

# MDAH

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF  
ARCHIVES & HISTORY

Thank you for your interest in obtaining a State Historical Marker. Since 1949, hundreds of sites across the state, including historic buildings, cemeteries, battlefields, churches and synagogues, and Civil Rights sites, have been recognized with the erection of a historical marker. Persons who have contributed to the history of the state have also been recognized. In these cases, the marker(s) are generally tied to a physical place associated with the subject of the marker. All state historical markers are privately funded.

To apply for a State Historical Marker, please complete the enclosed application and return to the address provided. To qualify for a State Historical Marker, the application must show that the site or subject of the marker has historical significance to a local community, the state or the nation. For cemeteries and places of worship, the application must also include some (a) architectural significance; (b) association with a prominent person(s) and/ or (c) association with a local community's history. For all applications, please provide as much background material as possible.

The text for a State Historical Marker is drafted by MDAH staff with the advice and consent of the sponsor(s). However, MDAH reserves the right to approve the final marker text. In drafting your own text, please remember that each letter, space and/or punctuation takes up one space on the grid. Once a final text is approved, the proposed marker will be considered at the next regularly scheduled MDAH Board of Trustees meeting. Following approval by the Board, MDAH staff will place the order with the manufacturer. Once a marker has been ordered, please allow at least twelve (12) weeks for manufacturing and delivery. If a marker dedication is planned in conjunction with an anniversary or special event, please indicate that in the application.

The current cost of a State Historical Marker varies depending on the size of the lettering requested. Prices are set by the manufacturer and are subject to periodic increases beyond the control of MDAH. Currently, the price of a 1 ½" style marker and post is \$1,990, while the 1" text marker is \$2,120. Because of the amount of text allowed, we strongly recommend a 1" style marker. All prices include the post and the cost of shipping. MDAH does not charge any fee for processing a State Historical Marker application. These prices are in effect until May 1, 2022.

Upon completion of a marker, the manufacturer will bill the sponsor directly and will ship the marker and post to the nearest Mississippi Department of Transportation District Office. If the marker is to be located on a state-maintained road, the MDOT may be able to erect the marker. Otherwise, it is the responsibility of the sponsor to receive and erect the marker. MDAH cannot receive payment for the markers; it is the sole responsibility of the sponsor(s) to pay the invoice.

Again, we appreciate your interest in Mississippi history and look forward to working with you.

**STATE HISTORICAL MARKER REQUEST FORM**

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY**

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NAME OF HISTORICAL MARKER WILLING EXPEDITION

SUGGESTED LOCATION OF MARKER ON US HWY 61 NEAR INTERSECTION WITH  
JEFF DAVIS ROAD AND NEAR YOKENA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, WARREN COUNTY

STYLE OF MARKER PREFERRED  1"  1 1/2"  
IS THIS REQUEST FOR A NEW OR A REPLACEMENT MARKER? NEW

REFERENCES FOR DOCUMENTATION OF MARKER (Please include copies of any available research materials and at least one photo of the proposed marker location):

**See attached**

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NAME OF INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANIZATION SPONSORING MARKER. PLEASE INCLUDE MAILING ADDRESS, EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER(S).

**MISSISSIPPI STATE SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

**% BEN JONES, 246 HIGHLAND PLACE DR., JACKSON, MS 39211-5909**

**CELL: 601-927-8479, EMAIL: BEJONESII@BELLSOUTH.NET**

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DOES THE SPONSOR WISH TO SUGGEST A MARKER TEXT? YES  
IF SO, PLEASE INCLUDE A SAMPLE TEXT ON THE GRID PROVIDED.

*The Department of Archives and History, in accordance with the policies adopted by the Board of Trustees, reserves the right to approve the final marker text.*

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SEND REQUEST FORM TO:

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**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY**  
**Attn: STATE HISTORICAL MARKERS**  
**Post Office Box 571**  
**Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0571**  
**Phone: 601-576-6908**

# STATE HISTORICAL MARKER PAYMENT RESPONSIBILITY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I / We the undersigned sponsor(s) do hereby acknowledge and understand that the sponsor(s) are solely responsible for the cost of State Historical Markers. Upon approval of this request/application and subsequent approval of marker text drafted by Department staff with sponsor consent, I/ we also agree that payment will be submitted to the manufacturer in a timely manner.

Sponsor(s) Email, Address and Telephone Number(s):

**MISSISSIPPI STATE SOCIETY SONS OF THE**

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**AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

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**EMAIL: BEJONESII@BELLSOUTH.NET**

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**% 246 HIGHLAND PLACE DR., JACKSON, MS 39211-5909**

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**CELL: 601-927-8479**

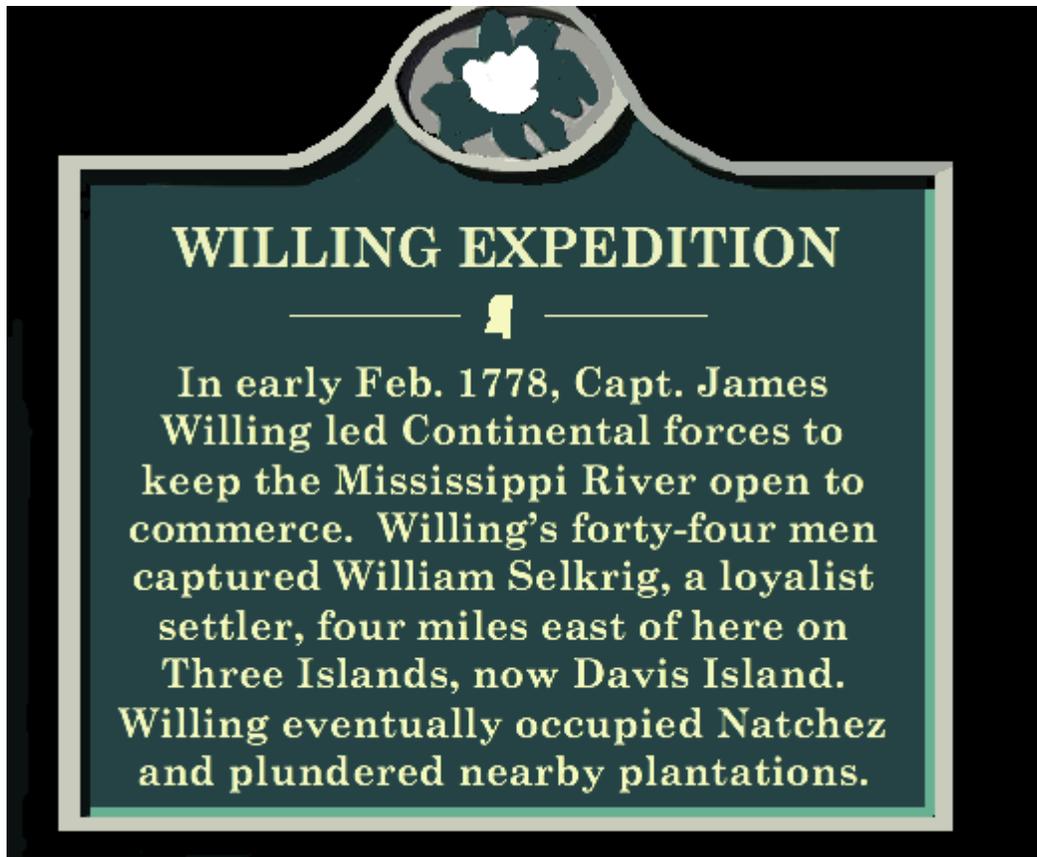
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Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_





William Silkrigs [sic], sworn on the *voire dire*, says, "that he is in no instance interested in this claim at present; that he, the witness, in the year 1777, began to improve this land, and built him a house, and cleared and fenced in about three acres; and the next year lived as overseer for one of his neighbors, yet cultivated a crop on the same place, and gathered it in, and hauled it to the house of the person where he lived, and then went off and staid about two months and returned to his land again, and the Americans took him as a prisoner, and carried him down the river in the year 1779, and remained with the Americans some time, and was afterwards retaken by the British. By this time the Indians had plundered his place, and was thereby prevented from returning to it, and he continued down in the settled parts of the country, and continued there until lately, and obtained a Spanish grant in Adams county; that he, the witness, had a British warrant for the land in question; that under that warrant Mr. Vousdan surveyed the land; that he, the witness, sent the warrant and survey to Pensacola to get a patent, but they never were returned; and that the premises were surveyed in the month of August, 1777; the witness says he was twenty-one years of age in the year 1774."

