

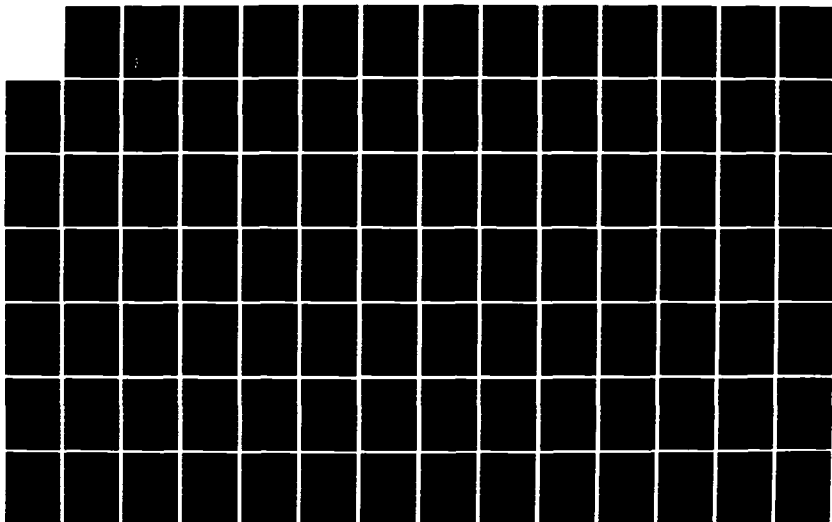
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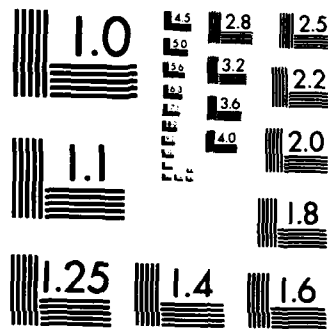
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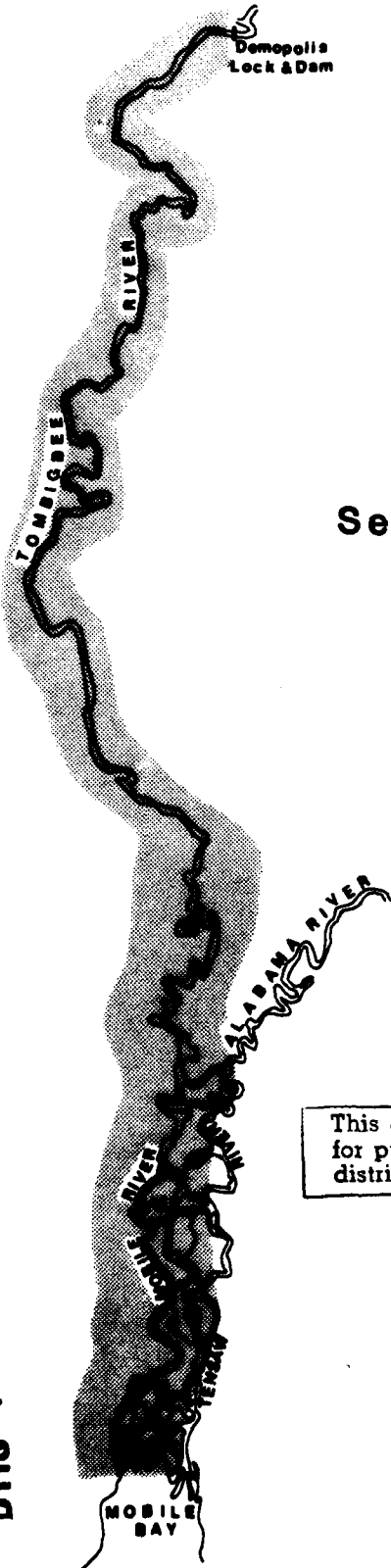


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# CULTURAL RESOURCES RECONNAISSANCE STUDY OF THE BLACK WARRIOR-TOMBIGBEE SYSTEM CORRIDOR, ALABAMA

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## VOLUME III HISTORY

### Settlement Patterns and Processes, 1500-1945

by  
David C. Weaver

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Prepared for the  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District

Department of Geology and Geography  
University of South Alabama Mobile  
1983

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This volume covers a time period beginning at approximately 1500 through 1945. The focus of this report is on historical documentation for the Tombigbee River from Demopolis to Mobile, Alabama. Major topics such as Political and Military Affairs, Economic Development, and Early Exploration are covered in detail. An outline chronology of the main events affecting the lower Tombigbee Valley is presented.			





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David C. Weaver

David C. Weaver  
Project Historian  
Department of Geography  
University of Alabama

Eugene Wilson

Eugene Wilson  
Principal Investigator  
Department of Geography and Geology  
University of South Alabama

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	iii
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	ix
 CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Objectives . . . . .	1
Responsibilities of the Corps . . . . .	1
Cultural Resources . . . . .	1
A Cultural Resources Reconnaissance . . . . .	1
The Study Area . . . . .	2
The Cultural Resources Human Use and Occupation Overview . . . . .	2
Research Design . . . . .	3
Research Procedure . . . . .	3
Structure of the Report . . . . .	4
 II OUTLINE CHRONOLOGY OF THE MAIN EVENTS AFFECTING THE LOWER TOMBIGBEE VALLEY, 1500-1945 . . . . .	 5
 III EXPLORATION AND COLONIAL COMPETITION: POLITICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS, 1500-1798 . . . . .	 19
Introduction . . . . .	19
The Obscure Tombigbee: Spanish Ambivalence, 1500-1682 . . . . .	19
The Louisiana Tombigbee: French Ascension, 1683-1763 . . . . .	20
The West Florida Tombigbee: British Succession, 1764-1783 . . . . .	24
The Disputed Tombigbee: Spanish Resumption, 1784-1798 . . . . .	26
 IV ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, 1500-1798 . . . . .	 29
Introduction . . . . .	29
Population and Settlement Patterns . . . . .	29
Raw Materials Production . . . . .	32
Furs and Skins . . . . .	32
Forest Products . . . . .	33
Farm Products . . . . .	34
Industrial Production . . . . .	40
Transportation . . . . .	40
Roads . . . . .	40
Rivers . . . . .	45
The Sea . . . . .	46
 V LIFELINE OF TERRITORY AND STATE: POLITICAL AND MILITARY, 1799-1860 . . . . .	 47
The Shared Tombigbee: Spanish Retreat and American Expansion, 1798-1811 . . . . .	47

	Page
The Contested Tombigbee: The War of 1812 and the Creek Indian War of 1813-1814 . . . . .	49
The American Tombigbee: Territorial Activities, 1815-1819 . . . . .	51
The Antebellum Tombigbee: State and National Affairs, 1820-1860 . . . . .	53
<b>VI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, 1798-1860 . . . . .</b>	<b>57</b>
Introduction . . . . .	57
Population and Settlement Patterns . . . . .	57
Raw Material Resources . . . . .	60
Forest Products . . . . .	60
Farm Products . . . . .	61
Industrial Production . . . . .	64
Agricultural Processing . . . . .	64
Timber Processing . . . . .	65
Transportation . . . . .	66
Early Trans-Sectional Highways . . . . .	67
County Roads . . . . .	69
Toll Roads . . . . .	71
Post Roads . . . . .	72
Stage Lines . . . . .	73
Ferries and Bridges . . . . .	73
Railroads . . . . .	75
Riverboats . . . . .	75
River Landings . . . . .	77
Towns . . . . .	78
St. Stephens . . . . .	78
McIntosh Bluff and Bladon Springs . . . . .	80
Coffeeville . . . . .	80
Jackson . . . . .	81
Demopolis . . . . .	81
Blakeley . . . . .	82
Mobile . . . . .	83
Fort Stoddert-Mt. Vernon . . . . .	83
<b>VII A DECLINING FORTUNE: POLITICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS, 1861-1945 . . . . .</b>	<b>85</b>
The Confederate Tombigbee: The War Between the States, 1861-1865 . . . . .	85
The Post-Bellum Tombigbee: Reconstruction, 1866-1879 . . . . .	87
The Unobtrusive Tombigbee: Diminished Political Identity, 1880-1914 . . . . .	90
<b>VIII ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, 1861-1945 . . . . .</b>	<b>95</b>
Introduction . . . . .	95
Population and Settlement . . . . .	95
Raw Material Resources . . . . .	98
Timber . . . . .	98
Agriculture . . . . .	100
Industry . . . . .	106

	Page
Agricultural Processing . . . . .	106
Timber Processing . . . . .	108
Boatbuilding . . . . .	109
Transportation . . . . .	109
Roads and Bridges . . . . .	109
Railroads . . . . .	110
Logging Railroads . . . . .	112
Rivers . . . . .	113
Towns . . . . .	114
IX GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW OF THE SETTLEMENT PATTERN . . . . .	119
Physiographic Structure . . . . .	119
Black Prairies . . . . .	120
Chunnenuggee Ridge . . . . .	120
Flatwoods . . . . .	121
Southern Red Hills . . . . .	121
Southern Limestone Hills . . . . .	122
Rolling Piney Woods . . . . .	122
Coastal Strip . . . . .	122
Population . . . . .	123
Indians . . . . .	123
Europeans and Euro-Americans . . . . .	124
Africans or Afro-Americans . . . . .	126
Agriculture . . . . .	127
Subsistence Farmstead . . . . .	128
Colonial Bottomland Mixed Crop Plantation . . . . .	128
Classical Upland Monocultural Plantation . . . . .	129
The Neo-plantation/Tenant Farm . . . . .	130
Industry . . . . .	131
Transportation . . . . .	132
Towns and Villages . . . . .	133
Building Types . . . . .	134
X LOCATION OF DOCUMENTARY MATERIALS . . . . .	137
Significant Libraries and Depositories of Records in Alabama . . . . .	137
Significant Libraries and Depositories of Records Outside Alabama . . . . .	138
REFERENCES CITED . . . . .	141
GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	173

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Stage Routes Affecting the Lower Tombigbee with Stage Mileages . . . . .	74
2 Population Statistics for Clarke County, 1840-1890 . . . . .	97
3 Select Crop Production Statistics For Clarke County, 1850-1880 . . . . .	103
4 Number of Farms and Improved-Unimproved Acreage, Clarke County, 1850-1890 . . . . .	104
5 Total Value of Farms in Clarke County, 1850-1890 . . . . .	105

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### OBJECTIVES

This report is one of five elements of a larger study which has been designated by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to be a Cultural Resources Reconnaissance of the Black Warrior-Tombigbee (BWT) System Corridor. The Tombigbee River, as a navigable stream is subject to the jurisdiction of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in Mobile. The purpose of the overall study is to assist with the management of cultural resources within a narrow corridor extending along the Tombigbee River from Demopolis to Mobile, Alabama.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CORPS

As part of its administrative responsibilities The Corp of Engineers is required to identify, evaluate, protect and provide for the appropriate public use of prehistoric and cultural resources or lands under its authority. These requirements are mandated by The Antiquities Act of 1906, The Historic Sites Act of 1935, The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended), The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, The Preservation of Historic Archeological Data (amending Public Law 86532), (The Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960), and Executive Order 11593 (May 1971). None of these mandates for the management and protection of cultural resources can be properly carried out without an adequate reconnaissance for probable cultural resources.

#### CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources are those fragile and nonrenewable evidences of human activity, occupation and endeavor as reflected in districts, sites, structures, artifacts, objects, ruins, works of art, architecture, and natural features that were important in human events. Cultural resources are further categorized in terms of their prehistory and historic values. Each of these aspects represents a part of the continuum of human use and occupation, from the earliest evidences of man to the present day.

#### A CULTURAL RESOURCES RECONNAISSANCE

A cultural resources reconnaissance is essentially a literature search and records review plus an on the ground surface examination of selected areas. The selected study areas should be adequate to assess the general nature of the resources probably present. For a cultural resources

reconnaissance, test excavations may be required at some archeological sites so that evaluation of the resource may be accomplished. Normally a reconnaissance level investigation will not yield information of adequate scope to serve as the basis for requesting determination of eligibility for The National Register of Historic Places.

#### THE STUDY AREA

The study area is composed of seven separate and distinct physiographic regions. These include: The Black Prairies, Chunnenuggee Ridge, Flatwoods, Southern Red Hills, Southern Limestone Hills, Rolling Piney Woods, and the Coastal Strip. The study area consists of a five mile wide corridor beginning at Demopolis Lock and Dam on the Tombigbee River to where Highway 43 crosses the Tombigbee River, and from that point southward a ten mile corridor to the foot of Government Street in Mobile, Alabama, on the Mobile River. The total length of the corridor is approximately 200 miles, and involves parts of Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke, Greene, Hale, Marengo, Mobile, and Washington counties. The Corps of Engineers anticipates that portions of this part of Alabama may be the subject of future environmental studies. In order to accumulate the necessary information for the management of cultural resources in the area, the Corps determined that a sample-oriented cultural resources reconnaissance of prehistoric and historic resources was necessary. The purpose of the sample reconnaissance was to allow for a degree of prediction about the nature, distribution, and locations of cultural resources relative to physiography, topography, vegetation and other variables. The effort attempts to provide the basis for: (1) a description and assessment of the known and potential cultural resources, and (2) for directing future cultural resource investigations. For the purposes of research and reporting the reconnaissance was divided into two parts, Task I - The Cultural Resources, Human Use and Occupation Overview, and Task II - The Cultural Resources Compilation and Survey Results. This report is a component of Task I.

#### THE CULTURAL RESOURCES HUMAN USE AND OCCUPATION OVERVIEW

The contract scope-of-work required that the narrative should provide descriptions of the prehistoric, protohistoric, and historic periods based upon literature, archival, and other sources for the entire study area. Emphasis was to be given to the sites and physical evidences related to the activities discussed in the narrative, including towns, communities, structure and architecture. The overview was to be divided into three parts: 1) Prehistory, 2) Ethnohistory, and 3) History. This latter section provides the basis for this report. According to the scope-of-work, the history section was to include a discussion of major historic themes for this part of Alabama. Among the more important themes to be treated were: early exploration, trade and trade routes, military and Indian activity, immigration, homesteading and settlement, Civil War and reconstruction, industrial and agricultural development, transportation (land and water), and river utilization other than for transportation purposes.

The contract scope-of-work recognized that the historic studies



covered a long time period as well as various topics, and that each should be developed in a concise manner. In particular it stated that, "these topics should not be developed as a definitive work but rather as an outline for possible future culture resource studies. This can be accomplished by summarizing the topic and extensively referencing the sources utilized."

Specifically the scope of work was intended to provide the following:

- 1.) Sufficient cultural resource data to assist with the planning of Phase Two survey efforts should such work be desired.
- 2.) Data useful for locating and predicting the physical evidence related to the topics of geology, environment, archeology, history and cultural geography.
- 3.) Synthesis of local and regional history.
- 4.) Parallel information which is comparative from one geographic area to another.
- 5.) A predictive model for site location, type and distribution.
- 6.) Information useful for the development of interpretive cultural resource studies by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, and public information material.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

The historical geography research was formulated to achieve three discrete results: a.) Outline Chronology, b.) Historical Narrative and, c.) Geographic Overview, including the presentation of settlement models. The purpose of the Outline Chronology was to identify, in brief, specific events, famous individuals, historic places and developments for the study area. The purpose of the Historical Narrative was to discuss the major themes of historic settlement for this part of Alabama. The purpose of the Geographic Overview was to define the general operation of settlement and economic systems within the BWT corridor area, to explain changes in the system through time, and to formulate settlement models useful for evaluating the cultural significance and spatial relationships of particular loci of the region's material culture.

#### RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The research methods employed in pursuit of the targeted information were diverse. They included survey and analysis of:

- 1.) published books, articles, reports and other secondary printed materials,
- 2.) original documents such as county records, original land surveys, letters and account books,
- 3.) a wide variety of contemporary and historic maps,
- 4.) aerial photographs, contemporary and historic,
- 5.) photographic collections,
- 6.) census materials both published and manuscript,

- 7.) personal interview, and
- 8.) field survey.

The emphasis on data collection was placed on the first three categories of activity. Research began with a comprehensive survey of the existing published literature. This involved searches of book and journal materials in The University of Alabama Library. Information derived from the survey of published materials was used to direct enquiries concerning less accessible documentary records. Resulting searches were made in appropriate national, state, university and local archive collections. Particular attention was given in the search to the tracking of maps, plats and other graphic assets.

#### STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The format of the report reflects contract requirements and guidelines, and is developed to present a logical arrangement of the three main components of the research design. Chapter II presents an outline chronology for the period 1500-1945. This chronology essentially provides the benchmark references for the story of the evolution of settlement in the BWT corridor. Chapters III through VIII provide a more detailed and explanatory discussion of the major themes of human occupation of the region. Chapter IX is a concluding statement comprising a geographic overview of site characteristics and patterns. Chapter X identifies the main repositories of documentary, map, and bibliographic materials for the Lower Tombigbee region. It is important to state at the outset that this is not a report of original research, but rather a synthesis of diverse sources of existing information. The primary intention of the author is to provide a coherent narrative base for the relating of the numerous entries contained in the References Cited and General Bibliography sections.

. CHAPTER II

OUTLINE CHRONOLOGY OF THE MAIN EVENTS  
AFFECTING THE LOWER TOMBIGBEE VALLEY, 1500-1945

- 1519 Alonzo Alvarez de Pineda, a merchantship captain, entered Mobile Bay and mapped it for Garay, the Spanish Governor of Jamaica.
- 1528 Panfilo de Narvaez explored the Mobile Bay area.
- 1540 Hernando De Soto first entered Alabama.
- At Maubila on the Alabama River, DeSoto and the Maubila Indians fought a battle which practically wiped out the Maubilian culture.
- Francisco Maldonado anchored at Achuse on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay.
- 1559 Tristan de Luna set out for Achuse to start a colony.
- 1561
- 1565 The attempt to establish a colony at Achuse was abandoned and all survivors set sail for St. Augustine, Florida.
- 1682 La Salle took possession of the valley of the Mississippi and its tributaries and named it Louisiana for Louis XIV, King of France and Navarre.
- 1698 Pensacola was settled by Spaniards.
- The Le Moyne brothers, Iberville and Bienville, visited Mobile Bay.
- 1699 Dauphin Island was settled by the French.
- 1702 Bienville moved from Biloxi to Mobile Bay, establishing the capitol of Louisiana at Ft. Louis de la Mobile.
- 1704 The ship Pelican brought twenty-three young women over from France to marry the men at Mobile.
- 1706 Iberville died in Havana of yellow fever.
- 1707 First black settler recorded at Mobile, Jean Baptiste, a slave of Bienville.
- 1708 D'Artaguette replaced La Salle as Mobile commissar. Charged to make "Domesday survey" of the Mobile Bay area.

- 1710 La Salle died.
- 1711 English freebooters from Jamaica attacked Dauphin Island. Major flood inundated Fort Louis. Fort site moved to present location of Mobile.
- 1712 Louisiana colony leased by the King of France for fifteen years to the French merchant Crozat as a trade station. Crozat sends Cadillac to govern Louisiana.
- 1713 Officers of Crozat established trading and military posts at the head of the Alabama near the union of the Coosa and Tallapoosa; at the mouth of the Cahawba; at Jones Bluff on the Tombigbee; at the present site of St. Stephens; at Nashville on the Cumberland; and at the Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee.
- 1717 Fort Toulouse was built on the Coosa River.
- Crozat surrendered his charter.
- The Western or India Company was chartered in Paris to manage the territory of Louisiana.
- 1718 New Orleans was founded.
- 1719 Chateauge marched from Mobile to take Pensacola. Spaniards from Cuba recovered Pensacola and captured Chateauge. Spanish attempted to take Mobile but failed.
- 1720 Fort Louis de la Mobile repaired and renamed Fort Conde de la Mobile.
- 1721 Louisiana was divided into nine districts, of which Mobile was one.
- 1723 Seat of Government for the Louisiana Colony moved from Mobile to New Orleans.
- 1732 Western Company surrendered its charter to the King of France.
- 1733 Disastrous hurricane struck Mobile.
- 1735 Capt. de Lusser with sixty men erected Fort Tombecbe at Jones Bluff.
- 1736 Bienville reached Fort Tombecbe with 600 whites and 500 Indians.
- Bienville halted at Cotton Gin Port and erected a stockade. Expedition against Chickasaws unsuccessful, through loss of battle of Ackia.
- 1740 Two destructive hurricanes hit Mobile.
- 1752 Vaudreuil traveled up the Tombigbee with a fleet of boats with French troops and Choctaw warriors against the Chickasaws. They

reconstructed and enlarged the Fort at Cotton Gin Port but the expedition was unsuccessful.

1759 Jean-Bernard Bossu visited the site of Demopolis and met a party of hostile Choctaw Indians.

1762 Louisiana was ceded to Spain.

1763 France relinquished Mobile District to British in the treaty of the Peace of Paris of 1763. The area became part of British West Florida.

The English renamed Fort Conde, Fort Charlotte. Fort Tombecbe became Fort York.

1765 The Choctaws deeded to the British a strip of land on the west side of the Lower Tombigbee, beginning at the mouth of Sintabogue Creek and extending downriver about sixty land miles.

Mobile Congress produced a treaty between the Choctaws and the English which fixed the boundary lines and made concessions.

1772 Bernard Romans traveled from the Chickasaw country down the Tombigbee River from the vicinity of Cotton Gin Port to Mobile.

1775 A British land grant given to Capt. John McIntosh was for 500 acres, which included McIntosh Bluff.

1777 William Bartram, botanist, visited Mobile and the east side of the Tensaw.

A plantation of 500 acres was granted to Charles Walker at Black Rock on the Tombigbee, 112 miles from Mobile. Other Tories fleeing eastern states, also took up land grants on the "Tombeckby."

1779 American Whig raider, Colonel James Willing came to Mobile and the Tensaw settlement trying to stir up trouble and incite revolt against the British settlers in the Tensaw area. He was driven away.

Taking advantage of Britain's preoccupation with the American Revolution, Spain declared war and moved to capture the Gulf Coast possessions through Galvez from New Orleans.

1780 Fort Charlotte was seized by the Spanish.

Governor Galvez built the Spanish Fort on the east side of Mobile Bay as a defense against an expected assault by the British.

1781 The Spanish took Pensacola.

1783 Peace of Paris of 1783 ended the American Revolution and confirmed Spain's possession of the Gulf Coast below the 31st parallel. Spain refused to accept this boundary for fifteen years.

- 1784 The Mobile Congress signed by the Choctaws formed an alliance with Spain and established a schedule of fur prices and a list of annual presents to the Indians.
- 1785 A Land Ordinance was passed by the U. S. Government in which the terms of sale of public lands of the United States were established.
- 1786 A treaty between the U. S. and the Choctaws was concluded at Hopewell on the Keowee, in South Carolina, reestablishing the Hunting Grounds of the Choctaws as those that were used by them as of November 29, 1782.
- 1789 The Spanish Governor, Estevan Miro, built a fort atop Hobuckintopa Bluff and named it Fort San Esteban (St. Stephens).
- 1790 Lt. Joseph De Ville Degoutin was made commander at Fort St. Stephens.
- 1791 The Great Yazoo freshet caused abandonment of many low lying Spanish and British plantations.
- Hiram Mounger bought a Spanish grant on the east side of Sunflower Bend.
- 1793 A full-scale Indian conference was held between the Creeks, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Cherokees. The "Treaty of Nogales" was arranged to prevent the Chickasaws and Creeks from going to war.
- 1795 Georgia legislature conveyed most of the territory drained by the Tombigbee River to the Georgia-Mississippi Company.
- By the Treaty of San Lorenzo, Spain made concessions to American trade on the Mississippi River and formally recognized the 31st parallel as the U. S. boundary with West Florida.
- 1796 An Act of Congress authorized the establishment of U. S. Government trading houses.
- 1797 A ferry was established by Samuel Mims across the Alabama and by Adam Hollinger, an old resident among the Indians, across the Tombigbee. The route crossed Nanahubba Island below the cutoff.
- 1798-1799 Ellicott marked the boundary between Spanish and United States territory.
- 1798 Congress established the Mississippi Territory.
- 1799 The Mississippi Territory was divided into two counties, the northern called Adams and the southern, Pickering.
- Lieutenant McLeary took possession of Fort St. Stephens.
- Fort Stoddert was established.

Antonio Palaas, the Spanish Commander, moved out of Mobile and U. S. Commander McLeary marched in.

The earliest known school in the district was established by John Pierce. It was called the Boatyard School and served the Tensaw-Tombigbee settlements.

1800 Louisiana was sold by Spain to Bonaparte in exchange for the Kingdom of Etruria.

Washington County was created, with its only occupants thinly scattered along the western banks of the Mobile and Tombigbee for 70 miles.

Governor Sargent designated McIntosh Bluff as the county seat because "it was centrally located and had never been owned by a private individual."

1801 A treaty between the U. S. and the Choctaws, made at Fort Adams on the Mississippi River, provided for a road through the Choctaw Nation.

A treaty between the U. S. and the Chickasaws at Chickasaw Bluffs (Memphis, Tennessee) granted the U. S. permission to make a road between Mero District (Tennessee) and those of Natchez in Mississippi Territory. It became known as the Natchez Trace.

1802 A government trading house was established at Fort St. Stephens. The first factor was Joseph Chambers who was succeeded five years later by his assistant George S. Gaines.

A cotton gin was built at McIntosh Bluff. It was the third gin built in the area that year.

1802 Superior Court was first convened in Washington County.

Georgia finally ceded her claims to the lands in the Mississippi Territory.

A treaty between the U. S. and Choctaws at Fort Confederation (old Fort Tombecbe) on the Tombigbee River sought to "retrace, connect and plainly mark the old time limits established by and between his Britannic Majesty and the Choctaw Nation" this being the line from the Chickasaway River running in an easterly direction to Hatchet-igby on the Tombigbee River.

1803 Louisiana was purchased by the United States from Bonaparte for fifteen million dollars.

First County Court of Washington County was established at McIntosh Bluff.

The first determined effort was made by Tombigbee River Settlers to procure a division of the Mississippi Territory.

Lorenzo Dow, famous itinerant preacher, visited St. Stephens.

A treaty between the U. S. and the Choctaw, concluded at Hobuckintopa (St. Stephens) on the Tombigbee River, restated the original boundary lines.

- 1804 The Mississippi Territory Government made a separate Court district out of Washington County and Ephraim Kirby was appointed judge.

The Territorial Land Board for the Mississippi Territory east of the Pearl River was officially convened.

Harry Toulmin held the first court at Wakefield, now county seat of Washington County.

- 1805 Indians met at St. Stephens to discuss the purchase of the "Tombigbee Settlement" and connecting it with the "Natchez Settlement."

Indians then met at Mount Dexter (in Mississippi), when the Commissioners managed to purchase land to connect the Tombigbee and Natchez settlements.

The treaty opened more territory to American settlement (extended the area 40 miles further north). The Choctaws also relinquished title to the lands east of the Tombigbee as far as the dividing ridge between the Alabama River and the Tombigbee River (finally ratified in 1809).

The Board of Examiners closed examinations. The General Government allowed one section of land to those who were living on public lands at the time the line of 30<sup>o</sup> was established, and one quarter section of land to those settlers who came just before the Board of Commissioners had been appointed.

- 1805 Lorenzo Dow revisited old St. Stephens.

- 1806 First sales of public lands held at St. Stephens, at \$2.00 per acre.

Congress provided for construction of a road from Athens, Georgia, through the St. Stephens settlement on the Tombigbee, and on to New Orleans. It became known as the "Federal Road."

- 1807 Aaron Burr was captured at Wakefield, Choctaw County.

Digest of Laws for the Mississippi Territory was approved. One of the laws established a town at St. Stephens.

The first wagon road from St. Stephens was opened under supervision of James Callis, Harry Toulmin, and Leonard Henry.

Clark and Washington counties were laid out.

- 1809 Baldwin County was organized from part of Washington County. The



Courthouse was west of the Tombigbee at McIntosh Bluff.

The Lower Salt Works in Clarke County were opened by McFarland.

The first census of Baldwin County was approved by the General Assembly of the Mississippi Territory.

1810 An expedition of Tensaw settlers went against the Spanish in Mobile, but were unsuccessful.

1811 Mt. Vernon, Cantonment, and Arsenal were established as a buffer between the Americans and the Spanish.

The first English language newspaper printed in Alabama was the "Mobile Sentinel" at Fort Stoddert.

The Federal Road was cut from Mim's Ferry to the Chattahoochee at Columbus. This released a flood wave of migrants to the Tombigbee.

1812 The War of 1812.

Clarke County was established by the Mississippi Territorial legislature. It consisted of that part of Washington lying east of the Tombigbee.

The territory lying east of the Pearl River, west of Perdido, and south of the 31st degree of latitude, was annexed to the Mississippi Territory.

Tecumseh visited the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Seminoles, and Creeks.

1813 Spaniards finally gave up lands east of the Pearl River, including Mobile.

General Williamson with six hundred troops took possession of land from the Perdido to the Pearl River. Spanish retreated to Pensacola.

The Creek War began with the Battle of Burnt Corn Creek.

Fort Mims and other forts constructed.

The Fort Mims Massacre occurred.

Mobile County was formed.

1814 The Creek War ended and immigration picked up again.

Courts of Washington County were held at the town of Rodney.

Newspaper "The Halcyon" was published at St. Stephens.

By the Treaty of Fort Jackson most of the present State of Alabama and part of Mississippi became the property of the U. S.

1815 The lands between the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers were offered at auction at St. Stephens.

Blakeley was incorporated on the banks of the Teasaw River.

1816 A treaty between the U. S. and the Choctaws at The Choctaw Trading House on the Tombigbee River ceded land east of the Tombigbee.

The town of Jackson was incorporated in Clarke County.

"The Mobile Gazette" and "General Advertizer" began publication at Mobile.

More than a hundred seventy thousand acres of land were sold at St. Stephens.

The Choctaw Trading House was moved to the site of old Fort Tombecke, the Spanish Fort Confederation.

1817 Mississippi Territory was divided. The western part was admitted into the Union as the State of Mississippi. The eastern part was organized into a territorial government and called the Alabama Territory. The original seven counties were Mobile, Baldwin, Washington, Clarke, Madison, Limestone, and Lauderdale. St. Stephens was made the territorial capital.

A grant was given for the Olive and Vine Colony by the Federal Government.

A treaty was held at the Choctaw Trading House, resulting in the U. S. purchase of the Choctaw claim to all lands lying east of the Tombigbee River.

1818 The Alabama Legislature voted to establish a more centrally located capital at Cahawba.

Marengo County was organized with Linden as county seat.

Vine and Olive settlers arrived in Alabama.

Demopolis, Arcola, and Aigleville were founded.

Tombeckbee Bank was established in the town of St. Stephens by the legislature.

Bank of Mobile was founded.

An act was passed to incorporate the St. Stephens Steamboat Company.

"The Blakeley Sun," a semiweekly newspaper was published.

1819 The Alabama State Convention at Huntsville developed the State Constitution.

Alabama was admitted to the Union, December 14.

The town of Coffeeville was incorporated in Clarke County.

Wilcox County was formed.

Steam navigation was established on the Tombigbee River, between Mobile and St. Stephens. The first trip up to Demopolis was made by either the "Tensaw" or the "Mobile." "Tensaw" was built at the Blakely shipyard. The "Harriett" and the "Cotton Plant" were brought to Mobile.

1820 Cahawba housed the new state capital.

Baldwin County seat was moved from McIntosh Bluff to Blakeley.

Clarksville was declared the county seat of Clarke County.

Census of Clarke County gave three thousand, seven hundred and seventy-eight white inhabitants.

The Newspaper "The Clarion" was published at Claiborne.

The steamboat "Tombeckee" was launched at St. Stephens.

Fort Charlotte was sold because it was no longer needed as a fort.

1821 The "Mobile Commercial Register" was founded.

1822 The Mobile " Register" bought out the Mobile "Gazette".

"Mobile Argus" was founded.

The entire system of Government Trading Houses was abolished by an act of Congress.

1823 The name of the "Mobile Argus" changed to the "Mercantile Advertiser."

1825 Lafayette visited Mobile.

1826 Blakeley experienced a yellow fever epidemic.

1828 The second yellow fever epidemic at Blakeley caused the abandonment of the city.

The road from Choctaw Corner to Wood's Bluff in Clarke County was opened.

1830 A treaty between the U. S. and the Choctaws at Dancing Rabbit Creek in Noxubee County, Mississippi, forced cession of land by the Choctaws and resulted in their removal to west of the Mississippi.

Spring Hill College founded.

- 1832 The county seat of Clarke County moved to Macon (Grove Hill).  
Mt. Sterling was founded in Washington County.
- 1832 Treaty of Cusseta provided for the removal of the Creeks to west of the Mississippi River.  
The northern boundary of Baldwin county was finally fixed.
- 1833 Pendleton Academy at Coffeerville was incorporated.  
Sumter County was created, with Livingston as county seat.
- 1834 A treaty between the U. S. and the Chickasaws, prepared for their removal west of the Mississippi.
- 1835 A treaty between the U. S. and the Cherokee at New Echota forced land cession on the Cherokees.
- 1836 "Clarke County Post" began publication at Suggsville.
- 1837 Great financial panic caused abandonment of Alabama City Project.
- 1839 Curative power of the water at Bladon Springs claimed, and the development of a spa began.  
Fire destroyed large section of Mobile.
- 1845 Mobile and Girard Railroad Company chartered.
- 1846 Bladon Springs Hotel was completed to accommodate 200 people.
- 1847 Choctaw County was created from Sumter and Washington counties. Butler designated as the county seat.
- 1850 Alabama and Florida Railroad Company chartered.  
"Choctaw County Reporter" published.
- 1851 Construction on Mobile and Ohio Railroad began.
- 1852 A major flood inundated Mobile.
- 1853 Worst yellow fever epidemic in Alabama occurred.
- 1854 Legislature passed an act establishing the public school system in the state.  
Kansas-Nebraska bill brought forward.
- 1856 Mobile and Great Northern Railroad was chartered.
- 1860 Secession convention held at Charleston.

- 1861 Secession decision finally adopted on January 11, 1861.  
Civil War began.  
Mt. Vernon Arsenal siezed for the Confederacy.
- 1862 Seven fortifications built or strengthened including Fort Gullett (Gullett's Bluff), a small Confederate fortification, on the Tombigbee River about four miles south of Jackson, In Clarke County.
- 1863 Blakeley became a Confederate fort.  
Confederate Boatyard established at Oven Bluff.
- 1864 Mouth of Mobile Bay seized by Union forces.
- 1865 Mobile surrendered to Union forces.  
Fort Blakeley and the Spanish Fort surrendered.  
Federal Cotton Tax imposed.
- 1866 Mobile and Alabama Grand Trunk Railroad was established.  
New Orleans and Chattanooga Railroad was established.  
Alabama rejected Fourteenth Amendment.
- 1867 Reconstruction Acts imposed.  
Kelly Riot of May, 14, happened in Mobile.
- 1868 Mobile and Montgomery Railroad was formed from the Mobile and Great Northern Railroad and the Alabama and Florida Railroad.  
New state constitution adopted.
- 1870 Mobile, Selma, and other cities surrender their charter because of debt burdens.  
City of Mobile acquired title to a third of a mile of river front.
- 1871 Mobile Board of Trade organized.
- 1872 The Western Railroad of Alabama was built to connect Selma and Montgomery.
- 1873 National Financial Panic set in.  
Yellow fever epidemic occurred in Alabama.  
Mt. Vernon Arsenal was converted to barracks.  
New Orleans and Mobile Railroad was formed from the New Orleans,

- Mobile, and Chattanooga Railroad.
- 1874 Mobile and Montgomery Railway was absorbed by the Louisville and Nashville Railroad.
- Reconstruction party overthrown.
- 1875 New Alabama constitution passed.
- Congress began work to open Mobile Harbor for the first time since the war.
- 1877 Yellow fever epidemic affected Alabama.
- Alabama-Tombigbee basin economic development conference held at Blount Springs.
- 1878 Thirteen foot channel completed at Mobile.
- Seven year economic depression began.
- 1879 Alabama legislature revoked Mobile city charter and substituted the Port of Mobile, ridding city of debt burden.
- 1881 Cincinnati, Selma, and Mobile Railroad was formed.
- State Railroad Commission established.
- 1884 Mobile Chamber of Commerce established.
- 1885 Mobile and Western Railroad formed.
- Alabama-Tombigbee basin economic development conference held in Tuscaloosa.
- 1887 Mobile and Western Railroad became Mobile and Birmingham Railroad.
- Interstate Commerce Commission established.
- 1888 Twenty-three foot channel was adopted at Mobile.
- 1890 Seaboard Railroad of Alabama was organized.
- 1893 National financial panic developed.
- Banana trade at Mobile began.
- 1895 Mt. Vernon complex was turned over to the State of Alabama.
- 1898 Spanish American War started.
- 1900 Tombigbee and Northern Railroad formed.
- State of Alabama made Mt. Vernon an insane asylum.

- 1902 New state constitution disfranchised blacks.
- 1904 Ollinger and Bruce built drydock at Mobile.  
Tombigbee Valley Railroad organized.
- 1906 Alabama, Tennessee and Northern Railroad formed.  
Comer administration elected.
- 1910 Mobile Terminal and Railroad Company was developed.
- 1913 Southern Commercial Congress meets at Mobile.
- 1914 First World War began.  
Dixie Overland Highway Association was formed to build a hard surface highway from Savannah, Georgia to San Diego, California, passing through central Alabama.  
Panama Canal opened.
- 1915 Lock system opened on the Tombigbee and Warrior Rivers.  
First barge of coal unloaded at Mobile.
- 1916 Federal Highway Act passed.  
Bee Line Highway (U. S. 31) from Mobile to Montgomery, Birmingham and Athens became first surfaced highway in the state.
- 1917 Alabama Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Co. installed heavy dry dock at Mobile.
- 1918 First World War concluded.
- 1919 Rooster auction was held to finance Tombigbee Bridge near Demopolis.  
Mobile suffered fire destroying forty city blocks.
- 1923 Alabama State Docks construction began at Mobile.
- 1925 "Rooster Bridge" opened for traffic.
- 1926 Mobile Bay and River channel dredged to 32 feet.
- 1929 Mobile reaches a level of 50 facilities for the purpose of loading and unloading ships.
- 1933 River channel dredged to 33 feet.
- 1937 Mobile City Commission authorized lease of the city wharf property to the State Docks Commission.

1939 World War II began in Europe.

1941 U. S. entered the War.

1945 World War concluded in Europe and Far East.



### CHAPTER III

#### EXPLORATION AND COLONIAL COMPETITION: POLITICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS, 1500-1798

##### INTRODUCTION

The history of the Gulf Coast from the Mississippi to Tampa Bay during the colonial period has generated an extensive literature. Some of the writings are general histories of the region as a whole; others concentrate on local areas and issues. Among the most useful of the references on the early general history of the east Gulf Coast region are the following: Alden (1944), Allain and Conrad (1973), Bartram (1791), Bolton (1921, 1925) Bolton and Marshall (1920), Bossu (1771), Campbell (1892), Carroll (1939), Caruso (1963), Cotterill (1954), Crane (1928), Dibble and Newton (1971), Giraud (1974), King (1892), Lambeth (1974), Lowery, (1901), Patrick (1964), Pickett (1941), Reynolds (1928), Robinson (1979), Romans (1775), Rowland (192732), Tepaske (1964), Whittaker (1927), and Wright (1971). Of those historical investigations which focus on the Lower Tombigbee per se, the ones with the most import are perhaps: Coker and Holmes (1971), Doster (1959), Haarmann (1960), Hamilton (1898-99, 1903, 1910, 1911, 1913), Higginbotham (1966, 1977, 1978), Holmes (1964, 1965a, 1965b, 1965c, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1971, 1972, 1975a, 1975b, 1976, 1978a, 1978b, 1980), Howard (1942, 1945), Jenkins (1959), McWilliams (1967), Penman (1976), Faye (1946), Starr (1976), Summersell (1949), Taylor (1935), and White (1975a, 1975b). The single authoritative study which stands apart from all others in its significance and detail, however, is Peter Hamilton's Colonial Mobile (Hamilton, 1910). Much of Chapters III, IV, V, and VI of this report are freely abstracted, adapted and synthesized from the huge volume of information presented in that book. To avoid repetition only sources other than that book are cited in those chapters.

