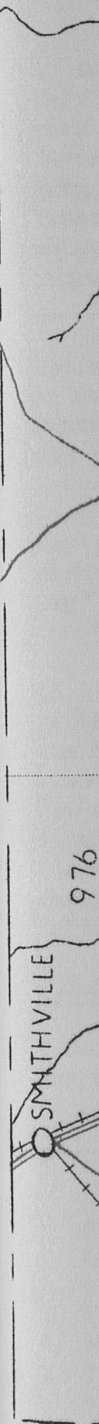
⁹ Ibid., vol. B, p. 248.

¹⁰ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census, I, 534.

¹¹ Commissioners Minutes, vol. B, p. 407.

¹² Ibid., p. 412.

¹³ Ibid., p. 373.



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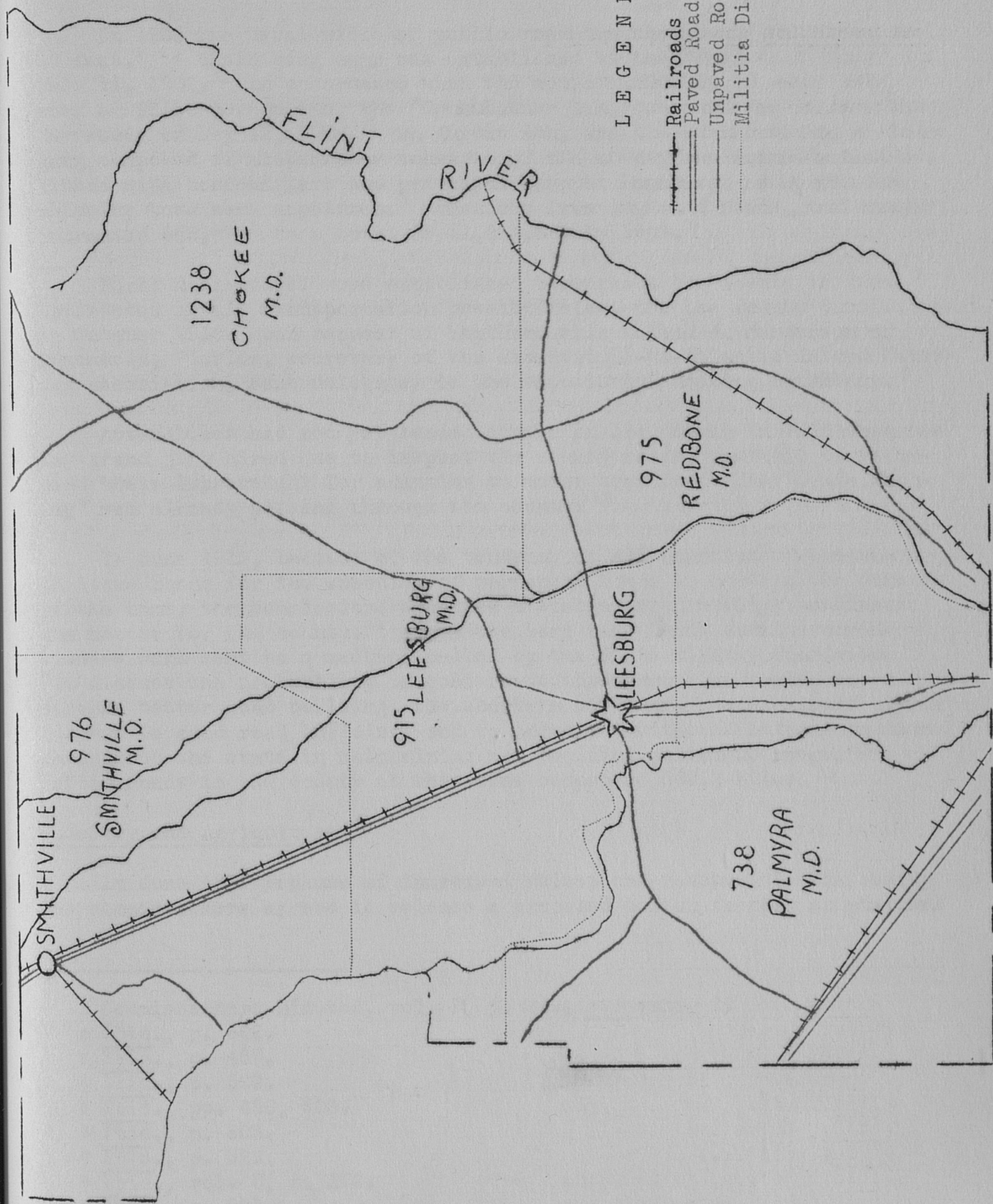
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LEGEND

- +--- Railroads
- ==== Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Militia Districts

Historical Sketch

In 1902 the usual width of public roads in the county was noted as 18 feet.¹ A chain gang camp was established at the "Phil Cook Place" on July 11, 1902.² In accordance with the act of 1890-91, 10 days' road work or \$2.50 per capita, the "Commutation Tax," was ordered in Lee County for roads on May 12, 1903.³ On August 4th, for the public works, a chain gang composed of misdemeanor convicts of the county was formally established with headquarters and principal camp at Leesburg. A warden and whipping boss were appointed.⁴ Possibly from improved roads, tax values increased \$55,872⁵ to a total of \$1,231,868 in 1903.⁶

Rural mail routes were established throughout the county in 1904.⁷ Interested in all transportation possibilities, the Lee County Commissioners in October 1912, upon request of the Honorable Leland J. Henderson of Pensacola, Florida, secretary of the Mississippi-to-Atlantic Inland Waterway Association, sent delegates to the association meeting in Albany.⁸