Walter Lowrie & Matthew Clark, Comp. ed., American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States (Washington DC: Gales and Seaton, 1833), House of Representatives, 10th Congress, 2nd Session, Class VIII Public Lands: Vol. 1, "*Report of Claims founded on British and Spanish Warrants of Survey within the District west of Pearl River, disallowed by the Board of Commissioners; made in pursuance of the fourth section of an act entitled "An act concerning the sales of the lands of the United States, and for other purposes," passed March 31, 1808,*" 570.

Marion Bragg, Historic Names and Places on the Lower Mississippi River (Vicksburg, Miss.: Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers, Mississippi River Commission, 1977), 167-170.

Christopher Morris, Becoming Southern: The Evolution of a Way of Life, Warren County and Vicksburg, Mississippi 1770-1860 (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), 21.

Christopher Morris, Town and County in the Old South: Vicksburg and Warren County, Mississippi, 1770-1860 (Dissertation, 1991), 74-77, 84.

May Wilson McBee, The Natchez Court Records, 1767-1805, Vol. II (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1979), "*Unrecorded Land Claims,*" Item No. 1925, 579.

United States Geological Survey, Yokena Quadrangle Mississippi-Louisiana 7.5 Minutes Series (Topographic): NW/4 Yokena 15' Quadrangle, No. 336751, 1963 (Photo inspected 1973).

Mississippi State Highway Department, Traffic & Planning Division, General Highway Map: Warren County, Mississippi, 1967

We gratefully acknowledge the support and assistance of Historian Jordan Rushing and Director George Bolm of the Old Court House Museum, Vicksburg and Warren County Historical Society, Inc.

AMERICAN STATE PAPERS.

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DOCUMENTS

LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE.

OF THE

**Congress of the United States,**

IN RELATION TO

THE PUBLIC LANDS,

FROM THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIRST CONGRESS TO THE FIRST SESSION OF THE  
TWENTY-THIRD CONGRESS :

MARCH 4, 1789, TO JUNE 15, 1834.

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SELECTED AND EDITED,

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

BY WALTER LOWRIE,

SECRETARY OF THE SENATE.

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**VOLUME I.**

FROM MARCH 4th, 1789, TO FEBRUARY 27th, 1809.

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**AMERICAN STATE PAPERS**

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**CLASS VIII**

**PUBLIC LANDS**

**VOLUME I**

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William S. Hein & Co., Inc.  
Buffalo, New York  
1998

# AMERICAN STATE PAPERS.

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## PUBLIC LANDS.

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1st CONGRESS.

No. 1.

1st SESSION.

### VIRGINIA MILITARY BOUNTY LANDS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES JULY 31, 1789.

Mr. WHITE, from the committee to which it was referred to examine into the measures taken by Congress and the State of Virginia, respecting the lands reserved for the use of the officers and soldiers of the State, on continental and State establishments, in the cession made by the said State to the United States of the territory northwest of the Ohio river, made the following report :

That the Legislature of Virginia, by their act of the 2d of January, 1781, resolved that they would yield to the Congress of the United States, for the benefit of the said States, all the right, title, and claim, which the said commonwealth had to the northwest of the River Ohio, upon condition (among others in the said act expressed) that, in case the quantity of good lands on the southeast side of the Ohio, upon the waters of Cumberland river, and between the Green river and Tennessee river, which have been reserved by law for the Virginia troops upon continental establishment, should, from the North Carolina line, bearing in further upon the Cumberland lands than was expected, prove insufficient for the legal bounties, the deficiencies should be made up to the troops in good lands, to be laid off between the Rivers Scioto and Little Miami, on the northwest side of the River Ohio, in such proportions as have been engaged to them by the laws of Virginia.

That Congress, by their act of the 13th of September, 1783, agreed to accept the said cession, on the condition above mentioned.

That the Legislature of Virginia, by their act of the 20th of October, 1783, authorized their delegates in Congress to convey, transfer, and assign to the United States, the right, title, and claim, of the said State, to the lands within her charter, and northwest of the River Ohio, on the terms agreed to by Congress, including the above mentioned condition, which conveyance the said delegates accordingly made.

That, on the 17th of July, 1788, Congress resolved that the State of Virginia be informed that Congress consider all locations and surveys which shall be made by, or on account of, the said troops, on the said lands between the Scioto and Little Miami, before the said deficiency, if any, on the southeast side of the Ohio, shall be ascertained and stated to Congress, invalid, and

that the executive of the State of Virginia be requested to inform Congress whether there has been any deficiency of good lands, reserved by the laws of that State, on the southeast side of the Ohio, for the Virginia troops upon continental establishment; and if there has been any deficiency, what is the amount; and, also, what checks have been provided by the said State to prevent the said troops taking up more lands than are actually due to them; in order that measures may immediately be taken for laying off, for the benefit of such troops, a sufficient quantity of good land between the Rivers Scioto and Little Miami, and that Congress may be prepared to dispose of the remaining land between those rivers, for the general benefit of the Union.

That the council of Virginia, on the 4th of August, 1788, took the said resolutions into consideration, and, thereupon, advised that the acting superintendent, appointed by virtue of an act of Assembly, entitled "An act for surveying the lands given by law to the officers and soldiers on continental and State establishments, and for other purposes," do state to that board the quantity of good lands on the southeast side of the Ohio; whether all the good lands were located or surveyed before they proceeded to locate on the northwest side of the Ohio; how much has been located or surveyed on the southeast side for the Virginia troops on State establishment; how much for the Virginia troops on the southeast side; what is the real deficiency of good lands on the southeast side; what locations or surveys have been made for the Virginia troops on continental establishment, on the northwest side; and what quantity on the southeast side is allotted to the continental and State lines, by the agreement of their respective deputations, on the 17th of December, 1783; that an answer be written to Congress, in the words by the said advice recommended; and that copies of the said advice shall be immediately despatched, by express, to the superintendents aforesaid, together with the copies of the above mentioned resolution; and that a copy of that advice be transmitted to the delegates of the State in Congress.

In compliance of which advice the governor of Virginia, on the said 4th of August, 1788, wrote to the president of Congress a letter, of which an attested copy is produced. [No. 1.]

## MISSISSIPPI TERRITORY,

TOWN OF WASHINGTON, July 3, 1807.

Sir: The Board of Commissioners west of Pearl river, established by a law of Congress regulating the grants of land, and providing for the disposal of the lands of the United States south of the State of Tennessee, respectfully report:

That, having finished the business assigned them, so far as related to decisions, on the 15th ultimo proceeded to the execution of that part of their duty required by the seventh section of the said act, and find that it is not practicable to comply with the requisitions thereof, to the extent originally contemplated: because a survey of the lands has not, as yet, been made and returned, agreeably to the act aforesaid, by which the Board can know and ascertain the British claims required to be reported, and their conflicts with other claims, and also their present situation. They, therefore, are under the necessity of submitting the following, as the only report which, at this time, can be made, to wit:

The annexed abstract, marked (A) contains all the claims to lands held under "British grants, legally and fully executed, which have been duly recorded, the title of which is not confirmed to the holders thereof.