##### THE OBSCURE TOMBIGBEE: SPANISH AMBIVALENCE, 1500-1682

In 1520 Garay, the Spanish Governor of Jamaica, sent Pineda to explore the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. On that voyage Pineda visited Mobile Bay and the Mobile River and found the banks of the river thickly inhabited by Indians. The density of settlement is indicated by his mention of fifty Indian hamlets in a distance of six leagues. Pineda presumably landed at one of more points during this visit, but there is no record of these events.

Pineda was followed in 1528 by de Narvaez who is believed to have stopped at Mobile Bay for water, possibly at Bellefontaine. There is no record of him entering the delta area, but after 1520 Mobile Bay begins to appear on European maps for the first time as the Bay of Espiritu Santo

(Hamilton, 1899b). The DeSoto expedition of 1539 meandered into Alabama, approaching the Gulf Coast from the north, but was diverted after the encounter with the Mobilians on the Lower Alabama River (Biedman, 1850; Swanton, 1939; Lankford, 1977). He rerouted through the Upper Tombigbee Valley above Demopolis; there is no evidence to suggest that DeSoto ever entered the Lower Tombigbee Valley. His group, however, provided the first European military encounters with the Indians of Alabama (Brame, 1928 a, b; 1929).

In 1558 Garay sent out the first exploration party with a colonization objective under Bezares and Tristan de Luna (Jameson, 1959). Settlement was actually made by de Luna in the summer of 1559 at a place called the Bay of Auchuse (Priestly, 1928, 1936). It is not certain whether this was Mobile or Escambia Bay, but probably the latter (Arnade, 1959). The settlers made expeditions to the interior where they were aided by the residents of the town of Cosa. The Spanish in return fought with the Cosa against a neighboring group of Indians, the Nanipacna, along the Coosa-Alabama Rivers. Hurricane devastation and shortage of supplies caused quick abandonment of the settlement in 1561.

After the defeat of the Armada in 1588, Spanish naval supremacy declined, and the Spanish appear to have lost colonial interest in the northeast Gulf Coast (Bolton, 1925). Spanish claims to the Gulf Coast remained, however, and were not territorially threatened until incursions by the French and the English, in pursuit of the fur trade, began to emerge at the end of the seventeenth century (Chatelain, 1941). In 1682 La Salle floated to the mouth of the Mississippi from the Great Lakes and claimed the territory around the river for France under the name of Louisiana (Abbott, 1875; Anderson, 1898; Cox, 1905).

#### THE LOUISIANA TOMBIGBEE: FRENCH ASCENSION, 1683-1763

In 1685 La Salle returned to the Gulf by sea to establish a colony, but he failed to find the mouth of the Mississippi and his efforts proved abortive (Chesnel, 1932). In 1698 Colonel Welch traveled from Charleston to Chickasaw Bluffs (Memphis) on the Mississippi River, and at the same time other English fur traders were pressing west from Virginia and the Carolinas and trading into what today is central Mississippi and Alabama. France learned that William III of England was organizing a company to explore the Lower Mississippi Valley; and France decided she must take possession first. Iberville was selected to carry out the work that La Salle had projected (Crouse, 1954; Hamilton, 1948; Reed, 1910). He reached and explored Mobile Bay in January, 1699, and then proceeded to investigate the Mississippi (Saleeby, 1949).

The Mississippi was found unsuitable for sailing ships and Bienville, a member of d'Iberville's party, was sent back to establish a port settlement at Biloxi which could handle supplies for future Mississippi Valley settlements. Fort Maurepas was built at Biloxi and trade relations began with surrounding Indians - Pascagoulas, Capina, Choctaws, Pensacolas, and Biloxis. Some trade was conducted at this time with the Mobilians and the Tomeh on the Mobile River, extending French influence closer to areas of English domination.

Spain's response to the French (Dunn, 1925; Leonard, 1939) and English incursions was to expand its base at Pensacola. Spain also attempted to strengthen its hold on the area by building three forts: one at the junction of the St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers (Weinhold, 1956); another, soon deserted, at Fort Appalachicola near the present day site of Columbus, Georgia (Crane, 1928); and a third near the junction of the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers (Boyd, 1936). These forts were soon abandoned because the Indians preferred to trade with the English who brought superior goods from their bases on the eastern seaboard.

Spain attempted diplomatically to dislodge Iberville from Pensacola, and Bienville recommended that France purchase Pensacola, but neither was successful (Holmes, 1967; Ford, 1939). France and Spain were allies in Europe at the time, and in 1702 competition between the English and the Spanish culminated in open conflict on the Florida-Georgia border (Faye, 1946). Meanwhile Iberville continued to explore the country around Biloxi, including the Mobile Bay region. Becoming impressed with the site of the Mobile Indian village near Mt. Vernon as a better point for trade and for establishing and controlling territory against the British pressure, he decided to relocate the Biloxi settlement there (Jaray, 1937).

Early in 1702 Bienville set up his new administrative center at Twenty-Seven Mile Bluff on the Mobile River (Higginbotham, 1977). Fort Louis de la Louisiana was constructed to protect the incipient community. In February, 1702, Iberville began to explore the Mobile River and Delta and provided the first detailed site records and economic characteristics of the Mobilian and Tohome Indians. In March, 1702, the community of Mobile was formally delineated by the laying out of streets, the locating of the inhabitants, and the initiation of trading relationships with the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians (Higginbotham, 1978b). In the process Bienville persuaded both groups to affiliate with France and abandon the English in exchange for French support against the raiding Illinois and the establishment of a French trading station in the interior. The promised trading post was to be established on the upper Mobile River between the two tribes, three or four leagues from the Chaquechoumes and twelve or fifteen from the Chickasaws.

Thus began the first step in a grand design conceived by Bienville, to pull all the territory west of the Appalachians, between the Great Lakes and the Florida peninsula, under French control from Mobile (McWilliams, 1967). In 1701 the Governor of Canada was notified from Paris that Louisiana could be better governed directly from France than by way of Quebec. Part of the scheme involved the relocation of Indian tribes discussed by Lankford (1983). A second part involved the dissemination of Frenchmen as trade representatives and government agents among the various tribes, including villages along the Tombigbee.

After the founding of Mobile in 1702 competition between the English and the Spanish culminated in open conflict (Bolton, 1925; Swanton, 1922). In 1708 the English incited Alabamas, along with other Indian allies, descended the Alabama River with four thousand warriors. They were in a position to totally destroy Fort Louis but eventually contented themselves with burning a Mobilian village six leagues above Fort Louis and then retired without attacking the fort. Shortly afterwards Bienville had to

lead an expedition to aid Pensacola against attacks by the Alabamas (Carroll, 1939).

Shortage of supplies was a continuous problem for the French garrison at Fort Louis and in 1706 and 1710 floods inundated the fort and the surrounding fields. The result was that the inhabitants asked for a change of site for the community. The site of present Mobile was selected and a community that was almost a replica of the first town was constructed. For a complete description of the character of this community see Hamilton (1976: 85-92).

The new administrative center had barely begun to function when news came from France that the wars between England, France, and Spain had been terminated by the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713 (Reynolds, 1928). Of greater consequence to Louisiana, however, was the simultaneous news that Louis XIV had leased the colony to one of his prominent citizens, the merchant Antoine Crozat. He was to be represented by a governor and directors, while the king was to maintain an adequate military force to defend the colony.

Crozat's ideas of colonization were at great variance with those of Bienville which involved emphasis on the fur trade and the development of affiliations with various Indian tribes to foster and protect that trade. Crozat believed in agriculture, not commerce, and planned to increase European settlement at the risk of alienating the Indians (Cruzat, 1932). To make sure his desires were effected Crozat replaced Bienville in the governorship, with Cadillac, the founder of Detroit (Tepaske, 1964).

Among Cadillac's first enterprises in 1714 was an attempted trade with Mexico, and the relocation of the Taensa Indians from Bayou Manchac to a site two leagues north of the new site of Mobile (Lankford, 1983; Penicault, 1943). The Mexican venture was repulsed by the Spanish, but it opened up much of the area immediately to the west of the Mississippi to trade from Mobile. In 1717, at the invitation of the Alabamas, Fort Toulouse was established near the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa (Jenkins, 1959a; Thomas, 1929, 1960, 1969), significantly extending French influence to the east. From both a commercial and a military standpoint this was an important development because it reduced the influence of the English among the Creeks, Chickasaws and Choctaws, and helped to protect the Mobile settlement and the southern flank of the Appalachians (Cockran, 1956; Smith, 1974). While the fort increased the trade and the security of the colony, however, it was not sufficient to prevent Crozat from doubting the viability of his colony and surrendering his lease in 1717.

At that time Bienville was again appointed Governor, coincident with the assignment by the king of the commercial development of Louisiana to the Western Company established by the notorious Scottish promoter and speculator John Law (Biggar, 1911). Law obtained a charter for twenty-five years to develop agriculture in Louisiana. It was Law's desire to concentrate on the Mississippi River rather than the Alabama-Tombigbee system as the artery of expansion (Heinrich, 1908). As a result Bienville selected and settled the site of New Orleans and other points along the Mississippi as new trading points, and for the first time agricultural settlers in substantial numbers began to immigrate into Louisiana from

France (Cruzat, 1928). Because of the new emphasis on the Mississippi, the capital of the colony was moved in 1720 from Mobile to Biloxi, a point nearer to the focus of colonial activity. While Mobile continued for a time to be the largest city in Louisiana, both it and the Tombigbee Valley began to lose their place as the focus of French colonial attention. In 1720 Mobile became only one of nine districts into which Louisiana was divided by the Western Company.

Although Mobile's dominance was waning in Louisiana, Bienville continued to retain it as the site of the annual French-Indian Congress which was intended to foster good relations and establish trading practices. Penicault (1943) says that Mobile was retained because of its connection with Fort Toulouse and its accessibility to the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Creeks. Between 1726 and 1733 Bienville was recalled to France and in his absence relationships with the Indian tribes deteriorated. By 1735 the English were making extensive trading inroads to the Chickasaw and the northern Choctaw (Alden, 1944). The alienation of the Indians from the French at one point frightened the Mobile community so much that, just prior to Bienville's return, they considered retreating to the more secure position of New Orleans.

In 1735 Bienville renewed contacts with the Choctaw and, satisfied that he had persuaded them once again to be reliable allies, he determined to attack the Chickasaws from Mobile. In 1736 despite problems of materials supply from New Orleans, he set out up the Tombigbee with an expedition of five hundred soldiers and an unknown number of volunteers. While the valley had previously been penetrated by traders and coureurs de bois, this expedition provided the first major European incursion above the junction of the Alabama and the Tombigbee (Bossu, 1768).

Bienville established an intermediate base at Jones Bluff on the Upper Tombigbee where he erected the long serving Fort Tombecbe. Here Bienville conferred with the Choctaw chiefs before moving further upriver to the vicinity of present day Amory, Mississippi, where he erected a smaller fort (Oltibia) as his forward base against the Chickasaws. A previously arranged rendezvous between Bienville and three hundred Frenchmen under d'Artaguet from Illinois failed to materialize. The Chickasaws, with support from the English, fought well. The French were defeated and forced to retreat to Mobile.

Bienville realized that the defeat would only encourage further English expansion and threaten Louisiana's security, so he immediately set about planning another expedition which was implemented in 1740. This time the route taken involved the Mississippi rather than the Tombigbee. The expedition was not a great military success, but it did result in a temporary pacification of the Chickasaws and in increased security for the colony. After Bienville's recall in 1740, Mobile's fortunes declined further. In 1745 the population outside the garrison had decreased to 150 white males and 200 negroes. In 1747 Vaudreuil, the new governor, found it necessary to pallisade Mobile, and even thought of abandoning Fort Tombecbe because of increasing Indian pressure. In 1752 Vaudreuil not content merely with fortifying Mobile against the Choctaws, also undertook an expedition from there up the Tombigbee against the Chickasaws.

He followed Bienville's route up the river to Fort Tombecbe and from there to Cotton Gin Port where Bienville had disembarked. From that point he marched across country and with the Choctaws as allies he attacked the Chickasaws. He destroyed cabins and crops, but, like Bienville, met defeat, and retreated down the Tombigbee. The French halted at Fort Tombecbe, which they enlarged and strengthened, and then returned to Mobile. These early expeditions of Bienville and Vaudreuil were almost identical in design, route, method, and result. The main exception was that Vaudreuil had greater resources and knowledge of the country.

The defeat of Vaudreuil by the Chickasaws was a premonition of what was to happen with the onset of the French and Indian War (1756-63), which was the last phase of the Second Hundred Years War in Europe. The Ohio Valley was the primary focus of the contest. Conflicting claims to Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh) resulted in Braddock's defeat, and by extension to the declaration of war between France and England. Most of the fighting took place far to the north of the Tombigbee. In Mobile the French made plans to attack the British in Charleston but found themselves without the military means and, furthermore, involved in a local feud between the Intendant (Rochemore) and the Governor (Kerlerec). During the French and Indian War the British took the initiative in the vicinity of Mobile and established an effective blockade off Mobile Point (Price, 1977). The war was concluded by the Treaty of Paris (1763) which, among other provisions, ceded the Mobile area and Florida to Great Britain.

#### THE WEST FLORIDA TOMBIGBEE: BRITISH SUCCESSION, 1764-1783

The British divided the coast territory into East and West Florida with the Chattahoochee/Appalachicola the separating boundary (Carter, 1914-15). In the interior the 31st parallel marked the colonial boundary with Indian hunting lands (Hamilton, 1903). Although Mobile was the largest city in the new territories, the British chose Pensacola as their capital for naval reasons - the city being located on a smaller bay but nearer the Gulf (Carter, 1917:18). Mobile retained its commercial identity (Born, 1965). The British repaired Fort Conde and changed its name to Fort Charlotte in honor of their new queen. A blockhouse and battery were installed near Montrose on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay. The port was reopened and commerce flourished. At the same time European settlement expanded as the British implemented a new Indian policy (Long, 1969; Montault de Monberaut, 1965).

The British introduced a plan already adopted on the Atlantic of buying lands from the Indians for the settlement of white colonists (Howard, 1947; Johnson 1933a, 1942). This was effectuated by a series of treaties and by 1765 the vicinity of Mobile and a strip reaching far up the west bank of the Tombigbee was secured (Doster, 1959; Hamilton, 1899c). To embrace this and other settlements on the Mississippi, the colonial boundary was moved northward to the latitude of the mouth of the Yazoo.

The Indian trade was systematized, prices fixed, traders licensed, and all placed under the supervision of a superintendent of Indian affairs (Brannon, 1952). At the same time large powers were vested in the local

governor and also in the legislature which was granted to the province of West Florida (Born, 1963). Those Scottish traders who had been extending British influence from the Carolinas over the mountains north of the French forts now flocked to Mobile, and McGillivray, McIntosh, and similar names became familiar on the bay as well as on the river (Pearson, 1970; Pickett, 1930; Rea, 1954). Fort Toulouse was renamed Fort Confederation but never occupied. Fort Tombecbe became Fort York, and was regarrisoned in 1766. Immediately after that both forts were abandoned because there was no longer an imperial frontier to defend.

Although European settlements remained concentrated around Mobile, the Indian trade involved increasing numbers of Europeans and knowledge of the interior was increasingly in demand for both military and commercial purposes (Greenslade, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939; Osborn, 1953). In 1771-72 Bernard Romans, an army captain, toured the Tombigbee District for Superintendent Smart (Halbert, 1902b). He left Mobile on September 20, 1771, for the Choctaw country and traveling overland reached the Chickasaw settlements on the Upper Tombigbee on November 23rd. On Dec. 23rd, 1771, he and his servant embarked on Town Creek, a tributary of the Upper Tombigbee and floated downriver to Mobile, arriving on January 19, 1772. Romans provided the first recorded detailed observations made along the river (Romans, 1775).

In 1773 William Bartram, a botanist, set out from Charleston to explore the southern interior. In 1777 he was traveling in and around Mobile. He came from Georgia by way of Tallassee and the headwaters of the Escambia, arriving on the east side of the Tensaw river. He visited Mobile and surrounding plantations and provided several descriptions of the qualities of land use and vegetation (Bartram, 1791).

The most important event affecting the Tombigbee region during the British period was the American Revolution. Although hostilities commenced in 1775, Mobile remained firmly under British domination and the section benefited from the eastern revolt (Passons, 1970; Siebert, 1914-15; Starr, 1976b, 1978). Tories driven from Georgia and South Carolina were the first white settlers of what are now Washington, Clarke, and Baldwin Counties (Rea, 1969; Taylor, 1935). The minutes of council in 1777 show a number of grants on Mobile waters to people who were probably fugitive Tories. Fighting did not reach Mobile until 1780. Spain, Holland, and France collaborated to take advantage of British involvement in the American Revolution by fighting the British. A Spanish expedition commanded by Bernardo Galvez, the governor general at New Orleans, captured the British post at Natchez and marched to attack Mobile (Caughey, 1934; Abbey 1928a, 1928b). Galvez bombarded Fort Charlotte from the rear and burned much of the town before the British reinforcements from Pensacola reached the eastern shore of Mobile Bay (Rowland, 1916; Beer, 1896); the British were beaten by the Spaniards, who then erected fortifications nearby that were later known as Spanish Fort (Haarman, 1960). Not only did Galvez hold Mobile, and with it the Alabama-Tombigbee basin but the following year attacked and also captured Pensacola (Cusacks, 1917; Faye, 1942; Padgett, 1943). General Campbell, Governor Chester, and the British troops were repatriated to New York (Osborn, 1948-49). Spain continued to control the Mobile area until 1783 when the Treaty of Versailles recogni-

zed the independence of the United States and at the same time transferred East and West Florida to Spain (Beerman, 1976; Howard 1938-39 a, b,).

#### THE DISPUTED TOMBIGBEE: SPANISH RESUMPTION, 1784-1798

Galvez' conquest of West Florida caused a new adjustment in administrative style. Martial law was established and affairs became regulated by royal decrees from Madrid. Representative government entirely disappeared, and in its place the Spanish authorities ruled paternally. English law had been superimposed on the Coutume de Paris, and now both were gradually displaced by the Partidas. Local alcaldes continued the jurisdiction of the English justices of the peace. Immigration, so rampant during the British period, slackened substantially (Holmes, 1971). Unlike the other Spanish colonies in the New World, both Louisiana's and Florida's populations remained largely French with Indians in the interior (Berry, 1917; Harrison, 1950; Holmes, 1968, 1969, 1975a, 1978a, 1980).

Pensacola was still nominally the capital (McAlister, 1959). The land office was located there as well as juntas or commissions for a variety of purposes. But the governorship of West Florida was practically annexed to that of Louisiana, and almost everything of importance had to be sent to New Orleans for ratification. The old Latin division of authority came into play again because the intendant controlled the land grants and was practically independent of the governor. They often differed and their quarrels were similar to those of Bienville and LaSalle. In practical terms the Mobile area was ruled simultaneously by the governor-general at New Orleans, the governor of West Florida as his subordinate at Pensacola and the commandant in Mobile (Holmes, 1972; Burson, 1940). The commandant was a functionary with civil as well as military duties. Of some dozen commandants at Mobile during the second Spanish period, the best known were Folch, de Lanzos, Osorna, and Perez (Holmes, 1966a).

The revival of Spanish colonial interest promoted by Galvez did not last long. Public affairs became Spanish in every form, and even private documents were eventually written in Spanish instead of the native French. The uncertainty of political matters in Europe became reflected increasingly in North America, and placed even greater pressure on the periphery of Spain's American empire.

The territorial boundary north of Mobile was a crucial diplomatic question in the earliest history of the United States. The Treaty of Paris, (1783), with Great Britain ended the American Revolution. By it Great Britain recognized the United States as independent, recognized Spanish possession of Florida, and set Florida as the southern boundary of the United States. The Florida boundary had been the subject earlier of a famous secret clause in the Preliminary Treaty of 1782, which Jay and Shelburne affected between the United States and Great Britain, and which deliberately made the Florida boundary flexible. The boundary was carried over into the Treaty of 1783 and caused considerable friction between the United States and Spain during the period of the Articles of Confederation and during Washington's administration (Corbitt, 1936). The Florida boundary question also complicated relations between the United States and France during this period, although the Alliance of 1778 was still in



effect (White, 1975b, 1977). The new American Constitution substituted a stronger home based central government for the old British colonial alliance while, on the other hand, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars weakened Spain. These two facts came together to radically change the status quo in the Tombigbee Region (Whittaker, 1927; Wright, 1966, 1971).

Due to American and European pressures upon Spain, this boundary question was finally settled by the Treaty of San Lorenzo which was negotiated by Thomas Pinckney in 1795 in a manner highly favorable to the United States. This first diplomatic achievement of Washington's administration set the boundary at  $31^{\circ}\text{N}$  latitude. The Spaniards put off surveying the boundary of  $31^{\circ}\text{N}$  as long as they could. In 1789 they had built Fort San Esteban to defend the indeterminate northern frontier (Holmes, 1965c). In 1798, however, besieged by angry American settlers, Governor Gayoso yielded (Holmes, 1965a). The line was demarcated in 1798 by Andrew Ellicott for the United States and by Sir William Dunbar for Spain and became known as Ellicott's Line (Ellicott, 1803). It was designated by a stone marker a few miles north of Mobile in the vicinity of Mt. Vernon (Gallalee, 1965). Much to Spanish chagrin, St. Stephens was situated on the American side of the line, which aided the town in competing with Spanish Mobile for upstate trade (Hamilton, 1898). In 1798 the United States occupied St. Stephens and established Fort Stoddert on the Tombigbee River just above the  $31^{\circ}\text{N}$  line to act as a first line of defense for the newly acquired territory (Brannon, 1928).

## CHAPTER IV

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, 1500-1798

#### INTRODUCTION

Much greater attention has been devoted by historians to the political and military history of the colonial period in Alabama than has been paid to the character of economic activities during that era. This imbalance is due perhaps to the more substantial documentary evidence for political and military transactions and to the clearer relationship of these events to national and international historic themes. While the details of many of the day to day activities of colonial economic life are scanty and the full pattern of cultural practices may never be known, there is enough of a record to make judgements concerning the basic character of settlement before 1800.

In this chapter the settlement process is viewed from both a temporal and a geographic perspective with individual sections devoted to particular aspects of economic and social development. Topically these sections address population and settlement patterns, raw materials production, industrial production, trade, transportation, and town development. The primary general source for this chapter is again Hamilton (1910). Other useful general sources are Griffith (1968), Cooke (1935), Summersell (1949), Hamilton (1909-1913a. b. c), and Higginbotham (1968), Brannon (1935a, b) and Owen (1921).

#### POPULATION AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The expansion of population and settlement in the Lower Tombigbee Valley during the eighteenth century was primarily an expression of varying colonization policies applied to the area by the controlling European powers. The basic distinctions in settlement policy derived from contrasts in goals and objectives between the French, British and Spanish governments, but there were also shifts in emphasis under individual administrations (Dunn, 1917). This was particularly the case between 1700 and 1763.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century all the European powers tended to view colonial development from a mercantilist perspective. Colonies were expected to generate raw material products for processing in the mother country, while at the same time providing a market for manufactured goods from the mother country. France was a center of mercantilist philosophy, and when Iberville and Bienville were encouraged to establish a French presence on the Gulf Coast their primary charge was to promote and police the fur trade, not to foster agricultural settlement (Saleeby, 1949). Bienville, in fact, was removed as governor because his

limited efforts to develop agriculture instead of commerce did not suit the commercial plans of Crozat (Biggar, 1911; Cruzat, 1932). Interest in agriculture became subordinate to interest in commerce from the earliest days of French settlement (Giraud, 1950).

The peculiarities of the mercantilist colonial philosophy provided great limitations on the patterns of settlement and development of the French colony (Cruzat, 1928). While the generation of certain raw materials was favored, many kinds of production were discouraged, and settlers were very much the subject of colonial trade regulations (Surrey, 1916). The government or company fixed the price at which the colonists could buy and sell, and either transaction could only be made with the government or the company. In addition, the government or the company provided all supplies and shops in the early years were almost unknown. Settlers were permitted to hunt and have gardens, and the resulting produce could be sold, but anyone wishing to purchase cloth or other manufactures bought them from the company or the royal magazine. As a general rule, neither commercial agriculture nor manufacturing was encouraged.

The main effect of the French colonial trade policies on population and settlement was a very slow growth in the number of people and a very limited expansion of the territory owned and operated by Europeans between 1700 and 1763. During the years 1700-1714, largely against orders, Bienville attempted to encourage agricultural exploitation but was thwarted by several factors. His available population was tiny (only 130 persons in 1703), providing a restricted market. Much of the work was experimental and destined to fail. Environmental events such as storms, floods, heat and drought played havoc with early plantings (Cruzat and Dart, 1931). Under Crozat (1713-18) agriculture was overlooked. Law's Company of the Indies (1718-1722) favored agriculture and the issuance of land grants, but focussed its attention on the Mississippi and neglected the Tombigbee (Banet, 1929).

After 1725 the French Crown returned to a policy of deemphasizing agricultural production, except for specific items such as rice, tobacco, indigo and cattle. These commodities were produced on a few properties granted by the Crown along the west and east sides of the Mobile Delta, only a short distance from Mobile. Due to the attitude of the government, French settlement of the Lower Tombigbee Valley in 1763 consisted of three elements, none of which involved substantial population totals. The first element was the administrative and trading center at Mobile, the only community having any semblance to the European concept of the town. Even Mobile was only a village by European standards in 1763. A second element consisted of settlement related to the fur trade. This included the small garrisons at Forts Toulouse and Tombecke, as well as French traders scattered throughout the Alabama-Tombigbee region, many of whom resided in Indian villages. There were 29 families at Fort Toulouse in the 1750s (Thomas, 1960). The third element comprised the very small number of settlers functioning as agricultural pioneers along the banks of the Mobile and Tensaw Rivers. The precise numbers of these settlers will never be known but there were almost certainly less than fifty, and several of these had their primary residence at Mobile rather than on their plantations. With the arrival of the British in 1763, settlement policies changed (Taylor, 1935). Although interested in the fur trade, the

British government was becoming increasingly attracted by of the prospects of economic gains to be realized from the production of exotic crops (Johnson, 1942). Under the British administration from 1763-1779, agricultural activities were fostered, and the area under settlement expanded rapidly (Johnson, 1933b). During this period the communities at Forts Toulouse and Tombecbe were abandoned. Mobile's commerce became more balanced between furs, timber and agricultural commodities; and the banks of the Lower Tombigbee became intensively settled with land grants extending from Mobile northwards to the Indian boundary line at Sintabogue Creek above the Alabama-Tombigbee junction. There was virtually no settlement at this time away from the river which provided the essential lifeline to Mobile.

Under the British land granting system the grantee could locate his own claim, and so there came to be a great deal of irregularity of form and, over time, overlapping grants. It was basically a case of first come first served and was technically efficient. Officers and soldiers of the war against France were given land, which took the place of a modern pension (Howard, 1945). A private soldier got fifty acres and officers more. On the Tombigbee, McIntosh, (Pearson, 1970), Blackwell, Sunflower, Bassett, McGrew, and other names date from this period (Long, 1969). On the eastern shore of the Bay, and on the Tensaw, the Village and Croft town appeared, and such pioneers as Durnford, Terry, and Weggs established themselves.

Mobile continued to be the only town community of the region, with a population of about 350 in 1765. The town clustered around Fort Charlotte, being more regular to the north, than on the west and south sides. The lots surviving from French times were unchanged, and the little frame and mortar houses faced country roads where livestock mixed with people. McGillivray, and Strothers, McGillivray and Swanson, and Strachan (Born, 1965) were the leading merchants and carried on a considerable business from the King's wharf in front of the Fort. Grants were made in the suburbs to people who wished to farm. The Orange Grove, Fisher, Choctaw Point Tract, and Farmer's Island date from this time.

After 1783 the character of the settlement process changed as the Lower Tombigbee was separated into two jurisdictions. The area north of the 30th parallel became American, that south of 30°N latitude became Spanish. The American territory was subject to policies of loose control, unrestricted immigration and a constant assault on the legal boundaries of the Indian domain (Coley, 1958). The Spanish territory was exposed generally to an administrative policy of benign neglect, which combined somewhat restrictive trade policies with cautious attitudes towards immigration and the granting of new lands to settlers (Holmes, 1962; Howard, 1942).

The result for population growth and settlement during the period 1780-1798 was a surge of European agricultural settlement along the Lower Tombigbee and Alabama River Valleys above the 30°N line, with the development of a new administrative town center at St. Stephens and a defense post at Fort Stoddert. Below the 30°N line population and settlement grew slowly along the Mobile and Tensaw rivers and at Mobile although trade with the expanding Tombigbee settlements to the north provided some increase in commercial traffic for the port (Holmes, 1971).

## RAW MATERIALS PRODUCTION

### Furs and Skins

As already indicated, the main purpose of the early French colonization was to generate commodities which would support the mercantilist goals of the home government. Interest in agriculture became subordinate to interest in other commodities from the earliest days of the Mobile settlement. For the French the acquisition of animal skins and of timber products was the central theme of development (McWilliams, 1967). It was pursuit of the fur trade which led to the establishment of the trading centers at Fort Louis de la Mobile in 1702 at 27 Mile Bluff on the Mobile River; Fort Alibamo, soon to become Fort Toulouse, in 1717 at the confluence of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers (Thomas, 1929, 1960, 1969); and Fort Tombecbe, in 1735, above the junction of the Tombigbee and the Black Warrior. The latter two were remote outposts, intended to influence the Creeks on the one hand and the Choctaws on the other (Cockran, 1956).

Prior to the French intrusion, the British Indian trade was the primary colonial business developed in the Gulf Country (Brannon, 1935a). The westward expansion of the Charlestown trade, which began before 1680, exhibited Britain's far reaching efforts to control the commerce of the New World (Crane, 1928). Records show that there were English speaking traders at the mouth of the Tallapoosa in 1675. The proprietors of the Carolina Company sent goods for the Indian trade as early as 1669, a year before the founding of Charleston (Robinson, 1979). South Carolina trade records show that the packhorse caravans of these early merchants reached the valley of the Tallapoosa River, long before the British post at Oakfuskee was established in 1735 to form a barrier and a protective concentration point against the French at Fort Toulouse (Smith, 1974).

The struggle for territorial domination of the fur trade of the Gulf region was pursued along indeterminate and constantly fluctuating boundaries as tribal affiliations and preferences, and the commercial and military strengths of the main European protagonists went through various metamorphoses. The British finally completed their hold on the Gulf country coast and the lower Mississippi River Valley with the acquisition of the West Floridas by the Treaty of Paris in 1763. As the French posts at Fort Tombecbe and Fort Toulouse were now in English territory, they were useless and quickly abandoned. The old practice of uncontrolled trading was brought to an end by the introduction of licensing following the Georgia Council of 1761 (Caldwell, 1941).

The Georgia Council regulated trade; licensed traders were assigned to the towns of the upper Alabama, Tallapoosa and Coosa Rivers. Some of the resident representatives who came into the country married native women so that when Colonel Benjamin Hawkins, United States Indian agent, came into the country thirty five years later, he found them surrounded by their children and grandchildren. All over the territory that is now Alabama and Mississippi in and Indian village of consequence were found, white traders, some of whom had acquired wealth (Montault de Monberaut, 1965).

British merchants dominated the fur and skin trade. George Galpin had his headquarters at Silver Bluff, South Carolina, and Lachlan McGillivray was influential from his home on the Coosa River, six miles above Fort Toulouse. McGillivray and Swanson at Mobile, controlled the Indian commerce to the west. James Adair operated from Pensacola (Brannon, 1952). Archibald McGillivray and Company used 103 horses to convey goods to the Creeks from Pensacola. The export of furs and skins took place from Charleston, Savannah, Pensacola, and Mobile (Alden, 1944).

After 1770 the British influence beyond Mobile became somewhat subdued (McGowin, 1956). In 1783 a trading license was issued to the British firm of Panton, Leslie and Company which began operations just before Florida was returned to the Spanish (Sherlock, 1948). The Spanish would have preferred for another firm to have assumed the trading license, but Panton, Leslie and Company were able to keep the franchise largely through the efforts of Alexander McGillivray, the most influential of the contemporary Creek chiefs and a friend of Panton (Whitaker, 1928; Foreman, 1929). McGillivray feared American expansion into Creek lands and, therefore, wished to maintain Spanish influence in the area (Pickett, 1930). By 1788 Panton, Leslie and Company had a store and warehouse at Pensacola with several affiliated outposts (Brown, 1959), and a virtual monopoly on Indian trade throughout the northern section of Spanish Florida (Cotterill, 1944). The firm became such an important instrument of Spanish Indian policy that it was soon exempted from export and import taxes (Greenslade, 1937). While McGillivray was using Spanish support to stem American advances, the Spanish were using the Creeks as a buffer for the protection of their own interests (Harrison, 1950; Holmes, 1969, 1975a, 1978b, 1980). Panton, Leslie continued to do business until the War of 1812, but after 1800 it operated with constant deficits (Greenslade, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1959).

#### Forest Products

Furs and skins were not the only raw material staple of interest in the Lower Tombigbee region during the colonial period. The vast forests of the Gulf Coast region were early recognized as a potential substitute for the waning timber resources of western Europe (Albion, 1926). This was particularly true for the 'naval stores' industry which placed great demands for spars, masts and calking and preserving materials, derived from pine. As early as 1734 d'Artagnette, the French commandant at Mobile, wrote the following letter about the production of pitch to the French authorities in Paris (Rowland, 1927, I: 248);

Mr. DeSalmon has done me the honor to write to me to induce the colonists of Mobile to make pitch because the King was taking it at an advantageous price and because half would be paid her and the other half after it had been received at the port of Rochefort. His Majesty could not choose a better way to establish this colony quickly since this is the only profitable return that it can furnish in the present situation. But he informed me in the next place, that they would accept only that which could be shipped in the King's vessels; so that those who were preparing to work at it were in part disgusted with it at

the prospect of so small a business and of the preference that they imagine persons in favor or in authority will always have. Whereupon I have thought it my duty, my lord, to represent to you for the interest of this post, which for a long time has been languishing in inaction, that neither it nor the others will prosper at all if his Majesty is not so good as to receive this pitch in the colony or to oblige the merchants who come there each to take a certain quantity proportioned to their tonnage in consideration of the forty francs per ton that they have as a subsidy, at least until the exportation of this pitch gives the colonists the means to obtain vessels of their own to transport it to France at their own risk, which would be a matter of at most three or four years if one received what they might produce, without turning aside from the cultivation of the fields. Then the colony would be in a position to support itself and to increase by itself, but I do not think that without that it can make any progress. I have informed Messrs. De Bienville and de Salmon of these ideas and they will not fail to add their sound reflections to them.

The actual extent of the lumber and forest products' trade during the colonial period has not been fully determined, but was at times substantial, particularly during the British administration. Virtually all plantations before 1798 incorporated timber and forest products' activities into their regular operation, alongside crop production and animal raising. Forest products were considered to be a primary source of income by most planters. Timber and forest products were generally floated or rafted downriver to Mobile for export to Europe or the Caribbean.

#### Farm Products

As previously discussed, the earliest French attempts to stimulate agricultural production on the Lower Tombigbee were either surreptitious, desultory, or inappropriate to the Gulf Coast environment. Bienville's efforts in the first part of the eighteenth century to provide an agricultural base for the incipient colony focused upon wheat production and were a dismal failure. Before 1720 there were repeated shortfalls in food supplies for the colony, and Bienville had to repeatedly resort to hunting and to both the local Indian villages and the Spanish at Pensacola for the foodstuffs necessary to keep the colony alive. After a few years the French settlers began to realize that the road to agricultural progress lay in emulating the cultivation practices of the Indians, who possessed crops adapted to the regional environment and who had learned the productive capacity of the more fertile lands of the river bottoms.

Once the French settlers turned to the cultivation of corn as a cereal staple and to the growth of indigenous vegetables, the food supply became more assured. Due to established governmental policy, however, such food production took place mostly in gardens in and around the town of Mobile (Cruzat, 1932). One difficulty was the lack of slaves who could work in the malarial low country during the long summer when the Europeans could not. The French settlers suffered greatly every summer from malaria and yellow fever.

Around 1720, under the influence of John Law, the first serious attempts were made to grow cash crops in Louisiana for the European and Caribbean markets (Heinrich, 1908). Figs, oranges, and other fruits were introduced with the main emphasis being on indigo and tobacco. Stress was laid for a time upon rice production but it did not come up to expectations and was never extensively grown. To satisfy the need for field labor in the cash crop system slaves were imported from Africa and the Caribbean for the first time (Dart, 1931).

It was the tentative interest in cash crops after 1720 that led to the first establishment of landholdings which could be categorized as plantations in the vicinity of Mobile (Cruzat, 1928). Mme. de Lusser obtained a grant in 1737 of a five thousand and fifty arpens island in the Tensaw River which had been abandoned by the Tensaw Indians. This tract corresponded in location with one on the mainland, approved for Mme. de Lusser in 1738, which had frontage of one league on the Tensaw River and a depth of sixty arpens. This pattern of land granting, which combined a portion of the delta floodplain with a portion of the higher bluff land, appears to have been a common French practice between 1730 and 1763. The pattern derives from a fuedal concept of land tenure developed much earlier in France and first transferred to the new world in the Canadian settlements. There were no French land grants north of the Mobile Delta and only a handful in total. According to Hamilton (1910: 137-138):

Most of their names are lost to us, but, as a southern Acadian race, they tilled the river banks, and the smoke from homes of thrifty settlers rose amid the figs and vines from Mobile up beyond the fork of the rivers. Gayety was not lacking, and pirogues carrying pleasure parties would pass the farmer or the hunter taking his products to town, or hail the solemn Indian in the bayous.

We should naturally expect to meet them mostly about the bluffs, not on the swamp lands predominant below Twenty-one Mile Bluff, and so it was. This, the first highland, was occupied by Beauchamps, who sold to Grondel, for whom the plantation was called St. Philippe, and a little promontory almost making up a part of it is even yet sometimes called for La Prade. Lizard Creeks across in the delta were long named for Beauchamps, and Bayou Registe a little above we have noticed as at least certainly French. Creole Dubrocas, including the Brus, have long lived near Twenty-one Mile Bluff, although the French grant places B. Dubroca south of Bayou Sara.

About the site of the old fort we do not find settlers, but the well-known La Tours seem to have been near the river bend a mile above. Bayou Mathieu across in the delta may commemorate the cure of this name, and Krebs Lake perpetuates some one of that family.