Automobiles had not yet become common in Lee County in 1916 when the May grand jury hired one to inspect the county roads, probably to recommend their improvement for adaption to motor traffic.⁹ The "Dixie Highway" was already passing through the county.¹⁰

In June 1919, because of the tendency of all counties of the state to issue bonds for the erection of permanent roads in meeting the demands of the time, the commissioners called a special open meeting to discuss the matter for the county.¹¹ About the same time Lee's county commissioners were sent to a meeting called by the State Highway Commission "to discuss the probability of good roads throughout the state, to discuss better road building, the shortage of labor, the machinery better adapted to good road building, and to cooperate with the several counties throughout the state in maintaining and building permanent roads."¹² Public roads in the county at this time comprised 569.2 miles.¹³

Industry and Agriculture

In June 1899 because of increased values and revenues to the county the commissioners agreed to release a proposed cotton factory on what was

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- 1 Commissioners Minutes, vol. B, p. 449, see entry 1.
 - 2 Ibid., p. 502.
 - 3 Ibid., p. 486.
 - 4 Ibid., p. 502.
 - 5 Ibid., pp. 450, 503.
 - 6 Ibid., p. 503.
 - 7 Ibid., p. 529.
 - 8 Ibid., vol. D, p. 172.
 - 9 Ibid., p. 525.
 - 10 Minutes (Superior Court), vol. I, p. 380, see entry 55.
 - 11 Commissioners Minutes, vol. F, p. 58.
 - 12 Ibid., p. 59.
 - 13 Ibid., p. 90.

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known as the Hollis Place from taxes for 3 years from the date of commencement of the factory.¹

In 1905 "plentiful crops of sweet and Irish potatoes, field and ground peas, cotton, sugar cane, and the cereals" were being produced in Lee County. "Some of the original yellow pine remained, and poplar, cypress, hickory and white oak lined the banks of the streams." Lumbering gave employment to many.²

Leesburg was the center of the cotton trade and had a gin company which handled annually 2,000 to 3,000 bales. The town had express and telegraph offices, some stores and churches and a public school system. The population was 413.³

Smithville, on the junction of two lines of the Central of Georgia Railway, was also in the midst of an extensive fruit district, shipping thousands of barrels of pears every year.⁴ The county's first bank, the Bank of Smithville, was serving the county.⁵

By 1910 there was also a Bank of Leesburg.⁶ Tax values for this year were \$1,998,727,⁷ an increase of \$766,859 over the values of 1903.⁸ The population was 11,679 - 1,687 white and 9,992 colored.⁹

In 1911 there was being published a weekly newspaper, the Lee County Journal,¹⁰ which in 1915 was described as the "official Gazette of the county."¹¹ In April 1914 Jesse Williams, Abner Dublin, Ben Hayslip, and others resident of Lee County, were granted a petition for incorporation for 20 years as the "Farmers' Institute" for "the purpose of promoting religion, education and benevolence."¹²

On May 3, 1916, the grand jury recommended that the county appropriate \$600 for the employment of a farm demonstrator who was to begin service September 1, 1916.¹³

W. J. Sorrels came to the county as farm agent in 1917 and organized

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- 1 Commissioners Minutes, vol. B, p. 309, see entry 1.
 - 2 Candler and Evans, Cyclopedia of Georgia, II, 461.
 - 3 Ibid.
 - 4 Ibid.
 - 5 Commissioners Minutes, vol. C, p. 14.
 - 6 Ibid., p. 499.
 - 7 Ibid., p. 502.
 - 8 Ibid., vol. B, p. 503.
 - 9 U. S. Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census, I, 233.
 - 10 Minutes (Superior Court), vol. I, p. 10, see entry 55.
 - 11 Commissioners Minutes, vol. D, p. 402.
 - 12 Minutes (Superior Court), vol. I, p. 163.
 - 13 Ibid., p. 380.

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large pig, calf, corn, peanut, and canning clubs, the Lee County Farmers' Association, the Red-Bone Co-operative Club, and the Lee County Hampshire Breeders' Association, as well as a Colored Ministers Association to assist negroes in their agricultural development. He inoculated more than 3,800 head of hogs to prevent cholera, and bought 47 registered Hampshire hogs. During the war he also performed a leading role in the sale of liberty bonds and other war activities. Agricultural products were, of course, Lee County's chief contribution to that war.¹

In this heyday of prosperity and demand for farm products, taxable property was estimated at \$4,042,259² and land at an average of \$35 per acre. To cotton, corn, grain, hay, pecans, peaches, grapes, hogs, cattle, and other livestock were added three new money-making crops: peanuts, velvet beans, and tobacco.

The weekly newspapers flourished. Telephone lines radiated throughout the county, particularly from Leesburg and Smithville. The Alabama Power Company furnished 24-hour electric service to the county. Leesburg had a number of privately owned waterworks, and Smithville several artesian wells.

