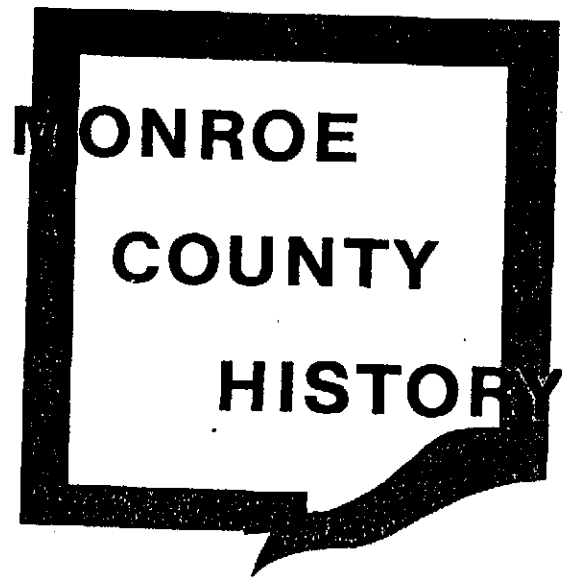


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# THE JOURNAL OF MONROE COUNTY HISTORY OF MISSISSIPPI

VOLUME XVII

1991

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Mary Elizabeth Casey Hamilton, Editor; Jerry June Anderson Harlow, Felix Jerome Lann, Jr.; Marilyn Tackett Richmond; Eleanor Welch

## TAYLOR'S STORE - EAST ABERDEEN

ROBERT IRVIN TAYLOR\*

Mrs. Hamilton, members of the Historical Society, I am going to go over some of the places that were there and also some of the ways of life that existed during that time. I have prepared a map that I hope we can refer to, but one of the things that I left off the map was the blacksmith's shop. We can pencil that in.

When the Corp of Engineers had finished surveying for the Tenn-Tom Waterway, one of the first things that they did before they started any construction was to figure out where the archaeological sites and places of historical interest might be. They planned to excavate these places to see what was there. One of the first sites they chose and had students from Mississippi State University come up and check out was the site which was formerly the original Taylor's Store in about 1925.

This place was also known as Martin's Bluff in earlier days. So, they chose this for its long history of use. It was thought to be a camp and stumping ground for the Chickasaw Indians and one of the possible places where Hernando DeSoto might have crossed the Tombigbee River on his way to the Mississippi River in 1541.

Also, it was thought to be the site of an old cotton warehouse and several residences from the 1800s. It was a high bluff, the only one on the east side of the river in the near vicinity of what would become the town of Aberdeen in the mid 1830s. Therefore, it was used more because of the annual flooding of the Tombigbee River. There was possibly an acre to an acre and a half that did not flood. That is where the stores were all located.

The ferry at Martin's Bluff had its landing behind where the 1925 Taylor's store was built. It circled around behind the store and came up onto the old Amory Road. The first bridge built in 1873, was a single lane span with an iron overhead and a wooden floor with two plank runners for the wheels to go over. Of course, if anyone got on the bridge and someone else came from the other direction, they had to wait for the other vehicle to get off. The abutment on the west side of the Tombigbee River is still visible from the east side of the river.

What was in use then was wagons and buggies and horses and foot traffic. Some of the wagons would be hauling logs. I remember one of the first motor vehicles to use the bridge was Luther R. "Goat" Robinson in his old Model "T" Truck. The bridge was quite elevated and "Goat" would get his load of logs up on the bridge - and he was famous for carrying the biggest load of logs of anybody - he would make a start with that old Model "T", and would go about a foot and put a "scotch" behind the back wheels, then he would make another try, "scotch" it again, and finally would get up on the bridge and across. I think that I have a picture of him with a big load of logs.

The second bridge, which is the one that has just been abandoned in the past few years, was opened July 4, 1930. Of course, the last bridge was opened in 1983. Going back in the 1930s, they thought that East Aberdeen was going to grow and someone got it started to sell lots. That was all along the old Columbus Highway - from the East Aberdeen area toward Columbus for about three quarters of a mile, lots were sold off on both sides of the road. And they were all sold! And it was thought that East Aberdeen would develop, but it did not.