The De Lussers, at the close of the French Period, certainly lived at the north end of the delta. Where the Tensaw leaves the Mobilians and Apalaches, one plan shows the Parents, and not far away was Favre.

Eleven leagues from Mobile, and therefore near what is now called Chastang's the Le Sueurs at one time had a plantation at a bluff on the west side of the river. It was afterwards the



property of Narbonne. The description, owing to court proceedings, has survived in some detail. In 1756 the house was new, thirty feet long by twenty wide, a filled-in frame of posts, and roofed with bark. It had six windows and two doors and a clay chimney, with a gallery at one gable; there was also a lean-to (appentif) kitchen with chimney. To one side was a chicken house, and to the right of the rear (cour) a large structure sixty by thirteen feet, surrounded by posts and piling, covered with bark, used as a lodging for slaves. On the other side was a barn, twenty-five by eighteen feet, with lean-to and chimney. The whole was inclosed by piling (pieux), making a yard twenty-five toises square. The place faced on the river fifteen arpens by two deep, and across the river there was another field (desert) ten arpens front by two deep.

To this time we must assign the adjacent Chastang settlement near Chastang's Bluff, still represented by the large and interesting colored Creole colony who live in the vicinity. They claim descent from Dr. John Chastang of Spanish times, but really go back to the French period, of which their patois is an interesting reminder.

While the French flirted with the plantation concept in a somewhat inconclusive fashion in the first part of the eighteenth century, the British after 1763 made the plantation their primary mode of economic exploitation (Howard, 1940). They rapidly permitted land grants along the river banks, to absorb all those areas not previously allocated by the French, and they extended plantation settlement northwards to Sintabogue Creek (Howard, 1947). Among the many plantations emerging during the British period were those of Patrick Strachan, Robert Farmer, and Elias Durnford. According to Rea (197: 229-232):

Another group of British colonial plantations stretched along the rivers flowing into Mobile Bay. The Tensaw had attracted French settlers before 1763, and by the 1770s a number of Anglo-Americans had established themselves in the area of present-day Stockton. Among these was Patrick Strachan, a Scot who came to America in 1765 and to West Florida very shortly thereafter. Strachan served as secretary to Brigadier William Tayler, who commanded at Pensacola from 1765 to 1767, and assisted in boundary surveys after the dividing lines were settled with the Indians. In 1771, Strachan sat on the Fifth General Assembly of the Province as a member of Mobile. Active in the defense of both Mobile and Pensacola against Spanish attack in 1780-81, Strachan was Captain of a company of about thirty Royal Foresters who were known as The Associated Company of the Loyal Militia of Tensaw, and he also raised a light dragoon troop of thirty-five men.

Patrick Strachan held a total of 11,000 acres of land in West Florida; his Tensaw plantation included nearly 2,000 acres on the river, largely cleared, tilled, and settled, a seven-and-a-half-acre island in the river, a thousand acres of unimproved land. Specializing in livestock, Strachan claimed to own 600 cattle and 80 horses. He lived in a house thirty-six by twenty-one feet in size, the whole surrounded by a gallery and

covered by a shingle roof. Uniquely, Strachan built his house over a stone cellar - no small accomplishment on the banks of the Tensaw! Meals were prepared in a kitchen building set apart from the house. The plantation boasted two storage barns, a stable and cowsheds, a dairy house, a smokehouse, and a carpenter's shed. Strachan's overseer had a house of his own and an unspecified number of Negro houses had been built. The planter valued this property at L 776 and his building at L 2,596.12.4. At the time of the American Revolution the plantation was producing an income of L 1,000 a year, and Patrick Strachan was one of the region's most successful settlers.

Nearby, on the banks of the Tensaw, sat the house of Mr. Robert Farmar. A native of New Jersey who had followed a career in the Army from 1741 to 1767, Farmar had commanded the British regiments that occupied Fort Conde in 1763, and he had led an expedition up the Mississippi to the Illinois country in 1765. Upon his return he faced a court martial which cleared him of charges of misusing his funds and authority but so soured him with officialdom that an untimely expression of his disillusionment with the Army resulted in the loss of his place in the 34th Regiment of Foot. Having picked up a variety of properties in Mobile, Farmar secured further grants on the Tensaw and settled down as a farmer from about 1771 until his death in the fall of 1776. His widow maintained the place until the war drove her from the colony. Mary Farmar evaluated her property at L 12,000 a sum that included a house in Mobile, worth L 600, which was pulled down in 1780 on the orders of Lt. Gov. Elias Dunford, in order to clear a field of fire around Fort Charlotte. Farmar's plantation home must have been relatively comfortable as he had two rooms with fireplaces, but it was not large enough for him to escape the prattle of his little girls. The Major's crops included rice and indigo, but neither proved successful. In 1776 he remarked that after two years he had not enough rice for the use of his family, a circumstance he blamed upon the bad management of his overseer. Three years' efforts to produce indigo were equally fruitless, for he could find no hand who knew how to make it. At that point Farmar decided to shift his attention to lumber. The combined problems of soil and weather, labor and management, were discouraging. His plantation was producing a quarter of what he had expected, in 1776, and that, he wryly observed, was twice as good as had been the case in recent years. Spanish conquest deprived Mrs. Farmar of her real estate, but she was able to sell her Negro slaves for L 300 before retiring to England.

On the east shore of Mobile Bay there was a settlement known as Croftown, around which were scattered a number of farms. Here Elias Durnford had a 5,000-acre plantation, each valued at L 500, and nearby lived the Frenchman Charles Parent. The Parent plantation centered upon a six-room house, thirty-six feet in length, with a gallery or piazza all around. Its owner was engaged in making tar, and in 1780 he had on hand a hundred barrels of tar worth 900 and 200 empty tar barrels valued at one pound sterling apiece. The whole was estimated by M. Parent at nearly L 3,000. Durnford, who came out as Surveyor General in

1764 and became Lieutenant Governor in 1769, owned widely scattered properties on the Mississippi, the Tombeckby, the Alabama, and the Escambia rivers, totalling 36,365 acres valued at L 9,729. Although most of his effort as a planter seems to have gone into a place known as Belle Fountaine, altogether Durnford claimed to have had six hundred cows and sixty horses on his land.

The British experimented with the commercial production of both indigo and rice, as well as cotton. Of the three crops indigo was the most rewarding because of the peculiar economic conditions related to the crop at that time. The surge in indigo production in the Gulf-South Atlantic colonies of England in the mid-eighteenth century usually has been ascribed to the Parliamentary bounty which provided a premium of six pence for every pound of American indigo imported into Britain. The basic cause of indigo's success, however, was King George's War (1739-1748), which cut off England's normal suppliers of indigo in the French and Spanish West Indies and raised maritime insurance rates to the point that shipments of bulky commodities such as rice were uneconomical. After the war recovery in the price of rice encouraged a return to that staple, but the Parliamentary bounty allowed merchants to offer higher than market prices for indigo after the war and limited production continued in the American colonies.

During the French and Indian War (1754-1762) the loss of French and Spanish indigo again favored mainland production, and by the end of the war, indigo had become an economic staple in Georgia and the Carolinas. Indigo was a dominant crop along the Lower Tombigbee from 1763 to the last years of the century. In the 1790s, however, planters abandoned indigo, not so much because of the enticement of new crops but because a surplus of the dye collapsed the market. Three other problems became evident in addition to the market collapse. One was the poor reputation of the product which put it at a severe disadvantage in the European market. Second was the constant threat of insect infestation or climatic disasters such as drought or excessive rain that periodically devastated the crops. The great Tombigbee flood of 1791 dealt the indigo plantings around Mobile a blow from which they never recovered (Holmes, 1978). The third was a shortage of capital for a labor intensive crop. Greater productivity per unit of slave labor was one means of increasing return, but as slaves became responsible for larger acreages of indigo the quality of the dye further declined. By the end of the eighteenth century indigo had largely disappeared from the Mobile region, and seas of cotton were beginning to spread in its place.

Details of indigo production and processing in the Lower Tombigbee have not been discovered, but they were probably very similar to those identified by Winberry (1979:9596) in South Carolina at the same period:

Indigo tolerated a variety of soils, growing even on sandy coastal lands and the pine barrens, but preferred the "rich light soil, unmixt with clay or sand" of the oak-hickory interfluves. On coastal plantations rice was grown on the riverine floodplain after the swamps were cut over and dikes, trunks, and canals constructed. On the higher lands behind these,

indigo fields were cleared. Indigo seed was sequentially planted from middle or late April into May so that the plants matured at different times. Cuttings occurred in July or August when the plants were two or three feet high and again in August or September; a third was at the end of September, if cold weather held off.

The indigo leaves and stems were cut early in the morning and carried directly to the vat complex. They were laid into the first vat, the "steeper," covered with water and allowed to ferment. The indigo dissolved, and the liquid was drained into a second vat, the "battery." It had a long rod through its center with attached paddles or bottomless buckets, which violently beat the liquor. The resultant oxidation caused the indigo to precipitate out of solution, and lime water was added to hasten this settling. The precipitant was then removed from the vat and placed in osnaburg bags to drain. Eventually, after additional drying, the indigo was cut into 2-inch squares and packed into casks.

The success of any plantation depended not on productivity per acre but on productivity per unit of labor. Governor Glen had noted that one slave could readily manage two or more acres of indigo, although others argued that two acres was a heavy task and that  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres was "full enough." William De Brahm, however, in the 1770s noted that a slave could handle up to four acres of land and as well produce an acre of provisions. Nevertheless, an individual slave during the colonial period probably handled two acres of land and therefore produced some 70 or 80 pounds of the dye. Some planters expected more from their slaves, especially after the Revolution. Because of labor difficulties and shortage of capital, they held to a higher ratio to increase productivity per unit of labor.

One other aspect of indigo production was its insalubrity and generally unpleasant nature. Contemporary medical theory associated malaria with the "putrid effluvia" of the coastal swamps, exacerbated by the stagnant waters in the ponds and processing vats associated with indigo production. Mosquitoes, drawn to the processing areas by the glucose released during fermentation of the leaves, were the real culprits, however, and spread disease among slaves, planters, and livestock. The houses were set far from the processing vats because of the acrid stench of the fermented leaves, but indigo manufacture, in short, was not a pleasant calling.

Before 1798 crops of indigo, rice or cotton were usually grown on a small portion of plantations. Invariably these crops were raised in combination with other products such as corn, tobacco, vegetables, livestock and the Lower Tombigbee plantations of the eighteenth century had no real resemblance to the monocultural plantations which were to succeed them during the early years of the nineteenth century. The Tombigbee plantations of the eighteenth century were a combination of subsistence and commercial production where economic stability and survival were seen to be most assured by a broad diversity of activities, with no overcommitment to any particular product.

## INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

Of all of the types of economic activity conducted in the Lower Tombigbee area during the colonial period, those which might be categorized as industrial have a peculiar insignificance. The low level of industrial activity exhibited during the eighteenth century, in Mobile and vicinity, was an expression of both the level of technological development reached in Europe at that time and of the mercantilist philosophy with respect to the role of a colonial territory. Of these two the latter is of most consequence.

The home countries deliberately promulgated trade regulations which placed severe restrictions on manufacturing and processing industries in the colonies. Only those industries which were necessary to maintain the internal viability of the colony or to preserve and package raw material products were permitted. As a result the only industrial activities which appear in the Tombigbee region outside Mobile before 1798 were saw milling, grain grinding, and skin tanning. A small number of sawmills, gristmills, tanneries, and tile and brick-kilns of indeterminate size and location were scattered on minor watercourses around Mobile during the eighteenth century. It is probable that most were ephemeral in nature and related to individual plantation operations.

In the city of Mobile, certain crafts were practiced. According to Summersell (1949:93) as early as 1718 Mobile had:

at least one clerk, cooper, muskateer, domestic servant, cooks, shoemaker, tobacco worker, carpenter, joiner, tailor, laborer, brewer, locksmith, soldier, wheelwright, baker, miner, wig-maker, surgeon, bookkeeper, weaver, stone cutter, flax-dresser, papermaker, vine-dresser, sailor, rope-maker, goldsmith, maker of gold and silver cloth, thatcher, anvil-maker, tile-maker, silk worker, butcher, farrier, miller, 'edge-tool-maker,' puppet-maker, turner, carter, and coppersmith.

Such activities were on a domestic rather than industrial scale, however, and it was not until the nineteenth century that the Lower Tombigbee region witnessed any significant industrial development.

## TRANSPORTATION

Throughout the colonial period there were only three modes of transportation of significance to the Lower Tombigbee Valley. Overland travel by trail or road, was of greatest consequence. That was followed closely by river communications with the interior and by oceanic communications with adjacent areas of the Gulf Coast, and overseas trading points.

### Roads

The earliest European explorers of the Gulf Coast found that those areas occupied by Indians were already connected by a complex network of trails, linking not only the villages of individual tribes, but also

extending to neighboring societies (Myer, 1928). This made it possible for the first Europeans to travel freely and range widely. DeSoto followed Indian trails exclusively. Tristan de Luna made immediate contact with aboriginal settlements, and Pardo in 1566 was able to use Indian trails to penetrate deeply from Santa Elena to the Tallapoosa River area (Hamilton, 1910).

The Indian trails were always along routes where the fewest physical obstructions were to be encountered. According to Owen (1911) the general direction was determined by topographic features such as mountain ranges and gaps (passes), valleys, springs, water courses, and fordable places in rivers. The ridge or watershed between streams was generally followed. Forging and ferrying places across streams and rivers were so judiciously selected that most continued to serve travelers until bridges were built in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Along the trails Indians made war forays or exchanged trade items with other tribes. According to Gatschet (1888):

A correct and detailed knowledge of the Indian trails leading through their country and called by them war paths, horse trails, and by the white traders, "trading roads," forms an important part of Indian topography and history.

When Iberville explored the Lower Gulf region, he found good "roads" among the Mobilians. The success of the Creek confederacy depended largely upon its network of trails connecting the "Upper Creeks" on the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers with the "Lower Creeks" on the Chattahoochee. These paths traversed a large portion of what is now the eastern part of Alabama. Likewise the Chickasaws in present Mississippi and Tennessee had their system of trails, as well as the Choctaws in Southern Mississippi. It is impossible now to delineate the exact routes of all these trails because the settlements they connected were far from permanent, and contemporary maps failed to show lesser trails in detail. The main routes which connected the different tribes with each other and with the colonial settlements can, however, be traced.

The Creeks had an elaborate network of roads in which most routes ranged toward the east through present day Georgia or south towards the Gulf Coast in the vicinity of the Lower Chattahoochee. Creek trails to the Southwest were less numerous, but a major trail to the Choctaws is known to have existed. This crossed the Tombigbee River at or near McGrew's Shoals. From there it ran along the Alabama to the Cahaba where it crossed to the Upper Creek country. Another major Creek path continued southwesterly, along ridge routes wherever possible, to Pensacola and Mobile. This trail, extending from the Alabama towns near the site of present-day Montgomery to Pensacola along a route closely paralleled today by the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, became famous as the "wolf trail" or "Pensacola Trading Path." The trail was much used by the Creek Indians and by traders who enlarged it into a horse path. The "Wolf Trail" received its name from the location of the village of Muklasa, on the Tallapoosa River, home of the Wolf clan of the Creeks. The site of this town, ten miles east of Montgomery, was the point from which many of the early trails to the up country and to Georgia radiated. A western branch of this trail separated at Bluff Springs in Escambia County,

Florida, and ran northwest to the junction of the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers.

As the English and the Spanish were found at the terminus of the Pensacola Trading Path, so were the French found at the end of the Mobile-Tuckabatcha Trading Path, the Mobile Route to the Alabama-Tallapoosa towns. This path crossed the Wolf Trail at the site of Flomaton, and passed through northern Brewton. It divided some distance on between Persimmon and Pigeon Creeks, crossing the latter eight miles southeast of Greenville, and from there continuing to Tuckabacha. According to Brannon (1934:10):

These Mobile and Pensacola routes, when they reached the Coosa-Tallapoosa junction, through diverging ways, followed the valleys of the rivers to cross the Tennessee east of the Great Bend and on to the Cumberland and Ohio regions to the north.

Intimately associated with Mobile's colonial history was the Great Southern Trading and Migration Trail which led from the mouth of the St. Johns River in Florida to the mouth of the Red River in Louisiana (Hamilton, 1901). The route crossed the Appalachicola River below the confluence of the Chatahoochee and the Flint, and passed over the Alabama delta, through the "Cut Off," and across Nanahubba Island. Apart from its association with war and trade it was the migration route used by the Southern Indian tribes and subtribes that settled in Louisiana after the loss of the French dominion in Mobile.

The "Spanish trail," which developed as the main artery of land-based communication along the Gulf Coast during the colonial period, was generally coincident with the Great Southern Trading and Migration Route. A branch of this trail ran from the Appalachicola crossing northwest to the vicinity of modern Montgomery, providing the great route of communication between the Creeks in Alabama and the Seminoles in Florida. This Appalachicola-Alabama trail continued on from the lower Koasati towns northwest along the Upper Tombigbee across the Buttahatchee River to the Chickasaw Country. The Chickasaws thereby had direct access to Koasati and Alabama towns, and from there to the Atlantic coast at the mouth of the St. Johns River.

There were also paths leading northwest from Mobile to the Choctaws, with whom the French had the greatest affinity. The Big Trading Path from Mobile to the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations ran about a mile west of Citronelle; thence to Isney in Choctaw County; on to Coosha Town in what is now Lauderdale County, Mississippi; from there to Plymouth in Lowndes County, Mississippi; and from there to the Chickasaw towns. Henri de Tonti on his goodwill mission to the Mississippi River people in 1702 traveled much of this road (Higginbotham, 1978b). In American times it became a path for traders and afterwards the greater part of it was used as a post road by the government. Eventually a larger part of it was converted into what was known as the Tennessee Road.

The main route of the Choctaws to the central Creek country was the Alamuchee Creek Trail, which crossed the Tombigbee River at the shoals a short distance above the mouth of Chickasawbogue Creek in Marengo County.

It crossed the Alabama River just below the entry of the Cahaba and then passed east and north to the mouth of Old Town Creek, and from there to the Alabama towns. That part of the trail between Old Town Creek and the Alabama towns was the road travelled by DeSoto in 1540; in more recent times it formed part of the American road from Linden to Adams and Martins. This trail was a good example of the Indian tendency to follow ridge routes, trending as it did, southeast to avoid the Warrior River and the "Chickasaw Bogue," then following the ridge through the prairie country to the Alabama River.

The "Great Tombigbee War Crossing" was at Black Bluff, (Socteloosa) about two miles below the influx of the Sucavnuchee. Several Choctaw trails converged here and then proceeded as one trail for some distance east of the river. Eventually the trail forked, with one branch leading to Oakfuskee on the Tallapoosa and the other to the towns of the Alabamas near the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers. Both Creeks and Choctaws used this crossing frequently in their raids.

Among lesser routes of importance in the Lower Tombigbee region were the following:

1. the Mobile and Hobuckintopa trail from Mobile to the Indian village that later became St. Stephens.
2. the Hobuckintopa and Creek nation trail which crossed the Tombigbee river at Hobuckintopa to the Chickasahay River and then down it to the Pascagoula River and the Gulf.
3. the Coosa - Fort Tombecbe Trail from Coosa Town in Talladega County to Fort Tombecbe via Tuscaloosa.
4. the Upper Creek - Vicksburg path from the Upper Creek country west through Pickens County, Alabama, to Vicksburg.

The above trails were the highways of the Southern Indians in the mid-eighteenth century. They had at that time been the main routes of colonial and provincial transportation for two hundred years. According to Hamilton (1897-98:42):

The Indian trails were the paths of the white explorers, from the Spanish discoverers and French "coureurs de bois" to the American pioneers like Boone and Dale, and between these extremes competing British and French merchants carried their wares over the same routes to reach the native tribes.

Traffic along the early roads and trails was by packhorse. The thriving Indian trade of the eighteenth century relied upon packhorse caravans for the carrying of wares and Hamilton has provided an excellent picture of the physical and self-reliant persons involved in the packhorse trade (Hamilton, 1910. According to Cooke (1935: 24):

Besides skins and pelts of many kinds, the traders bought up bees wax, hickory nut oil, "snake root," together with medicinal barks. These were sent to Augusta and Pensacola on pack-



horses, and to Mobile and New Orleans in large canoes. The pack-horses were small native ones, capable of enduring heavy loads and great fatigue. The pack saddle carried three bundles each weighing sixty pounds, two of which were suspended across the saddle and down the animal's sides while the third was deposited on top of the saddle over which was thrown a water proofing skin. Liquids were transported in the same fashion, including the popular "taffai," a low grade of rum which remained in its small kegs on route. Even poultry of all kinds was carried in cages on the backs of these docile animals.

Rivers appear not to have been major obstacles. The fur traders swam swollen creeks and rivers, and rafted their wares across if canoes were not available. The rafts were constructed as needed from cane found along the river bank. The cane was cut into ten foot lengths, tied into bundles three feet around, laid in the water and bound parallel with other bundles. Across these were placed more bundles, thus forming a crude float of great potential strength. In the absence of cane, logs were used. Grapevines were used to hold and guide these cumbersome craft across the rivers to the ponies waiting on the other side. Through these techniques the packhorse trains traveled an average of twenty-five miles a day, maintaining contact between the Gulf-Atlantic ports and the Indian villages of the hinterland.

William Bartram recounted his service as a temporary packhorseman at a crossing of a branch of the Alabama River in 1777. The river was in flood and in order to cross it Bartram (1791:352354) said:

I undertook to collect dry canes, and my companion, dry timber or logs and vines to bind them together. .... In the first place we laid, parallel to each other, dry sound trunks of trees, about nine feet in length and eight or nine inches in diameter; which binding fast together with grapevines and withs, until we had formed this first floor, about twelve or fourteen feet in length, we then bound the dry canes in bundles, each near as thick as a man's body, with which we formed the upper stratum, laying them close by the side of each other, and binding them fast; after this manner our raft was constructed. Then having two strong grapevines, each long enough to cross the river, we fastened one to each end of the raft, which now being completed, and loading on it as much as it would safely carry, the Indian took the end of one of the vines in his mouth, plunged into the river and swam over with it, and the vine fixed to the other end was committed to my charge to steady the raft and haul it back again after being unloaded. As soon as he had safely landed and hauled taught his vine, I pushed off the raft, which he drew over as quick as possible, I steadying it with my vine; in this manner, though with inexpressible danger of losing our effects, we ferried all safe over.

But my difficulties at this place were not yet at an end, for our horses all landed just below the mouth of a considerable branch of this river, of fifteen or twenty feet width, and its perpendicular banks almost as many feet in height above its swift waters, over which we were obliged to carry every article

of our effects, and by no other bridge than a sapling felled across it, which is called a raccoon bridge; and over this my Indian friend would trip as quick and light as that quadruped, with one hundred weight of leather on his back, when I was scarcely able to shuffle myself along over it astride.

The Spanish who controlled West Florida from 1780-1798 did little to improve roads, trade or settlement. The trading house of Panton, Leslie and Company did send traders and packhorses as far as the Cherokees, and their trade formed a large part of Mobile's business (Hamilton, 1897-98). By 1790, however, John Pope found the Creeks trading almost exclusively with the city of Augusta. Upon the organization in 1789 of the American administration of the area north of 30°N latitude, the United States provided for trading houses, called Public Factories, and attempted to control trade with the four major Indian nations in the Gulf country. The four factories established in the region were located at Coleraine, Georgia, on the St. Mary's River; Tellico Blockhouse in east Tennessee; St. Stephens on the Tombigbee River; and at Chickasaw Bluff on the Mississippi. Even so Panton, Leslie and Company at Pensacola competed strongly in the Alabama country with these factories (Brannon, 1934).

Mobile, like Pensacola, had spasmodic desires for better communication with neighboring towns. Under the French regime few roads were built except within local settlements, and access to the Indian country remained via the rivers and the old paths. Under English control a military road was proposed from Mobile to Natchez which would have been of value in the control of the west by use of the Mississippi River and in preventing the dispatch of supplies to the Kentuckians and other rebels by the Spanish. The plan, however, never matured. The only road actually opened was one from Mobile to Pensacola, at the petition (and largely at the expense) of the Mobile merchants who wanted to receive their English mail and freight sooner from the capital of the territory. The route was by ferry over the bay to the "Village," near Bay Minette and then overland to Pensacola, with a short ferry over the Perdido River. Because of its partial use as a post road, the government assisted in maintaining the road.

With the acquisition of the western territory by the United States after the Revolution, the Gulf country ceased to be dominated by the Indian traders alone. The vanguard of agricultural settlers emerged to begin the relentless pressure on the hunting grounds which was to diminish severely the profitable control of the fur traders. With their demise and the unprecedented extension of trails and trade routes by white settlers desiring the fertile bottom lands there arose a need for a more adequate system of transportation than that offered by the old horse paths. By 1798 few of these new routes had developed.

#### Rivers

While the Indian trails provided the main thoroughfares of transportation during the colonial period, there were other avenues of traffic in operation. While some of the main trade and military activities of the colonial period focused on the longer overland routes, certain military, local trade and communications activities relied upon the Tombigbee and

Alabama Rivers and their tributaries as the transport medium. Forts Toulouse, Tombecbe, St. Stephens, and Stoddert were all built on the riverbank; supplies and personnel for these trade and defense points were frequently transported along the rivers. The two French military expeditions from Mobile against the Chickasaws utilized the Tombigbee River as a means of entry and exit. Undoubtedly, there was some transshipment of Indian products downriver from points such as Tombecbe, Blacks Bluff, and Hobuckintopa. The use of the river as a trade route was somewhat limited in the colonial period by the difficulties of upstream navigation, and by the fact that the major Indian settlements of the middle reaches lay away from the main river channel.

As European agricultural settlement expanded to the north of Mobile in the later part of the eighteenth century, the river south of St. Stephens came to be used to a much greater extent for local trade and communications with Mobile. The area between the junction of the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers and Mobile became increasingly densely settled and exploited between 1763 and 1798. The Mobile and Tensaw Rivers during those years were major arteries of transport activity for that area. At the time St. Stephens was considered the head of navigation for ships and several boatyards operated to satisfy the demand for vessels in both the river and coastal trades. Agricultural produce and timber were the main items transported by water between the Tombigbee, Mobile, and Tensaw river plantations and Mobile.

#### The Sea

During the eighteenth century there was a considerable traffic by sea of people and supplies between the Lower Mississippi settlements, Mobile, and Pensacola. This traffic originated in the first years of the century between the French on the Lower Mississippi and Mobile and the Spanish in Pensacola and continued unabated during the various changes in political arrangements up to the end of the century. Pensacola remained greatly dependent on agricultural produce from the Tombigbee settlements throughout the colonial period. The dependence of the American settlements above Fort Stoddert on the port of Mobile and the Gulf Coast traffic for basic food supplies was instrumental in attempts both to open up Tombigbee River trade with the Tennessee Valley and the midwest via Gaines Trace and to bring Mobile Bay under American control. Of the exports in the 1770s Hamilton (1910:289-290) has said that:

Indigo and hides probably led the list but we find also timber and lumber, slaves, poultry, cattle, corn, tallow, bear's oil, tar and pitch, rice and tobacco, myrtle wax, salted wild beef, salted fish, pecans, sassafras, and oranges.

## CHAPTER V

### LIFELINE OF TERRITORY AND STATE: POLITICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS, 1799-1860

#### THE SHARED TOMBIGBEE: SPANISH RETREAT AND AMERICAN EXPANSION, 1798-1811

On March 6, 1798, the United States House of Representatives passed a bill "for an amicable settlement of limits with the State of Georgia, and authorizing a government in the Mississippi Territory," and on April 8, 1798, it became law (Haynes, 1954, 1973; McLemore, 1967; Whittaker, 1903). President Adams appointed Winthrop Sargent, a native of Massachusetts, to be the first governor of the territory (Elliott, 1970), which extended from the Chattahoochee to the Mississippi River along the 31st parallel. At first the northern boundary was run parallel from the mouth of the Yazoo, but in 1804 the line was changed to the latitude of the southern border of Tennessee (Hall, 1906).

Sargent divided the territory into three counties, and on June 4, 1800 he created Washington County extending from the Pearl River to the Chattahoochee. The county had a population of 733 whites and 494 slaves, as well as 23 free blacks (McLemore, 1943). The majority of these people were concentrated along the Tombigbee River above the 31st parallel in what were then known as the Tombigbee settlements. The Tombigbee settlements were separated from other Euro-American settlement concentrations by the Chickasaw lands on the west and the Creek lands on the north and east (Davis, 1965; Martin, 1902). In 1802, at Fort Confederation, the Choctaw signed a treaty transferring to the United States the old cession to the British of all land south of the Hatchee-Tikibee Bluff on the Tombigbee (Brannon, 1950a), and between the Tombigbee and Mobile on the east and the Chickasaw River on the west. Wilkinson signed for the United States; Pushmataha and other chiefs signed for the three divisions of the Choctaw nation.

In 1804, under Act of Congress, Washington County was made into a judicial district (Haynes, 1965; White, 1899). In 1805 by the Treaty of Mount Dexter the United States acquired a grant, from the Choctaws of a strip of land to connect the Tombigbee and Natchez Districts. It extended in width from Ellicott's Line to Choctaw Corner, crossing the Tombigbee at Fallettabrenna Old Fields below Tuscahoma. McGrew's, Mitchell's and some other reserves were noted in the Treaty. The center of population and of community interest in the Tombigbee Settlements was Fort Stoddert on the Mobile River (Holmes, 1964). It was a port of entry, the residence of a United States tax collector, and the seat of Federal as distinguished from local authority (Silver, 1935). To the Americans it was a defense and a springboard against the Spanish. To the Spanish during the first decade of the century it was protection against the people they called "the firebrands of the Bigbee" (Holmes, 1971).

The first county seat was McIntosh Bluff where Ephraim Kirby presided as the first territorial judge (Briceland, 1971). He was succeeded by Harry Toulmin who moved the court and court files to the new site of Wakefield, which remained the county seat from 1805-1810. It was succeeded by St. Stephens in 1811 and Rodney in 1812. Wakefield was never a substantial community and consisted almost entirely of the log courthouse and jail on opposite sides of the road from St. Stephens to Mobile.

In 1807 commissioners under an Act of the Legislature laid out the town of St. Stephens near the old established Fort St. Stephen. There, under an Act of 1808, the land office for the district east of the Pearl River was located. David Holmes of Virginia succeeded the unpopular Governor Williams in 1809 and on December 21 of that year he signed an act carving Baldwin County out of the southern part of Washington. The completion of the "Three Chopped Way," from Natchez to Georgia via St. Stephens, in 1807 caused a major influx of population and by 1810 population extended on both sides of the Tombigbee up to Mount Sterling. The population of Washington County was about six thousand, with the majority from Georgia and the Carolinas (Walters, 1969). The people were mainly confined to the west side of the Tombigbee, but some pioneers lived to the east on the fertile bottom lands of Bassett's Creek and around the junction of the Alabama and Tombigbee (Pearson, 1970). Among those who traveled over the Three Notched Way to Fort Stoddert were Miller and Hood, who intended establishing a newspaper at Mobile. Instead they began the Mobile Sentinel at Fort Stoddert on May 23, 1811, thus initiating the first newspaper in the area that was later to become Alabama (Heimbold, 1959).

The first decade of the century also marked changes in the situation of the Spanish lands to the south of 31st parallel. Relations between the Bigbee District and Mobile were often strained, although some people such as Toulmin and Gaines had good relationships with individuals in the Spanish area. The main problem related to customs duties. Not only did Tombigbee settlers have to pay United States customs duties at Fort Stoddert, but they also had to pay the Spanish commandant at Mobile twelve and a half per cent ad valorem on everything imported or exported, even to another American port. Any military or political pressures on Spain's hold on Louisiana and the Floridas tended to be reflected in the Tombigbee settlements by schemes to bring Mobile into the American fold.

As Napoleon's power grew in Europe, and England's was strengthened on the sea, Spain began to fear a loss of West Florida (Cox, 1967). Jefferson made the first inroads when he purchased Louisiana in 1803 and claimed all the land to the Perdido which had been the old boundary of Louisiana (Aiton, 1931; Burns, 1932). French opposition causes Jefferson to back off with the statement that: "These claims will be a subject of negotiation with Spain, and if, as soon as she is at war, we push them strongly with the one hand, holding out a price in the other, we shall certainly obtain the Floridas, and all in good time" (Lipscomb, 1903, 10: 408).

In September, 1810, Americans in West Florida revolted against Spain and captured the Spanish fort at Baton Rouge (Arthur, 1935; Favrot, 1895, 1896; Padgett, 1938c). A blue woolen flag with a single silver star

proclaimed the "Republic of West Florida." (Padgett, 1937; 1940). The revolutionists, including Reuben Kemper, Joseph Kennedy, James Caller and others from the Bigbee District, expected to take Mobile, but never extended their authority that far east. Governor Claiborne put an end to the new state by annexing it to Louisiana. The Tombigbee settlers did sufficiently alarm Governor Folch, however, who tried to prevent hostilities between the Bigbee District and Mobile by promising to abolish those duties upon American imports and exports which had created so much friction (Pillans, 1930). By that time it was too late and Kemper led a small group down the Tensaw River where they were captured about twelve miles above Mobile.

U. S. officials disapproved of the venture and Claiborne sent soldiers and gunboats to protect Mobile. After the danger had died away United States troops marched upriver to found a new post at Mount Vernon, on higher ground back from Fort Stoddert (Hamilton, 1928). The United States had no serious objections to the end of Spanish rule in West Florida, but simply did not wish to recognize the new State of West Florida. In October, 1810, only a month after the West Florida Revolt, President Madison issued a proclamation extending American authority over the West Florida area as far east as the Perdido River. This incorporated all of the Lower Tombigbee Valley for the first time into the national territory of the United States (McAtee, 1967).

THE CONTESTED TOMBIGBEE: THE WAR OF 1812  
AND THE CREEK INDIAN WAR OF 1813-14

By Act of May 14, 1812, the district from the Pearl to the Perdido was annexed to the Mississippi Territory, and Mobile's attachment to the Bigbee District became secure. No immediate attempt was made at American occupation, however. In 1812 the United States found itself at war with Great Britain, with the American demand for West Florida and Canada one of the main causes (Mahon, 1972). Britain, busy in Europe with Napoleon, attempted to enlist the aid of both the Spanish and the southern Indians in conflict (Mahon 1966; Owsley, 1967). As a result, President Madison, by Congressional act directed General Wilkinson at New Orleans to take possession of Mobile (Holmes, 1976). Boats from New Orleans and soldiers from Fort Stoddert forced the Spanish to retire to Pensacola. With the capture of Mobile the Tombigbee residents not only had an assured outlet to the Gulf but also a new district to settle.

Even before the capture of the city, the governor's proclamation had established Mobile County. By Act of December 12, 1812, all land south of the 31st parallel from the Perdido to the ridge between the Mobile and Pascagoula Rivers, was to bear the name Mobile County, and all land west of Biloxi was to be named Jackson County (Rowland, 1921). While the threat of Spanish complicity with the British at Mobile did not materialize, a greater danger began to emerge along the Bigbee District's northern and eastern flanks. The Creek nation took up arms under British instigation in an attempt to drive the white man away from their traditional territory (Biggin, 1930). The building of the Federal Road from Georgia to the Tombigbee in 1811 and the visit of the Shawnee Chief Tecumseh in the same year roused the Creeks to action (Halbert, 1899-1903). The Choctaws were

invited to participate in July, 1813, but Pushmataha declined.

The conflict opened with isolated burnings and murders by the Indians resulting in the occupation of Fort Stoddert and Mount Vernon by regular troops under General F. L. Claiborne (Hamilton, 1928). It also resulted in the construction of a number of small fortifications to protect the scattered communities of settlers (Jenkins, 1959a). These forts extended across the southern part of Clarke County from the Tombigbee to the Alabama and included, Fort Mims (Baldwin), Fort Siquefield (Clarke), Fort Madison (Clarke), Fort Easley, (Clarke), Fort Carney, (Clarke), Fort Cato (Clarke), Fort Curry (Clarke), Fort Landrum (Clarke), Fort Lanier (Clarke), Fort Glass (Clarke), Fort Motte (Clarke), Fort Turner (Clarke), Fort White (Clarke), Fort Gullett (Clarke), Fort McGrew (Washington), Fort Pierce (Baldwin) and Fort Rankin (Washington) (Jenkins, 1959a).

The forts rapidly filled with refugees particularly after August 30 when the Indians, under McQueen and Weatherford, captured the palisade at Fort Mims and massacred over five hundred settlers (Doster, 1961; Owsley, 1971). When George S. Gaines received the news at St. Stephens, he immediately sent messengers for help from the Federal army in Nashville and from the Choctaws under Pushmataha. Andrew Jackson left Nashville on October 13 with the Tennessee Militia headed for Huntsville and the Creek Country (Ticknor, 1938). Joined by Cherokees and friendly Creeks he captured Tallasehatchee, founded Fort Strother and on November 9 won the Battle of Talladega. From the east the Georgians under Floyd defeated the Creeks at Autosa. General Claiborne built Fort Claiborne in current Monroe County, Fort Deposit in present-day Lowndes County, and defeated Weatherford at Econachaca, the Holy Ground, on December 23. The town was burned after the army reserved some supplies and the plunder was turned over to Pushmataha. Jackson finally tracked the main body of the Creeks to, and decimated them at, the Horseshoe Bend of the Tallapoosa River. Bienville's Fort Toulouse was rebuilt and renamed Fort Jackson, where, on August 9, the General concluded a peace treaty with the defeated Creeks (Halbert, 1897-98; Halbert and Ball, 1969; Owen, 1951; Owsley, 1969).

When the Indian War was over the Spanish still claimed Mobile, and the English fleet still threatened the coast (Rowland, 1926). After Jackson completed the peace treaty, he then floated down the Alabama to Mobile with his topographical engineer Tatum, making a complete survey of the river along the way (Brannon, 1928; Hamilton and Owen, 1897-98). Jackson occupied the ailing Fort Charlotte and strengthened Fort Bowyer on Mobile Point, which had been begun by Wilkinson in September, 1813. On September 12, 1824, the British attacked Fort Bowyer but were repulsed. As soon as General Coffee (with 2800 men) arrived on the Mobile River Jackson left Mobile, (with 3,000 men) to invade Pensacola, where he was victorious (Owsley, 1966). From Pensacola Jackson returned to Mobile and then marched to New Orleans, where he gained his renowned victory over the British on January 15, 1815.

On the 6th of February, 1815, the British fleet was again off Dauphin Island (Brown, 1969). On the 8th 5,000 British soldiers were landed three and a half miles below Fort Bowyer, and on the 11th the fort was surrendered. Mobile was spared her own defense from the British by Admiral Cochrane's receipt on February 13 of news of the signing of the Treaty of

Ghent on December 24, 1815. The British embarked for Europe and Dauphin Island saw its last hostile action until the Civil War.

#### THE AMERICAN TOMBIGBEE: TERRITORIAL ACTIVITIES, 1815-19

In 1815, with the white population having advanced and the Indians correspondingly withdrawn from about St. Stephens, it was decided to change the location of the Choctaw trading house to the interior, and Gaines was designated to select a suitable site (Owen, 1951; Peake, 1954; Plaisance, 1954). In November, 1815, he consulted Pushmataha and at the Indians suggestion selected the vicinity of old Fort Tombecbe. The work was completed and opened for trade in May, 1816. In October, 1816, a Congress was called at the new Indian factory to discuss land cessions with U. S. Commissioners John Rhea, John Coffee and John McKee (Jackson, 1957).