The Bank of Leesburg had resources of \$172,000, and the Bank of Smithville \$130,000. Leesburg had one hotel and Smithville two. Smithville, with a population of 1,200, had 3 feed and grist mills, 2 cotton warehouses, and a ginnyery. Leesburg had about 1,000 residents.³

Health Progress

Improvements in Lee County's health facilities were similar to those in other counties in the state. In 1897 in connection with the establishment of chain gangs, Dr. J. H. Conaway was appointed to do the medical practice for the county.⁴ In 1901 compulsory vaccination for smallpox was administered by the county doctor, Dr. Statham.⁵

In 1902 there was already a dispensary in Leesburg. The legislature of that year passed "an act to prohibit the sale of spirituous, vinous and malt liquors and intoxicating bitters and ciders in the county of Lee," except through dispensaries in each incorporated town upon the recommendation of the municipal authorities, election for or against dispensaries being provided, and the liquor was to be sold in packages, and loitering prohibited. Commissioners, a secretary, and treasurer were provided for the county dispensaries.⁶

1 Willis, "Lee County," in Atlanta Journal, November 17, 1918.

2 Knight, Georgia and Georgians, II, 1256.

3 Willis, "Lee County," in Atlanta Journal, November 17, 1919.

4 Commissioners Minutes, vol. B, p. 180, see entry 1.

5 Ibid., p. 401.

6 Ga. Acts 1902, pp. 222-227; Commissioners Minutes, vol. B, p. 481.

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In 1915 a campaign was inaugurated in the county to eradicate the hookworm disease. According to a report of Dr. A. W. Wood, medical inspector for the Georgia State Board of Health, of 403 rural school children examined, 187 had hookworm, and of 812 people examined, 271 had hookworm.¹

During the first world war the county was subject to the prevalent influenza epidemic.² Citizens of the county who honored their country with the sacrifice of their lives in the armed service were Corporal Robert Crittenden Kennedy and Private Grover Teele, both of Smithville.³

After the Boll Weevil

Agriculture

The one-crop idea in Lee County may be said to have been abandoned before the coming of the boll weevil. By 1917 there was diversification in grains, hay, pecans, peaches, grapes, hogs, livestock, velvet beans, tobacco, and peanuts.⁴ Lee County was one of the pioneer counties in growing peanuts in this section,⁵ and in 1917 was said to have secured \$2,500,000 from this product alone.⁶

But the invasion of the boll weevil that year found that cotton and corn were continuing their lead in acreage, which they had held since the Civil War. Several disastrous cotton-crop failures followed. In 1919, 37,901 acres of cotton produced only about one-fifth bale to the acre. Corn was grown on 33,275 acres, with an average yield of slightly more than 10 bushels per acre.⁷ Commercial fertilizers, mostly for the cotton crop, cost \$259,375.⁸ A period of severe agricultural depression ensued and there was an exodus of negro laborers.⁹ By 1920 over 1,000 negroes had left the county, and the white population was 240 more than in 1910.¹⁰

According to the 1920 Census, each tenancy being considered a farm, there were 1,691 farms averaging 101.7 acres. Of the farms 84.4 percent were operated by tenants and 14.1 percent by owners. Farms were rented for cash, on a share basis, or for a stipulated amount of lint cotton. Under the share system, the most common, and locally referred to as the "cropping system," the owner supplied land, livestock, implements, and

¹ Commissioners Minutes, vol. D, p. 403, see entry 1.

² Ibid., vol. F, p. 32.

³ Cooper, Story of Georgia, III, 495.

⁴ Willis, "Lee County," in Atlanta Journal, November 17, 1918.

⁵ Love, "Leesburg," in Albany Herald, October 24, 1941.

⁶ Willis, "Lee County," in Atlanta Journal, November 17, 1918.

⁷ U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 5.

⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census, I, 233; Fourteenth, III, 215.

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one-half the fertilizer, and the tenant furnished all labor and one-half the fertilizer. The crop was equally divided.¹ Most of the tenant farmers were colored people.²

Ernest Whitcard, the county auditor, suggested that a soil survey of Lee County by the United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Soils, in cooperation with the Georgia State College, would be of great benefit to all citizens. He further corresponded with the heads of various departments, including the Bureau of Soils, the Georgia State College, the Georgia Department of Agriculture, the Georgia Experiment Station, and the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey in an effort to secure a soil survey of the county. On September 24, 1923, the county commissioners heartily endorsed the action taken by Mr. Whitcard, and earnestly requested the above state and national departments to arrange a schedule for a soil survey of Lee County and commence work on the same at the earliest possible date.³ The survey was completed and published in 1927.⁴

The commissioners in November 1923 stated that because of the condition of agriculture in the county due primarily to the boll weevil, a realization had come that "diversified farming must become more generous and practiced" and that this was impossible without cooperative endeavor. The commissioners appropriated \$1,500 to match \$1,200 of Federal and State funds to employ a competent county agent.⁵

The increase of peanut planting continued with an acreage of 19,001 and a production of 437,023 bushels in 1924. An acreage of 21,369 in corn produced 234,162 bushels.⁶

With the completion of the Soil Survey in 1927 cotton, corn, and peanuts were leading field crops, both in acreage and value. Velvet beans were grown in with most of the corn and produced one-half to one ton of beans to the acre. Small acreages were sown in oats, rye, and wheat. Vetch, clover, winter field peas, soybeans, velvet beans, and cowpeas were the legumes most commonly produced for hay. Hay yields were about one ton to the acre.⁷

A few farmers in the north-central part were making a specialty of tobacco, which at the time was not widely grown in the county. A few

¹ U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 7.

² Deduced from ratio of population, 1920; 1,927 white, 8,977 colored.

³ Commissioners Minutes, vol. F, p. 242, see entry 1.

⁴ U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey of Lee County, Georgia, by J. W. Moon (Series 1927, No. 4). For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C., price 15 cents.

⁵ Commissioners Minutes, vol. F, p. 265.

⁶ U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 5.

⁷ Ibid.