The conditions annexed to those grants are numerous, and may be classed under four heads: those denominated mandamus grants, those to officers of the army and navy, and those to any other description of persons; the conditions of which vary, as will be seen by a reference to a copy of each, which is contained in the annexed sheets, numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4.

As to the performance of any of the conditions of those grants, no evidence has been given or offered to the Board relative thereto: in fact, they seem to have been considered more as matter of form than substance, and to have become obsolete.

Abstract (B) contains such claims as have been disallowed by the Board, on suspicion of their being antedated; but to be reported to the Secretary of the Treasury, in conformity to the third section of an act supplementary to the before recited law.

Abstract (C) contains claims of minors, founded on warrants of survey, &c. and disallowed by the Board, and also required to be reported by the ninth section of said supplemental act. As to the circumstances which occasioned the issuing these warrants, and the validity attached to them, the commissioners observe that it seems to have been the policy of the Spanish Government to guard against monopolies of landed property: hence, it frequently happened that, in allotting lands to men with numerous families of children, certain portions were granted to their children, or some of them, in their own right, which, by the Spanish laws, had the same validity as if granted to persons of full age; that, under this character of title, the parties were in the habit of considering themselves as secure as if they had gone on to perfect their rights to complete patent, and especially as the powers of the Spanish Government to revoke the complete as well as the incomplete titles were the same; added to which, it was very expensive, by reason of the extortion and high fees of the Spanish officers, for the poor, or common class of people, to carry their claims through all the grades of title.

THOMAS RODNEY,  
ROBERT WILLIAMS,  
THOMAS H. WILLIAMS.

True copy from the journal of the board of Commissioners.

THOMAS H. WILLIAMS.

## CONDITIONS.

1. Let a patent be prepared and engrossed, to pass the great seal of this province, importing His Majesty's most gracious grant unto Captain Amos Ogden, his heirs and assigns, of a plantation or tract of land, containing twenty five thousand acres, situate southwesterly about twenty-one miles from the old Natchez fort, bounded southerly by a creek called Homochitto creek, and about one-quarter of a mile east of a tract of one thousand acres, granted to Colin Graham, Esq. on said creek, about half a mile south from land granted to Junis Hooper, on a creek called Second creek, and on the other side by vacant land; together with all rights, members, privileges, and appurtenances to the same, being or in anywise belonging, upon the following terms, conditions, and reservations, viz.: That the said Amos Ogden do settle the said lands with foreign Protestants,

or persons that shall be brought from His Majesty's other colonies in North America, within ten years from the date of the grant, in the proportion of one person for every hundred acres. That if one-third of the land is not settled with foreign Protestants, or persons that shall be brought from His Majesty's other colonies in North America, in the above mentioned proportion, within three years from the date of the grant, the whole to be forfeited to His Majesty, his heirs and successors.

That such part of the whole tract as is not settled with foreign Protestants, or persons that shall be brought from His Majesty's other colonies in North America, at the expiration of ten years from the date of the grant, do revert to His Majesty, his heirs, and successors. That an annual quit-rent of one halfpenny sterling per acre be reserved to His Majesty, his heirs, and successors, payable on the feast of St. Michael in every year, to commence and become payable upon one-half of the said land, on the feast of St. Michael which shall first happen after the expiration of five years from the date of the grant, and to be payable on every ensuing feast of St. Michael, or within fourteen days after; and the whole quantity to be subject in like manner to the like quit-rents, at the expiration of ten years. That there be a reservation in the said grant to His Majesty, his heirs, and successors, of all those parts of the land which the surveyor shall, upon the return of the survey, report to be proper for erecting fortifications, public wharfs, and naval yards, or for other military purposes. That there be a reservation to His Majesty, his heirs, and successors, of all mines of gold, silver, copper, lead, and coals. That, if any part of the land shall appear, by the surveyor's report, to be well adapted to the growth of hemp or flax, it shall be a condition of the grant that the grantee shall sow, and continue annually to cultivate, a due proportion of the land, not less than one acre in every thousand, with that beneficial article of produce; the same terms, conditions, and reservations above mentioned being conformable to His Majesty's order in council to me directed, bearing date the thirteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven, and with the other usual clauses, reservations, provisoes, restrictions, and limitations, as contained in His Majesty's instructions; and, for so doing, this shall be your sufficient warrant.

2. To have and to hold the said tract of land, and all and singular the premises hereby granted, with the appurtenances, unto the said Daniel Clark, his heirs, and assigns, forever, in free and common soccage, yielding and paying unto us, our heirs, and successors, or to the Receiver General of our quit-rents for the time being, or to such other officer as shall be appointed to receive the same, a quit-rent of one halfpenny sterling per acre, at the feast of St. Michael every year, the first payment to commence on the said feast of St. Michael, which shall first happen after the expiration of ten years from the date hereof, or within fourteen days after the said feast, annually: Provided, always, and this present grant is upon condition, nevertheless, that the said Daniel Clark, his heirs, and assigns, shall and do, within three years after the expiration of the term of ten years aforesaid, for every fifty acres of plantable land hereby granted, clear and cultivate three acres, at least, in that part thereof which he or they shall judge most convenient and advantageous, or else do clear and drain three acres of swampy or sunken ground, or do drain three acres of marsh, if any such shall be contained therein; and shall further, within the time aforesaid, put and keep upon every fifty acres thereof, accounted barren, three neat cattle, and continue the same thereon, until three acres, for every fifty acres, be fully cleared and improved: and if it shall so happen that there be no part of the said tract of land fit for cultivation within the time aforesaid, without manuring and improving the same, if the said Daniel Clark, his heirs, and assigns, shall, within three years after the expiration of the ten years, as aforesaid, erect on some part of the said tract of land one good dwelling-house, to contain at least twenty feet in length, and sixteen feet in breadth, and put on his said land the like number of three neat cattle, as aforesaid, for every fifty acres therein contained; or otherwise, if any part of the said tract of land shall be stony or rocky ground, not fit for culture or pasture, shall and do, within three years, as aforesaid, besides erecting the said house, begin to employ thereon, and continue to work, for three years, then next ensuing, in digging any stone quarry or mine, one good and able hand for every hundred acres thereof, it shall be accounted a sufficient cultivation and improvement: Provided, also, that every three acres which shall be cleared and worked, or cleared and drained, as aforesaid, shall

D—Continued.

