

Pictures and information courtesy of

Thomas E. McMillan Museum

and

Alabama Room

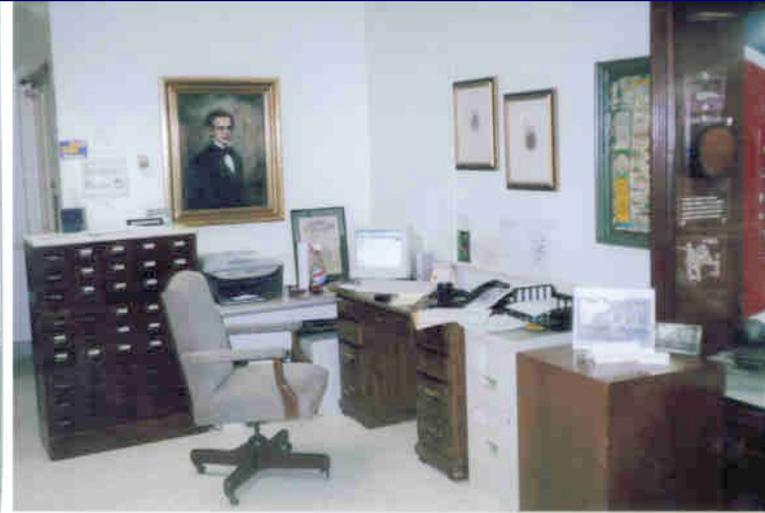
(Escambia County Historical
Society)

Jefferson Davis Community
College

Museum



Alabama Room



ATMORE, ALABAMA
and
Escambia County



A Brief History

© 2007 Jerry Simmons

Escambia County

Alabama Counties, 1890



Escambia County was created by the Alabama legislature on 1868 Dec. 10, from parts of Baldwin and Conecuh counties.

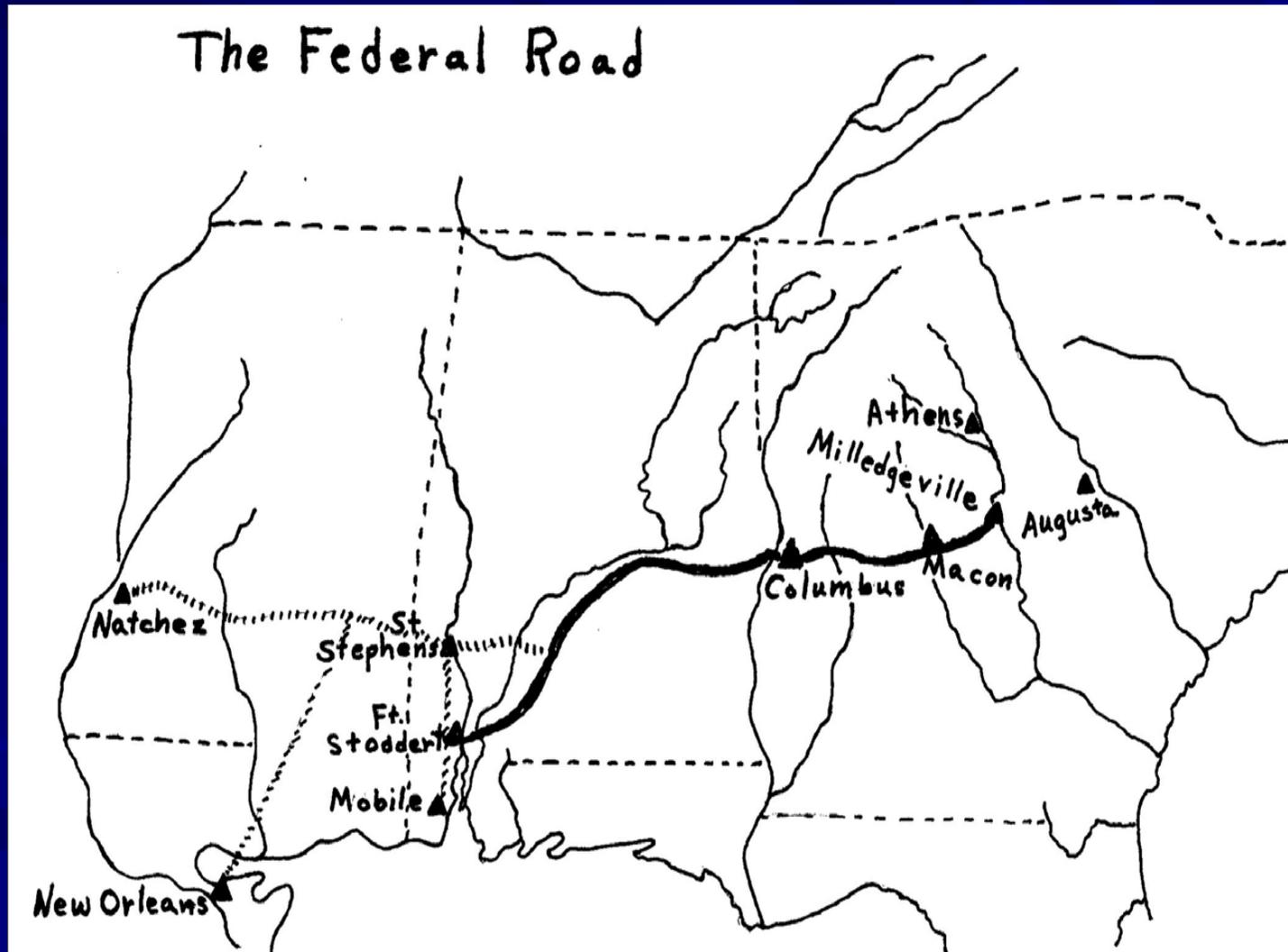
The word "Escambia" is believed to come from the Choctaw Indian language, meaning "cane-brake" or "reed-brake."