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commercial peach orchards were scattered through the county, and concentrated in extensive plantings in the southwestern section. Some pecans were grown commercially, principally in the vicinity of Albany, and pears were also grown commercially in the vicinities of Leesburg and Smithville. Pecan orchards were set out in nearly all parts of the county, many plantings comprising hundreds of acres.¹ The United States Pecan Field Station was located in the eastern part of the county on the Georgia Southwestern and Gulf Railway near Philema.² On most of the farms sweet potatoes and sugarcane were planted for home needs only, and some sweet potatoes and watermelons were grown for market.

Hogs were raised on practically all farms for home needs, and on many of the more progressive farms as one of the principal sources of income. The so-called "pine rooters" were mostly replaced by purebred hogs of such breeds as the Duroc-Jersey, Poland China, and Hampshire.³

A few dairy farms were in operation in various parts of the county. Grade cows, mainly Jerseys crossed with other breeds, predominated in the herds. Bermuda, wild, and other grasses on the uplands and carpet grass on the lower lands, together with a few acres of Napier grass, afforded excellent grazing from 9 to 12 months of the year. Only a small number of sheep, goats, and cattle were raised.⁴

Individual land holdings ranged from a few acres to more than 10,000 acres. About 65 percent of the land in the county was included in holdings ranging from 1,000 to 3,000 acres. About 64.5 percent of the farm land was classed as improved. Prices varied widely, according to location, improvements, and character of the soil. The undersirable lands commanded from \$5 to \$10 an acre, and lands in fair condition \$20 to \$30. Pecan orchards brought from \$200 to \$1,000 an acre.⁵

In 1930 the white population was 1,839 and the colored, 6,489,⁶ a loss of 82 white people from 1920⁷ and 322 from 1910,⁸ and a loss of 2,488 colored people from 1920,⁹ and 3,503 from 1910.¹⁰ Of 2,121 families living on farms, 1,670 were farmers and 451 were non-farming families. Of 304 families owing their own farms, 156 were white and 148 Negro, an almost even distribution in farm units. The white farms, however, comprised many large plantations. There were 1,776 tenant families, 263 white and 1,513 Negro.¹¹

¹ U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 5.

² Ibid., map.

³ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

⁶ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census, III, part 1, 471.

⁷ Fourteenth Census, III, 215.

⁸ Thirteenth Census, I, 233.

⁹ Fourteenth Census, III, 215.

¹⁰ Thirteenth Census, I, 233.

¹¹ Fifteenth Census, VI, 311.

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The number of farms in the county was 1,169, cultivating 142,690 acres, which was about 62 percent of the land acreage in the county.¹ The medial value of the farms in 1930 was \$1,300,² and the value of the crops was \$4,044,629, dairy products, \$6,069, and livestock, \$355,862.³

But the economic crash of 1929 turned back the tide of agricultural recovery from the depredations of the boll weevil, and in January 1930 the commissioners of the county were again seeking the aid of the Extension Division of the Georgia State College of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture. In order to obtain this help the payment of \$1,920 per annum for a county agent was authorized, the Georgia College and the United States Department of Agriculture paying an additional \$1,200.⁴

By 1935 the number of farm families had decreased from the 2,121 of the 1930 census to 971 families; the white farm families from 422 to 258; the colored from 1,699 to 713; owner families from 304 to 127 owners, 38 part owners, and 17 managers; and tenant families from 1,776 to 789.⁵ However, the average acreage per farm increased from 101 acres in 1920 to 167.1 in 1935. The average value per acre was \$14.41.⁶

Of the 971 farm families in 1935, only 10 reported neither work nor hired help. In 951 families working there were 1,258 laborers. For hired help 175 families employed 555 people. Of 176 farm people working for pay not connected with their farms 84 were in agricultural and 91 in non-agricultural pursuits. No outside employment was reported by 790.⁷

By 1940 the population had declined to 7,837. The loss of the preceding decade was entirely within the colored group, since the white population increased from 1,836 to 1,895. Lee County, however, still has the highest percentage of colored population of any county in Georgia: 75.8 percent. The rural farm population decreased from 8,716 to 6,347.⁸ Farms decreased in number to 946, but they had an average area of 157 acres: 30 percent larger than 10 years before.⁹

¹ Georgia Public Forums, Statistical Survey of the Counties of the State of Georgia, pp. 181, 182.

² Fifteenth Census, VI, 311.

³ Georgia Public Forums, Statistical Survey, pp. 181, 182.

⁴ Commissioners Minutes, vol. F, p. 245; see entry 1.

⁵ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Farm Census, 1935, Special Report (PL-9), pp. 2, 4; Fifteenth Census, VI, 311.

⁶ U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 7; Georgia Public Forums, Statistical Survey, pp. 181, 182.

⁷ Fifteenth Census, VI, 311; Georgia Public Forums, Statistical Survey, pp. 181, 182.

⁸ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Georgia (Series P-7, No. 37), p. 3.

⁹ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Agriculture, Georgia (First Series), p. 17.

Historical Sketch

But with the new system cotton was no longer king. The new order of leading crops, according to importance, is peanuts, cotton, and corn. The Spanish peanut is the chief money crop. Lee County with an annual production of about 15,000 tons has been called the "largest peanut producing county in the World." Leesburg is the important market where buyers compete for the crop. Leesburg, also, with two gins and two warehouses, markets most of the county's cotton.

Diversified farming is said to have attained as high a development in Lee as in any county in Georgia. Besides velvet beans, hay peas, oats, rye, etc., pecan and pear trees were planted on thousands of acres and were highly profitable in revenue. Trucks go to the homes of individual pecan growers to take the crop to Albany, the pecan center of the World. Watermelons have become a major crop, 556 carloads having been shipped in 1941 alone. Among truck vegetables produced are bell peppers, pimiento, cabbage, beans, green peas, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, lettuce, and carrots, most of which are marketed locally and in Albany.