The resulting treaty, confirmed by Congress in 1817, purchased all land claims east of the Tombigbee River from the Choctaws and thereby opened to white settlement most of present day Alabama (Collins, 1941). According to Gaines (1964): "The survey of the lands was soon characterized by great activity. Emigrants from Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Tennessee and Kentucky poured into the valleys of the Alabama and Tombigbee without waiting for the sale of those lands (Lynch, 1943; Saunders, 1899). Settlers from North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia came down the Tennessee Valley to Huntsville and on to St. Stephens. Georgians came across to Clarke County and the lower Alabama River Valley (Billington, 1967). The eastern half of the Mississippi Territory began to grow rapidly, but its settlers had no ties with the western half which held the reins of government.

The difference in interest between the Tombigbee and the Mississippi settlers had shown itself as early as 1803, when the Tombigbee settlers petitioned Congress to divide the Mississippi Territory. Six years later the same request came from people living in the district east of the Pearl River, but Poindexter, the territorial delegate, had the petition tabled. A number of attempts were made to have the territory admitted as one state, although the project was biased toward Mississippi. The House of Representatives passed seven such bills beginning in 1811, but when they reached the Senate, they were voted down because the proposed state was too large, being twice the size of Pennsylvania. The Senate Committee at first suggested a line of division up the Mobile River to near its source and from there over to Great Bear Creek which empties into the Tennessee (Bankhead, 1897-98). Georgia after being requested by Congress, agreed to the division, but nothing was done during the war with Britain. In the meantime the Territory of Mississippi was extended to the south.

When William Lattemore was a delegate he also attempted to secure admission for an undivided state, but the Senate again refused to pass the House Bill. The House then yielded, division became the settled policy, and the only question remaining was where the line should run. A convention met in 1816, on the Pearl River to discuss the subject. The presiding officer was Cowles Mead and Sam Dale was among the delegates from the Tombigbee (Guyton, 1944; Etheridge, 1945). Toulmin was appointed to go to



Congress and urge the division of the Territory. Toulmin's plan seems to have been to use the Pascagoula River as the line. A compromise was finally effected in Congress by which the boundary ran from the northwest corner of Washington County to the mouth of Great Bear Creek in the one direction and south to the Gulf of Mexico in the other.

An enabling act was approved March 1, 1817, for the admission of the western division as a state. A convention of forty seven delegates met in the old Methodist Church at Washington on July 1. The boundaries fixed by Congress created general dissatisfaction and a motion to reconsider the formation of the State was put up and lost by a tie vote. A petition for other boundaries was sent up and challenged by a counter petition of the Tombigbee settlers, but Congress refused to make any change. There was a large vote for adopting the name Washington, but the state was finally admitted under the name Mississippi. The long political association of the Mississippi and Alabama-Tombigbee river basins had ended (Brannon, 1958).

On March 8, 1817, Congress provided for the government of what was left of the old territory. The Tennessee Valley was added and it was named the Alabama territory after its main river. The territorial legislature of Alabama held two sessions - the first January 19 to February 13, and the other November 2 to November 21, 1818. There was little legislation enacted except that concerning the commercial and economic development of the region (Abernathy, 1922). The creation of counties occurred in spasmodic fashion and was originally a matter of subdividing the theoretical limits of Washington in the south and Madison in the north, with the addition of Mobile acquired from the Spanish. Baldwin was first taken from Washington in 1809 and Clarke was created in 1812 to include the land from the Tombigbee to the Creek boundary near the Coosa River. The Creek War halted the county forming process, but following its conclusion Monroe County was laid off on June 5, 1815. The settlement before this time was on the lower rivers. The Choctaws were still on the upper Tombigbee, the Creeks held east of the Coosa, and the Cherokees controlled much of the Tennessee Valley.

The Choctaw and Cherokee Treaties in 1816 allowed a great expansion of white population and initiated a new round of county making. 1818 saw the creation of Tuscaloosa and Marengo Counties on the Tombigbee River and Shelby, Dallas and Cahaba (later changed to Bibb) Counties on the Alabama River. In 1820 Baldwin was transferred from the west side of the Mobile River to the east, except that it retained Nanna Hubba Island. By 1817 settlers were moving into Tuscaloosa (1818), Pickens (1821), and Marengo (1818) counties, marking for the first time the permanent white settlement of that part of the valley. Many of those in Pickens and Tuscaloosa were from Tennessee, but in Marengo the majority came from Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia.

One of the most interesting settlements of the period was that of the Vine and Olive Colony established by refugee Bonapartists (Dawson, 1946; Dismukes, 1970; Emerson, 1958; Lyon, 1963; Martin, 1940; Smith, 1967). On March 3, 1817, Congress granted them four townships of land in the Mississippi Territory, at two dollars an acre, on condition that they grow the vine and the olive. The colonists arrived in Mobile in May, 1818, visited Fort Stoddert and St. Stephens, and under the advice of George Gaines

established their colony at a place they named Demopolis, at the junction of the Tombigbee and Black Warrior Rivers. A contract was entered into with the Secretary of the Treasury for Township 18, Range 3 East, and Townships 18, 19, 20, Range 4 East, to be used for the culture of vines and olives.

In 1818 Alabama was made up of four main areas of settlement, each growing rapidly. The Tennessee Valley was growing the fastest; the Tombigbee District, which now encompassed both sides of the river from Tuscaloosa at one end to St. Stephens on the other; the Alabama River region, being settled rapidly from Georgia; and lastly, and growing less rapidly, the Mobile District (Wyman, 1899). Following the Cherokees cession in 1819, congressional action was initiated to admit Alabama as a state. Twenty-two counties sent delegates to Huntsville when the convention assembled July 5. (Atkins, 1970a) The convention completed a constitution on August 2, 1819 (McMillan, 1950), and on December 14, 1819, Congress admitted Alabama to the Union (Prichard, 1945). The new capital was to be at Cahawba, on the Alabama River, rather than at Huntsville (Capital 191820) because of its centrality (Brantley, 1818).

#### THE ANTEBELLUM TOMBIGBEE: STATE AND NATIONAL AFFAIRS, 1820-1860

When the new state was launched, it resembled both a frontier community of pioneers and some of the older established states to the east. Mobile, although a small town with little more than 2,000 inhabitants, was more than a hundred years old; Blakeley, which had been built across the bay in 1813, was a new American town, raw and western in character. So were most of the settlements that sprang up on the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers. With the exception of Mobile there were few places in Alabama that could boast of being more than ten or twelve years old. After two hundred years of a history, influenced primarily by external and international agents, the period 1820-1860 was one of relative tranquility in political and military affairs. Primary attention was concentrated on further settling the land, clearing the forests and cultivating the soil.

The conquest of nature so absorbed the new state that there was little time for political concerns, and, in fact, few serious ones emerged. The new state began its life in the "Era of Good Feeling" under Monroe. The population was nearly half slave, but socioeconomic conditions were favorable for slavery and there was little popular debate about it. Laws were passed to regulate the institution, to prevent cruelty on the one hand and wholesale emancipation on the other, to prescribe the status of free Negroes and to maintain order among the slaves and the free. The issue then passed into the background where, with one or two minor exceptions, it remained until the Civil War.

Only the Indian effectively brought the state into touch with the national government and its policies. The Indian treaties prior to statehood had opened up three quarters of the state to white settlement, leaving the Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Choctaws only small areas around the borders of the state. But as the whites poured in, the demand that all Indians should be removed by the Federal government increased. In 1830 the Choctaws gave up their lands through the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit

Creek and soon moved west of the Mississippi (Beckett, 1949; Brannon, 1950; Brown, 1967; Dillard, 1899; Halbert, 1902a). The Creeks, who held the largest territory and were directly in the line of settlers coming from Georgia, still remained and were troublesome at times.

At length, in 1832, they consented by the Treaty of Cusseta to give up their lands and go west. White settlers immediately rushed into the ceded land before the time stipulated by the Treaty. Federal troops were ordered to enforce its terms and in doing so killed a settler named Owens in August, 1833. Excitement ran high. Governor Gayle and Secretary of War Cass exchanged sharp correspondence, and for a time a struggle seemed imminent between the state and national governments. Fortunately Francis Scott Key, who was sent from Washington to handle the matter, effected a compromise and the dispute was settled amicably (McCorvey, 1904). Four years later in 1837, after a lively fight with the whites at Pea Ridge, the Creeks finally left their old home and followed other Indians across the Mississippi. The Cherokees agreed to leave in 1835 and by 1838 only a few scattered Indians remained in the state (McDonald, 1931). The Indian question was finally settled. Sumter County, with its county seat at Livingston, was created in 1832 as a result of the Choctaw cession.

The decade 1830-40 was an eventful one in the state's history. It not only covered the settlement of the Indian question and the nullification controversy but it also witnessed the establishment and downfall of the State Bank (Baldwin, 1853). While Alabama was still a Territory the need for more money was keenly felt. In addition to the usual demand for capital to develop the resources of the new county, the money in circulation was steadily drained eastward by the sale of government lands. To meet this demand, banks were needed which would lend money on ordinary security and would increase the circulation by issuing banknotes. The Territorial legislature established several banks, usually reserving for the Territory an option on part of the stock. The constitutional convention recognized the importance of the subject and devoted a long section of the constitution to it. The section authorized the establishment of a State Bank, safeguarded it as far as was thought wise, and provided that the state should hold at least two fifths of the stock.

The legislature in 1823 formally established "The Bank of The State of Alabama" (Alexander, 1925). It was to be controlled by the President and twelve directors, all appointed by the legislature. It was to make loans, issue notes, and be the depository of state funds. The Bank, initially located at the capital Cahawba, but it was moved to Tuscaloosa when that town became capital in 1826. Branches were established in 1832 at Montgomery, Mobile, and Decatur, and in 1835 at Huntsville. The growth of the bank paralleled the flush times that culminated in 1836 when speculation and wild finance reached their height (Baldwin, 1853). Scandals connected with the management of the bank, combined with the panic of 1837, caused its collapse. Legislative investigation followed, and in 1842-43 under the leadership of Fitzpatrick and Campbell, the legislature put the whole system in liquidation. The bank was closed down in 1853.

With the growth of the state, participation in national affairs increased. The Indian problem had been a local one with possibilities of national complications. The bitter experience with a state bank was,

although scarcely recognized at the time, an expression of the general financial recklessness that swept over the whole country. The nullification controversy brought Alabama in touch with a national question that concerned a sister state and in 1836 the struggle of Texas for independence aroused considerable sympathy in a state that was still comprised largely of pioneers. Mass meetings were held, funds were subscribed, and volunteers were organized to help the cause. Similar emotions were sparked by Florida's struggle with the Seminoles, and in 1836 the Tombigbee Valley provided troops for that war (Graham, 1923).

By 1846 the Texas question, had erupted into a war with Mexico. Alabama men enlisted freely. Some served with troops from other states. The territorial problems growing out of the Mexican War brought home to the people of Alabama the question of State's Rights. They touched on the slavery question and made it for the first time a great political issue in the state. The legislature had from time to time passed laws regarding slavery. In 1827 to check and regulate the slave trade, in 1832 to prevent free blacks from coming into the state, in 1834 to require emancipated slaves to leave the state within twelve months after emancipation, and at different times to regulate the patrol system and the management of slaves. But these acts aroused no serious public opposition and the anti-slavery movement found little sympathy in any part of the state.

With the acquisition of lands that resulted from the Mexican defeat the question assumed a new and more practical thrust of whether slavery should exist in the territories. This became a national issue from the moment Wilmot of Pennsylvania presented his proviso excluding it from them. In Alabama, as in other Southern states, this stimulated forth a general protest, which found expression in local meetings in many parts of the state, and culminated in a famous set of resolutions adopted by the State Democratic Convention in Montgomery in 1848. These resolutions, generally known as "The Alabama Platform," declared that neither Congress nor a territorial legislature had a right to prohibit slavery in the new territories which had been acquired by the common efforts of all the states, that it was the duty of the national government to protect slave property in this territory and that the party would support no man for the presidency who would not endorse these resolutions. This, the most advanced position taken by any Southern state at that time, was taken under the leadership of William L. Yancey. Yancey succeeded Lewis as the leader of the "States Rights Men," and was from that time until his death (in 1863) the most conspicuous of all Alabamians.

The National Democratic convention of that year, however, refused to adopt the Alabama Platform, and in 1851 a Union convention at Montgomery denied the right to secede. In 1854 Douglass brought forward the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, and the struggle for Kansas by proslavery forces began. In one form or another it was to continue until settled by the War. The current of events carried the Yancey wing of the Democratic party into control in Alabama. The states' delegates to the national convention in Charleston in 1860 were instructed to insist on the adoption of the Alabama Platform by the body and to withdraw if their request were refused. The national party refused to adopt, and the Alabama delegates and many others withdrew. The Democratic party was, thereby, hopelessly split and Lincoln was elected. A convention of Southern states was subsequently

held in 1860, and they voted fifty-four to forty-five to secede (Duckworth, 1961). Not all communities in the Tombigbee Valley favored secession. Coffeeville in Clarke County, for example, was opposed (Clarke County Historical Society, 1977). With the majority of the population of the state in favor, however, Alabama and the Tombigbee Valley entered upon a new political course (Darden, 1941; Brantley, 1954).

## CHAPTER VI

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, 1798-1860

#### INTRODUCTION

The early years of the nineteenth century saw extensive changes in the character of settlement in the Lower Tombigbee region. Among those changes were the shift from Indian control of the interior to white control, the subsequent survey and disposition of the public lands by the Federal government, the ascendancy of cotton culture and the eclipse of other commercial crops, the introduction of slave holding on a large scale, and the expansion of the timber industry to supply foreign markets.

The dimensions of these changes are explored in the following chapter through a synopsis of the main elements characterizing economic development during the antebellum period. The documentary record for the period after 1798 is substantially better in most instances than that for the colonial period and enables topics to be investigated in greater detail. For the purposes of this report, however, the main focus is placed upon an overview of developments and of the numerous sources which are available to elucidate them. Among the best general sources for this chapter are Ball (1882), Griffith (1968), Owsley (1949), Reynolds (1953), Cooke (1935), Clarke County Historical Society (1977), Graham (1923), Davis (1939), Boyd, (1931).

#### POPULATION AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

At the outbreak of the American Revolution, the only Euro-American settlements of consequence in the Gulf country east of the Mississippi River were at Mobile, Pensacola and Natchez. White traders and trappers were found throughout the vast territory, but they were largely transient people without fixed, long term settlement sites. During the Revolution and immediately following it, small parties of refugees from Georgia and the Carolinas occasionally drifted into what was then known as the Georgia Western Country, ultimately settling in the Alabama-Tombigbee basin in what is presently Clarke, Baldwin, and Washington counties (Chappell, 1949). The population continued to grow following the Revolution, and the Spanish then in control of the country encouraged further immigration. When the Mississippi Territory was formed in 1798, the settlers in the Tombigbee country numbered several hundred (Doster, 1959).

During the first years of the nineteenth century, agricultural settlement in the Lower Tombigbee region was concentrated along the banks of the Mobile and Tombigbee Rivers, and their tributaries, as it had been during the colonial period. The distance between the Spanish line and the northernmost point of white habitation was about ninety miles by water,

about sixty by land. Below the confluence of the Alabama and Tombigbee and along the eastern side of the Mobile River, there were approximately fifty to sixty families comprising the Tensaw settlement. On the west bank stood Fort Stoddert, around which lived a few people, who brought the total number of families to about two hundred (Avant, 1929; Pearson, 1970; Doster, 1959).

The only other inhabited area of significance was along the western bank of the Tombigbee above and below St. Stephens, where a number of families were located by 1800 (Saunders, 1899). A few farmers lived by special permission of the Choctaws on the more fertile eastern side of the Tombigbee. They, however, lived in constant fear of dispossession of their lands and were limited in numbers primarily by this fact. During the twenty years before the Creek War most immigrants to the area came from either the Carolinas or Georgia, although there were settlers from such places as Illinois and New England (Haynes, 1965).

Quite a number of white families moved into what is now Clarke County between of 1800 and 1813. According to Ball (1882), about the year 1800 a brisk migration had begun from Georgia and the Carolinas through the Creek country to the Mississippi Territory. Samuel Dale, then a Georgian, placed three wagon teams on this route of transporting families westward and taking back loads of Indian produce to Savannah. In 1809 Caleb Moncrief, with a number of families, settled on the west side of Bassett's Creek. Many others came during these few years and settled near Clarkesville, Grove Hill, Suggsville, and other parts of the county.

In the fall of 1805 the Choctaw Indians ceded five million acres, beginning at the Cutoff to the United States. Increased opportunities for white settlement continued to draw immigrants from Georgia, South and North Carolina, Kentucky, and Tennessee until 1812, when Clarke County was formally established. At the close of the War of 1812, and as late as 1817, there were comparatively few families between the Tombigbee and Alabama Rivers (Wyman, 1899). The larger settlements were on Bassett's Creek, around McGuffin's Store, south of Suggsville, near Pine Level (Akens, 1956), and on Jackson's Creek; West Bend and Coffeenville were settled on the Tombigbee during this period. By 1819 families were beginning to locate on some of the streams in the northern part of Clarke County around Bashi and Tallahatta. The census for Clarke County in 1820 enumerated a population of 3,778 white inhabitants. After 1820 as Pickett (1900: 91) says:

The flood gates of Virginia the two Carolinas, Tennessee, Kentucky and Georgia were now hoisted and mighty streams of emigration poured through them spreading over the whole territory of Alabama. The axe resounded from corner to corner. The stately and magnificent forest fell. Log cabins sprang, as if by magic into sight. Never before or since has a county been so rapidly peopled.

Before 1830 the most desirable areas for settlement were along the major streams and on the higher drier interflaves of the "pine barrens" (Owsley, 1945). The productive potential of the Black Belt "canebrake" went largely unappreciated. After 1830 the Black Belt became the primary

focus of settlement, particularly of plantation culture, and came to dominate the region in terms of population (Dubose, 1930). The rampant expansion of Black Belt settlement was best exhibited in Sumter County. Although the areas to the west of the Tombigbee above St. Stephens legally belonged to the Choctaws until 1830, many whites moved into those lands between 1810 and 1830 as squatters. Pressure was brought to bear upon the Federal authorities to wrest the land from the Indians, and in 1830 the Choctaws relinquished their control over their last holdings along the river (Dillard, 1899; Halbert, 1902a).

Some prominent Indians (about fifty, mostly mixed bloods) retained property by the treaty, and certain squatters had their property confirmed (Reynolds, 1953). Most of the land in the area, however, was made available at public sale to whites. Between 1830 and 1835 virtually every section of land in the Sumter County was sold. The very best land along the river bottoms was taken by the first settlers in 1830 and the less desirable lands were quickly absorbed after that. Land adjacent to the Tombigbee River was among the first to be claimed (Reynolds, 1953).

During the 1830s there was a substantial mix of slave holding and nonslave holding landowners in Sumter County. Over the three decades before the Civil War the number of property owners in Sumter declined, while the size of land holdings and number of slaves per owner increased. Sumter became "blacker" at a faster rate than any other county in the state, with Marengo County to the east of the Tombigbee a close second. In 1840 Sumter had a population with 53.1% slaves (Marengo 68.9%). In 1850, 67% of the people were slaves in Sumter (74.3% in Marengo); in 1860, 75.3% of the people were slaves in Sumter (78.3 in Marengo) (Reynolds, 1953). The average number of slaves per owner for Sumter County in 1850 was 15.5; for the state, it was 11.70. By 1860 the average in Sumter County had increased to 20.25 per owner, whereas for Alabama as a whole it had increased to 12.89. In addition a marked contrast in population structure had developed between the northern counties of the Lower Tombigbee region (Sumter, Choctaw and Marengo) and the southern counties of the region (Clarke, Washington, Mobile and Baldwin). The northern counties were characterized by larger plantation holdings and higher slave holdings. The southern counties had larger proportions of white population, smaller land holdings and fewer farms large enough to be classified as plantations.

Owsley (1949) and McWhiney (1978), among others, have shown that farm holdings in the Lower South were diverse. While large holdings were more visible in certain areas, there was invariably some geographic mix of forms and functions. Owsley (1949) checked 2,351 landowners in the Black Belt, heart of "plantation" territory, and found that 65.04% of them had less than 500 acres and another 20.54% owned from 501 to 1,000 acres. Kiger (1947) found that of the 1338 slave holders in Sumter County in 1840, only thirty-six owned as many as fifty slaves and that the average was less than 10 slaves. In the counties to the south of the Black Belt many farm operators owned no slaves at all. Such variation in slave ownership makes the differentiation between farm and plantation difficult.

Griffith (1968: 142) has said:



To say that a plantation is a large farm is only avoiding the question. There were many large farms that were never called anything else but there were also small plantations. One caustic Wetumpka editor said the difference between farmers and planters was that "one supports a family and the other supports pride until pride gets a fall". Thomas P. Abernethy, writing about early Alabama described two systems of agriculture: the planter raised cotton with corn as his subsidiary crop and the farmer raised cotton with corn as his subsidiary crop. Since there can be no absolute rule the standard that U. B. Phillips used is as good as any. A farm he said was cultivated by the owner, his family and a few slaves. But when the size of the work force reached twenty and the acreage five hundred it was a plantation. Most family holdings were easily recognized as one or the other; only the borderline cases cause any confusion and probably more to the historian than to residents of Alabama before 1860.

#### RAW MATERIAL RESOURCES

The fur trade which had dominated the economy of the Lower Tombigbee during the eighteenth century had drastically declined in significance by 1800. A few fur traders continued to maintain bases in Mobile and Pensacola into the 1820s, but there was a consistent decline in their business. Panton, Leslie and Company and its successor, the John Forbes Company, dominated what was left of the trade (Sherlock, 1948; White, 1973). Also in decline or demise were the agricultural staples of indigo and rice. Very little indigo was grown after the floods of 1791 (Holmes, 1978a). Rice cultivation continued into the first two decades of the nineteenth century in a few locations but was never a significant factor in the regional economy (Hamilton, 1910). Periodic experimentation occurred throughout the antebellum period with a variety of exotic crops such as the olive and the vine (Rumney, 1980), sugarcane (Ball, 1882), and the mulberry and silkworms (Ball, 1882). These efforts were both routinely limited and short-lived. After 1800 forest products, cotton, and livestock became the three pillars of the Lower Tombigbee economy.

#### Forest Products

The Lower Tombigbee Valley was rich in pine, cypress, and hardwoods. By 1860 Alabama was the fourth Southern state in the value of sawed and planed lumber manufactured, and Mobile was the great export center for the lumber brought into the city from areas along the Mississippi and Florida coasts. Mobile eclipsed New Orleans in terms of lumber and timber exported. Lumber and timber cut north of Mobile was generally rafted to the city on the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers. Relatively little lumber came in by rail during the antebellum period (Massey, 1961). However, much of the lumber that did was cut south of the city along the Bay, Pascagoula Sound, and around Pensacola.

There was a remarkable increase in the amount of lumber shipped out of Mobile from the 1820s to 1860. From September, 1831, to September,

1832, Mobile shipped 1,500,000 board feet of lumber. From September, 1846, to September, 1847, the totals more than doubled to exceed 3,500,000 board feet. More than 17,500,000 feet were shipped in 1855-56. Exports went primarily to the West Indies. As early as the 1820s Cuba was the chief international customer for Mobile products. By the mid-1850s Havana, Matanzas, Cardenas, Cienfuegos, and St. Jago, all Cuban ports, absorbed the bulk of the lumber sent internationally from Mobile. In 1860 Cuba took more than 80 per cent of the total lumber shipments exported from Mobile. Most of the other sawed lumber was taken by other West Indian, Mexican, and Central American ports. According to Eisterhold (1973:101):

Despite the fact that relatively little sawed lumber was being shipped anywhere but to the South Atlantic, Caribbean and Gulf ports, an active and lucrative trade did develop between Mobile and several European ports in special wood products. Masts, spars, staves, wood spokes and other wood items formed a valuable part of Mobile's total forest exports in the mid-1850s. Although there was some discrimination by the English against the use of American wood products, the French and Spanish began contracting in volume for naval lumber and timber, and other wood items in the 1840s. By the 1850s direct trade in naval timber and lumber products with France and Spain was beginning to have some real importance for Mobile lumber factors. In the 1853-1854 commercial year, 1088 masts and spars, 1,376 tons of hewn timber, 186,345 board feet of deck plank, 103,500 staves, and a large quantity of oars and hand-spokes were exported internationally. They went almost totally to French and Spanish ports and the shipments were valued at \$109,117.

The surge in the demand for timber at Mobile during the antebellum period, was translated into increased timber cutting and processing along the Lower Tombigbee. Hardwoods were culled along the river bottoms, pines on the higher lands near the river. Most of the timber was dragged by draft animals to the river. Ball (1882) states that in the 1850s two branches of the timber industry were of great importance in Clarke County. One was the cutting of spar timber for the foreign market (Albion, 1926), and the other was naval stores (the opening of turpentine orchards, boxing the tall pines, erecting distilleries, collecting and separating the light-wood). According to Ball (1882) the first brought a considerable amount of money into the county, while the latter required a heavy capital outlay at a time when the price of resin was quite low.

#### Farm Products

Agricultural development during the period consisted in the main of two variously dominant elements: the herdsman and the planter. Between 1798-1830 the majority of settlers in the vicinity of the river were stockman farmers. These people had been the pioneer element in southern settlement for some time. They generally occupied those areas extending from the Indian borders back through the unsurveyed lands of the public domains and into the thinly but permanently settling agricultural communities. According to Owsley (1949:24-25) they fell into two classes:

The first were those on the cutting edge of the frontier - where Indians and game were plentiful - who engaged in hunting and trapping as their principal occupation and livestock grazing as a secondary pursuit. These people were constantly moving from place to place in search of better pastures and more game including Indians and they seldom built more than mud huts for their homes and not infrequently dwelt a few seasons in open faced camps. As a consequence of their nomadic life they engaged in agriculture only to the extent of growing their vegetables and enough corn to furnish their bread. The next class who were the main body of frontiersmen occupied the zone of unsurveyed lands at a reasonably safe distance from the Indian border. They were the genuine herdsman. Livestock grazing was their chief occupation and hunting and trapping were secondary. They built better and more permanent cabins and many of them pre-empted a farm with the intention of acquiring title to it when the land was put up for sale. They almost invariably cultivated considerable fields of corn, sweet potatoes, and vegetables. The inner edge of this group lived on the sparsely settled agricultural frontier where the lands had been surveyed and considerable portions sold. They usually owned land and were, more often than not in a transitional stage from grazing to an agricultural economy. Even after settling as farmers they often employed cowboys to manage the herds on the public domain until the frontier retreated to a distance. Many frontiersmen passed through the three states and finally settled as farmers and planters.

Many contemporary reports are available concerning the nature of the herdsman economy and the land occupied (Israel, 1970). John F. Claiborne (1906:86) wrote that the area to the west of Mobile in 1840:

... is covered exclusively with the long leaf pine; not broken but rolling like the waves in the middle of the great ocean. The grass grows three feet high and hill and valley are studded all over with flowers of every hue. Thousands of cattle are grazed here for market. The people are for the most part pastoral, their herds furnishing their chief revenue. These cattle are permitted to run in the range or forest, subsisting in summer on the luxuriant grass with which the teeming earth is clothed, and in winter on green rushes or reeds a tender species of cane that grow in the brakes or thickets in every swamp, hollow and ravine.

Samuel Brown (1817) described the pine country as affording a fine range for cattle, hogs, and horses. Timothy Flint (1832) described the pine forests of south Alabama as an excellent range for livestock but not well suited for agriculture. He observed that the combination of poor soil and excellent pasturage explained why so many settlers deliberately moved into a country with poor soil. He goes on to say that they (Flint, 1832:219):

... do not covet a country which admits of a dense population. They prefer those extensive pine barrens in which there is such inexhaustible range for cattle and which will not for a

long time admit a dense population. Many of the people about Mobile are shepherds and have droves of cattle numbering from 500 to 1,000. Swine are raised with great ease when they can be guarded from their enemies, wolves, panthers, and alligators.

Graham (1923) states that in the early years of the century pasturage was excellent and that Clarke County was a great stock region. He further states that in 1818 McGrew had a drove of about 1,000 head of cattle on his land near St. Stephens. The principal markets for livestock in the Lower Tombigbee region were Mobile, Blakeley, and Pensacola.

By 1840 the better agricultural lands along the Lower Tombigbee had been settled by farmers, forcing the herdsmen to the more sterile sandy soils of the piney uplands where pockets of cattle raising continued to the end of the nineteenth century (Avant, 1929). Between 1830 and 1860, the lands having any real potential for agriculture were occupied by the farmers and planters (Dubose, 1947). These people, according to Owsley (1945, 1949) and others, sought out landscapes like ones they had formerly occupied in terms of soil, rainfall, temperature and appearance. The level, sandy uplands were in greater demand than either the ridges or the prairies. This has been clearly shown by Ball (1882) in his discussion of the settlement process in Clarke County.

Before 1820 most of the settlers practiced a mixed farming system based upon corn and vegetable crops, plus some cotton, timber, and livestock. Between 1820 and 1860, cotton increasingly dominated farming, particularly in the main plantation areas of Marengo and Sumter Counties. By the 1850s the reliance on cotton monoculture was being challenged by some members of the population. The Grove Hill Herald contained an editorial in 1851 expounding the vulnerability of the cotton economy (Ball, 1882:248), only one example of numerous similar exposes. The emphasis on cotton production forced both the importation of livestock (primarily from Kentucky and Tennessee) and of flour, bacon and other foodstuffs from the midwest via New Orleans and Mobile.

There was significant geographic variation in both the intensity and character of agricultural production. Commercial cash crop farming, based on cotton and supported by slavery, was primarily characteristic of the northern counties of the region - Sumter, Marengo, northern Choctaw and northern Clarke. Farther south there was a gradual transition to a subsistence farming economy. Summersell (1949:19-20) has shown that agricultural operations in Washington and Mobile counties were in strong contrast to those in the central counties of the state:

Statistics on Mobile County agriculture indicate that Mobile was out of the cotton belt, that there was no outstanding staple in the county, and that Mobile ranked low among Alabama counties in agriculture throughout the antebellum period. In 1840 with per capita holdings for the free population of 1.90 farm animals Mobile was forty-seventh among Alabama's forty nine counties.... In production of bushels of corn per free person of 2.55 Mobile county was also forty-seventh.... In 1840 Mobile was one of three Alabama counties from which no reports were received of wheat growing, and one of three counties reporting

no cotton. At the same time most Alabama counties were devoting large acreage to cotton and harvesting large yields.

In 1860 Mobile County had 1.02 farm animals per free person which was a larger figure than for 1850 but nevertheless smaller than that for 1840 and Mobile trailed the other fifty one counties. For the third successive decennial census no wheat was reported. All other counties reported wheat except Washington which adjoins Mobile on the north.... As for cotton after to decennial census reports with not a bale, Mobile County in 1860 was credited with 440 bales. This was .01 bales per free person, again the smallest percentage for any county in the state and also fewer bales than any other county in Alabama produced.

About the foregoing facts concerning the antebellum period the following conclusions may be drawn 1.) The rural part of Mobile County, large as it was, was overshadowed by the city 2.) Mobile County was less an agricultural than a commercial area 3.) The fact that Alabama was so largely an agricultural and rural state in this era made the contrast between Mobile County, containing the largest city and other counties of the state quite marked 4.) Unexploited markets must have been close at hand for those Mobile County farmers who chose to seek them 5.) Mobile's known interest in cotton was less agricultural than commercial.

#### INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

Industries in the Lower Tombigbee Valley in the antebellum period were generally those oriented to the essential processing of the raw material products of the region. Because of the low level of cash generation, there was never adequate demand to support the production of manufactured goods. Items of clothing, tools, agricultural equipment, and the like were, for the most part, produced on the plantations and small farms by skilled craftsmen. The blacksmith shop was the closest approximation that most communities had to a manufacturing establishment.

#### Agricultural Processing

The rural industrial crafts which developed to serve the needs of the agricultural economy were: a.) tanneries, b.) gristmills, c.) cotton gins, d.) brickovens and e.) saltworks. Tanneries were numerous in the Lower Tombigbee Valley as a result of the extensive cattle raising during the antebellum period. The tannery usually consisted of a grouping of pools and vats for soaking the skins. Other needs were lime and a plentiful supply of trees to provide both bark and fuel. Because of the needs for large amounts of water, tanneries were generally located adjacent to a small but reliable stream, and at a location where timber was in plentiful adjacent supply. Such sites were numerous.

Gristmills were also numerous, as were cotton gins, and before 1860 both were generally powered by flowing water. The first gin of record in the Lower Tombigbee Valley was one installed by the Pierce brothers at the Tensaw settlement in 1799 (Hamilton, 1910). After that the innovation

spread rapidly with the penetration of settlement throughout the valley (Ball, 1882). Frequently cotton gins and gristmills were built in tandem, on streams at crossing points, where they had the greatest accessibility to neighboring farm populations. According to Graham (1923), one of the first gristmills in Clarke County was built near Suggsville in 1812 by John Slater. In 1813 Jonathan Emmons started the first cotton gin in that part of the valley at Smith's Creek, two miles south of Suggsville. Robert Hayden had one of the first tanneries, plus a small shoe factory about three miles south of Suggsville. Robert Caller had a mill and a cotton gin, also, an iron screw for packing cotton by hand or horsepower on the Barnes place near Suggsville in 1816. There were similar developments on both sides of the river between Demopolis and Mobile.

Brickovens were generally small and located on the larger plantations. Perhaps of greatest interest to industrial history were the Clarke County saltworks (Krouse, 1958). In March, 1819, the United States granted the state of Alabama five sections of salt lands, two sections in Township 5 North, Range 2 East, and three sections in Township 7 North, Range 1 East (Graham, 1923). These lands produced much of the salt consumed in the Lower Tombigbee region before 1860. Salt was made at three locations, designated as Lower Saltworks, Central Saltworks, and Upper Saltworks. These were places where salt oozes occurred adjacent to the Tombigbee River.

The Upper Saltworks extended from Stave Creek, about four miles above Jackson, up the Tombigbee to near Peaveys Landing. The principal part of the works lies on Jackson and Upper Salt Creeks in Section 16, 17, 20 and 21 of Township 7, Range 1 East. The Central Saltworks were about six miles below Jackson in Township 6, Range 2 East, situated where the Jackson and Forks Road crossed Lower Fall Creek. The Lower Saltworks were about five miles below the Central Saltworks in Township 5, Range 2 East, located in Sections 21 and 28 about half a mile from the river (Clarke County Historical Society, 1977). The Lower Saltworks were opened in 1809 and other openings followed. The Saltworks maintained continuous production until the Civil War, particularly supplying livestock needs throughout the region.

#### Timber Processing

Until the coming of steam power the production of lumber was basically a rural industry. Much of the lumber which reached Mobile was produced by small mills located along Mobile Bay or on one of the rivers that led into the Bay. According to Eisterhold (1973: 84-85):

While there was some experimentation during the eighteenth century with windmills as a source of power for saws these efforts proved unpractical and water became the standard source of power well before the opening of the nineteenth century. Basically these mills were plantation affairs and were often used only part of the year because of the sluggishness of the Alabama Rivers during the summer and fall. They did however, provide a supplementary form of income for the planter and even as early as the 1760s some of the plantations depended largely

upon lumbering for their prosperity. Despite the advent of steam power, these water-powered saw mills persisted in the Mobile area until well into the nineteenth century. They were cheap to erect and though they were generally only capable of producing a thousand or so board feet of lumber per day they were valuable in allowing the planter to utilize his labor force effectively on a year round basis.

Even after the coming of steam power, some water-powered saw mills continued to operate; there were some twenty such mills still sawing lumber in the Mobile area as late as 1821. One mill, offered for sale in December of 1821, ran two saws and was capable of producing about 1,000,000 board feet of lumber annually. The mill was located approximately nine miles above the city and could be reached by schooner.

Although steam-powered sawmills began to appear around Mobile in the 1820s, water-powered mills remained in common use throughout the antebellum period. According to Eisterhold, (1973: 86):

In 1835 a plantation was sold which featured a water mill that ran two gangs of saws. The property was near Mobile situated on a navigable creek which terminated in Mobile Bay. Boats seeking lumber cargoes could load within a mile of the mill site. Even as late as 1857 two notices appeared of water-powered sawmills in the Mobile area. One of these mills was owned by A. Brooks and was situated 53 miles north of Mobile on a navigable stream. The mill ran several saws and could produce 5,000 feet of lumber in an average working day, a somewhat unusually high production for a water mill. The other mill, located thirty miles north of Mobile was owned by a large Mobile factor, E. C. Brewer. Also powered by water this mill ran two saws.

There were probably a number of such mills in the interior of which no evidence of their existence remains but which operated to the end of the antebellum period. After 1820, however, the steam mill came to be increasingly relied upon for lumber production. Small steam and water lumber mills were scattered along the length of the Tombigbee Valley in the period 1820-1860. In the northern reaches of the area, mills mainly produced for local consumption. In areas closer to Mobile there was more emphasis on the export trade.

#### TRANSPORTATION

The antebellum period witnessed a number of new avenues and modes of transportation. While travel in the colonial period had been largely restricted to rafts, poleboats, and packhorses, the turn of the eighteenth century ushered in the era of steamboats, and a variety of new techniques of overland transportation including toll roads, plank roads and railroads. All of these innovations had significant implications for the pattern of economic development in the Lower Tombigbee Valley (Martin, 1902).

## Early Trans-sectional Highways

Serviceable roads in the newly settling territory were largely created from pre-existing trails (Hamilton, 1901). Immigrants were inclined to build their settlements on or near known and used routes. In the earliest years there was a virtual absence of wheeled vehicles, but with the larger movements of immigrants after 1800 and the coming of the "rolling hogsheads," improved roads became essential. The rolling hogshead was an ingenious vehicle extensively used by early immigrants to Alabama. Hamilton (1897-98), describes it as a large sturdy hogshead, packed with the goods of the owner, to the ends of which spindles were fixed; shafts were attached to them for the hitching of horses and oxen. According to Ball (1882), the Clark family and others moved to Clarke County and vicinity using a rolling hogshead in 1800.

The hogsheads, along with the gigs and wagons of the wealthier settlers caused the widening of the trails, the selection of new routes, the establishment of ferries, the laying of causeways, and the opening of taverns or wayside inns to become commonplace. After the Revolution various roads connecting the Atlantic Seaboard developed to supplement river routes. Even so, Natchez and St. Stephens, the earliest white settlements in the Mississippi Territory, remained isolated outposts of civilization into the 1820s. Natchez was able to use the Mississippi River as an avenue of communication, but St. Stephens was cut off by the Choctaws from the Mississippi, by the Creeks from Georgia, by the Cherokees and the mountains from Tennessee, and by the Spanish from the Gulf. This isolation created growing demand for Federal assistance with internal improvements. At first the likelihood of the Lower Tombigbee settlements receiving aid seemed small. The Creek and Cherokee nations on the eastern borders of the territory were reluctant to make cessions while, the Federal government was not convinced that it had the constitutional authority to build roads purely for the development of a region. The nearest approach to Federal Aid to roads into the Southwest was the cutting of trails through the wilderness at the expense of the government. These routes were unimproved and difficult to travel. According to Moore, (1927: 99) "they had practically no commercial value. They were essentially rugged avenues through which determined settlers forced their way into the Indian wilds of Alabama and of the region to the west."