Escambia County is bordered by Monroe, Conecuh, Covington, and Baldwin Counties in Alabama and Escambia County, Florida on the south.

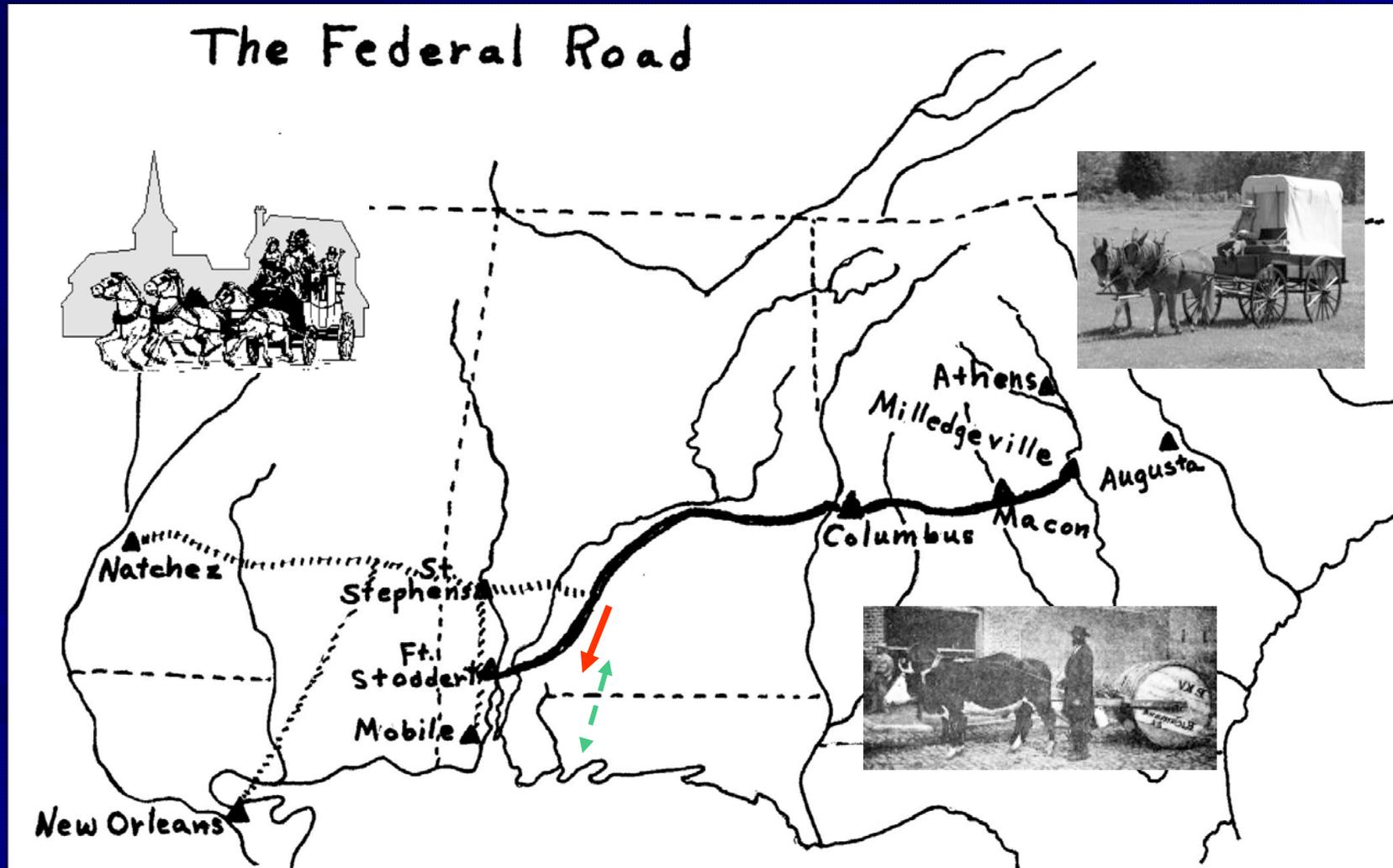
Factors Affecting Escambia County's Settlement