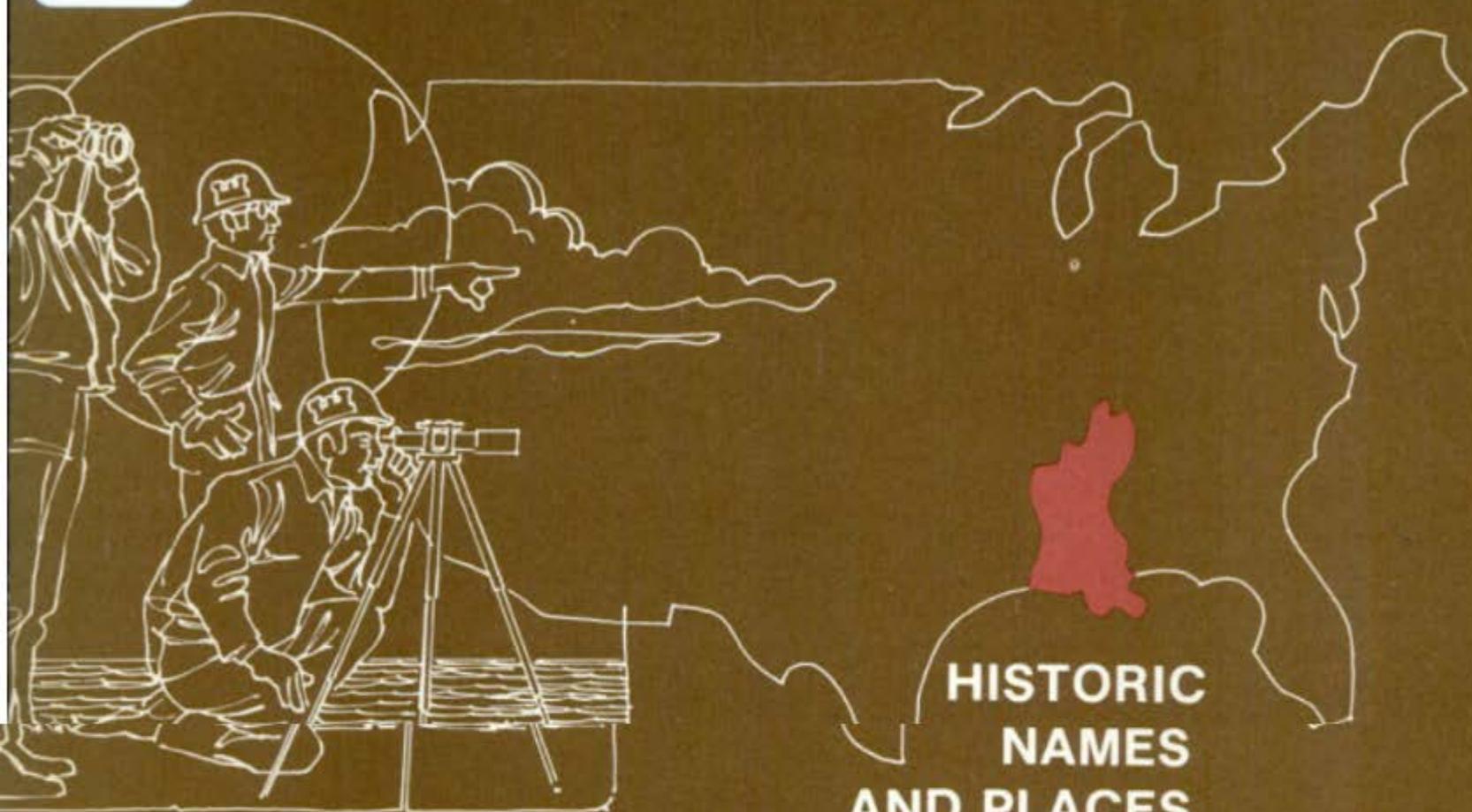
Register's No.	Claimant's name.	Name of original claimant.	Situation.	Quantity.	Title.		Remarks, &c.
					Where derived.	Date.	
1955	Samuel Brooks	William Silkrigs	Mississippi river	200	British	-	No warrant produced, but a certificate of a survey made the 21st August, 1777; and a certificate of William Vousdan, formerly a deputy surveyor, dated in 1801. Anthony Hutchins says, "that the signature to the abovementioned certificate is the hand-writing of William Vousdan, who, on the 21st of August, 1777, was a deputy surveyor for this district, under the British Government of West Florida; and that Silkrigs was twenty-one years of age, and upwards, at the date of the survey." John Girault says, "that William Silkrigs was an actual settler in the Mississippi territory, on the 27th October, 1795." William Silkrigs, sworn on the <i>voire dire</i> , says, "that he is in no instance interested in this claim at present; that he, the witness, in the year 1777, began to improve this land, and built him a house, and cleared and fenced in about three acres; and the next year lived as overseer to one of his neighbors, yet cultivated a crop on the same place, and gathered it in, and hauled it to the house of the person where he lived, and then went off and staid about two months, and returned to his land again, and the Americans took him as a prisoner, and carried him down the river in the year 1779, and remained with the Americans some time, and was afterwards retaken by the British. By this time the Indians had plundered his place, and was thereby prevented from returning to it, and he continued down in the settled parts of the country, and continued there until lately, and obtained a Spanish grant in Adams county; that he, the witness, had a British warrant for the land in question; that under that warrant Mr. Vousdan surveyed the land; that he, the witness, sent the warrant and survey to Pensacola to get a patent, but they never were returned; and that the premises were surveyed in the month of August, 1777; the witness says he was twenty-one years of age in the year 1774." Narsworthy Hunter says, "that this land was first settled in the year 1796 by the claimant, when he built a small cabin and cleared half an acre, and cultivated it in corn, and nothing more has been done on the premises since that time, that the witness knows of. The witness does not know the age of the grantee or patentee, but, from his appearance, thought he was not twenty-one years of age in 1793." Palsor Shilling says, "that the claimant, when he first came to this country, which he thinks was in the year 1790, he came to the house of the witness to undertake to build a mill for him, and that he then appeared to be a man grown, and was acting for himself, and the witness thinks he was two or three-and-twenty years of age at that time." Patrick Foley says: "that the claimant was upwards of twenty-one years of age at the date of the warrant, and the witness believes he was a resident in the Mississippi territory on and before the 27th October, 1795."
1926	P. McDermot	P. McDermot	Bayou Tunica	440 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Spanish	Jan. 18, 1793	No warrant produced, but a certificate from Luke Collins, dated 26th June, 1776, stating that he had surveyed the same in pursuance of an order from Elias Dunford, surveyor general of West Florida.
1927	John Choate	John Choate	Second creek	100	British	-	No warrants produced, nor any other evidence of title offered.
1928	John Choate	John Choate	Second creek	100	British	-	No warrants produced, nor any other evidence of title offered.
1929	Sarah Choate	Sarah Choate	St. Catherine's creek	500 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Spanish	-	James Hartman says, "that the original claimant was upwards of twenty-one years of age at the date of the warrant, and had a wife and ten children in the year 1774."
1959	Samuel Brooks	Wm. Hubbard	Bayou Pierre	100	British	Aug. 4, 1779	No warrants produced, nor any other evidence of title offered.

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**HISTORIC  
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AND PLACES  
ON THE LOWER  
MISSISSIPPI  
RIVER**

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army

**HISTORIC NAMES  
AND PLACES  
ON THE  
LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER**

by  
**Marion Bragg**

Published by  
**MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION**  
Vicksburg, Mississippi  
1977

afterward until the river moved west, leaving the village landlocked. It was then abandoned, and all that remains today is an old cemetery on top of a nearby bluff.

Islands No. 104 and No. 105 were in the Reid-Bedford Bend, and disappeared from navigation maps when the bendway was cut off.

## **DIAMOND CUTOFF**

*Mile 425.5 AHP, Map 34*

Diamond Cutoff was the first artificial cutoff constructed by the Corps of Engineers in the 1930's. There had already been several natural cutoffs in the area, and engineers believed that the river was about to create another at Diamond Island. To forestall the natural cutoff, the engineers began the construction of the artificial channel which was designed to keep the river channel in a more desirable alignment than the river itself might have chosen.

Work commenced in the fall of 1932, and the new channel was opened on January 8, 1933. It developed slowly but satisfactorily and eventually became the permanent bed of the Lower Mississippi.

## **DAVIS ISLAND, MISSISSIPPI**

*Mile 415.5 AHP, Map 34*  
*Right bank, descending*

The course of the Lower Mississippi in the Davis Island area has changed many times during the past two centuries.

In 1776, when American revolutionaries were putting the finishing touches on the document they called "A Declaration of Independence," loyal British subjects were asking the British King for grants of land on a great bend of the Lower Mississippi that was located a short distance above the mouth of Big Black River. In the bend were three small islands, and the British settlers called the area "The Three Islands."

One of the British subjects who succeeded in obtaining a small grant of land at The Three Islands was William Selkrig, a hard-working, peace-loving Tory who built himself a small cabin on the river bank, cleared away some of the ancient trees, and began to cultivate his soil in 1777.