The earliest Federal aid projects were military roads, and as such they were constructed under the direction of the War Department by troops stationed in the vicinity. A variety of purposes called for the building of these roads. Some were hastily and crudely constructed during military campaigns; others were cut in times of peace for general military purposes; while in a few cases they were constructed primarily to provide better access to public lands or to facilitate communication with newly founded settlements. It was necessary in many cases to establish the routes of these roads under treaties signed between the U. S. and various Indian tribes. Such was the case with the Tombigbee region's first major throughfare, the Old Federal Road.

Originally a Creek migration route of prehistoric times (Brannon, 1935a), the Federal Road was formally recognized as "a horse path through the Creek country from the Ocmulgee to Mobile" by a treaty with the Creek



nation on November 14th, 1805 (although according to accounts the road seems actually to have led to Mims Ferry on the Alabama and from there to St. Stephens). (Owen, 1911). The authorization for the opening of the Federal Road along the route of the southern and southwestern Creek trails was obtained under Article II of the treaty signed at Washington in November, 1805. Henry Dearborn, Secretary of State, served as United States Commissioner, attended by William McIntosh and other Creek chiefs. With the promulgation of this treaty, an appropriation of \$6,000 was obtained in 1806 to build the road from the Georgia frontier (on the route from Athens to New Orleans), as far as the thirty-first parallel of latitude (Meyer and McGill, 1917).

The Federal Road, also called the "Three Chopped Way" (from the triple blaze on the trees by which the surveyors marked the course), was a continuation of the major road running south from Philadelphia through Washington, Charlotte and Greenville, traversing the piedmont region of the South Atlantic states (Moore, 1934). In Alabama it ran from Fort Mitchell on the Chattahoochee to Fort Dale in Butler County, on to Fort Montgomery in Baldwin County and then to the Tombigbee settlements via the Cutoff. An alternate route led from Burnt Corn to St. Stephens, crossing the Alabama River at Weatherfords Bluff (Claiborne). Later a road branched at Burnt Corn to go south to the Tensaw Lake settlements and, later still, a route led to Mobile down the east side of the river to Blakeley, crossing over the bay at that point (Owen, 1911).

In the summer of 1807, Harry Toulmin, James Caller and Lemuel Henry, as commissioners, supervised the extension of the Federal Road westward from St. Stephens to Natchez. The population of the Tombigbee region increased rapidly after the completion of this through route which connected with Hollinger's ferries (installed 1797) across the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers just above the Little River. By 1810 settlements extended up both sides of the Tombigbee to Mount Sterling in current Choctaw County (Hamilton, 1910, 1897-98).

In 1811 the road was widened: causeways were laid over boggy areas and across branches to facilitate the movement of vehicles. In 1812 a branch of this wagon road was constructed from Fort Stoddert to Baton Rouge; the road later became part of the northern boundary of Mobile County. Josiah Blakeley wrote from Mobile in February of 1812 (Hamilton, 1910: 245):

During the last winter the United States army, which had long been wholly idle in this country have made a road and bridges from Baton Rouge on the Mississippi to Fort Stoddart, also from Fort Stoddart to the State of Georgia. I have seen many carriages which came from Savannah to Fort Stoddart.

The Federal Road and its complement the Natchez Trace were maintained out of United States War and Post Office Department disbursements because of their status as government roads. Appropriations for maintenance, however, were infrequent, and, coupled with the fact that the original construction was not very permanent, the result was the deterioration of the roads. With the end of the first great influx of settlers before the Creek War, the opening of alternative routes resulted in older roads

gradually becoming abandoned. By 1820 many were sadly in need of rebuilding. In 1817 some South Carolina immigrants already had to widen the way in places to allow the passage of their wagons. Although the Federal Road was in use as late as 1865, when Wilson's Federal troops marched over part of it, its role in the settlement process was virtually over by 1820 (Moore, 1934).

The roads during the first two decades of the nineteenth century were crude, and developed no traffic aside from the more or less constant streams of families migrating over them (Moore, 1934). But with the opening to the public of the different Indian cessions, and the development of sections by the growing population, a corresponding increase took place in the number of through and lateral routes connecting and intersecting settled areas (Phillips, 1908). As a consequence of this multiplication of new roads, the old crossing places on the Tennessee, Chattahoochee, Alabama, and Tombigbee Rivers became great points of divergence from which many roads extended into every part of the territory. During this period Demopolis, St. Stephens, and Mobile became important cross road centers (Owen, 1911).

The most important of the through routes affecting the Lower Tombigbee in the antebellum period were the Tuscaloosa-Mobile road, the Montgomery-Mobile road, the Tuscaloosa-Blakeley road, the Cahaba-Natchez road, and the Wire Road. The Tuscaloosa-Mobile road ran through Greensboro, Linden, Coffeville, St. Stephens, and Washington Courthouse. The Montgomery-Mobile Road passed through present Fort Deposit, Greenville, Butler Springs, Burnt Corn, Old Bermuda, Hollingers, and Steadham, (skirting Stockton and Bay Minette) to terminate at Blakeley, where a ferry crossed the Bay to Mobile. The Tuscaloosa-Blakeley road ran via Cahawba and Claiborne, while the Cahawba to Natchez route travelled via Coffeenville, St. Stephens, and Washington Court House. The Wire Road ran from Columbus, Georgia, to Meridian, Mississippi, and received its name on July 18th, 1848, when the Montgomery-Macon link in the Washington to New Orleans telegraph line was finished (Brannon, 1920). The original route was in use as early as the 1820s, however, and ran through Uniontown, Demopolis, and York. The route followed a ridge in the Black Prairie running west from Uniontown to Moscow landing on the Tombigbee.

#### County Roads

With the entrance of Alabama into the Union in 1819, a fundamental change took place in the road development process. With a state government constituted to take charge of internal affairs Alabama no longer depended solely on the National government to initiate, construct and maintain its road system. That duty devolved upon the shoulders of the state and county governments, which (except in cases of Federal aided interstate roads) were solely responsible for the progress of road development within their own borders.

The early state legislatures approached road building from a conservative and pragmatic perspective, authorizing the building and maintenance of roads largely based on local justification. Modern concepts of road systems designed to facilitate the speedy movement of traffic over long

distances did not apply. The roads of the antebellum period in Alabama were designed to get the planter and the small farmer either to his county town, to a local retail center or to a river landing for commercial activities. The long distance traveller had to be satisfied with the use of these local country roads to fulfil his itinerary, even though they frequently provided circuitous routes of travel.

From the beginning of state legislation, the construction and maintenance of main thoroughfares was a public obligation, from being subject to public control, these thoroughfares were called "public roads." There were also thousands of local roads, built at community or individual expense, connecting with or linking the public roads they were rough, but made the thoroughfares available to everyone. Often they were the only adequate means of communication. State legislation provided the main means of opening routes to make isolated communities move accessible or convenient. Thus on December 4, 1819, commissioners were appointed to (Cook, 1935:73):

lay out the best way for a road to be opened to begin at such a point as they shall think best on the new road leading from the State to the State of Georgia which intersects the Old Federal Road in the Creek Nation in the eleventh and twelfth townships, and the sixteenth range, and from such a point of beginning to the town of Cahawba.

Likewise on December 17th, 1819, laws were enacted providing for establishing public roads from Tuscaloosa via Cahaba and Claiborne, to Blakeley, and from via Coffeerville and Washington Court House to the Post Road from St. Stephens to Natchez.

County governments were responsible for establishing the secondary roads used throughout the nineteenth century. Laws passed during Territorial days gave county courts complete jurisdiction over the construction and maintenance of public roads, bridges, ferries, and causeways in their respective counties. The legislation provided for the appointment, by the county courts, of apportioners, who divided the roads within their precincts into sections and who designated an overseer and the choice of "hands" to construct and maintain the road. All able bodied men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were required to work on the roads for an annual period of ten days. A substitution of ten dollars tax was later provided to replace direct labor (Cooke, 1935).

On December 21, 1820, "An Act to reduce into one the several Acts concerning Roads, Bridges, Ferries and Highways," was passed which provided detailed regulations for road construction by the county courts (Cook, 1935). These regulations governed most roadbuilding in Alabama during the nineteenth century. The various sections of the Act stipulated that, 1.) all roads in the state laid out by virtue of the general assembly or any of the several county courts were public roads, and that the county court had the power to alter or discontinue any road; 2.) all new roads were to be laid out by a jury of seven freeholders appointed by the county court; 3.) the overseer was to measure all roads and to "set up mile posts each mile away from the courthouse" 4.) various offenses regarding road obstruction be subject to fixed fines; 5.) overseers were

to erect causeways fourteen feet in width, with drains on each side; 6.) necessary bridges were to be build by the county concerned and charged to the county; 7.) county courts were to establish and regulate ferries and fix the toll; 8.) no ferry be established within two miles of any ferry already established, unless within two miles of any town, 9.) the county courts enter into contracts with persons for the construction of toll bridges, and affix the toll charges; 10.) a \$500 fine be levied for establishing a ferry, toll bridge, or causeway contrary to the provisions of the act.

Supplementary legislation was later made to the original act. In 1836 a mode of establishing a new, or changing an old, road was enacted. A group of householders, appointed by the county court, were to take an oath before the clerk of the county court that they would (Cooke, 1935: 77):

view and mark out the road named in the order directed to them from the commissioner's court in pursuance of said order, to the greatest advantage to the public and with as little prejudice to enclosures and private individuals as convenient without favor of affection, malice or hatred, and to the best of their skill and knowledge.

It was stipulated, however, that no new road should be opened between the first day of May and the tenth day of July in any year, nor opened through any enclosure while there was a crop growing in the same.

Later the differing demands of traffic demanded a classification of the grades of public roads. Thus the courts of county commissioners in the several counties were given superintendence over public roads of three grades: a) thirty feet wide with fifteen foot bridges and causeways, b) twenty feet wide with fifteen foot bridges and causeways, and c) fifteen feet wide with ten foot bridges and causeways. Grades on hills were to be cleared of trees and obstructions, stumps were not to exceed six inches in height, and lanes through plantations (subject to the prescription of the courts) were not to exceed thirty feet.

#### Toll Roads

The third means of establishing roads in the antebellum period was through private roads opened to the public through toll charges. Private corporations built roads through settled areas, or areas of anticipated settlement and operated them as commercial enterprises (Moore, 1934). Turnpike companies were chartered for ten to twenty years, usually with the Legislature retaining the right to inspect their books and the county courts the right to supervise the opening and repairs of their roads. Toll gates were stipulated at intervals of a few miles and charges were fixed in the charters which were not to exceed 25% nor fall below 12½% of the capital originally invested (Reynolds, 1953).

A minimum of seven persons could be incorporated for the purpose of constructing macadamized, graded, wooden, rail or plank roads by publishing a notice of the opening of books of subscription. After stock to the

amount of \$500.00 for each mile of the road was taken, subscribers could elect directors, and the directors a president. Articles of incorporation included, among other things, the route of the road and the names of the counties, towns, and villages through which it passed. Branch roads could be constructed with the consent of the court of county commissioners and by purchasing the right of way. All chartered roads had to be constructed "to allow carriages and other vehicles conveniently to pass each other." Rates of toll were to be published and not increased except at annual meetings of the stockholders. Proprietors of toll roads who allowed them to be out of order for ten days, without sufficient excuse, were guilty of misdemeanor. The only turnpikes of consequence authorized for the Lower Tombigbee region were those from Tuscaloosa via Claiborne to Pensacola and Blakeley, and from Tuscaloosa via Claiborne to Mobile.

A variation on the turnpike concept was the plank road. Many localities in the South desiring railroad facilities could not generate enough traffic to justify construction of a railroad. Many of these same localities viewed the construction of wooden plank roads as subsidiary lines to the railroads, a suitable alternative. Numerous plank road routes were projected in Alabama in the 1840s and 1850s, but their actual construction and subsequent importance fell far short of general expectations.

The first plank road to be built in Alabama originated on the Tombigbee River at Demopolis, where the "Canebrake Plank Road Company" built a road from Demopolis to Uniontown in 1848. Other large projects, completed during the period of economic expansion prior to the Civil War, were the "Montgomery South Plank Road" extending into Lowndes County, the "Central Plank Road" from Montgomery to Talladega by way of Wetumpka, the "Mobile Plank Road" from Montgomery to Mobile, and the "Tuscaloosa and Greensboro Plank Road." Besides these main arteries, many shorter, local stretches were constructed in different localities over the state. In the session of 1849-50 alone, the Legislature chartered twenty-four plank road companies. Among them was the "Livingston and Tombigbee Plank Road" in Sumter County (Reynolds, 1953).

#### Post Roads

Post roads played an important part in the early development of Alabama (Brannon, 1927b). Particular routes from time to time were designated by the Post Office Department as mail routes. These selected roads tended to become the main highways between rising groups of towns and settlements in the state. They were frequently better maintained than nonpost roads, thus encouraging traffic over them. Ridge roads were mainly chosen to avoid obstructions in wet weather; the occasional swamps encountered were crossed by "corduroys," constructed of small lateral poles placed parallel across the road.

Pony postmen were carrying the mail bags through Alabama as early as 1799, but with the growth of improved roads coaches were coming into general use by 1820. The Natchez Trace and the Federal Road were first used by the government as post roads in Alabama. These were added to on April 20, 1819 when Congress partially established ten other roads

(Moore, 1934). Among the routes which impacted the Lower Tombigbee Valley were (Cooke, 1935): 1.) from Fort Claiborne via Fort Montgomery to Blakeley; from Huntsville via Meltons Bluff, the Falls of the Black Warrior, and the French settlement at Demopolis to St. Stephens; 3.) from Fort Mitchell via Fort Bainbridge, Fort Jackson, Burnt Corn Spring, Fort Claiborne, and Jackson to St. Stephens; 4.) from St. Stephens via Winchester to Ford, on the Pearl River in Mississippi, and 5.) from Mobile to Blakeley.

Subsequent congressional enactments established the following post roads in the lower Tombigbee region prior to 1850: 1.) March 3rd, 1819—from Cahaba to St. Stephens, from Burnt Corn Spring to Mobile; 2.) May, 8, 1822—from Cahaba via Clark Court House to St. Stephens; 3.) March 3rd, 1823—from Clairborne via Tensaw to Blakeley, from Greensboro in the Forks of the Tombigbee and the Warrior to Pickens Court House, from St. Stephens to Mobile; 4.) March 2nd, 1827—from Claiborne to Fort Stoddert; 5.) June 15th, 1832—from Mobile to New Orleans, from Burnt Corn via Claiborne and Washington Court House to Natchez, from Demopolis to Greensboro, from Cahaba to Linden; 6.) July 2nd, 1836—from Livingston to Washington Court House, from Linden to Livingston; 7.) August 21st, 1842—from Mobile to Carthage; 8.) March 3rd, 1845—from Greensboro to Livingston.

#### Stage Lines

Travel in the days of early statehood was mostly by horseback or stage; after the development of roads, the stage was the more popular of the two. As the pony mail rider gave way to the mail stage, the practice of carrying passengers with the mail expanded. Early travelers in Alabama have left records of their experiences (Moore, 1934; Brannon, 1927b). By 1834 the stage lines in Alabama had developed into a recognized system of transportation. At that time a tabulation of the stage routes in the state was prepared for the public. Those routes affecting the Lower Tombigbee region with their stage mileages are presented in Table 1.

#### Ferries and Bridges

An integral part of the development of highways in Alabama were facilities for crossing the rivers and streams of the newly settled country (Irons, 1951). In general there was a hierarchical, spatial arrangement of bridges, ferries and fords in the lower Tombigbee region with the frequency of occurrence being related to degree and reliability of use. Fords provided unreliable connections, particularly in wet weather. Ferries provided more reliable links but were somewhat cumbersome in operation and incurred both time delays and fees in their use. Bridges were reliable connectors except in the worst floods and provided the least complicated means of stream crossing. At the same time, the increasing advantages to road transportation of bridge construction were balanced by an increasing cost in capital investment. The result was a wide distribution of ford sites, a somewhat less numerous arrangement of ferries and a very limited installation of bridges, particularly over major streams. In the early nineteenth century bridges were generally reserved only for the most significant points of traffic demand. Fords were not feasible on the

TABLE 1

## Stage Routes Affecting the Lower Tombigbee with Stage Mileages

Stage	Stage Miles	Total Route Miles
1. From Tuscaloosa to Mobile		
To Greensboro	43	43
To Demopolis	19	62
To Linden	11	73
To Gayville	20	93
To Pineville	21	114
To Coffeeville	13	127
To Washington C.H.	11	138
To Mt. Vernon	43	181
To Mobile	37	218
2. From Ft. Mitchell to Mobile		
To Mt. Meigs	78	78
To Montgomery	12	90
To Hickory Grove	28	118
To Greenville	24	142
To Hemphill	21	163
To Burnt Corn	25	188
To Taittsville	42	230
To Blakeley	34	264
To Mobile	11	275
3. From Blakeley to Pensacola	67	67
4. From Columbus Mississippi to Montgomery		
To Mt. Zion	10	10
To Pickensville	13	23
To Vienna	14	37
To Clinton	12	49
To Springfield	20	69
To Erie	14	83
To Greensboro	17	100
To Marion	18	118
To Selma	25	143
To Vernon	26	169
To Washington	10	179
To Montgomery	10	189

Tombigbee below Demopolis because of the sustained streamflow and deep river channel and were, therefore, characteristic of only the tributary streams. Ferries were the primary mechanism of traffic transfer on the Tombigbee and occurred with considerable regularity. State law prevented ferries from locating closer than two miles to each other (Cooke, 1935).

The first known public ferry on the Lower Tombigbee was established in 1799 by Samuel Mims at Nanahubba Island. One of the most interesting of the ferries that authorized by the State Legislature in December, 1822, by which John Fowler at Blakeley was authorized to operate steam ferry boats between Blakeley and Mobile for five years. Steam ferries were a rarity on southern rivers where cable drawn boats were the norm.

#### RAILROADS

Although the first railroad in the Southeast, the Charleston and Hamburg, appeared in the 1820s, railroad development had barely intruded into the Tombigbee region by 1860. The antebellum railroads of the southeastern states were generally developed by Gulf or Atlantic ports to service the area tributary to them and to defend against trade competition from neighboring ports. Before 1845 Mobile, unlike Savannah or Charleston, felt relatively secure in its control of the trade of central Alabama and eastern Mississippi by way of the Tombigbee-Warrior and Alabama-Coosa River systems. Around that time, however, other railroads began to plan and construct routes which would penetrate Mobile's traditional hinterland. Vicksburg, New Orleans, Memphis, Savannah, and Charleston interests were all building or projecting feeder extensions into Mobile's commercial domain.

Mobile's response was predictable based on the actions of the other ports. An immediate start was made on a line from Mobile to the Ohio River which would run through the heart of the Black Prairie and west Tennessee, thus assuring Mobile of continued control of its natural trade territory through pre-emption of competing lines (Miller, 1945; Troost, 1847). Short tributary spurs were planned from the main north-south trunk to off-line urban centers in order to consolidate Mobile's trading position and to satisfy the demands of existing commercial centers for rail service. Due to the dual strategies of hinterland expansion and defense, however, the rail line was constructed at distances significantly to the west of the Tombigbee River. Virtually all of the main line except for its extreme southern mileage (164 miles in Alabama) lay in eastern Mississippi. The line was only partially complete in 1860 and was significant to the Lower Tombigbee for its increased trade to Mobile. The only other rail line to affect the region before the war was the line terminating at Selma, which drained some Black Belt traffic from the area east of Demopolis to Georgia ports rather than to Mobile.

#### RIVERBOATS

The increasing use of the Tombigbee as an artery of commerce paralleled the spread and intensification of settlement in the region. Before 1820 there was a gradual expansion of river traffic from the Mobile delta



area north to the Upper Tombigbee in the vicinity of Cotton Gin Port, and to the Warrior River at Tuscaloosa. In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the primary mode of travel was the raft or flatboat, which was floated downstream and broken up at Mobile at the end of the journey. Even on the smaller rivers flatboats transported cotton to market and sometimes were poled against the current laden with plantation supplies. An instrument known as a "hook and jam" was used to move the clumsy barges upstream. It consisted of a long, smooth pole pointed with a long spike and with a hook curving from its beak a few inches from the point. The boat was moved by pressing the point against trees or by fastening the hook to over hanging boughs. Cotton in loads of 50 to 100 bales was carried, on the flatboats, as well as coal and other materials. Ball (1882: 175) made the comment that at St. Stephens barges of forty to fifty feet in length were frequently seen loaded with several hundred bales of cotton on their way to Mobile. Keelboats were used less often because they were more expensive. In a keelboat a return trip could be made by poleing or warping, but the work was hard and the freight rate was \$5.00 per barrel.

One Mobilian writing in 1855 observed that (Mobile City Directory, 1855: 89):

There are still amongst us more than one of our fellow citizens who have in their early days poled their barges up the Alabama and the Bigbee, from Mobile to the highest navigable points; and thence floated down with the current, freighted with the results of their long trading expedition. Such a life was surely calculated to make or break a constitution. To the experience of such men, however, steam navigation owes much of its safety, for they became the first pilots and were thoroughly acquainted with every shoal rock and sand bar in the long and tortuous course of those capricious streams.

The introduction of the steamboat revolutionized the river trade and further confirmed the pre-eminent position of the waterways (Neville, 1962). The trip from Mobile to Demopolis could be made in five to ten days, depending on streamflow and the number of loading stops. Merchants in the interior could then profitably buy as well as sell in the Mobile market. Mobile cotton factors during the 1820s and 1830s received visits, usually once a year, from up country planters who would go down with their cotton shipments and return with their annual supplies (Ikerman, 1963).

Though the St. Stephens Boat Company was chartered by the Territorial Legislature in 1818, it is almost impossible to fix accurately the date of the first appearance of a steamboat on the rivers of Alabama. Hamilton (1910): asserts that the first steamboat trip as far up as Demopolis was made in 1819, either by the TENSAW or the MOBILE.. The next year the TOMBECKBEE was launched at St. Stephens. By 1822 there were three steamboats on the Alabama River and one on the Tombigbee, carrying an average load of 400 bales of cotton each trip (Mobile Commercial Register, June 10, 1822). The size of boats was usually reckoned by the number of bales of cotton carried. Until 1830 from 200 to 400 bales were considered an average load, which was little more than the flatboats could carry. In

1859, however, the ALICE VIVIAN arrived in Mobile with 2087 bales, an unusually large cargo for a boat on the Tombigbee (Clarke County Democrat, Jan. 27, 1859).

### River Landings

Steamboat traffic was channelled through a system of landings which were distributed at frequent intervals along the riverbanks (Adams, 1877). Commodities were generally hauled by wagon from the farm to the nearest river bluff; there they were slid or carried down an incline to the steamboat or barge. Landings tended to belong to four categories: (a) as an integral part of the economic base of towns or cities such as St. Stephens, Jackson, or Demopolis; (b) as public landings situated close to rural population concentrations; (c) as private landings built to service individual plantations along the river bank; or (d) as woodyard landings where boats could replenish their diminishing fuel supply.

In terms of physical construction, they varied from extensive, publicly regulated wharves at towns like Demopolis or Mobile (Reynolds, 1953) to primitively cleared riverbanks at some of the plantation landing sites. The more important city landings had associated processing and storage facilities, while the rural public landings sometimes possessed a cotton storage warehouse but were otherwise undistinguished. Those landings located in the largest towns tended to generate the largest volume of traffic and as a result became the regular ports of call for all steamboats. Those public landings at local points servicing the most productive agricultural areas became second rank shipping points and were scheduled ports of call for fewer steamboats. The private landings were served primarily on demand, based upon particular shipments or passenger needs.

While individual landings could be found in a variety of topographic environments, they were generally located where a high bluff reached the river, enabling dry access to the point of transshipment. They generally avoided shallow water areas of the river where channel fluctuations would occur and where shifting sediments would cause problems. Where such factors did impact a landing site, the landing site was frequently moved. River landings tended to develop close to the mouths of tributary streams, probably because access roads tended to be topographically focused at such points.

In the antebellum period the Tombigbee River was the undisputed traffic and settlement focus of the region, but as a reliable medium of transportation it suffered from considerable deficiencies. The greatest of these was discharge instability. The channel basin was subject to repeated floods and droughts. Peak flows tended to promote navigability at the expense of economic and settlement activity along the river. Low water made navigation extremely problematical. The spring of 1855, for example, was unusually dry and the river dropped so low that boats were unable to transport cotton to Mobile. Both planters and cotton factors were equally alarmed and some built flatboats to float cotton down as they had done in the early days. On March 23, planter William Gould recorded in his diary that two small sternwheel boats arrived at Miller's Landing

but demanded five dollars a bale to take the cotton to Mobile (Ball, 1882).

Because of these environmental hazards, the river contained an inherent weakness which made it certain that should a more reliable and efficient transportation mode be discovered, the river's pivotal economic role would suffer. The railroad provided the inevitable mechanism of displacement, but this did not occur until the later part of the nineteenth century. Even then, the adjustment was more gradual in the Lower Tombigbee Valley than in many other locations in the South.

### TOWNS

After 1798 towns developed rapidly in the Lower Tombigbee Valley, to provide government and service functions for the expanding population. While the most significant towns were established on river bluffs (Demopolis, Jackson, and St. Stephens) there were a number of important smaller villages located at some distance from the riverbank (Linden, Mt. Sterling, Suggsville) (Dubose, 1931). Virtually all of these towns developed as the foci of farming communities and functioned as transshipment points for agricultural commodities.

#### St. Stephens

The oldest and most important of the early American settlements was St. Stephens, which evolved from the Spanish Fort San Esteban de Tombeche (Hamilton, 1899). The fort was constructed in the spring of 1789. It was hastily built in an irregular shape of wood banked with earth, and only lasted a few years. It had been located only 600 yards from hills which dominated it. By 1792 the palisades were rotting and renovation began. The work cost \$7,000 and consisted of banquettes, trenches, a glacis, palisade and parapets for two 8-pound and four 4-pound guns (Holmes, 1965c). In 1795 the fort was once again rotting. The new commander, Paolo, used cypress instead of oak and relocated the fort. This structure followed the pattern of most frontier forts. It was roughly square, with a blockhouse constructed in the "arrow" of one flank adjacent to the river. The fort was protected by surrounding inner and outer trenches, which in turn were guarded by sharp stakes imbedded at an angle (Holmes, 1965c).

The outpost had a church, the Church of the Transfiguration of San Esteban, which was located near the fort and the mouth of a bayou; it was one of the earliest structures. There was also a small hospital equipped with cots and supplied with a meager selection of medicines. Three small buildings housed the troops. There was also a powder magazine, a cabin for the commandant, and a flagpole. The buildings were made of logs, or roughly-finished lumber, erected in such a way that they resembled cages. Some buildings were roofed with thatched reeds, while others were made of boards daubed with lime and Fuller's earth, upon which straw or brushwood were laid. Bricks were sometimes brought up from Mobile; a bakery was constructed of brick. There was a well and various "Indian Bathtub" reservoirs for storing drinking water (Holmes, 1965c). The powder maga-

zine was located beneath a cliff more than 100 feet above the waters of the Tombigbee (Welsh, 1899).

No commercial establishments were begun at St. Stephens until after 1802 (Plaisance, 1954), when a factory was built for the Choctaw Indians. The site was the former Spanish fort and construction was begun in the spring of 1803. "The parsonage of the old Spanish church was used as a skin house, and the old blockhouse served the purpose of the government store" (Plaisance, 1954: 395). The old fort was located immediately on the bluff of the river; one of the blockhouses was in a good state of preservation and was occupied as the store. There was an extensive frame warehouse (one room housed the land office) and a frame dwelling which had been the officers quarters. All was enclosed on three sides with pickets and a ditch, with the river forming the defenses on the fourth side. The frame dwelling was occupied by the United States Factor (Plaisance, 1954).

By 1811 the factory buildings began to show signs of decay and repairs were needed. The old building of Fort St. Stephens, in which the goods of the Choctaw Trading House and the land office were kept became leaky and untenable. The goods of the Trading House and also the Land Office were removed in the early part of 1812 to a new brick building which had been erected in 1811, a few hundred yards west of the old fort. In the winter of 1815-1816, the factory was moved from St. Stephens to the vicinity of old Fort Tombecbe in Sumter County (Plaisance, 1954).

The town of "Old St. Stephens" was laid out in lots in December, 1817 (Welsh, 1899). Among the structures which once stood within the limits of the old townsite were: a silversmith, three hotels, two banks, a theatre, land office, 25 stores, school, market, newspaper, tannery, and a capitol building (Welsh, 1899).

According to one account, the streets were regularly laid out and had sidewalks paved with stone (Welsh, 1899). The foundations of numerous structures, residences in particular, were made of native stone quarried from the nearby hills. Cellars seem to have been the rule rather than the exception. The buildings themselves were said to have been constructed in wood-frame style and local tradition states that, with the decline of the town, many of the principal buildings were removed from their stonework foundations and relocated in Mobile. Some structures had as many as three stories. Two of the most important public buildings were the state bank which had stone vaults, and the capitol building, which had dimensions that were a mere thirty by forty feet (Welsh, 1899).

Old St. Stephens, at the peak of its boom, probably had between 5000 and 6000 residents. The city limits terminated within a half mile of the river; the river landing was reached by Lime Street, but it was a good quarter mile from the river. The first street was Front and parallel with it were Madison and High Streets. Front was the principal thoroughfare. The business center was bounded by the land office on the west and Lime street on the east. At the intersection of Lime and High Streets stood the Tombeckbee Bank, which was a large building. In 1817 it was the site of the first legislative session for the new Territory of Alabama (Welsh, 1899). Between the land office and the bank were Malone's and Chamberlain's (later Jordan's) hotels. Across the street was the site of Fort

Republic built for use during the Creek wars. Many of the buildings had their own wells and the bank was one of them. The town lots were ninety-eight feet front by one hundred and ninety-eight in depth. Also, on Chambers and High Streets were the public square and a market. South of High Street, and parallel to it were Jackson, Monroe, and possibly others. Crossing at right angles were Chambers, Orange, Spring, and Lime Streets. (Welsh, 1899). Beyond its junction with High Street, Lime Street became the road to Mobile. It crossed a small creek below a tannery and became St. Stephens Road. The public cemetery was on a hill a quarter mile southeast of the town but there were few graves. There were no churches in St. Stephens after the Spanish period. There was a Masonic lodge, however, which for a time had met in the third story garrett of the Gordy residence (Welsh, 1899).

As settlement expanded up the Tombigbee Valley, the obstruction to navigation at McGrews Shoals was removed. This marked the beginning of St. Stephen's decline. A serious epidemic of yellow fever in 1833 was the death knell, and people began moving away in large numbers. Many of the buildings were torn down with some being moved to Mobile and other places (Avant, 1929). About 1845 another site, new St. Stephens, was selected a few miles from the river. Many of the residents of the old town moved in a group to the new site: by 1850 little was left of the old town. The brick building used by the bank was torn down during the Civil War, and the brick was used in making salt furnaces (Avant, 1929).

#### McIntosh Bluff and Bladon Springs

McIntosh Bluff had an important place in the early political life of Washington County (Haynes, 1965). The first election was held here in 1800 and the first court convened in 1803. It also became the first county seat of Baldwin County (Leming and Albers, 1969). The county seat of Washington was shifted to a point a few miles north of McIntosh Bluff in 1804 and named Wakefield. The town was laid out on the land of Richard Brashears and incorporated in 1805. Because it was located away from the river in a thinly settled area, the town never developed beyond having the courthouse, a tavern, and a few houses.

Mineral springs were discovered in the northern part of Washington County, and were known as Bladon Springs, after the owner of the property (Gay, 1976a). By 1838 the curative property of the springs had been widely reported, and they were opened to the public (Hamilton, 1896). In 1845 Richard T. Brumby, State Geologist, analyzed the water. When the report was published, wealthy planters who had formerly visited northern resorts flocked to Bladon Springs. The place became a very fashionable resort (Sulzby, 1960). Bladon Springs was in that part of Washington County incorporated into Choctaw County, when that county was organized in 1847 (Avant, 1929).

#### Coffeerville

Coffeerville, located on the Tombigbee River, was known as Murrell's Landing as early as 1808. The name of the community was later changed in

honor of General John Coffee of Creek War fame. A plat was drawn up for the town of Coffeerville and recorded on November 6, 1819. An Act to incorporate the town was approved on November 22, 1819. In that year there were only six voting places in Clarke County, of which Coffeerville was one (Clarke County Historical Society, 1977). At the time of the Civil War, the town was the largest in Clarke County. Coffeerville was on the old stagecoach road from Mobile to Greensboro, and it was at this settlement that travelers crossed the Tombigbee by ferry. The first ferry, a flatboat, was propelled by poles and oars. The ferry was pushed from the bank with poles, then the oars propelled it until the poles could be used on the other side (Clarke County Historical Society, 1977).

### Jackson

The town of Jackson developed (in the early 1800s) at a location known first as Republicville and then as Pine Level. In 1813 General Claiborne built a stockade, or fort, at Pine Level, at the site of a spring to be used as a defense point in the Creek War. In 1815 a stock company was organized and styled "The Pine Level Land Company." The Company purchased all of section 8, Township 6 north, Range 2 east except the southeast quarter. The land was laid off in lots, streets and alleyways. A sale of lots was advertized in the Georgia papers, and on the day of the sale persons from Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina were present; every lot was sold. The town was first called Pine Level, but in 1816 the commissioners changed the name to "Jackson." The population quickly reached 1500. The main thoroughfares of the town were Carrol, Washington, Commerce, Broadway, and Florida.

According to Graham (1923: 90):

It was at that time a manufacturing and commercial town. Among other branches of industry there was a large tannery; there were shops for tinware, for the manufacture of saddles, of hats, of boots and shoes, and of other articles of household and family use. Before the days of steamboats twenty sail of vessels at one time sometimes lay at the landing, and during the steamboat era there were boat repair shops at Jackson. Jackson prospered for a time and then began to decline in the 1820s until in 1838 only two families were resident. (Jackson did not rise again as a significant community until after the Civil War.)

### Demopolis

The site of Demopolis, at the junction of the Tombigbee and Warrior Rivers, was early recognized as a favorable trade location. It is probably that a fur trading post was established there during the seventeenth century and the French seriously considered it as the site of Fort Tombecbe. Demopolis, was first founded as a town by the French Napoleonic exiles in 1817, but it was only temporary (Smith, 1965; Ericson, 1958). Discovering that the site of Demopolis lay to the west of their grant area, the French settlers moved to build Aigleville, about a mile east of

Demopolis (Cobbs, 1961). Each settler was assigned a lot in the town, a small vegetable plot nearby and a larger portion of land to be farmed (Dusmukes, 1970; Lyon, 1963). When the French settlers moved, the desirability of the old site as a trade point was appreciated by a group of businessmen in St. Stephens who decided to buy it as an investment. In 1819 they formed the White Bluff association and purchased the land at \$52.00 an acre (the French colonists had paid only \$2.00 an acre). The businessmen retained the name Demopolis and elected five original commissioners for the new town: James Childers, Walter Crenshaw, General Lefebre Desnouettes, Joseph Earl, and General George S. Gaines. The city was surveyed by C. C. Stone and, like Old Cahaba, was laid off according to the Philadelphia plan (Smith, 1965). Between 1820 and 1860 Demopolis flourished, particularly as the Black Belt was settled. Demopolis was a commercial town focused on the steamboat landing rather than a center of planter social life as was the case of many of the towns away from the river.

According to Smith (1965:89) a visitor to Demopolis in the 1850s would have noticed:

If he had arrived by stagecoach at the River Hotel on the north end of Market Street (now called Main Street) he could have strolled past clusters of stores that flanked the street and gave it its name: Gottlieb Brailing's Warehouse, the Tavern, Paul Monnier's store, Fournier's Store, the Carriage Shop, Isaac Marx's store and others. But any visitor in the 1850s would surely notice that the business district seemed somewhat scattered. The oldest businesses were located along Market Street, but establishments tended to gravitate toward the Public Square and Washington Street the present business district - was fast replacing Market as the center of commercial activity. Already located on Washington Street were the Masonic Lodge, the newspaper office, the tailoring shop of Augustine Schmidt, the Public Well, several law offices Houston's Store, a drug store, the Brick store of Wilcox and Corrish and others.

### Blakeley

The city of Blakeley was developed on the east side of Mobile Bay by Josiah Blakeley, a land speculator. According to Hamilton (1910) the town was built on White House Plantation, which Blakeley had bought from Joseph Chastang and which was also the old village site of the Apalachees where Bayou Solome enters the Tensaw. The town was surveyed in 1813 by McGoffin of St. Stephens; it was to have two public squares and more than twenty streets. The town was incorporated in 1814 (McMillan and Beals, 1969). For a decade Blakeley was a thriving community, with coastal and steamboat traffic rivaling Mobile for the trade of the Lower Tombigbee (Parker, 1974). Yellow fever epidemics in the 1820s, however, discouraged settlers and by 1830 Blakeley had declined to insignificance (Grice, 1962).

## Mobile

Of all the Lower Tombigbee towns, Mobile was the one which thrived the most prior to 1860. During Alabama's short territorial period (1818-1819), Mobile cotton exports rose from 7,000 to 10,000 bales. A total of 209 ships entered the port in 1817, and the number increased to 280 the next year; imports for 1818 amounted to three million dollars (Jordan, 1948). From September 1, 1819, to August 30, 1829, Mobile handled more than a half million bales of cotton. Yearly production of the decade averaged about 55,000 bales and the largest annual output, almost 90,000 bales, was made in 1827. By 1830 Mobile was outranked as a cotton port only by New Orleans, Savannah, and Charleston (Jordan, 1948). Mobile's cotton handling increased from 100,000 bales in 1830 to 300,000 in 1838. The cotton flow and increased wealth led to a level of industrial development not found in the other towns of the Lower Tombigbee during the antebellum period. As early as 1835 there was a cotton seed oil plant, and by the 1840s an iron and brass foundry was in operation. Flour mills were established in the city, as was a cotton textile factory running 3,000 spindles. The varied activities of the city in the decade before the Civil War have been chronicled by Thompson (1979). The population of the city increased from 12,000 in 1840, to greater than 20,000 in 1850, and to nearly 30,000 by 1860. In 1859 cotton and supplies were being brought by more than 150 factors and commission merchants (Amos, 1976; Brantley, 1952; Haskins, 1956; Woodman, 1968; Wright, 1978). In the same year the city supported three local banks and sixteen insurance companies. Steamboats based in the city were making more than seven hundred official landings along the Alabama, Tombigbee, and Black Warrior Rivers to support the dock and warehouse activities (Jordan, 1948; Weber, 1967).

## Ft. Stoddert-Mt. Vernon

There was an important community in the vicinity of present day Mt. Vernon throughout the nineteenth century. First settled in the early eighteenth century this location gained considerable significance with the building of Fort Stoddert, as the most southerly American military post on the Tombigbee during the territorial period. The fort was built in 1799 by the 2nd Infantry at Chastang's Bluff, very close to the Spanish-American border (31°N) (Brannon, 1928). The post was regularly occupied and garrisoned until shortly before the war with England in 1812-15. In 1812 Josiah Blakeley writing from Mobile said (Brannon, 1928, 25), "At Fort Stoddert 50 miles north ... on the west bank of the Mobile river is an American garrison of 500 or less troops", giving some indication of its importance at that time.