- Agriculture
- Forests and lumber
- Market Accessibility

Agriculture and migration



The Federal Road Map



The Federal Road

The Federal Road was only the second such road along the Gulf Coast to receive federal recognition.

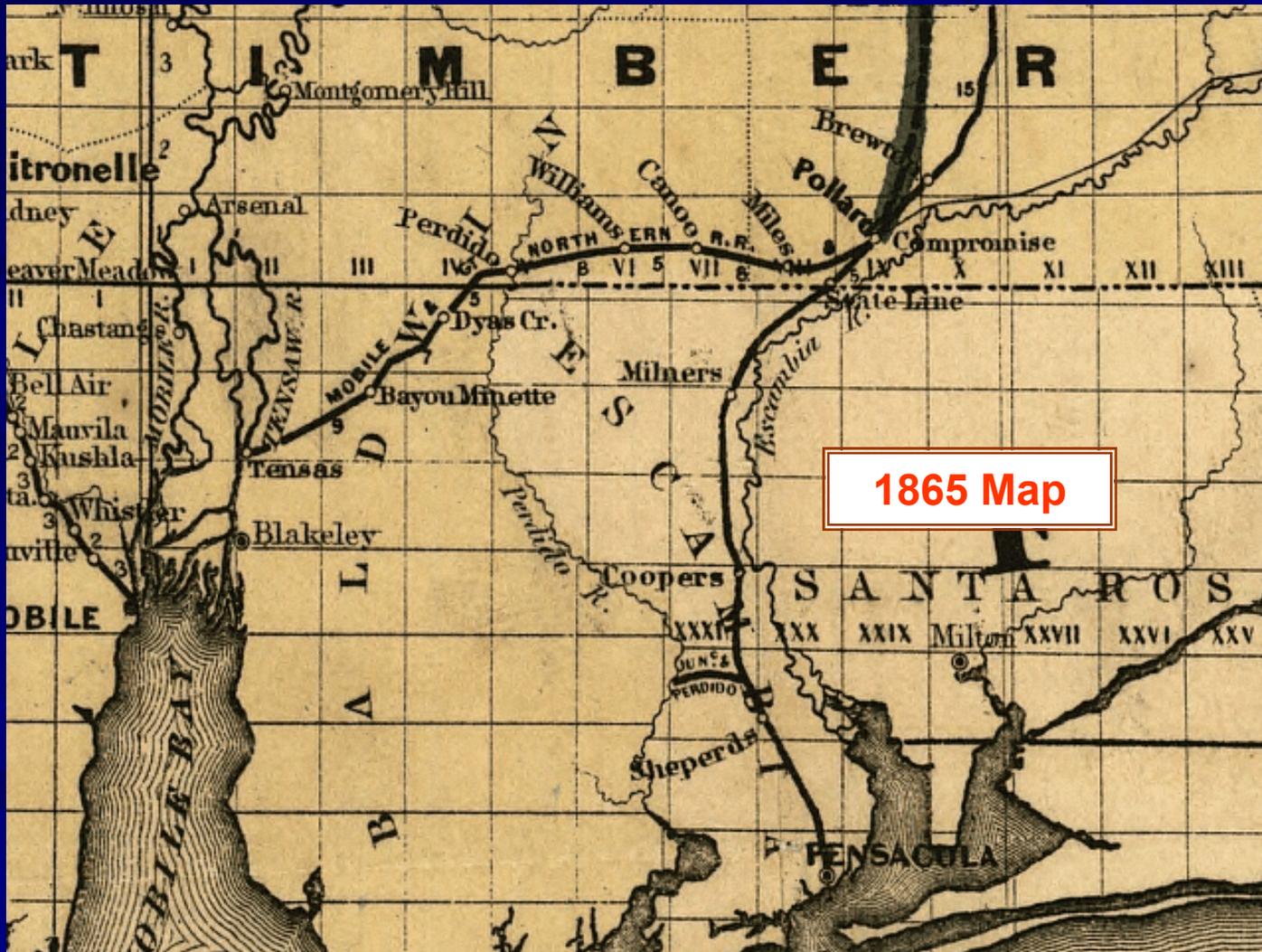
As an aside, in 1822 the Alabama Legislature passed an act allowing one David Peoples (Peoples) to operate a toll bridge and stage station on the Federal Road.

