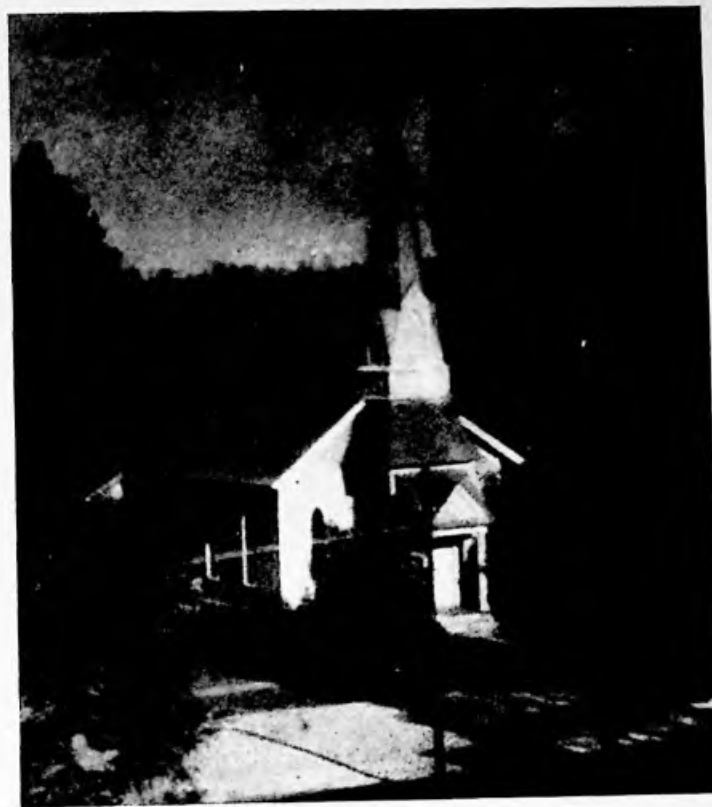




Boyle Methodist Church—First Erick Church in Bolivar County



Grace Episcopal Church—Rosedale—Oldest Church Building in County

who had been compelled to bury her baby without prayer or song, as no minister was near enough to come and perform these rites. Led by Mrs. Sessions, the good women of Australia bought an old store and procured the services of the Reverend Mr. Hughes of Concordia, eight miles distant, for Sunday afternoons and every fifth Sunday. To traverse those eight miles in those days of wretched roads was a more formidable undertaking than a one hundred mile journey would be over our paved roads of today.

A small combination school and church, built on Colonel Montgomery's plantation, Beulah, before the war, was used by the entire countryside. A large two-story Masonic lodge and church was built on the present site of the Beulah cemetery in 1866. It was used until the 1880's, when it was torn down. Only the cemetery remains at this point.

The first Episcopal Church in the county was built in Rosedale about 1880, Mr. R. H. Prosser being the first rector. The first Presbyterian Church in the county, built on Egypt Ridge in 1885, was destroyed by fire.

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### EARLY PHYSICIANS

Special mention should be made of the pioneer physicians, who rode on horseback through mud and rain, snow and sleet, cane and forest to attend the sick at great distances, undergoing hardships and privations unknown to the practitioners of today.

Dr. Cameron Montgomery, one of the earliest physicians, was known and loved over two counties. Dr. Isaac Shelby of Beulah was the only physician in that section and gave his life to serving his people. Dr. J. B. Pease, at Concordia, spent a long life in the medical service and was known far and near for his skill. Dr. Ross, Dr. Gibson, and Dr. Alex R. Rives, an elegant Virginian who had been a surgeon in the United States Navy before coming to Terrene and thence to Rosedale, were all prominent early physicians of the county.

Dr. Cousins was at Cook's landing in 1870; Dr. Marrel Rowland practiced at Catfish Point in 1879; Dr. Louis Stevens located at Carson's Landing; and Dr. Watkins, who practiced at Beulah, died during the Civil War.

Dr. De Hay lived near Rosedale soon after the war, owned a plantation, and practiced medicine. Dr. Lancaster was a physician and planter near Egypt Ridge and cared for his entire section. Dr. Mason, at Carson's landing, was a prominent physician before and after the war, dying in 1878 of yellow fever during the epidemic at Terrene.

Following these early pioneers, came Dr. W. P. Scott and Dr. John W. Dulaney of Rosedale; Dr. H. L. Sutherland of Bolivar and Rosedale; and many others who shared in the hardships of the early days of the county. The county owes much of its progress in the domain of health and sanitation to Dr. Sutherland's efforts, intelligence, and foresight while serving as the county's health officer.