In January, 1778, Selkrig saw a strange armed vessel approaching the landing near his cabin. The armed vessel was called the *Rattletrap*, and was under the command of an American captain, James Willing. Willing and his party were on their way to New Orleans, where he would obtain some assistance and supplies for the American revolutionaries from the Spanish governor, Bernardo de Galvez. Along the way, Willing was recruiting men who sympathized with the American cause, and burning the homes and crops of those who did not. Selkrig, a loyal Britisher, was taken prisoner, thrown aboard the *Rattletrap*, and carried away by the raiders.

Fortunately for Selkrig, British friends rescued him before the boat reached New Orleans. He returned to his little plantation at The Three Islands, only to find that Indians had plundered his cabin and fields in his enforced absence. Fearing for his own life, he abandoned his farm and moved down the river into a more settled area.

There were no further efforts to establish plantations in the vicinity of what is now called Davis Island until it became apparent that the United States was about to settle its boundary dispute with Spain, and that the Old Natchez District would become American property. American settlers rushed in to establish claims and a settlement called Palmyra sprang up on the east bank of the river in the bend.

When the United States opened a land office to settle land titles and dispose of government land, William Selkrig filed his claim to the land where he had built his little cabin in 1777. His title under the British land grant was held to be invalid, and the preemption claims of squatters in the area were recognized.

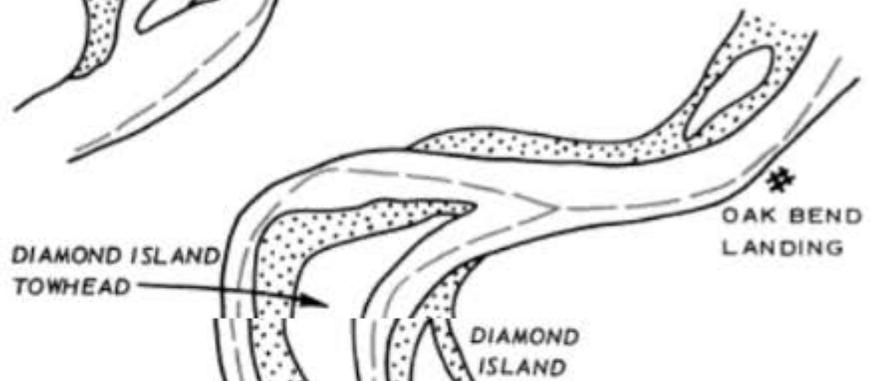
In 1808, Edward Turner, a Natchez lawyer, began to purchase the small tracts of land claimed by the Palmyra squatters, and by 1810 he had acquired the whole settlement on the north side of the peninsula of land in the big bend. Turner was joined in 1818 by another purchaser, Joseph E. Davis, who acquired most of the land on the west side of the peninsula. An adjoining property became the home of Joe Davis' younger brother, Jefferson Davis.

The two Davis plantations, Hurricane and Brierfield, became well-known and the bend of the river was renamed Davis Bend. When the Union campaign against Vicksburg was under way in 1863, both the Davis plantations were confiscated. Jefferson Davis, who had been a hero of the War with Mexico, a United States Senator, and U. S. Secretary of War, was now the President of the Confederate States of America, and Union authorities thought it was particularly fitting that the plantation that had belonged to the highest ranking rebel of all should be appropriated for use by the Freedmens' Bureau. A model colony was to be set up, to demonstrate that the ex-slaves from the southern plantations would quickly become self-supporting, given an opportunity. Cotton speculators thwarted the good intentions of both the black farmers and their government supervisors, and the colony was not a success.

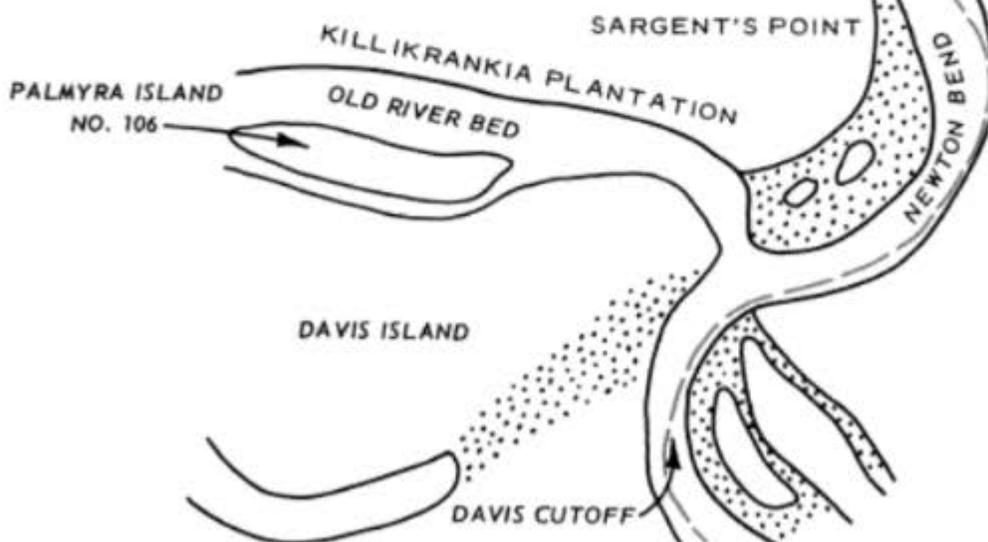
After the war ended, Joseph Davis regained possession of the land in Davis Bend by signing an oath of loyalty to the Federal Government. He swore to Union military officers who administered the oath that he had taken no part in the rebellion and had given no aid or encouragement to the Confederacy of which his brother had been the first and only President. Jefferson Davis, on the other hand, steadfastly refused to take the oath, saying that he would never beg for favors from the Federal Government. He



*BEFORE DAVIS CUTOFF. The big bend of the Lower Mississippi which had been known as "The Three Islands" during British dominion was later called Davis Bend. In the 1821 map shown above, the neck of the bend is extremely narrow, but it would be almost half a century before the river broke through to abandon the bend and create a new channel for itself.*



*AFTER DAVIS CUTOFF. After the Lower Mississippi cut through the narrow neck of land in Davis Bend, the peninsula of land that had been attached to the Mississippi mainland was called Davis Island. It had been the home of Jefferson Davis, first and only President of the Confederacy, and of his brother, Joseph E. Davis.*



had sincerely believed in the right of a state to secede, and he saw no need to "repent" of actions undertaken in good faith.

Two years after the war had ended, a natural cutoff occurred, and the peninsula in Davis Bend became an island. The Davis Cutoff removed about 25 miles of navigation channel from the river, but the reach was an unstable one that soon began to change again. In 1904, the Mississippi broke through a narrow neck of land at Killikrankia plantation and reclaimed its old bed in Davis Bend. When Diamond Cutoff was opened in 1933 the old bendway around Davis Island filled at both ends and the river permanently abandoned it.

The oxbow lake that was once Davis Bend is called Palmyra Lake today, and has become a popular fishing and hunting area for both Louisiana and Mississippi residents. The homes of the Davis family no longer stand, and the island is now a vast plantation where beans, cotton, and cattle are raised. It is separated from Mississippi by the river, and from Louisiana by Palmyra Lake and swampy areas, and few people ever see it.



(From 1941 MRC Map)

*AFTER DIAMOND CUTOFF.* After the construction of an artificial cutoff at Diamond Island, the Lower Mississippi abandoned its old beds in Davis Bend and Davis Cutoff and flowed into Newtown Bend, where it remains today. The above map was made in 1941, a few years after Diamond Cutoff.