Peoples charged tolls accordingly:

- 4-wheel carriage 50¢
- 2-wheel carriage 37 ½ ¢
- Man and horse 12 ½ ¢
- Footman 6 ¼ ¢
- Every led horse, loose or pack horse 6 ¼ ¢
- Every head cattle 4 ¢
- Every head of hogs, sheep or goats 2 ¢
- Wading the stream cost nothing

(“History of Escambia County,” by Annie C. Waters)

Miles Crossing



Sullivan/Wilson Station/Nokomis



**S.R. Sanford, one of SW
Escambia Co.'s early
lumbermen**

(ca 1890)

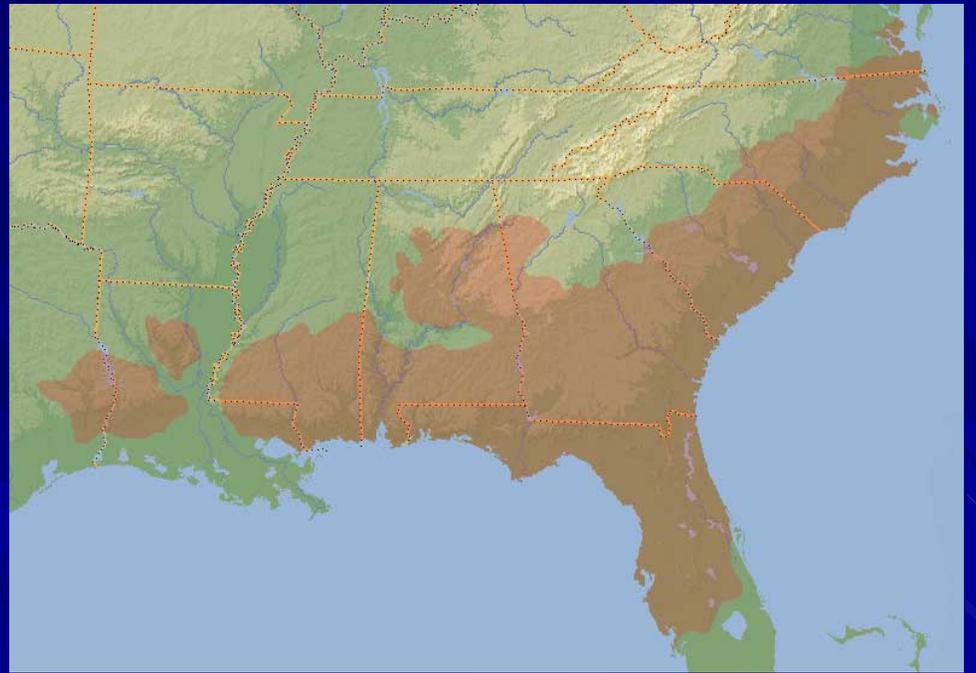


Some 20 miles of logging railroad track was laid by the Escambia RR in the mid-1890s. The first engines were called “Pole Engines,” because their wheels were cupped to run on the rails, which were simply logs (poles) laid on the ground