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## EARLY MERCHANTS

The first merchants of the county before the war were owners of "trading boats" on the Mississippi River, among whom was J. H. Clore, who came every year with his boat and finally settled at Australia, where he died many years later.

These floating stores went to every landing; word would go across the forests and the cane; and buyers would appear, as they always will. Yearly trips to the city were usually made by the heads of the families to procure the more fashionable and expensive clothing, but all other necessities of apparel were supplied by these boats.

The planters ordered all supplies by wholesale from New Orleans or Memphis and had their own storehouses for the plantation supplies. Colonel Montgomery built and operated a large store at the steamboat landing on his Beulah plantation, conducted by John C. Miller, a young northern man, who afterwards enlisted in the Bolivar troop, made a good Confederate soldier, married, lived, and died in this county. Mr. Godfrey Frank was a merchant in Prentiss before the war; and Mr. Dave Reinach was his clerk.

After the Civil War, the mercantile business grew until it spread over the entire county. Mr. C. T. Christmas opened the first store at Beulah, followed by the firm of Baldwin and Farrar in 1866. Mr. Godfrey Frank opened a mercantile business at Pride's Point, subsequently the town of Riverton.

Just after the war, Mr. Ed Storm, a merchant of Bolivar Landing before the war, opened a store at Stormville, a landing two miles above Bolivar. Mr. William Robinson settled at Mound Landing and had a large business. Mr. J. H. Zadeck settled at Terrene, a landing above Rosedale. A few years later, the firm of Biscoe and Speakes opened at Bolivar Landing, and Mr. A. C. Terrell opened a large mercantile business at Australia, where the old trading boat merchant, J. H. Clore, also established his store. All these pioneer merchants contributed their part to the financing

and developing of the county and became important factors in its success and growth.

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## SOME OF THE LAWYERS OF BOLIVAR COUNTY

By WALTER SILLERS

Before the war of 1861-1865, we find that a number of lawyers practiced in the courts of the county, though all of them did not live in the county. A few who lived here were: Judge B. F. Trimble, General A. B. Bradford, Charles L. Robards, Judge George T. Lightfoot, Judge Poindexter, Mr. Shamberger, General Charles Clark, W. E. Montgomery.

Colonel Frank Montgomery did not practice law until after the war, though he lived in the county. Rowan Bridges was practicing before the war also.

Judge William L. Harris, Judge of the Supreme Court of Mississippi, lived on his plantation on Bogue Phalia, in Bolivar County. When the writer came to the bar in 1875, ex-Governor Charles Clark, General A. B. Bradford, Colonel F. A. Montgomery, Major W. E. Montgomery, Rowan Bridges, Judge John W. Robb, Judge B. F. Trimble, the Honorable Charles Scott, George Y. Scott, and W. A. Yerger were the older members of the bar. C. C. Cummings a one-armed Confederate soldier, was a lawyer and editor of a newspaper, the *Bolivar Times*. He published an article censuring the Radical Judge Shackleford and incurred his displeasure, resulting in Mr. Cummings being disbarred from courts of Bolivar County. He went to Texas and was most successful there.

The younger members more recently admitted to the practice were Fred Clark, Edward H. Moore, George W. Bellamy, Harry Herndon, Ben Hullum, Jefferson J. Montgomery, Thomas J. Carson, and the writer.

A few years later, Fontaine Jones, Thomas M. Harris, John W. Robb, Jr, Frank M. Scott, Oscar McGuire, and W. B. Roberts were admitted to the bar; and later in the late 80's and early 90's, N. B. Scott, Thomas S. Owen. E. H. Woods, R. O. Johnson. and A. Y. Scott. This was a distinguished bar for the population of the county of that day and time.

They were all men of fine ability and splendid character. Only seven of all these men were living in 1924.

## EARLY HOMES OF BOLIVAR COUNTY

(Central and Lower Section)

BY MILDRED WILLIAMS SMITH

In writing of the early homes of Bolivar County, it is impossible to tell of the love, patience, care, as well as the struggles, hardships, and often tragedies that attended the building of them. We cannot fully appreciate, in these days of wonderful inventions, the real task it was to cut the trees, cane, and underbrush for the location of the house, and to hew the timbers from the logs for the construction of these sturdy pioneer homes. Nor can we ever know of the long, weary days of travel through dense virgin forests, of the thrilling encounters with the wild life of the woods, and the constant discomfort caused by mosquitoes and other forest insects. We do know, however, that all these terrors were braved and the way was blazed for the progressive communities which we enjoy today.