As to the way of life then - mainly the industry was the C. C. Day Lumber Company, and it provided work for hundreds of people. Most of the jobs were held by

widow of Osborn D. Herndon, one of the trustees of the town of Aberdeen at its founding.) Ethelred Lundy Sykes died Feb. 20, 1915, at the age of 67, a few months after writing the sketch on the burial of General Gregg. One of the children of Ethelred Lundy Sykes and Gertrude Frances McQuiston Sykes was the Rev. James Lundy Sykes (1870-1949) who was Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church, Aberdeen, Mississippi, for several years. He compiled a history of the parish that is still used as the basic text. The second child of Ethelred Lundy Sykes and Gertrude Frances McQuiston Sykes was Sadie Sykes Deal (See additional information on her in the article following this one).

Descendants of Rev. Simon Burr Sykes are of interest, also. The oldest child was Indiana Virginia Sykes (1832-1895) who married Francis Marion Rogers in Aberdeen in 1852. Francis Marion Rogers was born in 1812, and was the son of Timothy Rogers (1791-1844) and Mary Miles Rogers (1796-1868). The parents of Francis Marion Rogers are both buried in Odd Fellows Rest Cemetery, Aberdeen, Mississippi. Francis Marion Rogers was a lawyer and served as Chancery Clerk Judge in 1850, Circuit Judge for the 6th District in 1845 and again in 1852. He ran for governor of Mississippi in 1853 and was narrowly defeated. He built his home on the southwest corner of High and Hickory streets in 1850. The house is known today as "Magnolia Hill." In modern times, this was the home of Dr. N. S. Dickson and is presently owned by Dudley Williams. The story has always been told, that Jefferson Davis was a guest in this home, when he visited Aberdeen. During the war, Rogers was Capt. of 14th MS Inf. Reg. Co. E, CSA. He was killed in battle at Fort Donelson, Kentucky, February 15, 1862. His picture hangs in the Mississippi Hall of Fame. Clarence C. Day, Jr. and Frank Rogers Day are descendants of Indiana Virginia Sykes and Francis Marion Rogers.

The E. L. Sykes most familiar to Monroe Countians was Eugene Lanier "Papa" Sykes of "The Old Homestead," who was the son of Georgiana Augusta Sykes (1838-1899) and Maj. Augustus James Sykes and was a second cousin to Ethelred Lundy (E. L.) Sykes. They were both great-grandsons of William Sykes (1760-1813) and Burchett Lundy Turner Sykes (1765-1836).

\*This article was researched and compiled by Jerry Anderson Harlow.

## SEEDS FOR SOUTHERN SOIL THE WAX COMPANY

RICHARD TERRY WAX\*

Mrs. Hamilton, being from Moorhead, you knew my Aunt Verna Donald over at Baird. She was my mother's oldest sister.

(Mrs. Hamilton: "Yes, and I met your mother when she was visiting over there on one occasion.")

It really is a small world.

(Alex Morgan: "I've heard it said that Mississippi is not a state of the union but a family state.")

That is right. Yesterday, I scribbled out a few things and had it typed out on a double space so that I could read it. Just a few notes really, I want to start out with

the building where we are tonight. (EDITOR'S NOTE: The building referred to by Mr. Wax is the East Amory Community Center off Highway 25 North and facing Boulevard Drive, Amory, MS) This building - the land it is on - almost 50 years ago, the city of Amory wanted to build an airport, and the city fathers didn't have enough money at that time to purchase it and the land was available. So, they got my father to buy this land. He didn't draw up the papers on it - Mr. J. O. Prude, Sr. did the paper work on it.

(Judge Fred P. Wright: "I remember, I was the Mayor of Amory then.")