B E C O M I N G

# *Southern*

The Evolution of a Way of Life,  
Warren County and Vicksburg, Mississippi,  
1770–1860



*Christopher Morris*

# BECOMING SOUTHERN

The Evolution of a Way of Life,  
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CHRISTOPHER MORRIS

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been settled by people from elsewhere, but henceforth by regular contact with world markets, as in the case of the fur trade, and as part of a larger political entity that imposed its authority if not always successfully from distant places. From the late eighteenth century through to the middle of the next, these two communities coexisted and developed symbiotically, although over time there occurred a distinct shift in emphasis from interior to exterior.

In the spring of 1778, recalled Matthew Phelps, "the distresses of the revolutionary war began to afflict our remote settlements, and on a sudden put a stop to the efforts of honest industry, and agricultural enterprise among us."<sup>53</sup> The British had since the beginning of conflict worried about holding their shaky West Florida outpost, and with good reason. Sparsely settled, poorly defended by only a few hundred troops, and adjoining the much more populous Spanish Louisiana, the colony seemed indefensible, especially if Spain were to join the fray alongside France. England hoped to keep the conflict a domestic affair. Spain concurred, reluctant to risk angering the British, whose trade had become vital to Spanish New World possessions. But the necessity of remaining neutral seemed more apparent from the vantage point of Madrid than it did from New Orleans, where Governor Bernardo de Galvez entertained American proposals for a Spanish-supported raid on British West Florida. Plans eventually materialized in the form of James Willing's expedition down the Mississippi. Looting and sacking plantations, then withdrawing below the Spanish line only to strike again, Willing brought the Revolution to the Mississippi.<sup>54</sup>

War and the Royal Navy's blockade of New Orleans brought trade to a standstill. Farmers had no way to market their produce. The flow of credit ceased as hard-pressed lenders called in loans even at the risk of ruining debtors. Making matters worse, Native Americans took advantage of the general disruption in authority to pillage homesteads near their territory. John Farquhar "was compelled to give up his property to his creditors on account of the failure of his crop." Claiming he "had done everything in his power to do justice to his creditors," Farquhar "sold his plantation and had much trouble to make a crop this year on the plantation on which he is now settled; he asks that his creditors wait until the end of the present crop when he will divide the whole" among them. Jeremiah Routh told his creditors how the "Indians have stolen every one of his horses and reduced him to giving his last cow to pay a debt to a certain Thomas Green, his hogs that were not taken by the Indians are running wild in the woods." At the time of "the very unhappy revolution," Choctaw warriors drove Justus King and his brother Caleb from their home. Settling closer to the fort at Natchez, the Kings managed to live off savings while their land sat abandoned for nearly ten years. Willing's raiders actually carried off William Selkrig, and in his absence Native Americans plundered his farm. He never returned to it.<sup>55</sup>

TOWN AND COUNTRY IN THE OLD SOUTH:  
VICKSBURG AND WARREN COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI,  
1770-1860

By

CHRISTOPHER CHARLES MORRIS

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1991

another, and strangers had become, rightfully as it respected them, possessed of the property on the soil which once vested in me."<sup>48</sup> Phelps had purchased title from a squatter, which, according to custom, made the land his. But, again according to custom, in his long absence he lost his title. Squatters' rights, in which Phelps place such confidence, evolved as the only viable way to establish and hold a claim. The land office was miles away in Pensacola, and legal title took time and money to process. The procedure of acquiring legal title, however, did not replace custom; it worked with it. So long as the formal process remained slow and expensive, custom continued to serve a useful function, and so long as custom remained insecure, landowners sought legal title, as Phelps eventually did. In some cases, families had to market at least one crop to raise the fees necessary when applying for a family right. Unable to "pay the expenses of taking up a piece of land," Jeremiah Routh squatted, acquiring legal title only after Anthony Hutchins, a prosperous Natchez landowner and speculator, offered to pay the costs in return for half of Routh's entitlement.<sup>49</sup>

In one sense, then, two communities appeared on the Loosa Chitto. There was a interior community of interdependent households who concentrated on raising a subsistence of food, taking only small surpluses to local markets and purchasing items not available within the

community, exchanging commodities locally so as to minimize each household's need to interact with the outside world; an interior community with its own ways of determining how one established a claim to a piece of land, who was worthy of a neighbor's assistance, of how things were done. At the same time there was an exterior community in constant interaction with the rest of the world, initially by virtue of having been settled by people from elsewhere, but henceforth by regular contact with world markets, as in the case of the fur trade, and as part of a larger political entity that imposed its authority from distant places. Over the period under study, through the middle of the nineteenth century, these two communities coexisted, and developed symbiotically, although there was a distinct shift in emphasis from interior to exterior.

In the spring of 1778, recalled Matthew Phelps, "the distresses of the revolutionary war began to afflict our remote settlements, and on a sudden put a stop to the efforts of honest industry, and agricultural enterprise among us."<sup>50</sup> The British had since the beginning of conflict worried about holding their shaky West Florida outpost, and with good reason. Sparsely settled, poorly defended by only a few hundred troops, and adjoining the much more populous Spanish Louisiana, the colony seemed indefensible, especially if Spain were to join the fray alongside France.

England hoped to keep the conflict a domestic affair. Spain concurred, reluctant to risk angering the British, whose trade had become vital to Spanish New World possessions. But the necessity of remaining neutral seemed more apparent from the vantage point of Madrid than it did from New Orleans, where Governor Bernardo de Galvez entertained American proposals for a Spanish supported raid on British West Florida. Plans eventually materialized in the form of James Willing's expedition down the Mississippi. Looting and sacking plantations, then withdrawing below the Spanish line, only to strike again, Willing brought the Revolution to the Mississippi.<sup>51</sup>

War and the Royal Navy's blockade of New Orleans brought trade to a standstill. Farmers had no way to market their produce. The flow of credit ceased as hard pressed lenders called in loans even at the risk of ruining debtors. Making matters worse, Native Americans took advantage of the general disruption in authority to pillage homesteads near their territory. John Farquhar "was compelled to give up his property to his creditors on account of the failure of his crop." Claiming he "had done everything in his power to do justice to his creditors," Farquhar "sold his plantation and had much trouble to make a crop this year on the plantation on which he is now settled; he asks that his creditors wait until the end of the present crop when he will divide the whole among" them. Jeremiah Routh told his creditors how the

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By the signing of the second Treaty of Paris in 1783, most of the Big Black families were gone. The Lymans, supporters of the British during the War, fled the Spanish, who by then controlled the district. For the time being Matthew Phelps gave up farming, enlisted with the British, and eventually returned to New England, settling in Vermont. There he remarried and started another family. Indians killed John Felt. Most of the remaining settlers moved closer to Natchez, near the protection of Fort Panmure. By the war's end following the Spanish seizure of the Natchez district in 1779, only John Stowers remained on the Big Black, although even he apparently kept another home thirty or so miles to the south at Fairchild's Creek. But the war's interruption proved brief. After 1783, with the signing of the Treaty of Paris, migration to West Florida started

46. William Brocas vs. Benjamin Day (1781), vol. F, p. 5, and John Stowers, et al. vs. John and Samuel Watkins (1781), vol. F, p. 20, Mississippi Provincial Archives, Spanish Dominion, RG 26, microfilm, MDAH.

47. Some of these ideas are treated, although somewhat differently, in Bruce H. Mann, Neighbors and Strangers: Law and Community in Early Connecticut (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 9-27. Mann sees litigation as being every bit as personal as the debt relationships that they settled, which begs the question of why people would take their affairs to court in the first place, instead of settling them personally, in the neighborhood, face-to-face. It makes more sense that the formality and regularity of litigation made confrontation less personal, thus defusing conflict while at the same time allowing creditors to receive compensation, and debtors to maintain their integrity.

In any case, the most important point made by Mann, one with which I agree, is that formal authority and legal procedure complimented local and personal systems of credit and exchange. The South was no less litigious than colonial New England.