Although Lee County's soils and climate since the county's settlement has been known as developing good and permanent pasturages for beef cattle, hogs, and dairy cows, this fact seems to have been lost sight of until recent times when stock and dairy farming were again developed into leading industries. Red Hereford was the favorite among beef cattle. After the opening of a convenient packing plant, practically every farmer began raising hogs. Four dairies, two of which are among the largest in this section, supply 80 percent of the milk used in Albany.¹

In October 1941 the Farm Security Administration secured options on more than 2,000 acres of land 4 miles east of Leesburg, comprising the well-known Whitsett place and part of the ante-bellum Clegg place. This land, in a rich agricultural section, was and is to be used in the re-settlement of 30 families who were moved out of the Fort Benning area by the government because the demands of national defense required the use of their lands.²

Commerce and Industry

Starkville and Palmyra were the ante-bellum collection points for agricultural products in Lee County, but since the Civil War two new towns, Smithville and Leesburg, in the era of railroads, have continued to the present as the principal marketing centers for the county. Albany, 10 miles south of Leesburg in Dougherty County, has been a market and shipping center for much of the southern half of the county. Macon, Atlanta, and Columbus, Georgia, and Jacksonville, Florida, have been among the principal outside markets.³

¹ Albany Herald, October 24, 1941, pp. 2 E, 16 E, 10 H.

² Atlanta Journal, October 14, 1941.

³ U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 2.

Historical Sketch

In the prosperity of the twentieth century, before the boll weevil, the citizens of both Smithville and Leesburg organized banks. These banks stood for almost 10 years under the economic onslaughts of the weevil, but finally in 1926 succumbed. On July 14th the county commissioners held a "call meeting for special purposes," to discuss a deficit resulting from the closing of both the Bank of Leesburg and the Bank of Smithville. The borrowing of \$5,000 was authorized.¹ By 1914 there was a private bank (Citizen's Bank) in Leesburg.²

Though Lee County has always been principally agricultural, a few manufactures have been established in connection with the products. In 1929 there were 4 manufacturing establishments, using 295 horsepower and employing 53 wage earners with annual wages of \$23,340. The cost of the materials and containers for the products was \$83,548, value added by manufacture, \$60,696, and the total value of the manufactured products, \$144,244.³

In the general economic depression of the 1930's manufacturing establishments decreased to two by 1935. In that year the county had 9 food stores with annual sales of \$27,000, 3 eating places, 21 general food stores with annual sales of \$324,000, 3 automotive stores with annual sales of \$34,000, 7 filling stations with annual sales of \$51,000, and 2 drug stores. The annual sales of the 45 stores totaled \$450,000. The county had 34 people engaged in forestry and fishing.⁴

The number of business establishments had decreased to 42 by 1939, but annual sales still totaled \$450,000. There were 36 proprietors of unincorporated businesses with about 39 employees and an annual payroll of \$21,000. Annual sales for 19 food stores were \$61,000, for 8 general stores, \$217,000, and for 9 filling stations, \$66,000. There were also four eating and drinking places, a decrease from two to one drug store, a decrease from three to one automotive store, and, showing a sober tendency, no liquor stores.⁵

Leesburg, the county seat, assumed a slight lead by 1941 as the principal supply and marketing town for this fertile and productive agricultural area. The town has two peanut mills, two gins, and two warehouses, and buyers compete here for the county's peanut crop. In the county there are two more cotton gins and five sawmills, some parts of the county still containing much standing timber. Besides lumbering and logging, the county has a moderate naval stores industry. The pasturage lands of the county's four dairies were conveniently located in the western, eastern, and southern parts of the county.⁶

1 Commissioners Minutes, vol. F, p. 318.

2 Albany Herald, October 24, 1941.

3 U. S., Fifteenth Census, Manufactures, III, 124.

4 Georgia Public Forums, Statistical Survey, pp. 181, 182.

5 U. S. Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census: Census of Business 1939, Retail Trade, Georgia, p. 8.

6 Albany Herald, October 24, 1941, pp. 2 E, 16 E, 10 H.

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Vital Statistics

According to the 1920 census the average density of the population, 10,904,¹ was 33.4 persons to the square mile. The central part of the county, the north-central part, and the vicinities of towns were the most thickly settled. A belt lying along the Flint River, in the extreme eastern part of the county, was the most sparsely settled region.²

In 1940 the population by districts was: Smithville, 1,802; Chokee, 1,775; Leesburg, 1,718; Palmyra, 1,414; and Redbone, 1,128. Included in these figures were the populations of the towns: Leesburg, 619, and Smithville, 716. The total population of the county was 7,837.³

Transportation Facilities

The economic depredations of the boll weevil, as elsewhere in the State, hampered development of highways. An election ordered to be held July 23, 1919, "to determine whether or not \$155,000.00 in bonds would be issued by said county for improvement of roads throughout the county, other than dirt roads," failed of passage.⁴ There were in 1920, 569.2 miles of public roads.⁵ The Dixie Highway passed through Leesburg,⁶ and at least by September 1924 was also "directed" through Smithville.⁷ It was not paved from Leesburg to Albany at that time.⁸

In regard to a proposed \$77,000,000 State bond issue for paving roads in 1925, the commissioners of Lee County considered the bond issue as unwise at that time and advised their representative in the legislature to use his vote and influence toward defeating the issue.⁹

In November 1925 at the request of the commissioners the State was induced to direct the Florida Short Route, leading from Dawson to Albany, through the Palmyra District of Lee County.¹⁰ The road was known as "Fla. Short Route, Project No. 430 E, on State Route No. 50."¹¹

The county commissioners in June 1926, feeling that the county had not received "its quota of State and Federal Roads," authorized a request to the State Highway Commission for roads connecting the county seats of Lee, Terrell, and Crisp Counties, respectively the towns of Leesburg,

¹ U. S., Fourteenth Census, Population, III, 215.