You were the Mayor? O.K., I thought it was done before the war was over, but it was right after World War II then, wasn't it? Mr. J. O. Prude was the city attorney at the time. My father, Cayce Wax, held the land for several years under an agreement with the city, and then when the city had the money, he transferred it to the city, at his cost plus six percent interest.

(Question: "How many acres would that be?")

Well, this land plus the golf course, the armory, the high school, athletic field and everything about to the ditch I believe. The land south of Burkett's Creek was purchased later.

(Judge Wright: "That was part of it.")

That was part of it? I thought that was an additional purchase, Judge.

(Judge Wright: "You may be right, it's been a long time ago.")

The number of acres was a couple hundred acres maybe? Is that close, Judge?

(Judge Wright: "One hundred eighty-five acres.")

Anyway, my dad bought the land and held it for the city. By the time the city was ready to purchase it, they had decided not to build an airport. My dad really didn't know if he wanted to transfer it back or not. He went to Tom Fite Paine of Aberdeen and asked him about it, because the agreement had specified that the land was for airport purpose only. But my dad went ahead and transferred it to the city anyway. I thought of all of this when I found out that the meeting was going to be in this building and remembered that my family had some connection with this land.

I wondered why I accepted Mrs. Hamilton's invitation to be here tonight. I suppose, because Amory and Monroe County are so much a part of me. I am not really a historical enthusiast, like Dr. McDuffie, over here. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. McDuffie also addressed the Society at this meeting.) It's never been a burning desire on my part to be a historian, but I have come to it by default.

My mother, a Callaway with Stegall on her mother's side from Pontotoc County, and my father, a Wax with Burdine on his mother's side from Monroe County, both collected and became depositories of family relics - pictures, Bibles, business licenses, business ledgers, and genealogical information. And now, it seems like I am about all that is left to see after all this, except of course, my children and grandchildren. I have my dad's old desk, just filled with these things. Judge Wright was in my office a couple months ago and I gave him a few things to give to Brynda for the church history. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Brynda Martin Wright (Mrs. Fred P. Wright) is compiling a comprehensive history of the Amory First United Methodist Church.) One of them was a picture of my grandmother and another a picture of the meat market man, Mullins' wife, Mrs. Mullins.

(Brynda Wright: "And one of Mrs. York, Dr. Hollis's grandmother.")

Yes, that's right, these three pictures were some of the members of the Missionary Society. Anyway it has gotten down to me, and I have all of these things.

Of course, maybe my children and grandchildren will become more interested in all of this than I am. One of the things that I brought to show is a - I don't know how to pronounce this word, daguerreotype - is that close?

(Mrs. Hamilton: "That's fine.")

Anyway, I have one here of my great-great grandfather, James Davison (1788-1856) who is buried in Carter Cemetery at Detroit, Alabama. He was the father of my father's grandmother. When my father was a small boy, five years old, he asked his grandmother for this picture of her father. She told him it meant too much to her, but that when she died, he could have it. She died a year later, when he was six, but her daughter, Aunt Jennie Davis - some of you may recall her, she lived on Main Street in the house about where Nail, McKinney & Tait have their offices, one of those houses along there, and her husband farmed a farm up at Smithville.

(Judge Wright: "Was that Gaines Davis?")

Yes, that's right, Gaines Davis. That was my father's aunt and uncle. Well, she held this picture for my father and gave it to him when he graduated from Amory High School, May 13, 1913.

Now, I thought it would be better to do this thing by showing instead of just talking, so here is a copy of a Resolution in honor of Rev. J. A. Whitehurst on Sunday, March 13, 1892, as presented by N. T. Wax, Supt. Sunday School, Smithville, M.E. Church, South, and published in *The Amory Star*. I brought a copy, in fact I have the original cut-out from the paper. I made copies, I was afraid to bring the actual one.

#### RESOLUTIONS

Adopted in Honor of Rev. J. A. Whitehurst by a Rising Vote on Sunday, March 13th, 1892.