In 1811, however, primarily for health reasons the army decided to move the barracks back two miles to higher ground. They located at a spring which was given the name Mt. Vernon spring after Washington's home on the Potomac. After General Andrew Jackson visited Mt. Vernon in 1814 the spring was renamed Jackson Spring. Later by an act of Congress approved May 4, 1828, the Secretary of War was directed to procure a site for an arsenal on the waters of Mobile or Pensacola Bays (Brannon, 1928) This act authorized the building of the Mt. Vernon arsenal. The plat, dated 1830, was approved by Andrew Jackson.



## CHAPTER VII

### A DECLINING FORTUNE: POLITICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS, 1861-1945

#### THE CONFEDERATE TOMBIGBEE: THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES, 1861-65

On February 4, 1861, the delegates from the seceding states met at Montgomery and organized the Confederate States of America (Fitts, 1949). In the capitol building, the Confederate Congress made basic decisions shaping the destiny of the new republic, and there on February 18, Jefferson Davis was inaugurated. For three months Montgomery continued as the capitol of the Confederacy and Alabama occupied center stage.

While the state did not become the scene of great campaigns, as did Virginia and Georgia, it was often invaded by Union troops and there was scarcely any section of it that did not suffer invasion at some time during the war (Davis, Parry, and Kirkley, 1897). After the Battle of Shiloh in 1862, the Confederate Army moved southward into Mississippi and the valley of the Tennessee River in northern Alabama fell into the hands of the Federal troops. It remained in their possession almost continuously until the end of the war (Dyer, 1959). In 1863 Streight made a raid through the hill country of northern Alabama and was captured by Forrest. Raids were made through the central portion of the state by General Rousseau in 1864 (Bearss, 1963; Fretwell, 1956) and by General Wilson in 1865 (Andrews, 1867; Catts, 1943). The latter resulted in the burning of The University of Alabama and the destruction of public and private property in Montgomery, Selma, and other places.

During the war Mobile and its vicinity became the scene of heavier and more decisive fighting than any which occurred elsewhere in Alabama. Few areas of the Confederacy witnessed as long a period of hostilities as did Mobile. Military operations in this area commenced early, when on January 4, 1861, before Alabama seceded, Governor A. B. Moore seized Fort Morgan (Austill, 1945), Fort Gaines, and the Federal arsenal at Mt. Vernon.

The most important action in Alabama and one of the fiercest battles of American naval history was the Battle of Mobile Bay (Owsley, 1962; Walter, 1952). After Union forces captured New Orleans in 1862, Mobile became the most valuable port on the Gulf of Mexico for the sorely needed supplies of blockade runners. Significant in the blockade running were the connections of Mobile with the interior of the Confederacy through the Alabama-Tombigbee River system, and connecting rail lines. Especially important in the logistics of southern defense were connections by rail from Mobile to Richmond (Ramsdell, 1921).

Union armies were in need of some victory before the election of 1864. Therefore Farragut's fleet was prepared to undertake considerable risk in sealing the port of Mobile, and conversely Mobile was heavily

defended by large garrisons in Forts Morgan and Gaines (Fornell, 1961; Newton, 1958; Mobley, 1976; Bergeron, 1976). Fort Powell was also under construction to guard the pass between Mobile Bay and Mississippi Sound near Cedar Point. The City of Mobile was protected by a triple ring of defenses which made it one of the best defended cities of the Confederacy (Fornell, 1961; Nichols, 1959). Only four ships were available for the defense of Mobile: three gunboats and the new ironclad TENNESSEE, flagship of Rear Admiral Franklin Buchanan (Still, 1968). Buchanan had earlier fought the VIRGINIA against the MONITOR in the battle of ironclads at Hampton Roads (Still, 1963).

As early as February 24, 1864, Farragut began the actions in Mobile Bay with an ineffective three day attack of light draft vessels on Fort Powell (Folmar, 1964, 1970). However, it was not until August 5 when Farragut had found favorable tide and wind, and had assembled four monitors and fourteen additional warships, that he undertook to fight his ships from the Gulf into Mobile Bay, past Fort Morgan, the Confederate mines, pilings, and Fort Gaines (Duncan, 1978). In the passage a mine destroyed one of Farragut's ironclads, the TECUMSEH. Against Farragut's remaining seventeen ships, the three Confederate gunboats were soon out of the fight, but Buchanan and the TENNESSEE waged a three hour battle and did not surrender to the heavier and more maneuverable Union forces until the commanding officer was wounded, the steering mechanism was hit, and the ship immobilized. After the fall of Fort Morgan on August 23, the Federal forces had control of Mobile Bay and this accomplished their purpose in closing the port of Mobile to blockade runners (Austill, 1945). However, the city held out until April 12, 1865, when Mobile surrendered to the Federals following engagements at Spanish Fort and Blakeley (Bailey, 1968). Perhaps the most tragic incident related to the war in Mobile was the great explosion of May 25, 1865. Federal soldiers collected and stored large quantities of surrendered Confederate ammunition in cotton warehouses in the city. Careless handling of the ammunition caused one warehouse to explode, devastating four blocks, and leaving a huge hole in the ground. The explosion was heard at Fort Morgan thirty miles away.

While there was military action at both ends of the BWT corridor, the intervening counties experienced little direct involvement in military activities. The Confederate Government in 1862, in an attempt to defend the important saltworks in Clarke County from the gunboats threatening Mobile Bay, placed a fortification on Carney's Bluff on the Tombigbee a few miles from the Central Saltworks. Another battery was planted just below the lower works at Oven Bluff. Fortifications were also built at Choctaw Bluff by refugees from Mississippi who had fled from their homes after the coming of Federal troops to the Mississippi River. The fortifications at Choctaw Bluff became known as Fort Stonewall, while those at Oven Bluff were called Fort Sidney Johnston. (Clarke County Historical Society, 1977).

The saltworks were not the only industry that fortifications were built to protect. Ship building operations were carried on on the floodplain near the river at Oven Bluff, and a number of gunboats were built (Still, 1965). Although these boats were not finished at Oven Bluff, they were launched there and floated down the river to Mobile where they were finished. Several war vessels, probably gun boats, were in the process of

construction when the war ended; both vessels and machinery were destroyed by order of Confederate authorities. There is no formal evidence that Union gunboats ever travelled either the Tombigbee or Alabama Rivers.

#### THE POST-BELLUM TOMBIGBEE: RECONSTRUCTION, 1866-79

When the Civil War ended the prewar society of Alabama was devastated by its social and economic results. It was estimated that 35,000 men had died in the military, and that as many were wounded or in broken health from hard service. Five years after the war the census of 1870 showed that the number of whites in Alabama was then about 100,000 less than it would have been had the population increased as it did between 1850 and 1860, and the black population was about 80,000 less than it should have been.

Half a billion dollars worth of property, including slaves worth \$200,000,000, had been lost; public buildings, railroads, steamboats, factories, banks and capital, money, farm implements and farm stock, mills and gins - all such accumulations of property had been partially or totally destroyed. North Alabama had been for three years the contending ground of both armies, and in twelve counties of that section property had withered. The raids of Rousseau in 1864, and of Wilson in 1865 carried destruction down from the northern part of the State to central Alabama as far as Montgomery, and the invading armies coming up from Mobile in 1865 completed the wasting of the central and southern counties including parts of the Lower Tombigbee Valley. Several towns, among them Selma, Decatur, Athens, and Guntersville, were burned; other towns, among them Huntsville, Florence, Courtland, Mobile, and Montgomery, were partially destroyed. Thousands of dwellings along the paths of the raids had been burned and hundreds had been deserted. In north Alabama and in the southeastern counties, constituting over a third of the state, Tories and deserters roamed and looted almost at will from the early part of 1864 to the later part of 1865. After the surrender, the blacks in the Black Belt frequently seized what teams and supplies they found at hand and set out to join the Federals thus helping to complete the ruin.

To make matters worse the Washington administration began a general enforcement of the Federal confiscation laws. Unscrupulous agents and persons pretending to be Federal agents perpetrated many frauds during this process (Griffin, 1954). Legally all war supplies and cotton owned by the Confederate Government were subject to confiscation by the United States Government. But the treasury agents and pretended agents made little distinction between Confederate property and private property, and stole impartially from individuals and the government. The Federal grand jury at Mobile, which in 1865 investigated the confiscation frauds, reported that the agents in Alabama stole 125,000 bales of cotton worth then at least \$50,000,000, and that most of this was private property. The loss of cotton removed the only important source of revenue still existing in the Lower Tombigbee region.

Another burden felt for the next three years was the Federal cotton tax. This tax was two and a half cents a pound in 1865, three cents in 1866, and two and a half cents in 1867. It was estimated that the people

of Alabama paid \$15,000,000 of the cotton tax, of which \$10,388,072.10 was paid before the cotton left the State.

Politically the State had no organization for a period of six months in the middle of 1865. During the later part of 1864 and the spring of 1865 the Confederate Government had gradually weakened and in many parts of the State had gone to pieces. The surrender of the armies left the State without civil government. After the Federal occupation the military posts were few in number and widely separated. For most of the people there was no government from March to September 1865. A sort of lynch law, an early manifestation of the Ku Klux movement, commonly operated to check in some degree the actions of blacks, horse thieves, and outlaws.

As soon as the Confederate Government fell people began to hold "reconstruction" meetings at which they pledged to President Johnson their support of any plan of restoration that might be offered (Flemming, 1905). Johnson who had adopted in essentials the plan of reconstruction worked out by Lincoln issued May 29, 1865, a proclamation granting amnesty to all Confederates except the higher officials, civil and military. In June, Johnson selected Lewis Parsons as provisional or military governor, and began a program of quiet restoration and adjustment of the State constitution of 1865.

There was, however, frequent interference by the military authorities and the Freedmen's Bureau, and in December 1865 a struggle began between Congress and President Johnson over the fate of the seceding states. In 1866 it was seen that Congress would win against the President, and the Civil Rights Act and a new Freedmen's Bureau Act were passed, and the proposed fourteenth amendment sent out to the states for ratification or rejection (Myers, 1972).

In anticipation of the victory of Congress, the people of Alabama in 1866 and 1867 arranged themselves into parties. The great majority of the whites, regardless of former political affiliations, united into the Conservative (later called the Democratic) party and endorsed the policy of President Johnson (Alexander, 1959). A small number of the leading whites were willing to accept a limited black suffrage if it could be tried under proper conditions, the majority were opposed to black suffrage of any kind. About 15,000 whites for various reasons favored reconstruction by Congress, and for a few months most of them acted with the radical Republican party. The blacks were organized in 1866-67 by the carpet-baggers (white adventurers from the north) (Woolfolk, 1962) into the radical Republican party (Myers, 1970b; Schweininger, 1976).

The State Legislature rejected the Fourteenth Amendment, and by the Reconstruction Acts of March 2 and 23, and July 19, 1867, Alabama, along with other Southern states, was placed under military rule until the blacks and whites who were not disfranchised could be enrolled and a new government organized as the basis of this new citizenship (Bromberg, 1911). Alabama with Georgia and Florida formed the Third Military District commanded from Atlanta by General John Pope. During the summer of 1867 the registrars appointed by Pope rapidly carried out the enrollment of voters. The disfranchisement of whites included practically all who had had experience in civil life or held high office in the Confederate

army - an estimated total of 40,000. Reconstruction in Mobile reached nationwide notoriety with the Kelly riot of May 14, 1867 which resulted from an inflammatory speech by a Pennsylvanian, Judge W. D. Kelly, generally known as "Pig-Iron" Kelly (Wiggins, 1970).

In October 1867 elections were held for delegates to a constitutional convention (Rhodes, 1956). Blacks and carpetbaggers dominated and in February 1868 a new constitution was offered for ratification (Schweininger, 1978). Whites won by staying away from the polls and causing the constitution to fail by law, but in spite of this, in June, Congress voted to include Alabama with six other southern states in an act of readmission. In July, General Meade turned Patton out of office and put in his place William H. Smith, the radical governor elect. The radical legislature met, senators and representatives who were all newcomers to the state were elected and admitted to Congress, and the state was again in the Union. There was substantial public reaction expressed in newspapers but no public resistance in the Tombigbee Valley (Folmar, 1975).

From June 1868, to December, 1874, the state was in the hands of a ruling party composed mainly of blacks, with sufficient carpetbaggers and scalawags for leaders and office holders (Wiener, 1975; Hume, 1975; Reid, 1974). The mass of whites had little influence on government which was inefficient and corrupt (Wiggins, 1974). The leaders of the blacks in order to retain their control kept alive the friction between the races, and the whites secured protection by violent methods which caused loss of respect for law (Granade, 1968). The control of local government in the white districts after the first elections in 1868 passed gradually into the hands of the whites, the state government and the Black Belt counties remaining under the control of the radicals. The whites used not only legal means of ousting the latter, but also at times revolutionary and violent methods (Myers, 1970a). The radicals at every election under their control, had used fraudulent methods, and the white man's party in turn used similar methods; the Union League which held the blacks in line, was opposed and broken up by the Ku Klux movement (Sloan, 1965). After the solid ranks of the blacks were broken, the power of the radicals rapidly declined.

The final overthrow of the reconstruction party was accomplished in 1874 when George S. Houston, Democrat, was elected governor (Dyer, 1930; Going, 1951; Wilkinson, 1964). The radicals were soon driven out of the Black Belt counties, their last stronghold, and the Republican party declined in power, and the number of its white members decreased until it became merely an organization to secure Federal offices. A convention met in 1875 at Montgomery to frame a new constitution. The obnoxious features of the Constitution of 1868 were repealed and a constitution adopted that established biennial instead of annual legislatures. Taxation was limited and state and local aid to railroads was forbidden. The mixing of races in schools and by intermarriage, was prohibited by law (Sisk, 1957).

For several years the Democrats devoted their efforts to rooting out the carpetbag officeholders who still had control of the Black Belt (Going, 1951). By skillful gerrymandering all of the congressional districts except one were made safely Democratic. The attitude of the people toward the central government and the nation grew more friendly, though

for several years there was complaint of the annoyances of the deputy marshals and the United States commissioners who were stationed in the state. When it was certain that the whites were again in control of the state political questions became less important and economic problems pressed for solution.

#### THE UNOBSTRUSIVE TOMBIGBEE: DIMINISHED POLITICAL IDENTITY, 1880-1914

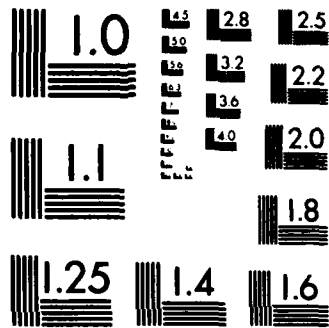
By 1880 the longstanding prominence of the Lower Tombigbee and Alabama River Valleys in the economic and political development of the State had disappeared. Scarcely threatened before the war, the power of the Mobile-Black Belt axis crumbled after 1865 as the depredations of the Federal Government, the machinations of reconstruction, the decline of the cotton economy, and the emergence of mining and industrial interests in other sections, all served to reduce the political power of the Lower Tombigbee region. The area was never again to become the focus of affairs of state as it had been for the most part since the earliest days of European colonization. In 1880, after six years of the new political regime in the state, the permanence of restoration seemed assured, and the state as a whole entered a period of political and economic retrenchment and recuperation (Going, 1951).

The enormous public debt, which was a legacy of the reconstruction period and which from 1874 to 1876 had offered many problems to the committee appointed to deal with it, was adjusted and the state was back in good financial standing. The Republicans retained control of only a few counties in the Black Belt, and in 1880 they placed no state ticket in the field. The Republicans showed very little activity after this until 1888, when they were encouraged to some extent by growing disaffection among the Democrats.

As early as 1886 the solidity of the white voters began to be threatened by the general discontent of the agricultural population. There had been a number of farmer's organizations, such as "granges" and agricultural "wheels" in the state for years (Rogers, 1955; 1959), but in 1886 these were being supplanted by the Farmer's Alliance (Rogers, 1962; 1967). A central state Alliance was organized in 1889, and in the following year there were societies in every county and the organization went actively into politics as a radical faction of the Democratic party (Rodabaugh, 1974). This caused a serious breach in the Democratic ranks; on the one side was a faction with the machinery of the Farmer's Alliance at their command, on the other were the Conservative Democrats with their old leaders and with the support of the regular party organization. As a consequence in 1892 there were two conventions, two platforms, and two tickets, and both factions declared themselves to be the real Democracy (Jones, 1958).

The platform of the Alliance faction was extreme in its advocacy of radical measures, among its demands being the abolition of the national banking system, the expansion of the currency to not less than fifty dollars per capita, the free and unlimited coinage of silver and reform in the methods of taxation, and in the convict lease system (Roberts, 1952). The traditional faction won the election which was contested strongly by





MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART  
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A



the Alliance group to no avail. Because of President Cleveland's sympathies with the conservative faction the Alliance group were even alienated from the national Democratic organization. They then adopted the name of "Jeffersonian Democrats," and on September 15, 1892 met in convention in Birmingham to nominate candidates for Congress and a list of presidential electors. They merged with the smaller Populist party and drafted a platform denouncing the Cleveland administration, demanding free coinage of silver, a currency circulation equal to fifty dollars per capita, an income tax, lower tariff rules, and the abolition of national banks and alien ownership of land (Summersell, 1955; Rodabaugh, 1975; Atkins, 1970b).

Again the Jeffersonians failed to win the elections of both 1892 and 1894 by small margins, and the contests became increasingly bitter and passions on both sides ran higher than at anytime since Reconstruction. After the financial panic of 1895, however, the discontent of the small farmer class, which had made possible the Alliance movement, gradually spread to other classes, and by 1896 had greatly contributed to the creation of a new party alignment. In the period 1894-96 the price of cotton and iron, the staple products of southern and northern Alabama, continually declined; labor was idle, factories and furnaces were shutting down, farmers were heavily in debt and merchants were unable to make their collections. It was inevitable, that the demand of the debtor class for more and cheaper money which had been heard for a number of years should spread rapidly, and Alabama, like the other Southern states, was soon swept with the free silver craze. The conservative element now in the minority hastily accepted the Jeffersonian position. The Populists then aligned with the Republicans.

This shift destroyed any serious challenge by the Populists to Democratic supremacy (Going, 1952). The Populists had been preeminently the party of the small farmer, and its strength had lain in the prejudice of this class against most other classes. The revolt of the mass of people in the state against Grover Cleveland and their enthusiasm for free silver had brought many populists back into the Democratic fold (Roberts, 1952). Moreover the fusion of the Populist and Republican parties was not conducive to the growth of the former because of white prejudices against blacks (Rodabaugh, 1972). The alliance of the People's and Black Man's parties was distasteful to many.

The Populist movement had also encountered an insurmountable obstacle in the Black Belt. Were it not for the heavy Democratic vote polled in this part of the state, Alabama would have been swept by a tide of Populism. In the late sixties and early seventies the Black Belt had been a Republican stronghold. After 1880, the situation was reversed. Twelve Black Belt counties, in 1872, gave a Republican majority of 26,619; in 1892 a Democratic majority of 26,246, and in 1894 of 34,454. In 1892-94 the Populists were successful only where the proportion of black voters was relatively small.

The large Democratic vote in the Black Belt was due chiefly to the influence wielded over the black voter by the dominant white class, the blacks as a rule voting the ticket favored by their employers. Also the manipulation of election returns was almost universal in the Black Belt

while the Jeffersonian movement threatened the supremacy of the region. The Democratic State conventions were usually dominated by the Black Belt men, though the number of real Democrats they represented was small. Moreover during the political ascendancy of the Black Belt, the black population was increasing much more rapidly than the white. In 1900 in the twelve Black Belt counties there were three times as many blacks as whites and between 1890 and 1900 the black population of these counties increased at the rate of 17 percent while the number of whites increased by only about 10 percent.

In 1898 the attention of Alabamians was somewhat diverted by the Spanish American War. There was strong support for the military actions in Cuba in the Lower Tombigbee area, particularly in the business community of Mobile which had longstanding trade ties to the Caribbean. The war was over quickly, however, and domestic concerns again became dominant. The unshakeable political control of the Black Belt exercised through intimidation and fraud led the legislature in 1898-99 to provide legal methods for disfranchisement of blacks (Going, 1952). A special election held in 1901 resulted in a majority for a constitutional convention. The main problem for the convention was to secure disfranchisement on grounds other than those prohibited by the U. S. Constitution, and at the same time to deprive no white man of the ballot. To accomplish this purpose it took advantage of social and economic differences between the races which would permit the exclusion of blacks from the suffrage for reasons other than those of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. The right to vote was made dependent first on long term of residence; secondly, a payment of all poll taxes due from the voter since 1901; thirdly, upon the ability to read and write any part of the Federal Constitution in the English language; and fourthly upon pursuit of some lawful occupation during the greater part of the previous year, or upon ownership of 40 acres of land or three hundred dollars worth of property. These provisions if rigidly enforced would disfranchise nearly every black voter in the state and a great many white voters as well, but the convention fulfilled its promise to disfranchise no white man by adopting temporary "grandfather" or "good character" clauses which gave the right of permanent registration before December 20, 1902 first to soldiers and sailors who had served in the War of 1812 or any subsequent war of the United States, and to their lawful descendants; and secondly to persons who were of good character and understood the duties and obligations of citizenship under republican form of government.

This brought to an end completely the period of reconstruction as reflected in the Constitution of 1875. The denial of the principle of secession, the declaration that all persons born or naturalized in the United States and residing in Alabama were citizens of the State, and the prohibition of educational or property qualifications for the suffrage of office holding did not appear in the new instrument. The effect of the new requirements for voting was readily seen in the following year in the registration of voters; about 2,500 blacks registered in 1902, while the registration of white voters amounted to about 180,000. With the disfranchisement of the blacks the political ascendancy of the Black Belt disappeared. In Montgomery County, the most populous part of the region, only twenty-seven blacks registered in 1902 out of a total black population of about 52,000, and similar proportions were reflected in other Black Belt counties.

The 1901 constitution settled the political order in the State for the remainder of the period to 1945, with the Democratic Party firmly in control and the black vote completely discounted (Doster, 1954a; Jones, 1968; Harris, 1967). In 1906 the primary attention of the state turned to economics when B. B. Comer, the antirailroad and anticorporation candidate, was elected governor and immediately set about regulating the railroads (Doster, 1955, 1957a, b) and improving education. The Alabama Legislature like that of about a score of other states passed laws reducing passenger rates. The State Board of Assessors was created to equalize tax values throughout the state. The assessors, however, never fully succeeded in accomplishing this. The tax laws at that time stated that real estate should be assessed at 60 percent of its real value.

The Education Act of 1907 provided that there should be a high school in each county of Alabama, except in counties which already had a district agricultural school or a normal school (teacher's college). Comer and his supporters in the legislature also passed a law which shifted the state from local option to state wide prohibition. Supporters of prohibition were called "drys" and opponents "wets." There was great dissension in the state on the issue and it cost Comer the election of 1911, when Emmet O'Neal was elected (1911-1915).

The following years found the state preoccupied with the prohibition issue, at the expense of other social problems that needed attention (Smith, 1956). Not only was there a titanic contest between the O'Neal and Comer forces, but the contest between Richmond P. Hobson and Oscar W. Underwood for the U. S. Senate was also a terrific fight between prohibitionists and progressives on one side and conservatives on the other. The senatoral contest was more distinctly between local option and prohibition than was the gubernatorial contest. Underwood, the local option candidate, won. In 1915, the local optionists won the Governor's race when Henderson was elected, but the prohibitionist won control of the legislature. The result was an amalgam of laws including a prohibition law, a primary election law, an education law, a tax revision law, public health laws, a drainage law for the reclamation of overflow lands, and an Act establishing the public service commission.

In 1915 President Woodrow Wilson visited Mobile to attend the Southern Commercial Congress, an international gathering of representatives from Latin America (Sensabaugh, 1953; Roberts, 1965). In the Lyric Theatre in Mobile, Wilson stated his corollary to the Monroe doctrine, that the United States would never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest, thereby establishing a new foreign policy. In 1917 the United States entered World War I and Alabama experienced a surge of patriotic responses as in earlier conflicts. According to Moore (1934), Alabama furnished 95,000 troops and sustained 6,262 casualties. Trade and industry increased in Alabama because of war conditions.

In 1919 Thomas Kilby was elected governor and during his term the first graduated income tax was instituted. Also a severance tax was placed upon all coal mined in Alabama. A workman's compensation law was passed, the State Board of Education was created and a new school code was adopted. A special session of the legislature provided for woman's suffrage after the Nineteenth Amendment was added to the Federal constitution.

During the 1920s and 1930s Alabama's concerns focused on basic social and economic problems. The Graves administration (1927-31) secured a bond issue of 25 million dollars for roads and some 17 million dollars for education with an additional 20 million dollars for school building. During the Miller Administration (1931-35) the State had to grapple with the severe economic problems of the Great Depression. During that period Alabama's relationship to the Federal Government became more important than it had been since Territorial days. The Federal Government fighting the depression, enacted sweeping changes which affected Alabama along with other states. These changes resulting from the "New Deal" have been designated the three 'r's of reform, recovery, and relief (Summersell, 1970), and their standard bearer was Franklin D. Roosevelt who had strong support in Alabama.

During Miller's administration, Alabama had a bitter fight over repeal of the prohibition amendment of the national constitution. At the suggestion of President Roosevelt, the Twenty-first Amendment repealing national prohibition was passed by two-thirds vote of both houses of the national Congress, and then submitted to the states. In Alabama the legislature provided for the election of delegates to a state convention to consider whether Alabama would vote wet or dry on the Twenty-first Amendment. Earlier Alabama votes on prohibition had sometimes been wet and sometimes dry, with the dries winning more elections than the wets. The vote on repeal of prohibition was held July 18, 1933, and the wets won the election. The prohibition issue was finally settled in 1937 when the legislature passed the local option law which allowed each county to decide for itself whether to be wet or dry.

After 1940 the Second World War had a very positive economic impact on Alabama. Several military installations were introduced including Brookley Field at Mobile. Foreign trade through the port of Mobile increased enormously, as did shipbuilding. In February 1941 the Bankhead Tunnel was opened to traffic at Mobile, and while shortage of critical materials put brakes on certain types of improvements, the Alabama economy was perhaps in better shape in 1945 than it had been at any time since 1860.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, 1861-1945

#### INTRODUCTION

Radical changes occurred in the social and economic fabric of the Lower Tombigbee area as a result of the Civil War. During the conflict itself only Mobile and Mobile Bay were involved in military confrontations, but as indicated in Chapter VII economic and financial support of the Confederacy, the supply of men for the southern armies, and the disruption of overseas trade, all placed severe strains on the regional economy. Immediately after the war, manumission of slaves, and the machinations of Reconstruction added to the burdens placed on economic development, and ensured that the post-war period would not be a repeat of the boom times experienced from 1820-1860.

The span from 1860 to 1940 was rather a period of social and economic turbulence with "King Cotton," the boll weevil, railroads, commercial lumbermen, the demagogue, the Ku Klux Klan, the automobile, public schools, share croppers, and outmigrants among the main contributions to the pattern of events. Each of these elements occasioned significant dislocations of people and their lifestyles, and the landscape of the Lower Tombigbee was subjected to a series of adjustments. The nature of these adjustments is the subject of this chapter, with impacts on culture and the economic landscape of the region as the main themes. Among the most useful references on this subject are Newton (1976), Clark (1976), Harper (1920a, b) Kaledin (1980), Owen (1921) Summersell (1949), Clarke County Historical Society (1977), and Ball (1882).

#### POPULATION AND SETTLEMENT

The Civil War brought a grinding halt to the economic and population expansion of the decade 1850-1860. During that period economic growth based on the plantation economy reached its zenith, with a 55% increase in population taking place (9,786 to 15,049) in Clarke County alone (Akins, 1956). At that time immigration continued to provide the main fuel for population expansion with whites and blacks approximately evenly divided in the stream of newcomers. The social structure became increasingly stratified with an elaborate, lavish social lifestyle for the rich upper class, supported by the field and forest labor of the black slaves. In 1860 optimism was abundant in the white community and the social structure appeared secure.

After the North and South separated in 1861 the counties of the Lower Tombigbee became strong supporters of the Confederacy. Voters approved secession by overwhelming margins despite the realization that war might

ensue. Extreme patriotism to the Confederacy existed throughout the Lower Tombigbee region. Statistics show that 1,100 men from Clarke County volunteered to serve in the Confederate army (Flemming, 1905) and similar numbers were provided by other counties. County histories contain extensive records concerning the almost total mobilization of men, livestock, and materials in support of the Confederate cause.

During the war physical destruction in the Lower Tombigbee counties was negligible, but the loss of manpower and livestock were long term impacts which the region did not fully realize until the conflict was over. At that time the true level of destruction created by the war was realized. The entrenched optimism of the late 1850s was replaced by a spreading malaise of anguish and fear produced by material bankruptcy, heavy loss of life among the white population, and emancipation.

The great depreciation of the Confederate currency adversely affected the counties in a profound way. Accumulated wealth disappeared as this money became worthless; and the previously balanced and prospering economic situation underwent an enormous upheaval as debts were paid with meaningless tender (Flemming, 1905a). Those who had prospered before the war to become the region's outstanding citizens - mainly those operating large, successful plantations - emerged afterward with only their property and their implements. The capital needed to build the antebellum economy evaporated making the task of restructuring and rebuilding the counties insuperable (Flynt, 1981).

Not only was the economy in a shambles but the population growth which had been endemic since colonial days, shifted gears and went into reverse. All of the counties in the region experienced an absolute decline in white population during the decade 1860-70. In Clarke County the decline was 7% (7,599 to 7,098) (Table 2). Part of this decrease resulted from deaths in the war. Much was due to emigration from the defeated region as people headed West or even left the country (Flemming, 1905). Most communities stagnated economically and demographically; some declined to the point of abandonment.

At the same time the black population in most counties rose slightly. In Clarke County the black population increased from 7,436 to 7,565 (1.8%) (Table 2). This growth may have several explanations. Fewer blacks were involved in military activities, blacks had a somewhat higher birth rate, and blacks migrated into some counties as they were freed after the war. There was for example some movement away from the Black Belt where land was more expensive, to the Red Hills region of Clarke and Choctaw counties where the poorer land was cheaper and more readily available to blacks (Fisher, 1973; Harper, 1920b). The possibility of a mass turnover of blacks through inflow and outflow seems slim. It is doubtful that the means existed for such a pattern to have occurred among the blacks so soon after the war. Further it has been shown that black migration generally followed a rural to urban trend, not a rural to rural one (Ransom and Sutch, 1977). The majority of blacks appear to have remained in the area which they occupied before the war and adapted themselves to the new circumstances.

After 1810 the population and settlement pattern of the Lower Tom-

TABLE 2

## POPULATION STATISTICS FOR CLARKE COUNTY, 1840-1890\*

	White Males	Females	Total	Colored Free	Slave	Total	Total
1840:	(No Breakdown)		4,589	(No Breakdown)		4,051	8,640
1850:	2,565	2,336	4,901	9	4,876	4,885	9,786
1860:	3,987	3,612	7,599	14	7,436	7,450	15,049
1870:	-	-	7,098	7,565	-	7,565	14,663
1880:	-	-	7,718	10,086	-	10,086	17,804
1890:	4,892	4,793	9,685	12,939	-	12,939	22,624

\*From Kaledin, 1980.

bigbee region gradually stabilized. Population resumed its growth in all sections but at an extremely low rate. Most communities in the early twentieth century had populations of approximately the same size, or less than those which prevailed in 1860. Only Jackson and Mobile of the town network experienced substantial growth and that was primarily related to the expansion of the timber industry after 1880. The coming of the railroads in the 1850s and 1890s shifted the main avenues of trade away from the rivers, causing a decline in settlement around river landings and a concomitant increase in settlement along the railroad tracks.

In the early years of the twentieth century the counties and population of the Lower Tombigbee were still attempting to recover from the Civil War. The region suffered extensively due to the inability to assimilate changes imposed upon it, and remained impoverished until the Second World War. During the 1930s the Lower Tombigbee experienced the additional burden of the 'Great Depression'. This stimulated further out-migration from the region, but the depression's impact was less noticeable in an area already long suffering from deprivation. The main result of the long season of a laggard economy was the changing proportion of whites to blacks in the population. By 1940 blacks comprised a majority of the population in Sumter and Marengo Counties, and were rapidly gaining in Choctaw and Clarke. In a number of places in those counties small communities of blacks had established themselves as distinctive sociocultural units in the postbellum period.

#### RAW MATERIAL RESOURCES

##### Timber

Earlier chapters have shown that the timber industry was a major contributor to the Lower Tombigbee economy throughout the antebellum period, but that industry was mainly restricted to areas immediately adjacent to a major stream. After the war the decline in agricultural production, and the playing out of the northern forests in New England and around the Great Lakes, caused timber to become the main economic factor in regional growth. The immigration of northern timbermen, and the introduction of the logging railroad, stimulated a massive assault on the timber of the inland pine barrens after 1865. Lumbermen rapidly turned much of the area between Mobile and the Black Belt into a cutover wasteland.

Ever multiplying mills produced lumber, squared timbers, shingles, lathes, windows and door sash stock, and fence post and planting. By the 1880s and 1890s the Lower Tombigbee felt the impact of expansion and change taking place in the United States and abroad. Within three decades the section became a major lumber producing area comparable to New England and the Northwest.

Soon after the Civil War most of the eastern stand of virgin timber had been exhausted. Lumbering in the Great Lakes timber belt of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, and Indiana was slackening off because of stand depletion and the slow rate of renewal and growth. In the years 1870 to 1907 the value of southern wood products rose from \$21,269,975 to



\$281,412,340. Aside from sawed lumber and hewn timbers, the Lower Tombigbee became a major source for staves, coopings and headings, turpentine and rosin.

Early in the 1870s the export of timber and lumber from Mobile was ten-million cubic feet and by 1877 the export had increased to thirteen million feet (Hamilton, 1913). In 1881 the export of lumber amounted to eighteen million cubic feet. In 1910 the value of lumber exports was one and a half million dollars (Summersell, 1949).

Exploitation of the areas timber stands came at a time when new inventions and improvements of the milling process occurred. Improved machinery made both logging and milling more efficient operations; this was especially true in sawing, planing, and finishing operations. In the woods the introduction of the new type of broad tired wagon, coupled in tandem units, made logging on sandy and swampy grounds an easier task (Hickman, 1962). None of the new machines however, relieved the demands on human beings for the necessary labor to produce large quantities of lumber. Many skilled timber cutters were brought into the region from the Northeast and Midwest as well as from Central Europe to swell the timber harvest (Clarke County Historical Society, 1977).

While some of the more skilled workers were white, by far the largest number of workers in the forest appear to have been black. Employment of daily wage laborers probably absorbed much of the surplus of cotton field laborers. According to Clark (1976: 27):

Although no dependable statistical source breaks down the racial composition of the logging labor force, 1870 to 1930, it seems reasonable to assume from general contemporary observations that the majority of woods and mill workers were black. The work was hot, humid, dangerous and demanded the ultimate in sheer human physical strength and endurance. A majority of the logging and lumber laborers lived in the woods and mill camps of the crudest type of construction, and which were devoid of any aesthetic qualities. In fact, there have been few comparable American industries which exploited so rich a natural resource and which left behind so few permanent cultural and social landmarks. No inland city of consequence is located on the site of an old logging camp and few mill towns have grown into places of genuine consequence.

By far the largest volume of lumber was produced in large mills located near the courses of heavy tonnage transportation. It was these mills which helped to shape the local social and cultural conditions of the whole region. Lumbering adopted a number of the evils developed by the cotton farming system. Company commissioners with advanced prices and high interest rates replaced the old agricultural furnishing stores. Timber companies generally disregarded much needed social services in the communities tied to them. The industry almost completely ignored the principles of land and forest conservation, generally following a practice of "cut and get out." The clear cutting mode of harvesting caused radical changes in the landscape of the Lower Tombigbee, with wide cutover areas remaining on the land for extended periods of time. According to Clark (1976: 29):

Most of the income from the lumber industry was sent out of the region either in the form of capital, or as raw materials to be processed and sold by foreign dealers. Few or no institutions of a cultural nature profited from the capital gains of the lumber industry before 1929. When the first phase of the of the big lumbering operations drew to a close the coastal region was left with vast stretches of almost worthless cutover lands which promised no immediate future income. The land was now ridiculously cheap in price and the taxes it bore were almost negligible..... The cutover pine barrens had to await the occurrence of a scientific and industrial revolution to make a profitable comeback.

The three elements which led to a revitalization of timber production in the Lower Tombigbee in the 1930s were (1) the discovery of the process by which the high rosin content of southern pine could be neutralized by the sulphite method, (2) the quick expansion of paper mills with their higher level of capital investment and greater promise of community stability and (3) the development of scientific forest management practices promoted by national and state forest services. By 1940 in many parts of the Tombigbee Valley the depredations of the old lumbering system were being corrected. Many timber products were beginning to be shipped from the region as finished or semifinished products, and "cutover land" was being reforested for sustained yield under the ownership and management of large timber corporations.

#### Agriculture

The events of the post-Civil War period had tremendous effects on the pattern of agriculture and particularly on the plantation system (Prunty, 1955). Changes occurred in the size of farms, tenure of farmers, and in emphasis placed on crops and livestock. Plantations generally continued to be held by planter families after the war and the high prices for cotton, generally encouraged planters to reestablish its culture. After initial upheavals there was a gradual return of laborers to the plantations under the wage control system. This practice met with varying success in different localities but in general it was quickly abandoned. There were no solvent banks after the war, the planters were land poor, and it was almost impossible for them to pay a weekly or a monthly wage. Attempts to bind blacks by contract failed because they did not understand contracts and refused to work for yearly wages. The superior profitability of cotton production and the scarcity of labor created higher wages, notably in Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi. This caused some black migration with consequent breaking of contracts. The loss thrown on the planter by crop failures, and the mobility of the workers, resulted in a reduction of yearly wages which ranged from \$100.00 to \$150.00 for men in 1867 to a scale of from \$90.00 to \$110.00 in 1868 (Vance, 1929).

The result was the share system, designed to govern the division of the produce between landlord and tenant (Taylor, 1943). In 1916 the Census Bureau defined a plantation as follows (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1916: 13):

A tenant plantation is a continuous tract of land of considerable area under the general supervision or control of a single individual or firm, all or part of such a tract being divided into at least two smaller tracts, which are leased to tenants. This definition in the first place eliminates from consideration as plantations groups of tenant farms which are not contiguous. In the South as in the North a single individual may own several separate farms, each of which is leased to a tenant, but it is obvious that these holdings taken as a whole, in no sense constitute a plantation. In the second place the tenant plantation as defined by the Census Bureau must be a tract of land of considerable size and containing at least five tenant holdings. It not infrequently happens in the South as elsewhere that a single individual owns a tract of land of moderate size which he leases to two or three different tenants: but to treat such a holding as a plantation would be distinctly contrary to the popular usage of the farm and would serve no particular purpose.