Among early settlers of Bolivar County was Elias Reese Porter, who moved from Laurel Hill, Mississippi, in 1850. He bought the tract of land extending from the Lake place to within three miles of the present town of Rosedale. He sold the upper part to Mr. John Kirk, Sr., and his sister, Mrs. Cousar of South Carolina, who called the place "Waxhaw." Mr. Porter retained the lower part of the land and built a home, a two-story frame house, with galleries all around, upstairs and down. He called it "Terrene," having been impressed with the meaning of this word in Milton's "Paradise Lost." Martha H. Porter, only child of Elias Porter and Sophia McGehee, married John Hampton Jarnigan and lived at Terrene place until 1889.

The property where the town of Rosedale now stands was owned by Elisha Warfield after the war and sold in 1868 to two brothers, Elden and Harris Field. No permanent home was built here until after the war, when a large residence was built by Mr. Harris Field. The home was never occupied by the Fields, however, but was sold to the county to be used as the first courthouse when the county seat was moved to Rosedale.

In the early 50's, Colonel Frank Montgomery came into Bolivar County to buy and clear for a home. In 1854, he bought a large plantation one mile north of the present town of Beulah. He named his place "Beulah plantation" because it was in truth a "beautiful land." In 1855, he built a lovely home on what is now known as "Willow Slough," but which was then a beautiful lake. The house was set in a large grove of magnificent trees with a lawn gradually sloping to the banks of the lake. The house was a large frame building with wide porches, upstairs and down. A capacious hall ran

the full length of the house. As was the practice at that time, the kitchen was built in the yard, and the quarters of the slaves some distance in the rear. Of course, wire screening from the mosquitoes was not heard of in those days, but Mrs. Montgomery thought of a very ingenious plan to protect her babies from them. She had a portable frame the size of a small room built, and this she covered with mosquito netting. She placed her babies' cradle inside this frame and also some chairs so that other members of the family might be protected also.

Colonel Montgomery and his family lived in this home from 1855 to 1863, when it, with the gin and all the negro cabins save one, were burned by the Yankees after a skirmish with the Home Guard Company commanded by Captain Eugene Montgomery. Meanwhile, Mrs. Frank A. Montgomery had fled for refuge with her small children to the home of Dr. Montgomery, who had built a substantial log house on Bogue Phalia.

Captain Eugene Montgomery and his wife, Mary Clark Montgomery, daughter of General Charles Clark, lived during the war in a beautiful new home on Bogue Phalia, which, with its furnishings, was a wedding gift from General Charles Clark to his daughter. One day, the Federal soldiers, under Colonel Curry, came out to this home looking for Captain W. E. Montgomery. When they failed to find him at home, they burned the house in spite of the pleadings of Mrs. Montgomery and her sister, Annie Clark, who was visiting her. There was a handsome piano in the home and one of the soldiers suggested that if Miss Clark would play for them he would have the piano saved. What was his chagrin when she immediately sat down at the piano and played "Dixie." They, however, admired her audacity, and true to their word saved the piano.

The first permanent home to be built by John Venable Lobdell was erected on the banks of Lake Vermillion in 1853. The doors and windows for the home were brought by boat from Memphis and many of the timbers for it were hewn out of the heavy cypress logs, making it a strong, durable house which stood for fifty years.

A beautiful home was begun on the Cook plantation at Dorset Grove near Neblett's Landing, but the war came on and it was never completed. It was to have been a large, two-story, plastered house, set in a grove of pecan and crepe myrtle trees. Although it was never finished, the family lived in an ell of the house for years until it was declared unsafe because of the overflows which had undermined its foundation. The family was rescued from the house by neighbors in skiffs during an overflow.

The old Burrus residence located near the town of Benoit is one of the few old Southern colonial homes to survive the war

and is a typical country mansion, being built for room, comfort, and durability. Every piece of lumber in it except the walnut furnishings was sawed by the plantation sawmill and was of red cypress selected with care and dressed and fitted by hand, even to the doors and Corinthian columns. This old home is historic, having been the headquarters of most of the soldiers who passed back and forth from the Confederate army of the East to the Trans-Mississippi Department. It gave shelter to many noted officers and dispatch heroes during the war; and when the end came, many distinguished officers rested here on their way to the western side of the Mississippi River. Among these, notably, was General Jubal Early, for whom at that time there was a reward offered by the United States Government of \$25,000.