From time immemorial it has been a custom to show forth in some public manner a high appreciation of eminent public services rendered and to add living testimonials to the virtues of the good and the great; and whereas, the Rev. J. A. Whitehurst, who for three years resided in our midst as pastor, neighbor and friend, has severed his connection with us and entered upon the evangelistic work in connection with the good and great Geo. Inge, and whereas, he must necessarily be thrown in communities that have not had the opportunity of realizing his many shining traits of character as we have, be it

Resolved 1st, by the members of the Smithville M. E. Church South, that we commend him to the public as an able and fearless defender of our Christian religion, and a minister who leaves our community without a blot upon his fair escutcheon, and carries with him our love, esteem, and our prayers in his great work.

Resolved 2nd, that we, the people of his charge, will miss his kind words, his ever bright and cheerful face, in his pastoral visits, which so often fell like a benediction upon our homes.

Resolved 3rd, that a copy of these resolutions be furnished *The Amory Star* for publication.

N. T. Wax,  
Supt. Sunday School.

J. H. Gettys, Secretary.

(Brynda M. Wright: "He was the first pastor of our church.")

But this was Smithville.

(Brynda M. Wright: "I know, but we were on the Smithville Charge. Mr. Whitehurst was our first pastor at the Amory Methodist Church.")

Was he really? I didn't know that.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The Smithville Methodist Church had been established c1851 and the Amory Church in 1889. The Town of Smithville was organized in 1846 and the City of Amory in 1887.)

N. T. Wax was my grandfather. He was Supt. of the Sunday School of the Smithville M. E. Church, South in 1892. He moved to Amory from near Smithville in 1896, two years after my father was born. He continued farming for awhile and then in 1898 opened N. T. Wax Grocery Co.

Going back farther, here is a license certificate No. 8, issued January 6, 1843, to George Etter Wax in Marion County, Alabama. He married Eleanor Araminta Davison, February 6, 1843 in Marion County, Alabama. These were my father's grandparents. George Etter Wax died September 6, 1870, at Smithville, where he is buried. George Etter Wax was born July 1, 1818, in Greensburg, Kentucky. Eleanor Araminta Davison was born August 24, 1825, in York District, South Carolina and died December 21, 1920 at Smithville, Mississippi.

Here are two ledger sheets from George Etter Wax's store at Millville, Alabama (near Detroit), dated October, 1852. I have the actual ledger that these came out of, but just brought these photo copies of two pages. I am going to read a few things that I pulled out of these:

2 plugs tobacco 60 cents  
7 lb. coffee 1.00  
1 gal. whiskey 63 cents  
1 gal. whiskey 50 cents  
2 pr. small shoes 50 cents  
1 set of overcoat buttons 20 cents  
1 set knives & forks 2.00  
1 shaving box & brush 45 cents  
1 blue blanket 4.50

Now, I couldn't figure out why some of the whiskey was 63 cents a gallon and some was 50 cents a gallon. Was one of them aged longer than the other, do you think?

Here is a copy of James Davison's will signed, sealed and delivered on this the 30th day of April in the year of our Lord, One Thousand, Eight Hundred and Fifty-Six. Judge John D. Terrell of Marion County, Alabama, certified the last will and testament July 25, 1856. The will distributes his 13 slaves in the same manner as his . . . "real estate, known as my Millville and sixteenth section land and 80 acres on which Mr. Plunkett now resides, and seven quarter sections on the waters of Splunge in the County of Ittwamby (sic) and State of Mississippi." All was to be equally divided among his 8 children; except, that he specifically left out the first monies, a thousand dollars, for his crippled daughter, Margaret Jane Davison. He appointed as executors of his will, his son-in-law, George Etter Wax, and his son, William W. Davison.

After George Etter Wax died in 1870, his widow, Eleanor Araminta Davison Wax, managed a farm consisting of a full section of land, ran a general mercantile store in Smithville, and made her home a hotel for students attending the Smithville College. She also knitted a bedspread for each of her eleven surviving children. At the time of George Etter's death at the age of 52, Eleanor Araminta was left with eleven children aged 3 years to 25 years. My grandfather, Nathaniel Terry Wax was 14 years old. Eleanor Araminta Davison Wax outlived four of her children and eight survived her.