48. Phelps, Memoirs and Adventures, pp. 30, 102. Emphasis is added.

49. McBee, Natchez Court Records, p. 232.

50. Phelps, Memoirs and Adventures, p. 107.

51. Robert V. Haynes, The Natchez District.

52. McBee, Natchez Court Records, pp. 189, 303, 305, 579; Lowrie, ed. American State Papers, 1:570.

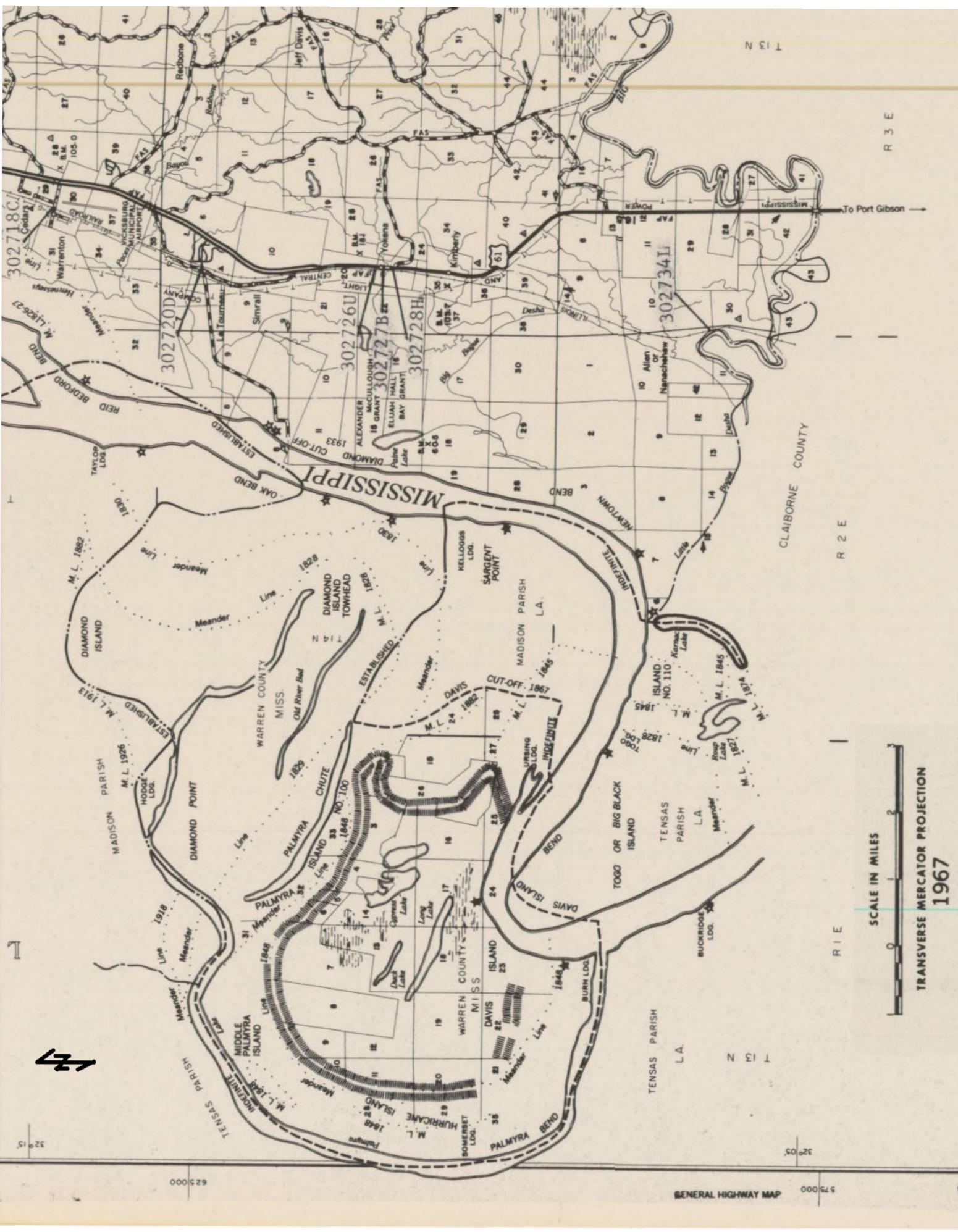
53. McBee, Natchez Court Records, pp. 9, 23, 93, 104, 577; Lowrie, ed. American State Papers, 1:566; Fabel, Economy of British West Florida, p.

- deed, who conveyed the same to the present claimant, 8 Aug. 1802. Signed by Thomas Fenton.
- No. 1907. Claimants: Heirs of C. Boardman, decd., 31 July 1804. Wit: John Henderson, 7 Sept. 1804. Notation: See Nos. 689 and 1825. Certificate B-271 issued 6 Mar. 1807. The guardians of the orphans and heirs of Charles Boardman, deceased, claim in their name 112 arpents in the District of Pine Ridge, which sd tract is part of 600 arpents granted to Abner Pipes from the Spanish Government, 22 Feb. 1793, which said grantee, as also the said Charles Boardman, were heads of families and actually cultivated the said tract on 27 Oct. 1795. Signed John Henderson, guardian. Plat shows Abner Pipes, John Bisland and Pine Ridge adjoining.
- No. 1908. Claimant: Charles McCollister, Aug. 23, 1804. Witness: Joseph Bradley, 22 Oct. 1804. Roan Godbolt, 19 Jan. 1805. Rejected for want of sufficient evidence, 30 Dec. 1806. Miss. Ter., Wilk-inson Co. Charles McCollister claims the right of preference in becoming the purchaser of 150 acres in sd county on the Homochitto including the Blue Springs, which tract was inhabited and cultivated 3 Mar. 1803 by Abraham Guice who relinquished his right to the present claimant, 15 Oct. 1804. Signed Charles McAllister.
- No. 1909. Claimant: John Wells, 31 Aug. 1804. Wit: Darling Bradley, 31 Aug. 1804. Certificate D-160 issued 16 Dec. 1806. Miss. Ter. John Wells, who was the head of a family on 3 Mar. 1803, claims a donation right of 640 acres cultivated and settled before 1795. He has been living on it ever since, situated on the headwaters of Sandy Creek in Adams Co.
- No. 1911. Claimant: Samuel May, 30 Aug. 1804. Rejected for want of evidence, 30 Dec. 1806. Samuel May, being of full age, claims 500 acres in Claiborne Co., Miss. Territory, on waters of Bayou Pierre, by virtue of 3rd Section of the Act of Congress.
- No. 1912. Claimant: John Grafton, 17 Sept. 1804. Residence proved in Claim No. 491. Certificate A-429 issued 11 July 1802. John Grafton claims 200 acres in Adams Co., Miss. Territory, on St. Catherine's Creek, part of 555 acres granted by the Spanish Government to William Atchinson who conveyed the same to Charles Dowling, who, with his wife, conveyed same to the present claimant, 25 Feb. 1802.
- No. 1913. Claimant: Abner Green, 24 Sept. 1804. Certificate A-644 issued to David Lattimore, assignee, 27 Sept. 1805. Abner Green claims Lots No. 2 and 4, Square No. 15 in the City of Natchez, by virtue of a Spanish patent to William Barland for 100 arpents which forms a part of City of Natchez, who conveyed 8 arpents of same to David Ferguson, by deed, 13 Jan. 1793, and sd Ferguson and Murdoch conveyed the same to claimant, 1 Apr. 1796.
- No. 1914. Claimant: Lancelot Porter, 24 Sept. 1804. Witness: Reuben Mayfield, 22 Jan. 1805. Certificate D-161 issued 16 Dec. 1806. Miss. Ter., Adams Co. Homochitto River. Purchased from Thomas Aldridge the right of preference as claim by sd Aldridge in Feb. 1803, when he cleared a parcel of land, made a brush fence and planted corn, also peach trees and in 1804 Lancelot Porter settled sd place and cleared 3 acres and is now living on it. Miss. Ter., Adams Co. // Thos. Aldridge, of sd county, for \$500 in hand paid by Lancelot Porter, of sd county, sells all right of occupancy on land on south side of Homochitto River, June 1804. Wit: Hiram Downs, John Scarlett and Shad Porter. Proved before the Board, 10 Sept. 1805.
- No. 1917. Claimant: Thomas Fortner, 1 Oct. 1804. Wit: Vincent Fortner, 19 Nov. 1804. Rejected June 1807. Miss. Ter., Claiborne Co. Thomas Fortner claims 240 acres by virtue of petition to the Spanish Government in 1789 and granted to me by sd Government at New Orleans April 1796 and by me cultivated May 1, 1799. Plat: Land near the Big Black. Note: The claimant being present before the Board, desires that if the testimony in this case is not sufficient for a donation that the land may be granted to him as a preemption by virtue of an improvement.
- No. 1919. Claimant: Thomas M. Green, 8 Oct. 1804. Wit: William Fairbanks, 28 Jan. 1805. Certificate B-284 issued 10 June 1807. Miss. Ter. Jefferson County. Thomas M. Green, who was an actual settler of sd territory on 27 Oct. 1795, claims 200 acres on Cole's Creek in sd county, by virtue of a British patent to Ebenezer Gossett, in 1777, who sold the same to Peter Hawkins who sold the same to John Girault, by deed, 3 May 1788, who sold the same to James Elliott, 31 Jan. 1789, who, by Daniel Clark, his attorney, conveyed the same by deed, 4 Oct. 1799, to the present claimant. It has been cultivated for many years by the said Gossett and his legal representatives afsd.
- No. 1920. Claimant: T. M. Green, 8 Oct. 1804. Wit: Thomas Calvit, John Staybraker, 28 Jan. 1805.