General Clark came to Bolivar County in 1850 from Jefferson County, Mississippi. His home on "Doro" plantation, situated on the banks of the Mississippi, was one of the first to be built in the county. While it was not the old pillared colonial style, it was large, roomy, and commodious—built seven feet from the ground, with wide galleries and a broad entrance. An avenue of cedar trees bordered the driveway. The always present "office" was near the house, while the overseer's house, with the negro quarters lying behind it, was in the rear. Because of the caving banks of the river, the original site of this home was lost before the war. The home was moved back three times. General Clark's home was one of the centers of the social life of the county. Great dinners were given, followed by wonderful balls attended by the neighboring planters and their families, who sometimes traveled fifty miles through forest and canebrake to enjoy General Clark's hospitality. Many travelers by land and water were the recipients of that hospitality for which the old South was famous. This old home was destroyed by the overflow of 1912.

Judge Joseph McGuire settled at Indian Point in 1819. His home was burned by the Northern soldiers during the war. It is interesting to know that the silver from the home was saved by Miss Dewberry, later Mrs. Wise, mother of Mrs. G. P. Rice of Rosedale, who placed the silver in a pillow case and dropped it in a well.

The old Bell place just below Glenwood was settled by Mr. Dickinson Bell, son-in-law of a famous jurist of war times, Judge William L. Harris. Mr. Bell was sheriff of the county just before and just after the war.

On the "Mounds" plantation in the upper part of the county, the Glenn brothers built a large two-story home about 1850, that was burned later. The few ante-bellum homes not burned by the Federals seem to have been at the mercy of fire and flood, so that

only one colonial ante-bellum home now stands intact in the county—the old Burrus home on Egypt Ridge.

Several of the “temporary” homes that the war made permanent homes remain, though not in the original state. Of course, many colonial and other style handsome homes of recent date are now scattered over the county.

In Bolivar County the ante-bellum home, the steamboat landing, travel and trade, the forest trail, and the old plantation life of freedom have all passed away and are remembered only by a few; so we try to preserve their memory in this record of the early days of Bolivar County.

A small house was built on his “Asia” plantation on Egypt Ridge, by Mr. William Sillers early in the 50’s, but he did not move his family there from Port Gibson.

Mr. A. V. Pearcefield built a home on what was then the property of Mr Aaron Noble, about 1854, in which he lived until his death in the 90’s, on Egypt Ridge.

Catfish Point was settled before the war by John V. Newman and his brother. When the Yankees were shelling the banks of the Mississippi River from gunboats, they fired one day at Mr. Newman’s house, one of the shells entering the front door, leaving a big round hole which could be seen in the old home for years afterward.

The home of General Peter B. Starke on Lake Bolivar was burned, as was also that of Colonel Myers.

A comfortable home was built by Mr. W. R. Campbell on what is still known as the Campbell place on the road to the Arkansas City ferry. The old house is still standing.

Bolivar County was just beginning to be settled by the planter class when the war came. The planters with their families and slaves had come and were clearing the forests while occupying small temporary homes—usually log cabins. Later, a few large homes were built, but it was not until after the war cloud had rolled away that most of the larger plantation homes were built. Had the war been ten years later, Bolivar County could boast of many beautiful old homes, but it was not until after the reconstruction period that the county really began to build rapidly. Many of the temporary homes, even, were destroyed by fire or with the changing course of the river.

A temporary, but comfortable, home was built before the war by Joseph Sillers on his Woodlawn plantation, situated just back of the Glenwood plantation that he sold to Mr. George L. Gayden. Here the family lived until they moved to Rosedale in 1884, since which time it has burned.

Suffice it to say, however, that brave men and women came



and cleared the land, making it possible for their children and their children's children to build homes of which the whole state may be proud.

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## THE PERTSHIRE HOME

BY SUSIE GIBERT KNOWLTON

The old Perthshire home was built by Major and Mrs. Torrey late in the 50's or early in the 60's. All the timbers and materials were brought down the Mississippi River on barges. The contract for building was given to a Cincinnati contractor and the building completed cost \$65,000. It was a brick and frame house of twenty-four rooms, set in a grove of fine old trees which were almost entirely destroyed by a tornado in 1907. The house itself was burned in 1902.

The rooms, as in most old houses, were very large, with high ceilings. The third story bedrooms were oddly constructed and with an arched alcove at each end in which the window was placed. Each room had a fireplace. The entrance hall must have been about fifty feet long and twenty-five feet wide.

At the death of Mrs. Torrey, her daughters, Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Buchanan, took possession of the place and lived there until the 80's, when it passed into the hands of Mrs A. E. T. Harris, of New Orleans, who sold it to Mr Pole Knowlton, formerly of Knowlton's, Arkansas