² U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 2.

³ U. S., Sixteenth Census, Population, Georgia, first series, p. 4.

⁴ Commissioners Minutes, vol. F, pp. 59, 63, see entry 1.

⁵ Ibid., p. 90.

⁶ Minutes (Superior Court), vol. I, p. 380, see entry 55.

⁷ Commissioners Minutes, vol. E, p. 265.

⁸ Ibid., p. 344.

⁹ Ibid., p. 283.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 299.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 464.

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Dawson, and Cordele.¹ However, there was a "casual deficiency" in the county treasury the following month due to the closing of the Banks of Leesburg and Smithville, and the plans for the roads may have been abandoned.²

At its February 1927 meeting the county commissioners learned that "a right of way for the purpose of building, constructing and maintaining a highway from" Leesburg to Albany could be "procured by the county of Lee, without cost to the county, or at least for a negligible amount expended by said county, by running said highway on the east side of the Central of Georgia Railway Company right of way and connecting with the pavement of Dougherty County." It appearing that this highway would be practically straight, thereby reducing the danger of travel over and upon it, the county commissioners empowered the chairman "to obtain deeds from the various landowners on the proposed route conveying a right of way over their lands for the purpose of erecting a highway thereon," in conjunction with the proper authorities of the county, the State Highway Board, and the Federal Board.³ This road was constructed and is in use today. Most of the roads of the county were of sand-clay material.⁴

By April 1927 the highway between Smithville and Leesburg had also been partially resurveyed and relocated along the property of the railway company, and had been designated as a state-aid-road.⁵

In June 1930 the commissioners came to the conclusion that the chain gang system was being operated at a prohibitive cost to the county, that the building of public roads and public improvements could be done cheaper by free labor than by the chain gang system, and ordered the system abolished in the county.⁶ Finding it expedient that the county have someone in direct charge of its road work, the commissioners ordered that the county employ a road superintendent, and provided that it would be his duty to superintend all work personally and daily, taking care of all machinery and road equipment. His salary was to be \$85 per month, together with suitable quarters for him and his family and sufficient land for a family garden.⁷

In 1941 there were 825 miles of public roads in the county, of which about 30 were paved.⁸ Busses from Atlanta to Tallahassee and return pass through Smithville and Leesburg.⁹ On the "Florida Short Route," leading to and from Columbus, via Dawson in Terrell County, to Albany

1 Commissioners Minutes, vol. F, p. 283, see entry 1.

2 Ibid., p. 318.

3 Ibid., p. 344.

4 U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 2.

5 Commissioners Minutes, vol. F, p. 351.

6 Ibid., p. 457.

7 Ibid., p. 502.

8 Albany Herald, October 24, 1941, pp. 10 H, 16 E.

9 Georgia Stages, Inc., Bus Time Tables, August 1941, No. 1.

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and Tallahassee, the busses and other traffic pass through the Palmyra district of Lee County.¹

Since the construction of the Albany & Northern and the Columbus Southern Railways in 1890, known in 1941 respectively as the Georgia Southwestern & Gulf and the Seaboard Air Line, few places in the county have been more than 5 miles from a railway, and none more than 8 miles.² The main branch of the Central of Georgia has four trains daily through the county, two from Macon and two from Albany. A Central of Georgia line also passes through Smithville to Montgomery, Alabama, and back every day.³ The Seaboard Railway passes through Armena, Oakland, and Palmyra.⁴ The Georgia Southwestern & Gulf passes by Oakfield Ferry, Starr Farm, Philema, the United States Pecan Field Station, Chehaw, Red Bone School, Stock, and Nutview.⁵

Education

After the boll weevil had conquered the cotton of Lee, the natural tendency was to turn to education for solution of the county's problem. Improved facilities for the education of the young to meet eventualities of economics, work, and living were the first consideration. The development of motor transportation and improvement of roads rendered progress in the education of rural youths more efficient by consolidated schools.

Before 1920 the public school system consisted of 16 school districts, with 9 white and 30 negro schools. Leesburg and Smithville had white high and grammar schools, with six and five teachers respectively in each town. Red Bone and Chokee schools had two teachers. The following other white schools had only one teacher: Armena, 9 miles west of Leesburg; Central, 10 miles south; Riff, in the middle northeast section; Norton, 8 miles southeast of Chokee school; and Philema, 9 miles east of Leesburg. All buildings and equipment were considered inadequate. The old courthouse, built in the 1870's, was used for the Leesburg High School. It had been condemned as "good for nothing but a public school house."⁶

In 1920 an educational survey of the county was made by M. L. Duggan, Rural School Agent, Miss Euri Belle Bolton, of the G. N. I. College, and supervisor F. E. Land, of the State Department of Education. The suggestions made by the survey were readily formulated by County Superintendent S. J. Powell into a "program of progress in harmony with the successful experiences of progressive Southern School systems." To

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- 1 Georgia Stages, Inc., Bus Time Tables, August 1941, Nos. 4 and 7.
 - 2 U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, p. 2.
 - 3 Central of Georgia (time table), corrected to April 8, 1941, p. 10.
 - 4 U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, map; Seaboard Railway (time table) effective June 6, 1941, p. 21.
 - 5 U. S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Soil Survey, map.
 - 6 Georgia Department of Education, Educational Survey of Lee County, 1920, pp. 4, 5.