The share given to the landlord ranged from a half to a fourth. If the workers owned no stock or implements, he lived in a house provided by the landlord, worked his farm, paid half the crop expenses as fertilizer and ginning and received half the crop for the labor of himself and his family. The term usually applied to such a farmer was a cropper rather than a tenant and his status was that of "a servant whose wages depend upon the amount of profit." The share tenant owned his mules and implements. He paid a third of the corn and a fourth of the cotton as rent for the land. Another system of payment which developed was called cash or "standing rent." The rental was standing in that a fixed amount was to be paid no matter how much was produced. This usually meant the delivery of cotton amounting to a specified cash value of harvest time. Laborers who had worked up to the level of standing renters owned their animals and work tools (Woofter, 1936).

Introduction of the cash rent and share renting system brought substantial changes in farm tenure in the Lower Tombigbee region. By 1880 about one-third of the farms in the Black Belt counties were being sharecropped, with about one fourth of the farms being sharecropped in other sections of the valley. However, cash renting of farms was important at the time, and probably one-fourth of the farms south of the Black Belt were operated on this basis. According to census figures cash renting was most important in the Black Belt counties. About half the farms outside the Black Belt were still cultivated by owners although the proportion varied from place to place. While no detailed evidence is available for the Lower Tombigbee Valley relating the physical structure of cash rent or share cropping systems, soil survey maps of the early 1900s indicate that the general models of these systems outlined by Prunty (1955) are probably applicable to the area.

The variations in tenure and production in different areas of Alabama after the war were noted by Eugene Allen Smith in his Report on Cotton Production of Alabama. According to Smith (1880, 65):

...the following conclusions seem therefore to be plainly taught by the discussion of the data contained in the tables presented...

1. That where the blacks are in excess of the whites there are the originally most fertile lands of the state. The natural advantages of the soil, are however, more than counterbalanced by the bad system prevailing in such sections, viz., large farms rented out in patches to laborers who are too poor and too much in debt to merchants to have any interest in keeping up the fertility of the soil or rather the ability to keep it up, with the natural consequences of its rapid exhaustion and a product per acre on these, the best lands of the state, lower than that which is realized from the very poorest.

2. Where the two races are in nearly equal proportions, or where the whites are in only slight excess over the blacks as is the case in all the sections where the soils are of average fertility, there is found the system of small farms worked generally by the owners, a consequently better cultivation, a more general use of commercial fertilizers, a correspondingly high product per acre, and a partial maintenance of the fertility of the soils.

3. Where the whites are greatly in excess of the blacks (three to one and above), the soils are almost certain to be below the averages in fertility, and the product per acre is low from this cause, notwithstanding the redeeming influences of a comparatively rational system of cultivation.

4. The exceptions to these general rules are nearly always due to local causes which are not far to seek and which afford generally a satisfactory explanation of the discrepancies.

Clarke County provides an excellent example of agricultural production trends during the post war period (Kaledin, 1980). In 1870 that county produced only one third of the cotton grown in 1860, and the figure of 5,700 bales was just slightly above the 1850 level (Table 3). Peas and beans, potato and corn production in 1870 all fell well below the 1850 outputs and did not approach 1860 figures. Since the total population remained fairly stable from 1860-1870 (15,000 to 14,660), Clarke County residents subsisted on a much smaller per capita agricultural production. Over the decade 1860-1870, 150 of Clarke's 901 farms failed and 174,000 acres of previously designated farmland went unclaimed. This included fairly substantial amounts of both tilled and untilled acreage. The number of acres of improved land declined from 99,000 in 1860 to 61,000 in 1870 (Table 4). Since these 61,000 improved acres were 13,000 more than had existed in 1850 while crop production was below the level of that year, it is clear that farming efficiency had disintegrated. More tilled land was turning out smaller crops.

Clarke's most staggering post war statistic is that concerning the value of her farms. Farms in 1860 were worth \$3,400,000 but by 1870 after five years of war and following a decade of enormous economic and social turbulence total farm value was only \$180,000 (Table 5). The county's wealth and general well being had been completely obliterated, and many people were characterized by "apparent hopelessness for working up again in life." (Ball, 1882: 295). Clarke like the other counties of the region

TABLE 3

SELECT CROP PRODUCTION STATISTICS FOR  
CLARKE COUNTY, 1850-1880\*

	1850	1860	1870	1880
Rye and Oats (Bushels)	21,000	3,000	500	Not Rec.
Peas and Beans (Bushels)	10,000	19,000	200	Not Rec.
Rice (Pounds)	31,000	10,000	Not Rec.	10,000
Corn (Bushels)	330,000	516,000	227,000	313,000
Potatoes (Bushels)	109,000	156,000	50,000	98,000
Cotton (Bales)	5,000	16,200	5,700	11,100

\*From Kaledin, 1980

TABLE 4  
 NUMBER OF FARMS AND IMPROVED-UNIMPROVED  
 ACREAGE, CLARKE COUNTY 1850-1890\*

	Number	Improved	Unimproved	Total
1850	456	48,000	163,000	211.0
1860	901	99,000	446,000	545.0
1870	765	61,000	310,000	371.0
1880	2,594	83,000	346,000	429.0
1890	3,357	127,000	389,000	516.0

\*From Kaledin, 1980.

TABLE 5

TOTAL VALUE OF FARMS IN  
CLARKE COUNTY, 1850-1890\*

1850	\$750,000
1860	\$3,400,000
1870	\$180,000
1880	\$1,000,000
1890	\$1,700,000

\*From Kaledin, 1980.

experienced an agricultural depression after 1870 produced by a combination of factors. A reduction in utilized land from 99,000 to 61,000 acres resulted from the loss in number of farms and from the decline in available manpower. Land went uncultivated "for want of labor" as blacks either withdrew or worked at their own pace and white farms stood deserted, testimony of the death, bankruptcy, and emigration resulting from the war (Ransom and Sutch, 1977). Decreased land utilization in turn helped nurture a spectacular depreciation of the counties farm values, as its conjunction with the new smaller labor force left previously farmed land available without the manpower, cash or implements to capitalize upon it. As a direct consequence, property was extremely cheap and prices plummeted. These factors combined to destroy all semblance of a well functioning agricultural environment. Agricultural production languished in the Lower Tombigbee region until the 1930s (Tower, 1948). The exceptions occurred in Mobile and Baldwin Counties, where the production of fruits and vegetables expanded over the period to serve Mobile and northern markets (Mobile Daily Register, Sept. 1, 1880). Most of this production occurred to the south of Mobile, however, and did not impact the BWT corridor (Comings and Albers, 1969; Nuzum, 1970).

### INDUSTRY

Industrial activities were only a small element in the Lower Tombigbee economy during the period 1861-1940. Most industrial operations were related to agricultural and timber production in the region, with others related to the maritime and river trade. Some discussion of industries connected to timber production has occurred in the preceding section, but more deserves to be said because of the relative prominence of this industry during the period.

#### Agricultural Processing

A variety of light industries related to agricultural productivity developed in the Lower Tombigbee during the late nineteenth century. Among them were cotton ginning and compressing, cotton spinning, cotton oil production, corn and wheat grinding, tanning, and fertilizer production. After the war with the decline of the plantation economy a number of traditional plantation operations became freestanding industries in their own right. This was particularly the case with cotton ginning. The emancipation of slaves and the institution of the sharecropping and renting systems made the carefully supervised operation of the plantation ginning process infeasible (Aiken, 1973).

Immediately after the Civil War large public gin plants were recommended by the Federal government. In the 1866 "Report of the United States Commissioner of Agriculture" (U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1867) one writer commented:

Another radical modification of the former (prewar plantation) system, which ought to be made immediately, and which would give to cotton growing an impetus which it could derive from no other source, is the building of neighborhood gin houses in well chosen locations, so as to be central to large farming



communities. These mills should be propelled by steam and furnished with the best apparatus for ginning and baling cotton, and also for extracting oil from cotton seed. The existence of such a mill within the distance of five miles would be a strong inducement to the small farmer and the poor immigrant from the northern states or from Europe, to engage at once in the planting of cotton.

Such public gins operated by steam power became commonplace throughout the Lower Tombigbee Valley after 1870. Their numbers and location reflected the significance of cotton in the local economy. They were most numerous in the Black Belt counties and in northern Clarke and Choctaw. They declined in number along the lower reaches of the river. Frequently cotton ginning operations were combined with saw milling or grain grinding operations which could make use of the same source of motive power. Gins tended to be located at transportation access points such as crossroads or agricultural areas or at towns or landings on the rivers or railroads such as Demopolis, Jackson. Cotton ginning declined as an industry in the early twentieth century as the production of cotton decreased. One of the greatest deficiencies of cotton as a commodity in the early years of the century was its great bulk compared to weight. While manual and animal power was used from the beginning to compact cotton on the plantation, and large screw type compresses were common on plantations by the Civil War, it was the advent of the steam driven compress which most facilitated the reduction of cotton bulk. The steam compress had a processing rate considerably greater than that of the gin and as a result fewer were needed. This resulted in larger service territories with compresses usually being found in urban centers. Frequently they were situated adjacent to the railroad tracks where their product could be loaded directly into the cars for transshipment. Such was the case at Demopolis and Mobile. Frequently cotton compresses were found in association with cotton gins or cotton oil mills (Shue, 1904) and were operated by common owners.

The character of grist milling also changed after 1860. With the introduction of the steam engine the production, capability and reliability of milling was enhanced with the result that steam mills spread rapidly. Steam mills were virtually unrestricted in their choice of location if wood was available for fuel. Consequently steam mills were built in a variety of sites both urban and rural, usually away from major stream courses. With the reduction in cereal production in most counties, however, and the increasing reliance on foodstuffs from outside the region after 1890, the number and importance of cereal mills in the region declined rapidly.

During the postwar period the prewar pattern of scattered rurally based light industries was changed to a significant degree as processing plants became larger and tended to concentrate because of economies of scale in larger urban centers. Mobile was the major regional beneficiary of this trend. Ninety-one separate manufacturing establishments were reported in Mobile in the 1880 census, with a total capital investment of \$525,708.00. This was a strong contrast to other smaller communities in the valley. The average number of hands employed in industry in Mobile in 1880 was 704 with total wages of \$261,643.00. The products were valued at

\$1,335,579.00. The largest industry was that of flouring and grist milling. Two cotton mills which had been built were said to be doing well and a third was reported nearing completion (Berkstresser, 1951).

### Timber Processing

Prior to 1860 most of the early lumbering operations were located at the head of Mobile Bay, and the logs to supply these early mills were rafted down the river, cut into lumber and then either exported or shipped back up river via flatboats for use in construction. After 1870 with the expansion of the railroads and logging railroads sawmills and planing mills began to spread over a much wider radius. These operations varied greatly in size and their locational stability tended to reflect the amount of invested capital and the size of the forested areas from which they derived their raw material. The peak period for development of lumber mills north of the Tombigbee-Alabama junction appears to have been from 1890-1930. The larger mills remained concentrated around the Mobile area (Anonymous, 1893).

By 1870 the production of naval stores in south Alabama had increased to 8,200 casks of turpentine and 53,175 barrels of rosin valued at \$280,203. In 1873 the receipts of the market in Mobile had doubled amounting to nearly 20,000 casks of spirits of turpentine and to from 75,000 to 100,000 barrels of rosin besides 1,000 barrels of tar and pitch of a total value of \$750,000. The largest production was reached in 1875 when the receipts reached a value of \$1,200,000. After 1888 a steady decline in naval stores production took place due to declining demand and increasing remoteness of raw material supplies (Stauffer, 1958).

Records indicate that the first paper mill in the Gulf region may have been built on Three Mile Creek near Mobile in 1856 (Roller, 1959). This mill may also have been the predecessor of the Gulf Paper Mill Company plant built about 1917 on Three Mile Creek, generally recognized to be the first paper mill in the State of Alabama. The Gulf Paper Mill Company of three Mile Creek, after its establishment in 1917, operated periodically. International Paper Company's mill at Mobile is the oldest continuous operation in southwest Alabama. The mill was built in 1929 and it has been expanded and modernized continually since. Another early paper mill in the region was the Hollingsworth and Whitney Division of the Scott Paper Company, built in 1940.

The chief contribution of the pulp and paper corporations to the region in the period 1920-1940 was to provide a market for trees which were formerly not able to be removed from a stand economically. Also the pulp and paper mills were long term investments providing a stable employment base for local population, unlike the smaller sawmills which migrated with the available timber reserves. However, the pulp and paper industry was only in its infancy in the Lower Tombigbee in 1940, and the very large contemporary mills such as the Gulf States Paper Plant at Demopolis did not emerge until after the Second World War.

## Boatbuilding

Boat construction along the Lower Tombigbee had been important since the 1820s and the industry continued to play a prominent role after 1860. During the war a number of boats were built and repaired in and around Mobile and at sites on the Mobile and Tensaw Rivers. Also a Confederate naval yard was established at Oven Bluff on the Tombigbee River south of Jackson, although the actual number of craft produced appears not to have been recorded (Still, 1965).

After the war shipbuilding was primarily confined to the environs of Mobile. Sixty-two vessels were constructed there in the 1880s for either the river, coastal, or overseas trade (Berkstresser, 1951). Production levels fluctuated from time to time but shipbuilding and associated industries continued to be important in the Mobile area economy down to the Second World War when shipbuilding was greatly stimulated in response to military needs.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Roads and Bridges

The latter half of the nineteenth century saw little progress made in the Lower Tombigbee area in the way of road improvement and highway expansion. Virtually all development was in the hands of individual counties and they were generally in dire financial circumstances due to the general state of the economy. Also river and rail facilities provided better alternatives for long distance transportation reducing pressure for improved roads. Following the Reconstruction period roads were further neglected due to an express stipulation in the Constitution of 1875 which forbade the state to engage in works of internal improvement, or to lend its money or credit in aid of such works (Cooke, 1935). This fundamental law was reiterated in the Constitution of 1901. Not until 1907 was it perceived that only under the State authority could best progress be made in road development.

Population was scattered in the Lower Tombigbee region and traffic on the roads was generally light. Since the population was scattered, and nucleated settlements were rarely larger than villages, travel was limited. The movement of staples, primarily cotton and timber, was seasonal, and so was wagon traffic. Capital, long invested in slave labor, continued to be applied toward agriculture and lumbering. There was no ready supply of labor for the roads, such as was furnished by immigrants in the north. More generally local individualism and conservatism operated to keep the joint undertakings and new enterprises necessary for the extension of an efficient road system to a minimum.

The cotton economy contributed significantly to unimproved road conditions in the region. Cotton producers harvested and marketed their crops in the fall when there was little other demand for labor and wagons. The crop was not affected by long distance transport over bad roads, and the time of travel was not important because activities on the farm were slack after the completion of the cotton picking. Therefore improved

roads in the opinion of the cotton producers were a smaller consideration than the cost of building and maintaining them. It is not surprising then that what improved roads, public and toll, there were originally were allowed to decay for lack of interest in them (Phillips, 1908).

Acts of the legislature during the later part of the nineteenth century show an abundance of attention given to local and county roads, and a dearth of effort on through routes. In 1859 an act reiterating in part previous legislation, provided for the establishment of public roads by the County Courts of Commissioners. Any person could file a petition with the proper county court for a public road, stating the length, width, points, and directions of the desired road, and the names of the owners of lands over which it passed. In 1861 an act provided that private roads could be established by the county courts on the application of any person, which roads were not to exceed fifteen feet in width and were to be opened and maintained by the applicants without exemption from their regular road duty.

There were similar pieces of legislation but nothing of real significance until the State Highway Department was established in 1911. This development was followed by the passage of the Federal Highway Act of 1916 which used the dollar matching principle to promote road construction. In the 1920s and 1930s the "farm to market" road movement stimulated a limited amount of road improvement, and the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s was active in road construction. In 1940 the roads of the Lower Tombigbee region were still almost entirely dirt roads of local function.

There were some exceptions. The first long road in Alabama to be hard surfaced was the Bee Line Highway (U. S. 31) running through Birmingham and Montgomery to Mobile (Summersell, 1949). The Dixie Overland Highway, a pioneering project to establish an all year round automobile route from the Pacific to the Atlantic, used the "Wire Road" route crossing the Tombigbee to the west of Demopolis after 1918. Efforts associated with this road raised funds in a unique fashion for the "Rooster Bridge" over the Tombigbee near Moscow Landing. (Henderson, 1972; Brannon, 1932). During the period before 1940 the Cochrane Bridge (1927) was built across the Mobile River, the Tensaw-Spanish River Bridge (1927) was completed and the Bankhead tunnel facilitated communications between the east and west bank of the bay.

### Railroads

As indicated in Chapter VI railroad construction had barely begun in the Lower Tombigbee valley before 1860. After the war, however, as throughout the south railroad growth occurred at a rapid rate. Most prewar railroad companies emerged from the war burdened with heavy debt. At the same time commercial activity entered a period of deflation which severely impacted railroad revenues. To solve their financial woes the railroads needed more traffic at higher rates but both were difficult to obtain in the impoverished economy. For most companies the only feasible alternative lay in securing more through traffic to supplement local income.

After 1865 three main tactics were adopted to increase traffic:

cooperation, construction and consolidation. Their use depended on individual circumstances but most companies became involved at some time with all three. Employment of any of these involved increased competition with other lines. A direct result of this competition was the financial failure of many companies, which were then purchased cheaply by their competitors or by northern capital, which was more readily available. Most particularly there was a rapid expansion and consolidation of corporations in the 1880s and 1890s which provided a few large integrated railroad systems controlling massive trade territories. These systems evolved not from coherent economic and geographic planning, but through a process of piecemeal expansion based upon monetary needs and the potential profits of monopoly. The traditional interests of the regional ports including Mobile were submerged by the interests of corporations based outside the area (Weaver and Doster, 1982).

For example in 1880 four main railroad lines were connected with Mobile. Of these, the Mobile and Ohio, Mobile's own road which remained independent, was said to serve the city "above that of any other place" (Doster, 1955). The line connected Mobile and Columbus, Kentucky by 472 miles of rail (Lemly, 1953). Although the president, William Butler Duncan was a New Yorker, the vice president and most other directors lived in Mobile in 1880. In 1890 eight of the directors were listed as New Yorkers, one was from Chicago, one from Savannah, while only three were from Mobile (Berkstresser, 1951).

In 1875 the Louisville and Nashville Railroad acquired control of the New Orleans and Mobile line (Owen, 1921) and in 1881 concluded a 50 years lease of the property. The policy of extension was continued when the Louisville and Nashville obtained possession of the Mobile and Montgomery Railroad (Owen, 1921). The first reaction of the Mobile press was to express pleasure over the transactions and the Mobile Register (February 28, 1880) stated that the "union of the lines could render the connections more orderly and would result in diminishing rather than increasing cost of transportation." It quickly became apparent that the main effect of the combination could be increasingly to deflect shipping from Mobile to the ports of Pensacola and New Orleans where better harbor facilities made expensive transfer by lighters unnecessary.

Late in 1889 the Mobile Register (December 8, 1899) was cynical concerning the wisdom of the managers of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad in offering liberal rates to the Export Coal company to the port of Pensacola rather than to Mobile which was the nearer port. It was stated that Mobile had the same freight rates as Pensacola and had three rail connections with Birmingham, whereas Pensacola only had one. The Mobile and Alabama Grand Trunk Railway operated a line connecting the 59.25 miles between Mobile and Bigbee Bridge in 1880, but was in default (Owen, 1921). In 1885 it was reorganized as the Mobile and West Alabama Railroad which was almost immediately absorbed into the Mobile and Birmingham Railway, and then into the vast East Tennessee, Virginia System. (Stover, 1955). Again Mobile was disappointed in the arrangement.

Attempts were made to build the Mobile, Hattiesburg, and Jackson Railroad after 1889 but without much success (Berkstresser, 1951). A more successful effort was the consolidation on May 1, 1913 of the Tombig-

bee Valley Railroad Company, organized March 1, 1904; The Alabama, Tennessee, and Northern Railroad Company, organized September 1906; and the Mobile Terminal and Railway Company organized September, 1910. The new line known as the Alabama, Tennessee, and Northern Railway Company extended from Nanahubba to Reform in Pickens County, with trackage rights over the Southern Railroad (successor to the East Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia Railway) from Calvert to Mobile (34 miles) (Owen, 1921). The only railroads built across the northern part of the BWT corridor never carried much traffic. The Alabama and Mississippi Rivers Railroad chartered in 1850, was renamed in 1861 the Selma and Gulf Railroad Company and in 1864 the Selma and Meridian Railroad Company. The road which crossed the Tombigbee at Demopolis suffered like all others from the devastation of the War. In 1882 it was transferred to the East Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia Railroad Company (Owen, 1921). The Frisco (now Burlington Northern) line from Amory Mississippi to Pensacola was built in the late 1920s, and passed through Demopolis before branching towards the East and South.

The development of the lines from Mobile to Montgomery, Selma, and Reform in particular had a pronounced effect on the settlement pattern of the Lower Tombigbee region, especially south of Jackson. Their installation caused radical adjustments in traffic patterns with major shifts from the river to the railroads. Rail lines rather than roads and streams became prime locations for urban and rural settlement activities. Urban centers were fostered by the railroads because of the commodity trade, rural settlers gravitated towards the railroad as a means of all weather transportation. The flagstop became an important element of rural life after the advent of the railroad, providing daily opportunity for communication by rural communities with the outside world.

#### Logging Railroads

Logging railroads were a mode of transportation of extreme prominence in the Lower Tombigbee Valley after 1860. As the forests of the river bottoms and adjacent terraces were rapidly exhausted during the 1850s many experiments were conducted in Alabama with crude logging "railroads" built of wooden rails fastened to crossties by means of pegs or iron spikes. Another type was the pole road, made of peeled logs placed side by side and pegged to the ground. The construction cost of such a road was from \$25 to \$100 a mile on comparatively level areas. Animal power then steam power was used to move cars on such roads.

The steam pole road locomotive was constructed so that each wheel had play in the spindle which allowed it to accommodate irregularities in the track. These small locomotives could pull 500 tons on a level track and up to 100 tons on grades of 65 feet per mile. A locomotive could deliver logs to the mills at a cost of sixteen cents to twenty cents each for distances up to five miles. By contrast the estimated cost per log to haul logs two miles by oxen was sixty-five cents (Massey, 1961).

From the 1890s the crude pole roads were replaced for the most part by narrow-gauge iron-railroads. It was not unusual for a large sawmill to own and operate an extensive system. The railroads were usually three feet wide and made of light secondhand rails. The locomotive and other

equipment were usually bought from large commercial companies. In fact the commercial railroads realizing their ultimate advantage did much to help the lumber companies build their logging roads. Most roads were laid over rough grading and were taken up and moved frequently as timber around the tracks was worked out.

The introduction of logging railroads changed lumbering operations considerably through out the region. The most obvious change was in the size of operation. Construction was so costly that only large, well financed companies could afford to build and operate private roads, using steel rails. In spite of the high cost of construction, however, there were according to Harper (1913a) 751 miles of private logging railroads in Alabama south of the fall line in 1910. The interesting differentiation by physiographic division can be seen from the fact that the Central Pine Belt had 165 miles, the Black Belt 2 miles, the Chunnennuggee Belt, 9 miles, Post Oak Flatwoods 30 miles, the Southern Red Hills, 14 miles, the Lime Sink region 7 miles, and the Southwestern Pine Hills 424 miles (Harper, 1913a). The rule of thumb was that at least one million board feet of lumber had to be cut per mile of railroad each year in order for the line to pay for itself. According to Massey (1961: 50):

The logging railroads gave the large, integrated lumber companies a distinct advantage over the small independent mills and tended to make the latter commercially negligible. This advantage, however, was for a relatively short time. By the end of World War I the inexpensive and efficient internal combustion engine had given new life to the portable or 'peckerwood' saw-mill and the motor truck and tractor soon began to replace the logging railroads.

#### RIVERS

The Tombigbee River below Demopolis continued to be a major artery of transportation after the war, although the gradual decline of the cotton economy, and additional competition from the railroads, ensured that the halcyon days from 1840-1860 would never be repeated. An indication of the continued importance of shipping on the river in the later part of the nineteenth century is provided by the fact that there were some 190 landings between Demopolis and Mobile in the 1870s and 1880s. For the year ending June 30, 1878, exports through the port of Mobile and were valued at \$9,126,000 yearly, largely in cotton and timber, while imports amounted to \$1,148,000 (Richardson, 1954). The major factor influencing both imports and exports was river traffic.

The city of Mobile in particular was fully aware of the importance of river navigation to the region's economic prosperity, and the city consistently worked to gain river and harbor improvements. Mobile's recovery from the post-Reconstruction depression can largely be measured by the deepening of her harbor channel (Delaney, 1953). Originally only five and a half feet deep through Choctaw Pass the harbor had been progressively improved at the expense of the Federal government since 1826. In 1857 the channel was increased to a depth of 10 feet through the shoals and up to the city of Mobile. An 1870 appropriation resulted in an in-

crease to 13 foot depth and to a variation in width from 200 feet at Dog River Bar to 300 feet at Choctaw Pass. Between 1880 and 1886 a project to make the existing channel 17 feet deep and 200 feet wide was completed (Berkstresser, 1951: 113). Government appropriations for the river and harbor system were only gained through strenuous lobbying efforts by Mobile businessman (Craighead, 1930). A convention held in Tuscaloosa in 1885 for the purpose of furthering Alabama's interests with regard to river and harbor improvements was dominated by Mobile delegates.

By the rivers and Harbor Act of August 1888 a project for securing a channel 23 feet deep and 280 feet wide was approved by Congress. Most Mobilians had never seen a seagoing steamship until this project was completed. Even with these improvements harbor and river traffic was not guaranteed. Before 1890 according to Summersell (1949: 49):

Mobilians faced many difficult problems connected with the decline of cotton receipts which spelled the decline of Mobile as a river port and seaport. These problems were as follows: (1) obstruction of the river system (2) a shallow ship channel (3) unfair railroad practices (4) railroad shipment of cotton to New England mills by more direct routes (5) in cotton shipments railroad preference for New Orleans, Pensacola, Charleston, and Savannah.

The greatest boost to the traffic of the Lower Tombigbee was provided when the first project for its improvement was authorized by Congress on March 3, 1875, and the first three locks and dams were built on the Warrior River between Eutaw and Tuscaloosa in 1895. The initial phase of the channelization program continued through 1915 when the United States Corps of Engineers completed the last of 17 locks and dams on the waterway (4 between Jackson and Demopolis) at a total cost of \$9,100,000. Five of the installations were of concrete construction, the other twelve were timber (Richardson, 1954). The dams extended river transportation 387 miles above Mobile (Moore, 1934). On July 15, 1915 the first barge of Warrior Coal was unloaded at Mobile (Mobile Register, September 1, 1915). After that date coal rapidly developed as the major commodity of trade on the Lower Tombigbee, supplanting cotton and timber, and the focus of trade shifted from the Lower River to the Warrior. Commercial steamboats continued to operate on the river until the 1920s but their numbers were gradually depleted. By the 1880s there were only two packet lines serving points on the Lower Tombigbee (Berkstresser, 1951).

#### TOWNS

Town development in the Lower Tombigbee region in the late nineteenth century was also a casualty of the depressed economy. There was virtually no urban growth along the corridor after 1860 except at two points, Jackson and Mobile, and even there growth lagged for many years after the war. In the smaller river communities such as Coffeetown, Tuscahoma, or Moscow there was either stagnation or decline, as the cotton traffic subsided and the timber industry moved inland.

Despite the losses of Reconstruction which were more costly in Mobile



than the losses due directly to the war, some evidence of economic progress was apparent from 1865 to 1878. In 1869-1870 the city acquired title to a third of a mile of riverfront and was able to set wharf charges, a considerable economic asset for the future (Hamilton, 1913). The lumber trade of the city continued to expand but the cotton business receded. In 1878 the number of cotton bales received was 419,071. Two years later the number had decreased to 392,319 bales, and by 1887 to 216,142 bales whereas in 1860 receipts had numbered 842,729 bales. The modest increase in the lumber trade, the establishment of two cotton mills and the emergence of vegetable farming on a commercial scale during this period were far short of compensating for the decline in the cotton business (Hamilton, 1913). Mobile's total exports in 1878 were valued at \$9,000,000, but decreased to \$3,000,000 in 1882. The value of imports was \$1,000,000 in 1873 but decreased to \$400,000 in 1882.

Out migration between 1878 and 1885 caused Mobile's population to decline. The Federal census listed the population as 32,034 in 1870 and 29,132 in 1880, a decrease of 9.1 per cent. This put Mobile County in first place in the state in percentage of foreign born and far ahead of neighboring Baldwin County with 2.58 per cent. In 1890 the total population of the city was 31,076, which was 6.7 per cent more than in 1880, but 958 fewer persons than the city contained in 1870. The year 1880 marked the first time a Federal census had shown any decline in Mobile's population (Summersell, 1949).

Between 1890 and 1930 the population of Mobile doubled in spite of some fluctuations in the regional economy. The population of the city was 62,201 in 1930, including 24,514 blacks. The decennial increase for the whole population was 12.2 per cent and for blacks only 2.5 per cent. The 1940 census reported a total of 78,720, a decennial increase of 15.4 per cent. Among the larger boosts to Mobile's development during the period 1890-1940 were the opening of the Panama Canal, the institution of the banana trade, the opening of the Warrior-Tombigbee lock system, and the expansion of the shipbuilding industry.

In 1923 the State of Alabama began the major State Docks undertaking (Moore, 1934). Ten million dollars were raised for the central warehouses and docks by the sale of State "Harbor and Improvement Bonds" and a State Docks Commission was set up to administer the new venture. By 1929 the port of Mobile had 50 facilities for the purpose of loading and unloading ship's cargoes. Thirty-two piers and wharves were connected directly with the railroads and four railroads owned piers and wharves. The most important privately owned piers were those of the Turner Terminal Company. The two publicly owned terminals were the Municipal Wharf and the State Docks. In 1937 the city commission authorized the lease of the city wharf property to the State Docks Commission (Summersell, 1949).

Jackson, was the Lower Tombigbee Valley's second town in importance in the period after the Civil War. It took on a new life with the coming of the Mobile and Birmingham railroad in 1886-1887 (Clarke County Historical Society, 1977). In 1896 the town newspapers stated that: "Jackson is booming and real estate owners are getting their land in shape to be sold in small lots. New residences are being built and more industry is locating in the town." Most of the new industry was related to timber opera-

tions. With the advent of the railroad sawmills and planer mills began to appear frequently around Jackson. In 1895 an application was filed to incorporate the Bigbee River Mill Company. In 1898 the mill bought a large tract of timber on the west side of the river and constructed a railroad to haul the logs from the woods and dump them in the river to be floated across to the mill. In 1896, J. M. Crowder of Birmingham purchased ten acres of land from Isham Kimbell's heirs and began construction of a hardwood sawmill valued at approximately \$40,000.00. This mill was located on the river between the warehouse (ferry) and the railroad bridge. In 1898 the C. W. Zimmerman Manufacturing Company was established by a Michigan lumberman of the name. The mill was where the present Jackson Sawmill Company is located. A railroad dummy line was built from the mill north through the company land. Logging camps consisted of railroad cars used as living quarters for the employees and a kitchen, a commissary, and a machine shop. Railroad spurs were used to move logs to the railroad. When an area had been "logged out" all the camp cars and equipment would be put on the main line and moved northward, and another logging camp would be established (Clarke County Historical Society, 1976).

Other businesses in and around Jackson included Bolen Brothers who operated a general store and a sawmill. The firm also operated a cotton gin located adjacent to the sawmill. The gin was equipped with a small steam boiler and its own steam engine. Bolen brothers floated most of their cut lumber down river to Mobile, using what was called a "float road" to get the timbers to the river. They cut a wide road through the swamp close to the creek: then when the high waters came and were deep enough in the swamp they had a clearly defined road that they used to float the timbers straight through to the river and then on to Mobile (Clarke County Historical Society, 1976). Other sawmills included McGowin and Hayton, M. W. Smith, McCorquodale Brothers, and the Jackson Sawmill Company. In 1899 the local newspaper noted that Jackson had sixteen stores, whereas ten years earlier (1889), there were only four stores. There were over eight hundred inhabitants in 1899 compared to two hundred and fifty in 1859. Jackson prospered until the timber industry decline of the 1920s (Clarke County Historical Society, 1976).

For the most part, the remaining small communities of the valley were notable for their lack of development during the period. They generally marked time, and suffered outmigration, as the river economy receded. Limited information on the small communities is found in "Historical Sketches of Clarke County" (Clarke County Historical Society, 1976), in "Alokoli: The Choctaw County Bicentennial Book" (Choctaw County Commission, 1976), and in "History of Baldwin County" (Nuzum, 1970). The later history of Fort Stoddert and Mt. Vernon are found in Brannon (1928).

In September of 1873, General Irwin McDowell recommended the conversion of the Mt. Vernon arsenal into an expanded barracks. When this was done the Mobile garrison was moved upriver to Mt. Vernon as a healthier post. By an act of Congress, approved March 1, 1895, the United States relinquished to the State of Alabama the entire reservation and all material improvements. During the 1880s, the Apache Indians with their leader Geronimo were incarcerated at Mt. Vernon. In 1894 due to the pending transfer of the installation to Alabama the Apaches were transferred to Fort Sill in the Indian Territory. Following the transfer of the barracks

to the State of Alabama the legislature on December 11, 1900 incorporated the Alabama Insane Hospitals and set up Mt. Vernon to house the Negro insane. It remained in this use to the end of the period (Brannon, 1928).

## CHAPTER IX

### GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW OF THE SETTLEMENT PATTERN

The foregoing chapters have emphasized the sequence of events impacting the Lower Tombigbee Valley over the period 1500-1940. While the temporal aspects of such events are important to an understanding of the cultural character of the region, the significance of particular types of cultural resources cannot be fully understood without reference to the spatial dimensions of these events and their expressions in the material landscape. The concern of this concluding chapter is to view the settlement process in the Lower Tombigbee Valley from the geographic perspective, a viewpoint which focuses on spatial patterns, man-environment relationships, and areal functions.

The primary focus of discussion will be on spatial regularities (commonly occurring landscape features of similar form and arrangement) and functional interrelationships of settlement activities through time. An attempt will be made to assess degrees of similarity or distinctiveness occurring within the region from place to place and from time to time. The main goal of the discussion is to establish certain general principles which characterize the evolution of the settlement pattern and the material culture. These statements of general principles can be considered to be "models" of specific facets of the development process.

The "models" proposed should be viewed as preliminary explanations of the cultural landscape of the valley. They are working concepts based upon evidence accumulated from published books and papers, from maps and aerial photographs, and from published and unpublished documentary sources. They are abstractions produced through analysis of the general historic record for the region. Such models can only be affirmed by substantial detailed analysis of local cases/sites in the area, a task beyond the scope of this study. Basic to an understanding of the quality of the cultural landscape, in this as in all regions, is the nature of the physical environment.

#### PHYSIOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE

As indicated in Chapter I the Lower Tombigbee area is composed of seven major separate and distinct physiographic regions. They are the Black Prairies, Chunnennuggee Ridge, Flatwoods, Southern Red Hills, Southern Limestone Hills, Rolling Piney Woods, and the Coastal Strip. Each of these physiographic regions exerted differing environmental influences on settlement, particularly through the quality of their topography, soils, and vegetation. A brief reference to the general character of each of these regions appears to be a necessary prelude to further discussion of the settlement pattern.

## Black Prairies

The Black Prairie region extends, with a general width of some 20-25 miles, from near the Georgia border to northeast Mississippi. In Alabama it is known as the Black Belt (Cleland, 1920). The name 'Black' is derived from the deep black residual soil formed on the Selma Chalk. It is a lowland of minor relief, with an altitude in central and western Alabama of little more than 200 feet between streams.

The only permanent streams are the large through flowing rivers such as the Black Warrior and the Tombigbee which have incised their valleys beneath the plain to a maximum depth of 60 feet. These incisions have created in places prominent chalk bluffs. Surface streams on the chalk are infrequent and most of them are intermittent. The lack of surface water was historically the major deficiency of this region. Fortunately the underlying Eutaw formation functions as an aquifer and the Selma Chalk contains enough clay beds to keep the water under pressure, so that artesian wells are feasible in many parts of the Black Belt (Fenneman, 1938).

The soil on the Selma Chalk is generally a calcareous and sticky clay with abundant organic matter, although there are variations. The topography is generally rolling with gentle slopes and nearly level areas. The natural vegetation on the chalk consists of grass, weeds, canes, shrubs, and a few lime loving trees. The most typical soils on the chalk areas belong to the Demopolis-Sumter-Obtibebe-Leeper associations (Hajek, Gilbert, and Steers, 1975). A typical landscape in this association is one of gently rolling to hilly pastureland and scattered woodland.

Scattered through the Black Belt are pastures of sandy soil with a mildly rolling surface rising ten to fifteen feet above the prairie. These are the remains of a terrace formation laid down in Pliocene times. The natural vegetation on these deposits is post-oak with scattered pine. Though less fertile than the Black Prairie, these areas were desirable for the location of homes and villages, and until the late nineteenth century most of the cotton was grown here with the black soils being planted to corn. With the depletion of the black soils and the introduction of artificial fertilizers, the black lands became the focus of cotton production (Harper, 1913).

## Chunnenuggee Ridge

The seaward dip of the coastal plain sediments carries the Selma chalk beneath the more resistant Ripley sand and clay. East of the Tombigbee River the Ripley formation has resulted in a belt of hills known locally as the Hill Prairies or more generally as the Chunnenuggee Ridge. A rugged scarp slope toward the north is marked by deep gullies and many hillsides are bare of vegetation. The ridge rises 100 to 200 feet above the Black Belt. The topography on the dip slope of the Ripley is affected by the absence of a lowland to the south, and relief on the south side of the Chunnenuggee escarpment is subdued. Bluish sandy clays produce a surface known as the Blue Marl lands and similar sandy deposits to those of the Black Belt are also found (Fenneman, 1938). The primary soil associations of the Chunnenuggee Ridge are the Wilcox-Mayhew, Eutaw and

Boswell-Susquehanna (Hajek, Gilbert, and Steers, 1975). The typical landscape is a rolling to hilly pine woodland. Scattered open areas are used for pasture.

#### Flatwoods

The Flatwoods region lies to the south and southwest of the Ripley Cuesta stretching from near the Tennessee-Mississippi boundary to and beyond the Alabama River. It has a level and relatively smooth surface, with a width of from five to eight miles, and an elevation similar to that of the Black Belt (Fenneman, 1938). Occasional patches of scrub oad on low sandy hills bear evidence of the same sand deposits which characterize the Black Belt. The area was naturally vegetated with pine and hardwoods, and due to the poor cultivational quality of the soils was little settled. According to Harper (1913) probably 80 per cent of the area was never cultivated. Floodplains a few feet below the general level and fractions of a mile wide provide the only good farm locations. Elsewhere the clay soils are sticky when wet and hard and cracked when dry and generally poorly drained. Shallow wells yield little water but artesian water is available from underlying sands. The primary soil association of the Flatwoods region is the Luverne-Smithdale-Boswell (Hajek, Gilbert and Steers, 1975). The typical landscape with this association is rolling to hilly pine woodland. Scattered open areas are used for pasture.