Forests and Their Migration

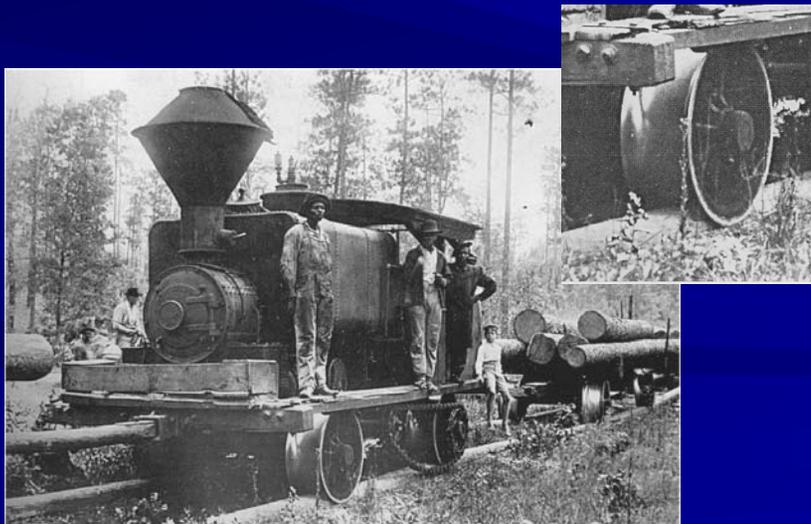
*Pines were Atmore's
Friends*

Forests of long
leaf pine were
plentiful in southern
Alabama.

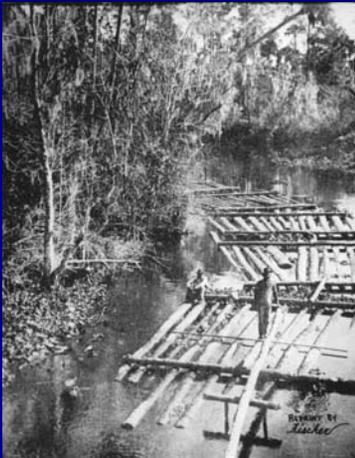


Long leaf pine growth area

Early Logging in Escambia County



Methods of hauling logs



Log Brands in Escambia County in 1890s

Harold Mill Co.	The Letter	"H"
McMillan Mill Co.		
	The Letter	"M"
Lindsey Lumber Co.		
	The Letter	"L"
Emmond & Ellis Timber Co.		
	A Heart	♥
Riverside Plantations, Keego, owned by S.S. Foshee Estate		
	Heart	♥
W. B. Wright Co.	Trefoil	♣
W. B. Wright Co.	Triangle	▲
M. L. Canady	Block C	[C]
Atkinson Lumber Co.		
	The Letter	"U"
T. R. Miller Mill Co.		
	Circled X	(X)"
Hall's Creek Logging & Manufacturing Co.		
	The Letter	"S"



The Incorporators of Hall's Creek on 8/28/1896 were William Mashburn of Wilson, Alabama; Joseph J. Rant, Wilson, Alabama, and J. J. Sullivan, Pensacola, Florida.