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enlist the support of the citizens of Lee County, the survey and the plans of Superintendent S. J. Powell were published.¹

The plan was to divide the county into four large school districts, namely: Leesburg, Smithville, Red Bone, and New Chokey, with four "live" consolidated schools and adequate buildings.² The school population was 600 white and 2,881 colored, and taxable property, including corporate property, was about \$4,000,000. A levy of 5 mills was made for maintaining public schools, and 4 mills for maintaining public roads.³

By 1937-38 the white schools had been consolidated into fewer but better schools than those originally planned. The consolidated schools at Leesburg and at Smithville were composed of accredited 4 year high schools and standard "Group I" elementary schools. There were 11 teachers at Leesburg and 10 at Smithville. In addition there was a one-teacher school at Red Bone.⁴ Eight of the 22 white teachers in the county taught high school work.⁵ The average college training of the teachers was 3 years.⁶ There was 1 high school library containing 1,000 volumes.⁷

The educational census of white youths in the county of school age was 477, the enrollment, 422, and average daily attendance, 356.67.⁸ The 4-H Club had 30 members. Only 59 whites were classed as illiterate in the county.⁹

Total expenditures for the educational term of 1937-38, for both white and colored, were \$55,431.81,¹⁰ including \$9,121.96 for transportation, \$292.50 for health services, and \$300 for demonstration agents.¹¹

In 1941 there were three accredited consolidated white schools: Leesburg, Smithville, and Palmyra, with about 600 pupils, 22 teachers, and 14 motor truck transports.¹²

With the large colored population in this section, from ante-bellum times attention was given to the religious and educational improvement of the colored race, especially to adapt them to agricultural life in

1 Georgia Department of Education, Educational Survey of Lee County, 1920, 25 pp.

2 Ibid., p. 6.

3 Ibid., p. 4.

4 Georgia Educational Directory, 1940-1941, pp. 48, 84.

5 Sixty-Sixth and Sixty-Seventh Annual Reports of the State Department of Education, Biennium ending June 30, 1938, p. 124.

6 Ibid., p. 158.

7 Georgia Public Forums, Statistical Survey, pp. 181, 182.

8 Sixty-Sixth . . . Reports, p. 75.

9 Forums, Statistical Survey, pp. 181, 182.

10 Sixty-Sixth . . . Reports, p. 40.

11 Ibid., p. 63.

12 Albany Herald, October 24, 1941, p. 10 H.

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the county.¹ In Lee County in 1937-38, 28 colored schools had 42 teachers and 1,839 pupils.² Though not having a regular colored high school, 35 colored high school students were taught by elementary teachers.³ In 1941 there were 28 colored schools, 31 teachers and over 2,000 pupils.⁴ The value of the school buildings was \$21,950; library, \$270; and equipment, \$1,869; totaling \$24,089.⁵

1 Smith, Georgia and Georgia People, pp. 400, 401.
2 Sixty-Sixth . . . Reports, p. 143.
3 Ibid., p. 105.
4 Albany Herald, October 24, 1941, p. 10 H.
5 Sixty-Sixth . . . Reports, p. 92.

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POPULATION OF LEE COUNTY

1830-1940

Year	Whites	Free Persons of Color	Slaves	Negroes	Total
1830	1,369		311		1,680 ¹
1840	2,469	5	2,046		4,520 ²
1850	3,025	8	3,627		6,660 ³
1860	2,242	7	4,947		7,196 ⁴
1870	1,924			7,643	9,567 ⁵
1880	1,739			8,837	10,577 ⁶
1890	1,432			7,642	9,074 ⁷
1900	1,507			8,837	10,344 ⁸
1910	1,687			9,992	11,679 ⁹
1920	1,927			8,977	10,904 ¹⁰
1930	1,836			6,489	8,328 ¹¹
1940	1,895			5,942	7,837 ¹²

¹ U.S. Census Office, Ninth Census (1870), I, The Statistics of the Population of the United States . . . , 20-22.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ U.S. Census Office, Eleventh Census: 1890, Report on Population of the United States . . . , Part I, 14, 406, 444. Total includes one Indian.

⁷ U.S. Census Office, Eleventh Census: 1890, Report on Population of the United States . . . , Part I, 14, 406.

⁸ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States . . . 1910, II, Population, 386.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population, III, Part I, 485.

¹¹ Ibid., 485, 503. Total includes three Mexicans.

¹² U.S. Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Georgia (Second Series), p. 45.

POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES

1840-1940

Year	White	Free Persons of Color	Slaves	Foreign Born	Total
1840	1,389,000	211,000	—	—	1,600,000
1850	2,499,000	3,000	1,000,000	—	3,502,000
1860	3,028,000	8,000	2,827,000	—	5,863,000
1870	3,247,000	7,000	4,047,000	—	7,301,000
1880	4,024,000	—	—	7,645	4,031,645
1890	4,789,000	—	—	2,837	4,791,837
1900	5,433,000	—	—	7,043	5,440,043
1910	6,807,000	—	—	2,837	6,809,837
1920	7,627,000	—	—	2,837	7,629,837
1930	8,287,000	—	—	2,439	8,289,439
1940	8,588,000	—	—	2,943	8,590,943

U.S. Census Office, 1940 Census (1940), I, The Statistics of the Population of the United States . . . , 20-21.

U.S. Census Office, 1930 Census (1930), Report on Population of the United States . . . , Part I, 14, 401, 402. Total includes one

U.S. Census Office, 1920 Census (1920), Report on Population of the United States . . . , Part I, 14, 401.