As I said before, my grandfather moved to Amory in 1896 and opened his store in

1898, selling groceries, ice and coal. He was the first ice dealer in town. My grandfather, Nathaniel Terry Wax (1856-1927) had married Elizabeth Ann Burdine (1855-1943) in 1878. The Burdine family had been in Monroe County since about 1844. John Cayce Wax, my father, was born April 10, 1893. In 1913-14, my father attended Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, but the money ran out, and he had to return home to help his father (my grandfather). He mainly collected debts on groceries put out on credit. My grandfather must have been a very kind and generous man. He died before I was a year old. I know my mother had a very warm feeling for "Big Poppa".

In my teens, I would spend a lot of time hunting and fishing and some how became close to Roy and Callie Wax, who had a fish camp restaurant right on the river north of Bigbee. I would stay with them literally days at a time. Roy was my father's first cousin. Roy's father was William Wax who was a brother to Nathaniel Terry Wax. Callie, Roy's wife, was a tremendous teller of stories. We would sit before the log fire at night and Callie would tell one story after another. At a time, when some of the family lived in Amory, and didn't have enough food to eat; Callie said, Uncle Terry (that's what they called my grandfather) would bring them perfectly good food, and tell them he was going to throw it away, but thought they might be able to use some of it. Callie said, that he was a wonderful man and one of the most generous that she had ever known.

Now, I think that this next paper was given to me less than a year ago by Helen Sims, out at Becker. Now, what was I out there for? - To see my wife get her hair done or something. Helen said to me, "Dick, come over here, there's something I've been wanting to give you for a long time." And she gave me a page out of *The Amory Progress*, dated June 30, 1917. It looks like the front page, and right at the top of that page there is an advertisement that says, "N. T. WAX GRO. CO. Cash buyer of poultry and eggs, and all produce from the farm. The quantity we can handle is unlimited. If you don't get our price before you sell, we will both lose money, so bear in mind the firm longest in business." So he had a pretty good idea of how to promote things, even back then.

Now, the first seed that my father bought, he traded for a wagon load of peanuts in about 1915, that he bought from a farmer. He said he doubled his money on that trade. That got him to thinking about something other than groceries and ice and coal. By the way, back in those days, they traded hides and furs, and bought nearly anything that the farmers and trackers had to bring in. Then in 1917 and 1918, my father went into the Navy and spent his time. In fact, he went from Amory, there were three Amory men who went together, my father, Pete Hollis, and Carl Tubb - they all went in at the same time. And I believe that they all joined the Navy. In 1919, he married my mother, Rozelle Calloway (1896-1969). She was an English teacher in Amory and was originally from Pontotoc County.

In the 1920s, my father worked with the County Agents to bring in improved seeds for the farmers. In the 1930s, he brought the first carload of ryegrass into Mississippi and the first carload of hairy vetch into Mississippi. In 1926, 1927 and 1928, he was active in oil and gas leases when the Carter well came in out here. In fact, I think I still have some royalties on some land around here that he bought back in those days.

In 1933, Amory banks were open when a lot of banks around us in other towns were closing, and he could get cash here and go to Calhoun County and purchase

cowpeas and bring them back to Amory and load them in railway cars. He shipped car loads of cowpeas to distant markets, to places like St. Louis and Baltimore. That was quite something in those days.

In 1940-41, he closed out groceries and concentrated completely on the seed business. He hired Florence Roberts, whom I wish were here tonight because she could tell a lot more than I can, as secretary. C. P. Alexander worked in the store, I'm sure a lot of you remember him. He owned a grocery store before he started working for my father. Then there was John Oliver Moore, a black man, very intelligent, and probably one more . . . I remember when they would make tags, they would work at an old stand up desk. My Father and John Oliver Moore would write out the tags to put on the bags of seed that they were getting ready to ship.