Sawmills

- Sawmills were being built everywhere, but the larger ones had the best chance of survival
- In late 1876, W.N. Carney built a store, a grist mill, and a sawmill in downtown Atmore
- Even church services were held in the mill
- The mill was the center of activity because of its impact on the town (commissary, for example)

Other uses for the pine forests

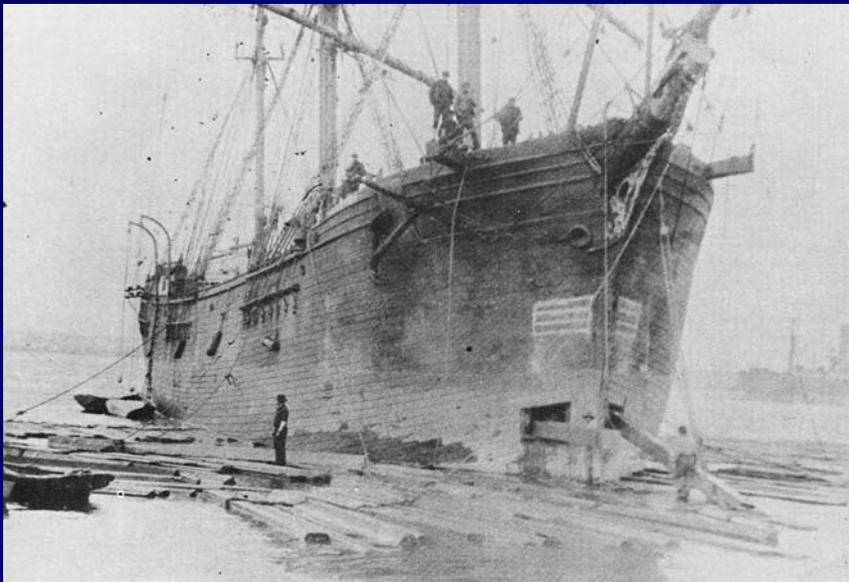
- Turpentine (Naval Stores) industry boomed

