

Camilla

Judge Tom Hill

Camilla is exclusively a product of the reconstruction days that followed the Civil War. Prior to emancipation, it had no commercial existence.

The first Camilla of the late 1860's and early 1870's was mainly composed of 3 white families, known as the Mitchells, McGowens, and Hills, together with a multitude of ex-slaves. Freedom never destroyed the tie that bound these old Camillaites together. In its formative state Camilla had no name and to find an appropriate one, a problem confronted its founders. New names do not always pop up and say "Here I am, take me".

Over in the old historic mother county of Polk, another family of the old southern type had its domicile known as the Hardin family. Three cultured daughters, Camilla, Colita and Helen added grace and charm to the household.

In the town of Livingston, a rising young lawyer of no mediocre ability known as George W. Davis wooed and won the gracious Camilla. George W. Davis and W. D. Mitchell, in those olden times were intimate friends and when business called, the former over to San Jacinto County, the Mitchell home frequently found him ensconced therein as its honored guest. During one of these visits the problem of naming the new Mitchell and McGowen enterprise came up for discussion. Then and there, the lawyer said, it is named Camilla, after one of the finest ladies in all the land, and this, a beautiful poetic name, adds a touch of romance and charm to the little rural settlement.

Sixty odd years of changes and new eras find the Camilla metaphorically sleeping in cemetery lots while the new Camilla is keeping the quick step with modern progress.