My uncle, G. B. Wax, was traveling for the company. He lived in Jasper, Alabama and traveled in South Mississippi. He lived in South Mississippi part of the time. A little later on, my father hired Mr. T. H. Underwood from Kossuth. Mr. Underwood had been an employee of the Department of Agriculture. Mr. Underwood traveled North Mississippi. Next hired was Marshall Brown, who worked in the store and later in the warehouse. Locke Pierce, Sr. worked for the company, and for a time Locke Pierce, Jr. did too, before he went into the Army. Locke Pierce, Sr. was quite a talker, himself. I'm sure most of you have read his sister's history of Smithville that she wrote. In fact, Locke Pierce had it published for her. Miss Jessie, his sister, was over 90 years old when she wrote this. We also had Bert Hein out of Memphis, Tennessee, who worked for us, and Bill Johnson and A. G. Bailey in Oxford. We've had a lot of good fine people to work for us.

I came into the business in 1948, then left for a couple of years, went to New York and worked in Import-Export. I went to school a little and returned in 1951. My brother, John, who had been in the Navy in World War II and had worked with Anderson-Clayton in Texas right after the war, returned to Amory about 1950. On February 1, 1952, we formed a partnership of my father, my brother and myself. John withdrew in 1968, moved to Florida about 1970, and my father and myself continued as a partnership.

Well, along about late 1971 or early 1972, although the partnership was fine, I knew that the way the business was going and the way the tax laws were constructed, we needed to incorporate. My father was a little leery of this, he was somewhat conservative. I talked to several people who he had confidence in. Our prime banker at that time was Peoples Bank in Tupelo, with Mr. C. C. Eason the man in charge. We were talking to Mr. Eason, one day, with both my father and me on the phone. I told Mr. Eason that we had been considering incorporating and asked him what he thought about the idea. He said two words, "Do it!" That's all that had to be said. My father said "Go ahead and try it." So, we incorporated in February of 1972. Incidentally, I was the first president of the corporation.

From here on, it is more like current events. I have a little more on the Wax family and the Methodist Church. From the time the Wax's moved to Amory in 1896, they have been staunch members of First Methodist Church in Amory. N. T. Wax was on Building Committees and active on the Board of Stewards. Betty Wax, my grandmother, was active in the Missionary Society and a devoted church worker. Fannie Burdine, if anybody ever knew Aunt Fannie, they knew that she was a character. She was an old maid. She could tell any preacher exactly what he was supposed to preach and how to go about it, either before the sermon or after the

sermon. She served as a missionary in the slums of New York about 1900 or so. There was nothing that Aunt Fannie didn't have an opinion on. Cayce Wax, my father, was a charter member of the Nine Plus Bible Class and church treasurer for many years. I believe it was thirty years that he was church treasurer. He was always there when there was any activity at the church. Truly, the church was his most important attachment. My mother, Rozelle Wax, was active in the Missionary Society. She was a Sunday School teacher, and one of the founders of the Willing Workers Sunday School Class.

On looking back over what I have said, I thought that maybe there needs to be more about the Burdine side of the family. The Burdines have all been Methodists. My grandfather's father, Rev. John Fletcher Burdine, Jr. (1811-1882) was a Methodist preacher. My grandmother, we called her "Big Mama" - "Big Mama's" brother, John Calhoun Burdine (1846-1882) was married to Desdemona Stegall and they lived at Stegall Place, east of Smithville. I believe, that this information is in *The Monroe County History Book* under Wax/Burdine, and it appeared in the Amory paper in an article with the picture of the old home, that the Leech family lives in now, and it is still standing. (EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the Burdine-Stegall house constructed in 1860.) Desdemona Stegall, we called her Dessie - her grandfather, the Rev. David Harkey (1793-1861) was a Methodist Preacher and a charter member of the Alabama Conference in 1832. Dessie and John Calhoun Burdine had a son who moved to Texas. His son, Alton Burdine (Dessie & John's grandson), was a vice president of the University of Texas at Austin and also was Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences with over 25,000 students. Alton's son, John A. Burdine, is a prominent physician at M. D. Anderson Hospital in Houston, Texas. At least he was in 1982, and I assume he is still there.