- Certificate B-285, issued 10 June 1807. Thomas M. Green, an actual settler in this territory on 27 Oct. 1795, claims 350 acres on Cole's Creek in sd county, by virtue of a warrant from British Government of West Florida to Benjamin Roberts on 1775, who was then above 21 years of age and took possession of and inhabited and cultivated the same, and is long since deceased. The sd Roberts transferred by delivery to James Cole, who transferred the same to Richard Bacon by writing, 16 March 1784, who conveyed the same to James Elliott by deed, 23 Jan. 1786, who, by Daniel Clark, his atty., conveyed the same to the present claimant, 4 Oct. 1799, which land has been actually inhabited and cultivated by the sd parties and their legal representatives from the date of the original warrant to the present day, they having been respectively inhabitants of this territory and above the age of 21 years.
- No. 1921. Claimant: T. M. Green, 8 Oct. 1804. Wit: William Fairbanks, 28 Jan. 1805. Certificate B-286 issued 1807. Thomas M. Green, of Jefferson Co., Miss. Ter., who was an actual settler the 27 Oct. 1795, claims 200 acres on Cole's Cr. by virtue of a British Warrant to Henry Roach, dated about 1776 who conveyed the same to Peter Hawkins who sold the same to James Elliot, 3 May 1788, who by Daniel Clark, his atty., conveyed the same to the claimant.
- No. 1922. Claimant: Thomas M. Green, 8 Oct. 1804. See No. 1683. Wit: William Fairbanks, 13 June 1807. Certificate B-297. Miss. Ter. Thomas M. Green, who was an actual settler in this territory on 27 Oct. 1795, claims 400 acres on Cole's Creek, in sd county, by virtue of an order of survey granted by the former British Government of West Florida to Joseph Daws, now deceased, about 1775, who transferred the same to Peter Hawkins who conveyed the same to James Elliott by writing, 3 May 1788, who by Daniel Clark, his atty., conveyed sd land to this claimant, 4 Oct. 1799. The sd Daws was at the date of the sd warrant above the age of 21 years and the said land by his legal representatives inhabited and cultivated ever since.
- No. 1923. Claimant: Thomas M. Green, 8 Oct. 1804. Wit: William Fairbanks, 28 Jan. 1805. Certificate B-287 issued 10 June 1807. Miss. Ter. Jefferson Co. Thomas M. Green, who was an actual settler in this territory 27 Oct. 1795, claims 122 acres on Cole's Creek in sd county, by virtue of a British order of survey to Alexander Boyd, now deceased, about 1773, who was then above 21 yrs. of age, for 250 acres. 72 acres, part of the sd 250 acres was sold by the Spanish Government by public sale for the benefit of the children of the sd Alexander Boyd, whereupon Jeremiah Bryan became the purchaser thereof and also of 50 acres of the balance, making 122 acres of the grant to the sd Boyd, and the sd Bryan conveyed the said 122 acres, among other things, by deed, 10 Jan. 1785, to Capt. James Elliott, who by Daniel Clark, his atty., conveyed the same among others, 4 Oct. 1799 to present claimant. This tract was inhabited and cultivated on 27 Oct. 1795 and before and since that time, 1st by the said Boyd and since by the legal representatives of the said Boyd.
- No. 1924. Claimant: Jonathan Jones, 15 Oct. 1804. Wit: John Atkinson, 12 Nov. 1804. Certificate D-305 issued 29 Dec. 1806. Miss. Ter. Jefferson Co., Jonathan Jones claims the right of preference in becoming the purchaser of 100 acres in sd county on the North Fork of Cole's Creek, by virtue of its having been inhabited and cultivated on and before 3 March 1803 by this claimant.
- No. 1925. Claimant: Samuel Brooks, 15 Oct. 1804. Wit: Anthony Hutchins, John Girault and William Selkrig, 19 Nov. 1804. Rejected 27 April 1807. Adams Co. Samuel Brooks, a resident of the Miss. Territory, claims 200 acres on the Miss. River in Claiborne County, opposite the Three Islands or a little above them, which land was surveyed by William Vousdan, Dep. Surveyor, appointed by the British Government. This survey was made in the name of Wm. Selkrig, 21 Apr. 1777, in pursuance of an order of survey granted to sd Selkrig previous to that time. Several acres of the sd land were cleared by sd Selkrig but he was driven off during the American Revolution and on his return has been driven from the same by Indians, and the order of survey lost which caused the sd Selkrig to apply to the above Vousdan for the above certificate, which was given on 12th Feb. 1801. This land sd Selkrig sold to Samuel Brooks the present claimant, 2 June 1804. From the plat: the location on the Miss. River, with William Vousdan adjoining on the east and adjoining Vousdan, Thomas James.
- No. 1927. Claimant: John Cheat, 16 Oct. 1804. Rejected 27 Apr. 1807. Miss. Ter., Adams Co. John Cheat, a resident of the Spanish Province of Louisiana on 27 Oct. 1795, long before and since that time, claims 100 acres in sd county on the south side of Second Creek, by virtue of an order of survey from the British Government of West Florida granted to the claimant about 1776, and a survey made in pursuance thereof by the Dep. Surveyor. He was the head of a family at the date of said order of survey and inhabited and cultivated the sd tract for two years about that time and on the 27 Oct. 1795. Signed John Cheate.



United States Geological Survey, Yokena Quadrangle Mississippi-Louisiana 7.5 Minutes Series (Topographic): NW/4 Yokena 15' Quadrangle, No. 336751, 1963 (Photo inspected 1973).



177

SCALE IN MILES  
 TRANSVERSE MERCATOR PROJECTION  
 1967

GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP 575,000

625,000

R 1 E

R 2 E

R 3 E

T 13 N

T 14 N

T 15

T 16

T 17

T 18

T 19

CLAIBORNE COUNTY

To Port Gibson