U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1910 Census of the United States . . . , Part II, Population, 28.

U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1900 Census of the United States . . . , Part I, 402.

U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1890 Census of the United States . . . , Part I, 402. Total includes three Mexicans.

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Note: The public records of Lee County, which are extensively cited in the Historical Sketch, are not listed in this bibliography. The Survey plans to publish the section containing the record entries at a later date, as a second volume. When a county record is cited, a reference is made to the appropriate entry, where the title, location, and other information about the record may be found.

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ROSTER OF OFFICIALS OF LEE COUNTY

First Officials, 1827

Superior Court

Walter T. Colquitt, Judge
Joseph White, Clerk

Solicitor General

Samuel A. Bailey

Inferior Court

Levi W. Moore, Justice
James R. Lyons, Justice
E. H. Hall, Justice
Elbert Milton, Justice
Axum Webb, Justice
Joseph White, Clerk
Jacob W. Cobb, Ordinary Clerk

Justices of the Peace

Alexander Mares (or Mars)
Abraham Lord

Justices of the Peace (cont'd)

James Gay
Philip Pittman
Luke H. Smith

Coroner

Gabriel Parker

Sheriff

Nathan Powell

Tax Receiver

Gabriel McClendon

Tax Collector

Isaac Dyson

County Surveyor

Abner Holliday

Ordinary, 1852

William Newsom

Jury Commissioners, 1869

William Newsom
John Batts
G. M. Stokes

Board of Education, 1872

J. P. Graves
W. T. Sadler
William V. Callaway

Superintendent of Schools, 1875

W. H. Baldy

Board of Commissionersof Roads and Revenues, 1876

William A. Maxwell
John H. Allen
Thomas Porter
G. M. Bryne
W. T. Sadler

County Attorney, 1876

W. H. Baldy

County Administrator, 1883

William C. Gill

County Registrars, 1895

A. S. Ansley
J. T. Carter
O. L. Thompson

Superintendent of Roads, 1903

James Salter

City Court, 1906

H. L. Long, Sr., Judge
W. G. Martin, Solicitor
James Morgan, Clerk

Tax Assessors, 1913

O. L. Thompson
B. F. Cassells
E. B. Martin, Sr.

County Board of Health, 1914

Dr. H. T. Simpson
A. M. Howell
E. J. Stocks

Roster of Official of Lee
County - Present Officials

County Agricultural Agent, 1915
Ridge Rountree

Department of Public Welfare, 1937
Mrs. Florrie Andrews, Director
A. W. Godwin

Department of Public Welfare, 1937 (cont'd)

John R. Usry
Thomas Moore
N. A. Wade
J. I. Kaylor

Present Officials

Board of Commissioners
of Roads and Revenues
J. B. Cannon, Chairman
R. J. Richardson
E. J. Stocks
T. M. Tarpley
G. H. Martin

Superior Court
W. M. Harper, Judge
R. R. Green, Clerk

Solicitor General
E. L. Forrester

Jury Commissioners
Joe T. Stocks
Homer Hay
J. K. Forrester
N. A. Wade
J. R. Usry

Grand Jury
J. C. Ritch, Foreman
Jack Bell, Clerk
J. L. Humphrey
Homer Hay
W. H. Branch
B. C. Godwin
Geo. A. Clark
W. O. Exum
J. R. Long, Sr.
William Tarpley
Eric Jones
E. B. Lee
G. G. Callaway
T. S. Burton
G. G. Sanders
Joe T. Stocks

Grand Jury (cont'd)

L. E. Varner
B. H. Whaling
Edward Cannon
J. R. Green
W. K. Knight, Bailiff

Ordinary
R. C. Harris

County Administrator
R. R. Green

City Court
E. W. Feeney, Sr., Judge
W. G. Martin, Solicitor
R. R. Green, Clerk

County Probation Officer
J. D. McBride (usually)

Justices of the Peace
E. E. Lee, 915th M.D.
S. J. Yeoman, 915th M.D.
Mrs. Nellie Stocks, 975th M.D.
J. H. Randall, 976th M.D.
J. T. Hooks, 1238th M.D.

Constables
E. L. Snider, 915th M.D.
W. H. Phillips, 976th M.D.
G. D. Richards, 1238th M.D.

County Attorney
E. W. Feeney, Sr.

Coroner
W. Z. Youngblood

Roster of Officials of Lee
County - Present Officials

Sheriff

W. E. Tarpley

Tax Receiver

H. T. Kearse

Board of Tax Assessors

T. S. Burton

R. L. Heath

W. A. Newsom

Tax Collector

J. J. Forrester

Treasurer

T. C. Tharpe

County Registrars

L. D. Hays, Chairman

Thomas Moore

R. B. Lee

Board of Education

H. D. Cannon, Chairman

J. I. Kaylor

M. J. Richardson

J. W. Pye

G. C. Kearse

Superintendent of Schools

S. J. Powell

Board of HealthR. H. Enzor, County
PhysicianJ. B. Cannon, Chairman of
Board of CommissionersS. J. Powell, Superinten-
dent of SchoolsCounty Physician

R. H. Enzor, M.D.

Department of Public Welfare

Mrs. Max Cawood, Director

Mrs. Bonnie Mae Kennedy

T. D. Lewis

Thomas Moore

R. L. Andrews

L. E. Varner

Superintendent of Roads

J. J. Segars

County Surveyor

S. P. Crotwell

County Agricultural Agent

L. H. Nelson

M.D.

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D.

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