I have with me a letter from Tommy Anderson to me, dated June 16, 1982. His mother, Burdine Clayton Anderson was my grandmother's niece; his grandmother, Martha Fletcher Burdine Clayton, was my grandmother's sister. I will read just an excerpt out of this letter.

I am pretty sure my mother's given name at birth was Desdemona Burdine Clayton, and that her parents called her "Dessie." She didn't like this and converted her middle name to a given name and changed the pronunciation so that it became "Burdeen". Thus the old surname has now been hung on a substantial number of grandchildren, nieces, great-nieces, etc., in Houston and elsewhere. I had never before known the source until you told me of Desdemonia Stegall.

There are so many items that have been collected over the years, that it is hard to know what else to tell about. I have an old family Bible that is 150 years old. There is a book of pictures from the middle 1850s and the old ledger dated 1852. I hope these things may have been of some interest.

(Brynda M. Wright: "Tell us some more about the seed business, I understand that you sell seed all over the world.")

Well, we buy seed from farther away than we sell it sometimes. But, some of the seed that we sell will end up in foreign countries, and we buy a good bit of seed from Australia in particular. We used to import more than we do now, but this country has become a very fine producer of seed. So there is now more exported from the United States than is imported.

(Mrs. Hamilton: "Where do you buy in the United States?")

In the United States, we buy primarily out of Oregon, California, Arizona, Texas, Florida, and pretty much all over. The northwest is one of the fine seed producers of

the world. There is a valley in Oregon that is just a fabulous grass growing area. they can grow seed more economically than any other place.

(Brynda M. Wright: "Is it mostly grass seed . . . and what about Hawaii, do you buy or sell in Hawaii?")

Mostly grass seed, and we have shipped seed to Hawaii. Actually, what I did was import the seed in from Australia and then shipped it out to Hawaii and sold it to the large plantations there.

(Question: "What kind of seed do you get from Australia?")

Carpet grass and Dallas grass. It is almost impossible to raise it in this country, for some reason. They have raised some in Alabama, but the production was low and there was a fungus that attacked it.

(Mrs. Hamilton: "That is wonderful! You have put Amory on the map through the seed business. I don't think people realize how extensive the business is.")

(Jerry A. Harlow: "The Anderson and the Clayton that you were referring to, are these the same as the Anderson-Clayton Cotton Co. people in Memphis?")

Yes, my grandmother's sister was the mother to Will Clayton, Ben Clayton, and cousin Burdine who married Frank Anderson. The Anderson-Clayton Cotton Co. was formed by them plus M. D. Anderson who was a bachelor, never married and lived in the Rice Hotel in Houston, Texas. He is the one who left the money which went to what is now M. D. Anderson Hospital in Houston. Tom Anderson was on the board of M. D. Anderson and was one of the administrators of the will of M. D. Anderson. The will was not clear about just how the money was to be used. Tom, who is a lawyer, by the way, was instrumental in seeing that the money went to this cancer hospital.

Anyway, Will Clayton was my father's first cousin. Another first cousin, was by my grandmother's father's first wife. He was Will Burdine. He went to Miami and started Burdine's Department Stores.

(Mrs. Hamilton: "Thank you very much, we sure do appreciate your being here.")

\*Mr. Wax gave his "Living History" in November 1991 to the Monroe Historical Society.



Elizabeth Ann Burdine and Nathaniel Terry Wax



Wax Seed Company and Grocery corner of Main St. and 2nd Ave. North, Amory, MS

## CARMARGO

DR. SAM JAY McDUFFIE\*

Mrs. Hamilton, ladies and gentlemen, I am not really a historian, I have been busy practicing medicine so long and so hard that I haven't really had time for history. And when I look back at my history grades at the colleges I attended, they weren't too hot either, I realize that I am strictly an amateur.