#### Southern Red Hills

The narrow belt of the Flatwoods is bordered on its southern side by the hilly margin of a higher and stronger formation in which sand is much more abundant. The sand deposits create a belt of hills rising 200 to 400 feet above the Flatwoods known in Alabama as the Southern Red Hills (Harper, 1913). Bright colored soils, red, yellow, and orange give the area its distinctiveness and its name. The Red Hills region has a relatively uniform level surface at about 600 feet. The sandy deposits are readily erodible, however, and the elevation of the surface has caused significant incisions to be made by streams, some several hundred feet deep. It is erosion which produces the greatest variations in relief. In places broad, fertile valley floors occur below the general level of the upland (Fenneman, 1938). The soils of the Southern Red Hills in the vicinity of the Tombigbee River are primarily of the Orangeburg-Red Bay-Dothan-Troup, and Luverne-Boswell-Quitman-Smithdale associations (Hajek, Gilbert and Steers: 1975). The natural vegetation of this area is pine forest. A typical landscape after settlement consisted of sloping cultivated fields intermingled with areas of pine woodland.

Within the generally homogeneous topography of the Southern Red Hills is the most rugged line of hills in the Coastal Plain province. These hills are a result of the outcropping of the Tallahatta sandstone formation, commonly known as the Buhrstone. Locally the Tallahatta is associated with a bed of white quartzite 20 feet thick. Some of the Tallahatta hills rise 300 to 400 feet above the streams incised through them. The belt of hills is about 10 miles wide and extends into Mississippi as

far as the Pearl River (Fenneman, 1938). Soils on and around the Tallahatta hills are generally of the Smithdale-Troup-Lucedale-Luverne association (Hajek, Gilbert, and Steers, 1975). The typical landscape is rolling to hilly woodlands dominated by pine.

#### Southern Limestone Hills

To the south of the Southern Red Hills there is a marked change in physiography due to the surface outcropping of limestone, and the rise of the Hatchetigbee anticline (Fenneman, 1938). This upcurving surface affects an area some 50 miles long and twenty miles wide with an uplift of 600 to 700 feet. The exposed limestone rock of the Jackson formation gives rise to the name of the Southern Limestone Hills. The area is quite hilly in some parts rivalling the rugged hills of the Tallahatta formation. Soils are of the lime rich Wilcox-Mayhew-Eutaw formation (Hajek, Gilbert and Steers, 1975). The region has always remained heavily wooded in spite of the good qualities of the limestone soil.

#### Rolling Piney Woods

The Rolling Piney Woods is a hill belt sloping from an altitude of 400 or 500 feet to the edge of the Pleistocene coastal terraces or coastal belt. It is supported primarily by the sandy or gravelly, porous, and therefore not easily erodible Citronelle formation. The surface is little dissected except by the major streams such as the Alabama and Tombigbee which cross the belt in wide bottomed often steep sided valleys 100 to 300 feet deep, in the area around Jackson (Fenneman, 1938). The red, yellow or, orange residual loams which cover the Rolling Piney Woods region are characteristic of the Citronelle formation. The main soils of this region belong to the Southdale-Troup-Lucedale-Luverne, Smithton-Escambia-Troup and Troup-Smithdale-Malbis-Escambia associations (Hajek, Gilbert and Steers, 1975). The typical landscape with these associations is one of nearly level to gently rolling pine woodlands, intermingled in the best soil locations by limited areas of cultivation.

#### Coastal Strip

Between the Rolling Piney Woods and the sea is a narrow strip of coastal lowland generally less than 20 miles wide and narrowing to almost zero near Mobile Bay where its arrangement is complicated by the emplacement of the Mobile Delta alluvial area. Generally the Coastal Strip lowland, often called the "Pine Meadows," merges with the Rolling Piney Woods at elevations below 100 feet. The terrace landscape consists of very shallow relief with low seaward facing scarps barely discernible. These low scarps are intermittently accompanied by low sand ridges, some 15 feet high, approximately parallel to the shore (Fenneman, 1938). The main soil associations are the Malbis-Orangeburg-Pansey, the McLaurin-Troup-Ruston, the Troup-Smithdale-Esto, and the Troup-Smithdale-Malbis-Escambia (Hajek, Gilbert and Steers, 1975). The typical landscape is one of gently rolling slopes with pine woodland interspersed with gently rolling cultivated fields and pasture.

Within the Coastal Strip physiographic region, the nearly level and level bottomlands and flats of the Mobile River delta provide a major subsection. The predominant landscape in this zone is level lowland along meandering streams and sloughs. Vegetation varies from dense lowland hardwood forest to the marsh grasses which are common in some locations. Most of this region consists of floodplain where the soils are extremely poorly drained with dark peaty surface layers often overlying blackish muck. The main soil associations are the Donovan-Plummer-Tidal Marsh and the Osier-Johnston (Hajek, Gilbert, and Steers, 1975).

### POPULATION

The Lower Tombigbee region has experienced a diverse population from a cultural standpoint. The main components have been (1) aboriginal or American Indian (2) European or Euro-American and (3) African or Afro-American. Historic cultural activities can be allocated among these three broad groups, however, there are fundamental and significant character differences evident in each of these categories as a result of the specific ethnic derivation of primary group members. Indian cultures in the area were divergent in nature while Europeans and Euro-Americans as well as Africans and Afro-Americans exhibited a variety of national and cultural origins.

Each of the population groups made its own contributions to the material landscape, and each influenced to some degree the others. Both the Indian and Black cultures, however, have been overshadowed in importance by the Euro-American tradition and its effects.

#### Indians

The Choctaw and the Creek Indians were the main aboriginal groups affecting the development of the region during the historic period. Of the two, however, only the Choctaws were actually resident in the valley, and that in only a few isolated locations such as Hobuckintopa, and Turkey Town. The main Choctaw settlements were to the west of the Tombigbee River in the eastern and central counties of Mississippi. The reasons for the Choctaw avoidance of the Tombigbee Valley for settlement purposes are not clear. It may be due to (1) a perception by the Choctaws that the soils and range were less desirable in the Lower Tombigbee Valley than to the west or (2) the susceptibility of the Lower Tombigbee to periodic disastrous floods or (3) the avoidance of extensive settlement in the Choctaw/Creek territorial frontier zone.

The most intense occupation of the Lower Tombigbee Valley by Indians during the historic period occurred in the area of the Mobile Delta between Mobile Bay and the cutoff. Settlement here was somewhat complex due not only to the number of different groups, but also to the machinations of colonial policy which caused the relocation of aboriginal communities from time to time. The known details of Indian settlement in this area have been treated at length by Lankford (1983) and Hamilton (1910). The latter (Hamilton, 1910: 116-117), suggests that the difficulty of tracing Indian settlement sites is due to the fact that they:



All changed their locations from time to time as they exhausted the hunting grounds, soil or pasture to which the 'old fields' and 'old towns' common in their names and country still bear witness, and the evidences of the Choctaws, who lived less in towns than the Creeks are often scanty. Experience taught them to keep near the bluffs in order to avoid the freshets of the rivers but they did not always live in those exposed places, and certainly preferred to cultivate lower lands.

#### Europeans and Euro-Americans

A variety of groups introduced European cultural traditions to the Lower Tombigbee Valley. Some of these were brought directly by European immigrants. Others were transposed by first or later generation Euro-Americans. In the early years of settlement before 1800 direct European influences dominated. After 1800 Euro-American contributions were the most significant. Five important lifestyles can be differentiated within the complex mix of activities established by European settlers. These were: (1) hunter/stockman, (2) subsistence/yeoman farmer, (3) planter, (4) artisan/industrialist, (5) mercantile/trader, and (6) military/administrator.

This list does not include all lifestyles in the BWT corridor by any means, nor are the categories mutually inclusive, but it does encompass the majority of activities, and certainly the dominant modes. The hunter/stockman lifestyle appears to have had two origins which blended in the Lower Tombigbee region. The range livestock industry was established in the Gulf Coast littoral by both the Spanish and the Louisiana French in the period before 1750. It was an economy quickly adopted by a number of Indian tribes, who frequently acted as intermediaries and cattle traders to incoming white settlers. Celtic settlers in the Middle Atlantic states established their own British cowboy-cowpens tradition along the cutting edge of the settlement frontier, and carried this progressively south and west through the Piedmont and the Piney Woods. The Spanish and French pastoralists, therefore, were exposed to a continuing contact with pastoralists of British descent, which maintained a range cattle industry in the Gulf Coast states down to the end of the nineteenth century. The dominant land uses in the Lower Tombigbee region throughout the last four hundred years have been forestry and stock raising with the two commonly overlapping. The hunter/stockman lifestyle was dominant after 1750 in the Coastal Strip, Rolling Piney Woods, and Southern Limestone Hills physiographic regions. It declined in importance progressively northwards to the Black Belt region where it was discouraged early in the century by the pressures of agricultural expansion.

The subsistence yeoman/farmer lifestyle was a distinctive culture style blended from Scotch-Irish, Welsh and, Rhineland German elements converging in the Middle Atlantic states and spreading south and west, primarily through the Appalachians and southern Piedmont. A more sedentary refinement of the hunter/pastoralist economy, the yeoman/farmer lifestyle has been variably designated as upland south, redneck, cracker, or plain folk. It had a number of traits which were pre-adaptive or synthesized to deal with the frontier and its problems. These traits have been

outlined by Newton (1974; 1976). Among the most common were the use of logs to build permanent houses together with the dominance of the dogtrot house plan the transverse crib barn, reliance on mixed farming of livestock and crops, dispersed settlements, fundamental evangelical churches, and action seeking modal personalities. The subsistence farmer lifestyle was the most pervasive of all in the Lower Tombigbee region, penetrating all physiographic provinces by the end of the nineteenth century. It was, however, best developed in the Southern Red Hills and Southern Limestone Hills regions where the soils were more attractive. In the Black Belt and the Piney Woods and Coastal Strip, upland south types were less common.

The planter lifestyle originally emerged in the area from Chesapeake Bay to the coast of the Carolinas and Georgia. Known most commonly as the Tidewater or Lowland South cultural tradition it spread first along the coast and then inland towards the Piedmont. It became established in a few favored interior locations such as the Black Belt, the Lower Tennessee Valley, and the Lower Mississippi Valley (Kniffen, 1965). This was essentially a slave based economy which provided strong contrasts with the yeoman or peasant lifestyle. The main traits of the Tidewater lifestyle were identification with a literate, aristocratic, and wealthy ancestry, slave holding on a large scale, delegated farm management, tendencies toward absentee ownership and urban residence, Episcopal church affiliations, preference for status indicative dwellings, adherence to cash monocrop systems, and orientation to formal education and professional careers.

The planter lifestyle was the dominant cultural feature of the Black Belt physiographic region alone. There were plantation outliers distributed through the Chunnennuggee, Red Hills, and Limestone Hills regions but they were extremely scattered. In the years before 1800 an early form of the plantation economy was found along the banks of the Lower Tombigbee from St. Stephens to Mobile primarily in the Coastal Strip. In this area there was some expression of the 'Creole' cultural tradition. According to Newton (1976: 76):

The French Creole, the most prominent is a synthetic blend of French and African traits; but there are also British Creole elements in the South. The penetration of Caribbean influence can be seen in plantations, full length galleries, external stairs, houses raised upon piers or brick basements, elements of cookery, and certain speech patterns.

The artisan/industrialist was present in much smaller numbers than members of the preceding culture groups but totals increased with time. Artisans were scarce during the colonial period and primarily concentrated in the city of Mobile. As population expanded to the north of the delta after 1800 and as agricultural production expanded there was an increasing demand for artisans to produce and repair tools, agricultural equipment, and transportation vehicles. Because artisans supplied services, they generally located in the small towns. During the mid-nineteenth century a few industrial entrepreneurs began to appear in the region. Most of these were farmers who established grain milling and cotton ginning operations. Others came from outside the region to establish timber processing plants, textile mills, and ship building and repairs facilities. Cotton ginning

and grain milling were concentrated in the Black Belt and Southern Red Hills physiographic regions. Timber processing was found primarily in the Coastal Strip, and Rolling Piney Woods regions. Boat building and textile manufacturing was a function almost entirely of the Mobile vicinity.

The mercantile/trader element was important in the Lower Tombigbee Valley from the beginning of European settlement. After 1700 both the French and the British established elaborate networks for facilitating the fur trade, and fur traders were the first Europeans to thoroughly explore and live in the Lower Tombigbee Valley above Mobile. As the fur trade declined in the late eighteenth century the timber and cotton trade developed to replace it. Mobile was the main focus of timber and cotton merchants and factors, but many of the smaller towns and villages had cotton warehouses and shipping functions. The main contributions of the mercantile/trader culture were to the urban life of the region. Many of the nineteenth century merchants and traders were immigrants from the Middle East or from the cities of Central Europe, particularly Jews, and they provided a strong contrast in cultural attributes to those of the agricultural groups.

The last cultural type was that associated with military or administrative activities. The military presence was most prominent in the colonial period when the army was the main instrument of imperial control. It was expressed in the early significance of the fort at Mobile, and the various campaigns and defense sites generated in the region (e.g. Fort Tombecke, Fort St. Stephens, and Fort Stoddert). After the Creek War the military function was largely eclipsed although the Civil War was to provide more wide ranging military cultural traits of its own. During the nineteenth century civil administration became the dominant factor in political life. The most important unit of local government was the county, and the focus of that government was the county seat. County seat towns became distinctive expressions of regional culture, and routinely housed the social and economic elite of the region's population. County towns frequently were the locations for affluent planters, and the educated professionals (doctors, lawyers, teachers), as well as the small number of merchants. Newton (1976:77) emphasized that this group had a role out of all proportion to its numbers when he said of the political geography of the Gulf Coast states:

The Gulf states formed a region where independent pastoral peasants had established an economy based on livestock and corn, raised in forests as well as on prairies. Both peasants and planters obtained additional cash from cotton raising. The whole was organized into little republics known as counties, and given focus by the literate elite of the courthouse town.

#### Africans or Afro-Americans

Black Africans and Afro-Americans comprised a substantial proportion of the population of the Lower Tombigbee from the mid-eighteenth century, but their culture has not received the degree of attention it probably deserves. Africans and Afro-Americans reached the Lower Tombigbee by both direct and indirect routes, but invariably arrived as slave laborers.

While many Africans were imported directly to the region from Africa, to work on the plantations and farms, others were introduced first to other parts of the southern states or the Caribbean islands. They or their children later reached the Tombigbee either through later migrations, or as second or later generation slaves. This latter group can be considered to be Afro-American rather than truly African in cultural experience.

Although there were a small number of blacks who were urban dwellers (Holmes, 1973; 1975b) and a small number who were free before 1865, the vast majority provided field and forest labor into the early twentieth century. Because of their economic status they were able to exercise little choice over the location or structural style of their residences. They lived largely in the places and after the fashion that their owners determined that they should. The historical record appears to indicate that their material culture quickly came to reflect elements of those Euro-American lifestyles in which they were economically immersed.

Only after emancipation in 1860 did specific patterns of black land tenure begin to appear, and this was limited because of the lack of black capital which made land purchase problematical. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries most blacks continued to be farm or forest tenants, and social, economic and political constraints on the mobility, employment and residential options of blacks continued to be an important factor in their geographic distribution. During the colonial period blacks were found in somewhat limited numbers on the river bottom plantations between St. Stephens and Mobile. Between 1820 and 1860 there was an explosion of black population in the Black Belt counties of Sumter and Marengo with smaller increases in the upland farm areas of Choctaw and Clarke. After the Civil War many blacks migrated from the Black Belt region to the cheaper lands of the Red Hills region and to the lumbering areas of the Rolling Piney Woods. (Fisher, 1973). A number of black communities are found in those regions today deriving from the 1870s and 1880s. The main concentrations of black population continued to remain in the Black Belt region where they were incorporated into a restructured plantation system (Prunty, 1955). In that area blacks were located either in isolated tenant farmbuildings or in hamlets of from 6-25 residences.

#### AGRICULTURE

Historically agriculture has made a greater contribution to the economic base of the Lower Tombigbee than any other productive activity. From the geographic standpoint a variety of agricultural elements can be differentiated, each having greater or lesser significance during specific historic periods. Based on physical structure or systemic operation a tentative classification of farming units can be made. These are (1) Independently owned subsistence farmstead, (2) colonial bottomland mixed crop plantation, (3) classical upland monocrop plantation, (4) the neo-plantation or tenant farm. Each type had a particular geographic focus and temporal status, but the precise dimensions of each are difficult to define because there were substantial variations of form in each category, and the four types are best viewed as segments of continuous spectrum operating in space and time.

### Subsistence Farmstead

From the very earliest years of the French colonization the majority of farmsteads were oriented towards subsistence production, based on cattle raising and corn and vegetable cropping. Even in the British occupation (1763-1780) when the term plantation came into common usage many farms so called were primarily subsistence in nature. During the fifty years following the Revolution there was a massive immigration of peasant or yeoman or stockmen farmers into the Lower Tombigbee Valley. Many of these migrated via the Piney Woods route from southern Georgia but others came from the Piedmont area of the Carolinas in central Georgia, and still others filtered through the Appalachian valleys of north-central Alabama coming into the region from the north.

These pioneers being hunters and stock raisers as much as cultivators were most familiar through generations of experience with the topographic and soils conditions of the uplands. They generally confined their advances to forested areas, migrating and settling along wooded ridges. Small clearings in the timber were tilled in a relatively unscientific manner as the hunter/pastoralist slowly transformed himself into a crop farmer. Farming continued to be primarily a subsistence activity practiced in conjunction with other exploitative support systems related to the natural environment, (e.g. hunting, grazing, fishing, and lumbering).

As much as any other factor the distribution of woodland and lowland affected the distribution of this settlement type. The Red Hills, Limestone Hills, and Piney Woods provided an attractive refuge for the pastoralist/farmer, while the Flatwoods and Black Prairie were largely avoided. Not only did the Prairie constitute a novel environment not previously encountered by the inflowing cultural tradition but the characteristics of that environment, particularly the soils, were such as to cause concern as to their workability and production potential.

In terms of internal functional arrangement the independent peasant farms were of the "upland south" variety elucidated by Newton (1971, 1974). They were usually comprised of a small set of individual buildings (a dwelling, storehouse, livestock barn, fowl pens, and food storage and preserving shed) exhibiting somewhat random arrangements. Usually well, privy, storage shed, and chicken houses were closer to the dwelling than the barn and animal pens. The economy prior to 1870 was based not only on crop cultivation but also upon open range livestock grazing. On these less crop reliant farmsteads open range and the absence of fencing would have led to different arrangements in the settlement pattern.

### Colonial Bottomland Mixed Crop Plantation

The plantation form of agricultural production first appeared in the Lower Tombigbee Valley under the French administration from 1700-1763. It was essentially a variant of the traditional peasant mixed farming economy of central Europe with some emphasis on the production of exotic, non-European, cash crops. It quickly came to be associated with indentured and slave labor which further removed it from the central European tradition. The evolution of the plantation economy was continued by the

British between 1763 and 1780. They greatly encouraged the expansion of this particular form of production to increase the supply of indigo.

The colonial plantation was somewhat similar to the nineteenth century plantation in its division of labor, its large land holdings, and its reliance on non-family labor. It differed from the nineteenth century plantation in three main ways: the first was in choice of location, the second in crop emphasis, and the third in the size of the slave holding. Because the desirable eighteenth century cash crops of rice and indigo required bottomland alluvial soils, and periodic inundation, and because the only viable means of commodity transport was the river, colonial plantations invariably were located at the riverbank. Their land use was primarily focused on the river bottoms. At the same time while colonial plantations were concerned with the production of cash crops, no single cash crop dominated plantation activities. The production of timber and livestock for sale off the farm were generally considered to be as important to the viability of the plantation as the production of cotton, rice, tobacco, or other experimental plantings.

The colonial type of plantation was found eventually from the vicinity of St. Stephens to Mobile on both sides of the river, and the Mobile delta, with the west side most significant above the Warrior Tombigbee junction. The layout of the colonial plantations appears, from the scarce evidence available, to have been largely determined by topographic considerations. Most plantation holdings were elongated in directions away from the river, but had substantial territory in the floodplain and on bottomland terraces. Normally, plantation holdings extended to the river bluffs where the residence of the planter would be located. Houses were relatively simple and never approached the status indicative dimensions of the nineteenth century. Hamilton (1910) and Rea (1976) shed some light on the character of the colonial period plantations.

#### Classical Upland Monocultural Plantation

During the early years of the nineteenth century the operational character and locational pattern of plantation units in the Lower Tombigbee region underwent considerable adjustment. Rice and indigo lost favor as commercial crops while cotton became the cash crop of choice. The transition from rice and indigo to cotton cultivation meant that lowland soils were no longer highly favored for crop production, and that overland transportation of the primary cash crop was now feasible. The greater profit initially associated with cotton had a dual effect. It encouraged larger and larger amounts of plantation land to be put under cotton production, and a concomitant reduction in the output of other materials. It caused rapid wealth accumulation stimulating individual planters to acquire larger landholdings and more slaves.

The increasing affluence of the cotton plantation owner after 1820, and the search for additional productive cotton acreage caused a major shift in the geographic concentration and the physical structure of plantations in the Lower Tombigbee Valley. Old colonial type plantations to the south of St. Stephens substantially declined, while a massive expansion of plantation activities took place in the Black Belt and to a lesser

extent in the Southern Red Hills region. The Bluff sites remained a preferred location of the early cotton planters because of the transportation and communication advantages of proximity to the river, but plantations quickly spread away from the rivers into the higher interfluves.

The classical upland plantation has often been idealized to represent a carefully arranged formal complex of buildings including the dwelling with kitchen, shops, storehouses, carriage house, horse stalls, and slave quarters. While the Lower Tombigbee region contains some examples of this kind such as Thornhill and Watsonia in southern Greene County, and Gaineswood at Demopolis, the majority of antebellum plantations were not of this "ideal-typical" form. Many plantation owners preferred to live in towns—particularly county seats, and workers and overseers occupied the plantation lands. The actual number of plantations which had a big house and extensive slave quarters will never be known but their numbers are certain to be less than commonly accepted. An analysis of the form of the antebellum plantation in the Black Belt region is given by Weaver and Doster (1982).

#### The Neo-plantation/Tenant Farm

The period of Reconstruction after the Civil War had a radical effect on prevailing patterns of agriculture, and particularly on the plantation system. Changes were effected in the size of farms, tenure of farmers, and in the emphasis placed on other crops and livestock besides cotton, corn and cattle. The main result of emancipation was the implementation of the cash rent and share-renting systems, which spread beyond traditional plantation areas as blacks and poorer whites attempted to cope with the need to earn a living in a time of severe capital shortages. By about 1850 approximately one-third of the farms in the Black Belt counties were being share cropped, compared to about one-fourth in adjoining physiographic regions. Cash renting was also important at the time through the percentage varied from county to county. Cash renting was more important in the Black Belt than in the regions to the south. Approximately half the farms continued to be operated by owners with a lower proportion of owner operation in the Black Belt compared to other sections of the Lower Tombigbee region.

In the share cropper operation the landowner supplied everything used in production (including the house) except labor and furnished half the cost of seed and fertilizer. Crop proceeds were normally split equally at the end of the year between owner and cropper. An oral contract confirmed acreages to be planted in staple specialties and in feed grains and other crops, procedures to be used in cultivation, where and how crops were to be marketed and the wage rate to be paid off for work on the croppers unit. Hoe and mule cultivation was almost universal.

The compact plantation village or quarters was replaced by small houses scattered through the croplands at a ratio of about one house site to each 30 or 40 acres. Each cropper would have at least half his land in cotton and the rest devoted to other crops. The reasons for farm fragmentation have been discussed by Prunty (1955). He suggests that in spite of the changes there remained strong similarities between the fragmented

share cropper system and the antebellum plantation. The amount of cropland stayed much the same, contractual practices differed little, woodland remained a major feature of the farm area, and equipment often remained in a central location.

The tenant-renter farm system evolved both from the plantation economy and from the depressed agricultural economy after the war which caused tax delinquency and low capital levels in rural areas. The main difference between the tenant and share cropper operations was that the tenant owned work-stock and implements and required pasturage and a greater degree of fencing. On tenant as on "share" farms the volume of land dedicated to cotton expanded significantly as it was the only significant crop which would generate money. The additional production flooded markets and added to the general misery in the agricultural economy. The increasing availability of artificial fertilizer during the postbellum period encouraged the spread of cotton farming onto inherently less fertile soils, and helped to keep worn out soils in production. In many instances cash-crop cotton farming became no more than an element of the subsistence economy during the post war period, throughout the Lower Tombigbee Valley. Farming remained restricted almost entirely to the uplands, and higher terraces and bottomlands along the Tombigbee River were generally avoided for all farming activities except occasional live-stock raising.

#### INDUSTRY

Industrial activities were conducted on a very limited scale in the Lower Tombigbee region during the historic period. There was a strong dependence on domestic production of many goods, and before the Civil War the plantation society relied heavily upon imported materials paid for by cotton generated cash. Those industries which did play a significant part in the life of the region were related to the primary processing of agricultural commodities. Such industries first appeared on plantations or in plantation areas as responses to the large farms needs for construction materials or for crop processing. Through time, however, the benefits of larger volume production were realized, and as transport facilities improved, as technological capabilities increased, and as the plantation system was restructured after the Civil War there was a gradual shift of industrial activities away from the plantations toward urban and transportation centers. A similar shift can be measured as the development of steam power freed many processors from the need to obtain a good water power site.

A variety of light agricultural industries operated throughout the Lower Tombigbee Valley region during the nineteenth century. Among them were cotton ginning and compressing, cotton oil production, cotton spinning, corn and wheat grinding, tanning, toolmaking, brickmaking, and fertilizer mixing. These industries were very small scale and for the most part concentrated in the small number of town and village communities distributed through the region. The larger the town the greater the tendency for it to have multiple industrial functions. Such industries accounted for a minute percentage of the total employment of the region which was dominated by agriculture and forest activities.



The forest products economy provided the only other significant industrial component. Sawmills operated throughout the region during the nineteenth century but were generally small and transitory, being constantly abandoned or moved as timbercutting exhausted one area and moved to another. By the end of the nineteenth century large mills serviced by extensive rail systems were prominent at a few points in the valley most noticeably between Jackson and Mobile, and in the twentieth century pulp and paper plants began to appear in a few locations at the river bank. Such installations had local economic and technological significance, but were of minor geographic note in terms of their number and contribution to the overall economy of the Lower Tombigbee region.

### TRANSPORTATION

The three important transportation elements in the development of the Lower Tombigbee Valley were the river, roads and railroads. The river was particularly important before the Civil War as the major avenue of interior migration for settlers and for the export of their products. In the eighteenth century trade was conducted primarily in flatboats poled down the river, but after 1820 the steamboat with its ability to move against the current and to carry heavy loads dominated river traffic.

By the time agricultural colonization occurred on any scale in the Black Belt and Red Hills regions the steamboat was available and it played an integral role in the development of those areas from the very beginning. Planters immigrating from states to the east were familiar with the principles of river trade, and one of the factors attracting them to the Black Belt was the accessibility to major rivers. The Lower Tombigbee provided the main artery, and the steamboats and steamboat landings the main vehicles, of trade with the outside world until the coming of the railroads after 1850. Steamboat landings provided the major foci of agricultural trade throughout the valley during the antebellum period (Doster and Weaver, 1981). There does not appear to have been any particular concentration of landings in any specific physiographic region, although precise landing functions may have varied from place to place.

Roads had their greatest prominence during the colonial and territorial periods, but later were overshadowed by the river and the railroads. Four main factors appear to have determined the character of the regional road network. These were (1) the custom of following crests or ridges, (2) the tendency to build a network radiating from a county seat, (3) the emergence of a few sites, favored for stream crossings, as road nuclei, and (4) the development of long distance interregional routes in a limited number of instances. Many of the earliest roads were adaptations of Indian trails. During the territorial period federal routes held brief prominence. After 1820 pressures for roadbuilding diminished, and while there is some evidence that roads may have been better maintained in the Black Belt region than elsewhere (Cleland, 1920) as an aid to shipping cotton, roads in all regions languished until the reform movements of the 1920s and 1930s.

Railroads came late to the Lower Tombigbee region, and when they did they focused on Mobile and largely avoided the rest of the valley. One

reason was the general lack of agricultural productivity in all areas except the Black Belt after the Civil War. Also, the railroads had no desire to compete directly with steamboat traffic except at some distance from the river where they could intercept traffic that might otherwise gravitate to the waterway. A rail line along the bank of the river tended to give a railroad a somewhat lopsided trade territory, due to the problems of cross-river access. As indicated in Chapter VIII only the Mobile-Selma-Birmingham line ran close to the river for any distance. All other lines struck away from Mobile into the interior. These railroads did deflect a substantial amount of traffic from the river, particularly timber, and adversely affected Mobile's maritime cotton trade. They were also consequential for the siting of a large number of rural communities along the tracks in the late nineteenth century. Most of the railroad activity in the Lower Tombigbee region took place in the Black Belt and Piney Woods areas, and almost entirely outside the BWT corridor.

#### TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Towns and villages in the Lower Tombigbee Valley with the exception of Mobile, St. Stephens, and the Tensaw villages generally derive from the nineteenth century and belong to one of five categories differentiated by function and spatial form. These groupings are (1) county seats, (2) platted river towns, (3) railroad towns, (4) rural hamlets, and (5) compound farms.

County seats were typically founded in conjunction with the establishment of new counties by the territorial or state legislature. The naming, siting and surveying of new towns was normally left to the discretion of the Board of Police which was constituted of local citizens. Taverns, inns, stores, or private houses were commonly used as the sites for the courts and for other governmental functions until permanent seats were selected and appropriate buildings erected. The primary factor in the selection of county seat sites was centrality or accessibility to the population served. Counties such as Washington with low populations tended to have unimposing county seats. Whenever county boundaries were adjusted the location of county seats tended to be affected, frequently by replacement. County seat forms in the south have been addressed by Pillsbury (1978), and in a more general way by Price (1968).

Most of the small river towns such as Jackson and Demopolis were developed as speculative ventures by one or more investors. In most of these towns the level of trade generated by agriculture or forest related activities was never sufficient to promote extensive town growth, and while some of the small towns such as Coffeerville and Mt. Sterling experienced brief status during the antebellum period, their economic fortunes were tied to cotton, and therefore precarious. Only Jackson which benefited from the timber boom of the 1870s and 1880s experienced any substantial development after the Civil War.

Jackson also benefitted from the railroad in a way some of its Clarke County neighbors (e.g. Coffeerville) could not. Railroads provided the greatest stimulus to new town growth in south Alabama after 1860, but in the Lower Tombigbee region, and particularly along the river itself railroad building was limited. A string of small railroad communities deve-

loped along the line from Jackson to Mobile (e.g. Calvert) but they were villages rather than towns.

The rural village or hamlet was the predominant nucleated settlement form in the Lower Tombigbee throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Varying in form according to their location and degree of development, rural hamlets, frequently known as "communities" or "settlements" were widespread in each physiographic division. Their sites varied from road junctions to rail flag stops, and from crop processing places to river landing or crossing points, but their development and physical structure were similar.

Rural hamlets were generated by the basic social and economic needs of the rural population. The main social needs were then of kinship, religion, and communication and the main economic needs were food and staple manufactured goods. The location of hamlets was determined by some favored topographic or cultural feature. Such features included a hilltop or bluff, a road junction, a railroad crossing, a well or spring site, a ferry ford or bridge site, an industrial site, a landing or some combination of these.

#### BUILDING TYPES

While the Lower Tombigbee Valley has experienced a complex cultural history, which has resulted in significant architectural variety, surprisingly little has been published about the form and function of the area's buildings. There are exceptions, most noticeably dealing with Mobile (Junior League of Mobile, 1974; Mobile City Planning Commission, 1974), and other useful references deal with the greater Gulf Coast region (Kniffen, 1936; Wilson, 1974).

Buildings dating from the Spanish, French, and British colonial periods are extremely scarce, both because of the ravages of time and because there were so few of them. French buildings were probably similar to those of New Orleans which have been documented. The architecture of the coastal section during the late colonial and territorial periods appears to have been directly influenced by climate and topography. Many buildings were raised above the ground, a necessary measure against the persistent problem of both flooding and dampness. Porches and galleries also had a practical purpose in aiding air circulation during hot weather (Beasley, 1976). In Mobile families with mercantile and shipping interests built many of the style conscious residences, while the most elaborate commercial structures housed or supported port related activities. Building forms such as the Creole cottage and the shot-gun house appeared well before the Civil War and were built with few changes into the twentieth century. The origins of the shot gun house are not definitely known but it is believed to have been a house type which because of its long narrow shape was adaptable to the land limitations of urban areas (Glassie, 1968).

Most of the material remains of the Lower Tombigbee region derive from the upland south cultural tradition. Kniffen and several of his students (Kniffen, 1935; Wright, 1958; Wilson, 1969; Newton, 1976) have

identified the single pen, double pen, saddlebag, dogtrot, 'I' house, and pyramidal roof house as the most common house types in the Coastal Plain uplands. There was a progressive evolution in these house types from log to frame construction (Wilson, 1969, 1970, 1975). By the end of the nineteenth century weatherboarded, balloon frame construction had come into wide use, as well as commercially produced doors, windows, lumber and hardware. With the change from folk to vernacular styles the frame houses generally became smaller than their log ancestral forms. The latest housing innovation before World War II was the bungalow, which gradually replaced many of the folk derived houses in the 1930s.

In the Black Belt and in some parts of the Chunnennuggee Ridge and Red Hills regions more substantial homes were found reflecting the greater agricultural wealth of those regions, particularly during the antebellum period. Many of these homes had a basic Georgian design embellished with elements of "Greek-Revival," although most rural plantation houses were what has been termed "plantation plain" (unpretentious two-story houses) rather than the Mt. Vernon stereotype. In the Black Belt in particular most of the planters lived in towns, where in general houses were more elaborate and individualistic than in rural areas.

## CHAPTER X

### LOCATION OF DOCUMENTARY MATERIALS

Many of the secondary or published works, which have provided the basis of this study, are generally available in major libraries. Others are less accessible and some are found only in single locations. Additionally the secondary works are supported by a large body of documentary and cartographic materials. These materials are located at a number of points, not all of which are in close proximity to the Lower Tombigbee area. Useful records have been located in many places, the most important of which are given below.

#### SIGNIFICANT LIBRARIES AND DEPOSITORIES OF RECORDS IN ALABAMA

1. Alabama State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery. A very large collection of materials on the History of Alabama. Of special interest:

Albert J. Pickett collection.  
Peter A. Brannon papers.  
Doy McCall papers (on steamboats).  
Thomas M. Owen papers.  
Biographical Collections (extensive).  
Collections of Alabama newspapers (extensive).  
Microfilms, of Manuscript U. S. Census records.

2. University of Alabama Main Library, Tuscaloosa. Special collections include extensive manuscripts and maps. Items of special interest include:

A very extensive collection of U. S. Government publications, especially congressional documents.  
An almost complete collection of the annual reports of the Army's Chief of Engineers.  
Records of Original Land Survey for Alabama.  
Theses on Alabama subjects.  
Large collection of Sanborn Insurance Atlases.  
Warner Collection of early maps.  
Kirksey manuscript collection.  
Extensive collections of Alabama newspapers.  
Microfilms of manuscript U. S. Census records.

3. Geological Survey of Alabama Library. The best assemblage of materials relating to Alabama's physical environment. Items of special interest include:

Map Collection.

Eugene A. Smith Field Notes and Photograph collection.

4. Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham. Houses the very extensive Rucker Agee collection of early maps of the Gulf Coast, some very rare.
5. Mobile Public Library, Mobile. The location of extensive records of Mobile and of Mobile's trade including the Tombigbee River. Of special interest is the collection of Mobile City directories, showing businesses, commission merchants, factors, and area residents. Steamboat landings on the Lower Tombigbee and Mobile Rivers with distances from Mobile are regularly listed in these directories. A good collection of maps of the colonial period is maintained here.
6. Army Corps of Engineers office, Mobile. Some records of the Black Warrior and the Lower Tombigbee are kept here but the Corps has not generally preserved archival records. A large number of twentieth century maps are housed in this collection.
7. County Courthouses of the seven Lower Tombigbee counties all contain a variety of local records which can provide the basis for research and analysis.
8. Auburn University Library, Auburn. Theses and dissertations on a variety of Alabama topics.
9. University of South Alabama Library, Mobile. Theses on a variety of Alabama topics.

SIGNIFICANT LIBRARIES AND DEPOSITORIES OF RECORDS OUTSIDE ALABAMA

1. Mississippi State Department of Archives and History, Jackson. Extensive document and map collections of the French colonial period and the Mississippi Territory.
2. Louisiana State University Library, Baton Rouge. Extensive document and map collections of the French era in Louisiana. Theses and dissertations.
3. University of Florida Library, Gainesville. Materials relating to the history of West Florida. Theses and dissertations.
4. University of West Florida Library, Pensacola. Materials relating to the history of West Florida, particularly Pensacola. Theses.
5. Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill. Extensive manuscript collections covering the entire South. A number of Black Belt plantation records housed here pertain to the settlement of the Lower Tombigbee region.

6. National Archives, Washington, D. C. This institution is unsurpassed as a repository of the archival records of the United States government. Its facilities are inadequate to cope with recent materials, which are either being stored in temporary facilities, or in the Federal records centers in various parts of the country which have archives branches. In the main collection in Washington the following items are of special interest:

Land plats from original surveys with field notes.  
Records of steam vessels, including steamboats.  
Archival records of the Army Chief of Engineers.  
Post Office records.  
Records of aerial photographic surveys.

7. Federal Records Center, Suitland, Maryland. Records of the sales of public lands are situated here in the Archives Branch. Also here are records of the Interstate Commerce Commission relating to railroads.
8. Federal Records Center, Archives Branch, East Point, Georgia. Contains a large body of records of the Mobile District Office of the Corps of Engineers.
9. Library of Congress, Washington. The operations and scope of the nation's major library are well known. Items of special interest include:

Thousands of maps of Alabama in the Map Division.  
County histories.  
Pictures of individuals and places in the Prints and Photographic Division and especially photographs of the Historic American Buildings Survey.

10. U. S. Bureau of Land Management, Silver Spring, Maryland. Maintains records and maps for its own operations on a very extensive scale. The collection contains many maps showing details of survey of areas in the Lower Tombigbee Valley. Of special interest are the tract books which show original purchases of public lands, acres purchased, precise location, price per acre, and date of purchase arranged by townships. Microfilms of the tract books for Alabama have been acquired by the University of Alabama Library.
11. U. S. Postal Service Library, Washington, D. C. Contains published records of post offices and postmaster appointments.
12. U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Library, Washington, D. C. Contains a complete set of the annual reports of the Chief of Engineers, and comprehensive index to those reports.

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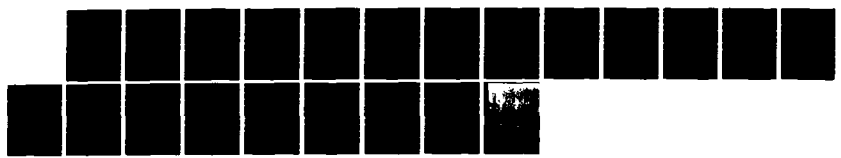
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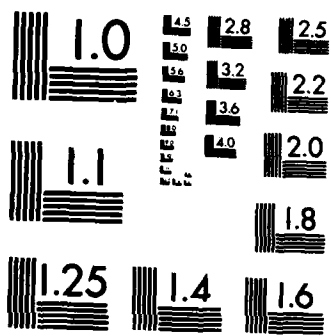
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