My knowledge of Carmargo is limited. I only knew what I heard on the street, and that my uncle owned the property. I had heard that there was a town laid out in Carmargo on Town Creek and that steamboats used to come up there, and for a long time that was all I knew. I had never even been out there and I am just two miles away. So, my wife was nice enough, not only to coach me on this, but — we went to Carmargo yesterday, my first visit — and we spent the afternoon.

It was enlightening to me. Mrs. Yeager's daughter has a nice home there and I asked her, where was the center of the town. She said, "You're standing on it." It was beautiful. It was on a bluff and a real scenic area. My wife Dot, a historian, enjoyed going out there too. We made a few notes, gathered what data we could and maybe we can help Mrs. Yeager get in the news here.

The main thing that the Historical Marker says — it is just south of the Town Creek bridge — on Highway 45, is . . . "Two miles northwest was the flourishing port of Carmargo, named by veterans of the Mexican War Campaign. The town had a

landing, port, schools, cemetery and churches, and the Confederates won a skirmish here, July 14, 1864." That is the wording on the Historical Marker. So, we stopped and read that. I had never even read that. But, I talked with Betty Guin who lives there on the place, she is Mrs. Yeager's daughter. She gave us a lot of information.

I think Carmargo probably started flourishing around 1840 or 1847. The trustees who founded it met on this bluff. They were dreamers and thought it would be a great port city. I can't imagine it myself — a steamboat coming up Town Creek. If you've ever seen the creek, of course the creek has changed, it must have been more like the Tombigbee River in those days. The digging for farming interests and canaling the creek has changed the course of the creek. So, where Carmargo had a port and a landing, that has all disappeared. Though there is some evidence that Town Creek did once run there.

The dreamers that dreamed up Carmargo were E. Hornberger, C. W. Cade, J. J. Hill, and R. C. Clark. Mr. Clark was the only one that I can relate to personally. I have had friends that were related to him. I don't know if you recall George Moreland or not, but he was from Carmargo and was a real good writer for *The Commercial Appeal*, a Memphis, Tennessee newspaper. So those were the dreamers and they started this port around 1840-1847.

The town was founded and surveyed by M. H. Buchannon (the maternal great-great grandfather of Mrs. Maria H. Riley of Nettleton). The site of the town is three miles west of Highway 45 on a local road that leaves the highway two miles south of Nettleton. The town site is on the peak of a small knoll which according to a United States Geologist is an unusual out-cropping of hard lime rock. The town and cemetery were on top of the hill, but there were a number of homes located on the slope which went northward toward the ferry.

Carmargo derived its name from that of a Mexican village near which the 2nd Mississippi Regiment camped during the Mexican War. Carmargo was a shipping port for cotton and grains. The steamboats that came up the river to the port, were loaded with area planter's produce and shipped out for Mobile. Carmargo was a church and school town. There were three churches and a good school, taught by the Rev. A. H. Feamster. It was a very wealthy little town. Apparently there were a number of homes there. There must have been between five and seven hundred people who lived there. There is some evidence of where the churches were located. There is a cemetery. (To E. Alex Morgan) — You might need your wires to work on this because the cemetery is in pretty bad shape. (EDITOR'S NOTE: E. Alex Morgan has been very helpful in locating lost graves with dousing wires.) We went down to the cemetery. The graves that we saw were sunken. We found a marker for Mr. Weatherstone, I believe . . .

(Mrs. Hamilton: "Featherstone, Featherstone.")

Featherstone! Evidently, he was buried there and his son, also, who was 16 or 17 years of age. The graves were brick lined. Many of the bricks had been pushed up. This cemetery really needs some restoration. (EDITOR'S NOTE: The graves are those of Edward F. Featherstone (1797-1857), and his son William A. Featherstone, who died in 1857 at the age of 18. A daughter, Lucy Featherstone Boone (c 1819-1853) the wife of Clark Boone, is also buried at Carmargo.)

They must have had a post office, too, because this letter was found that had a Carmargo Postmark on it. A copy of the letter was given to me by a lady from Emory University who came to Carmargo to see what was out there. She stayed a day or