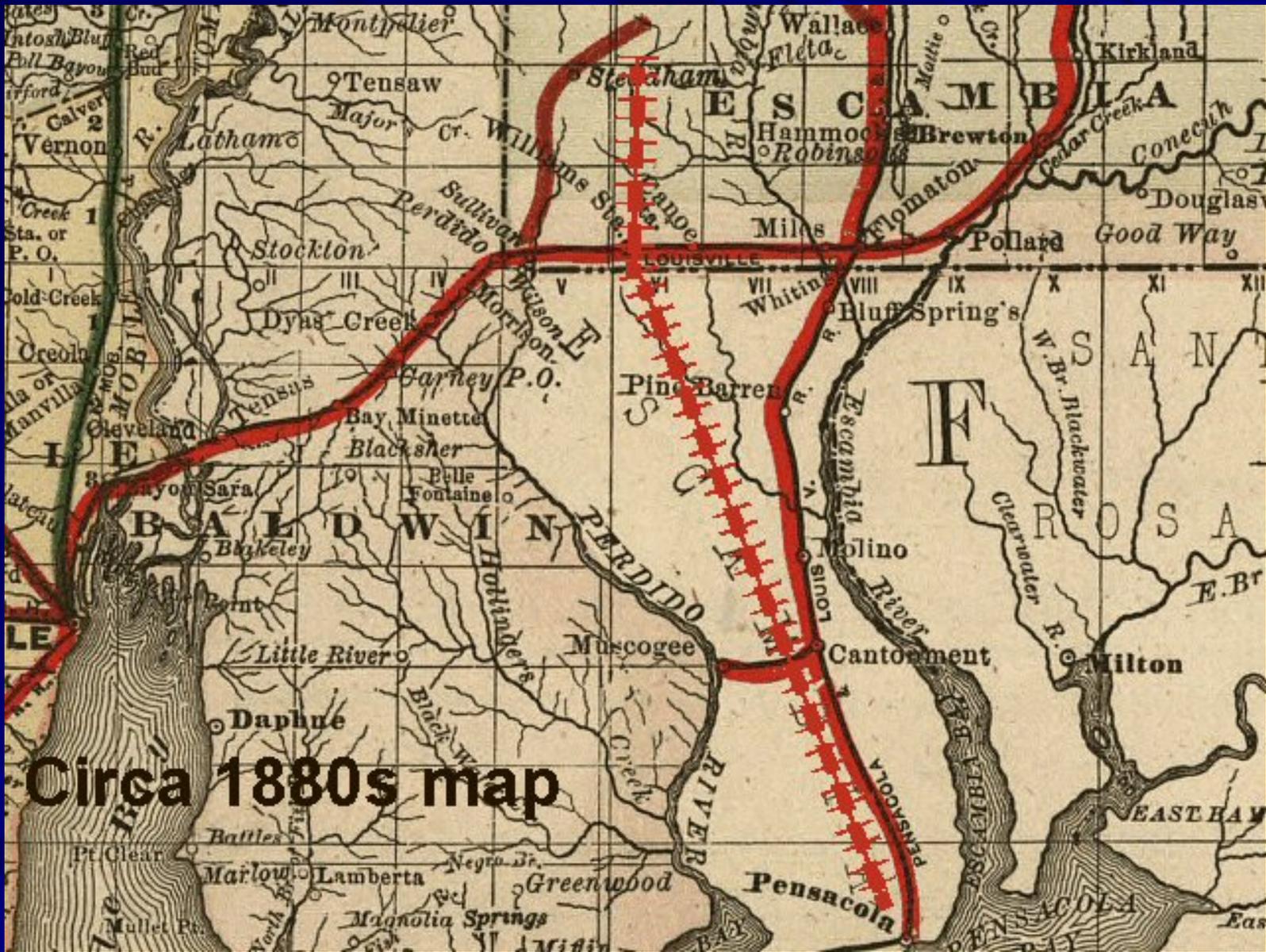


“Catfaces” collecting sap from pines into the drip cups - The drip cups were plentiful at one time but now you have to really search to find one

Market Accessibility

- A railroad to Alabama was considered to be the key to growth and prosperity for Pensacola





Circa 1880s map

The Frisco Railroad

Was first named The Georgia, Florida and Alabama. It was also called the G, F, & A, which some said meant Gophers, Frogs, and Alligators!

Frisco Station

The GF&A had a station near where the line crosses the L&N today. In the early days, trains backed out of the station to get onto the main line.

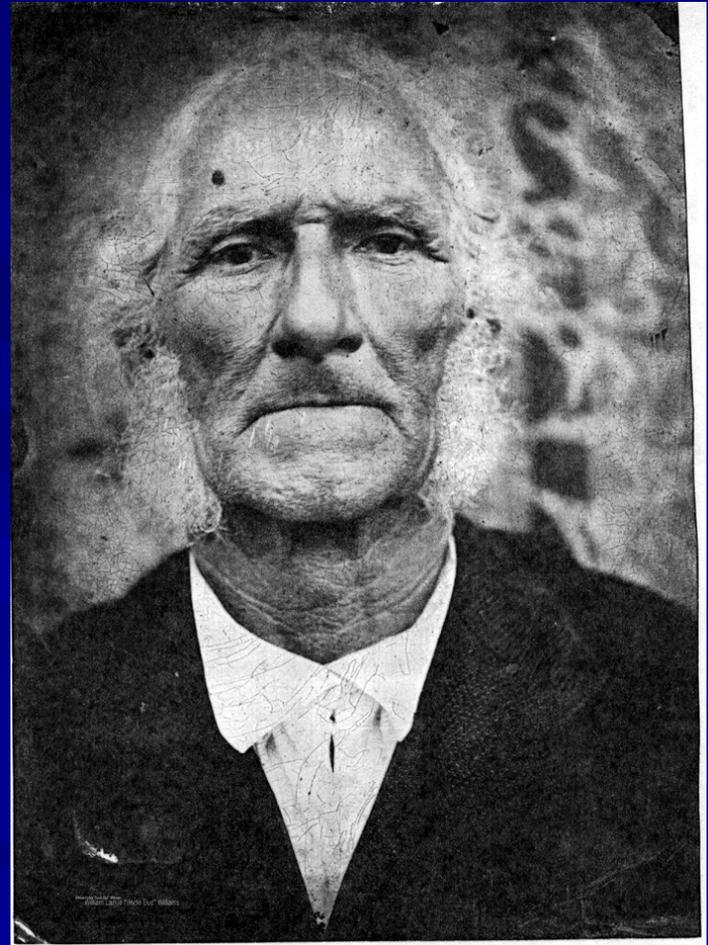
The Frisco later built their station a few blocks north on the main track.

Early Escambia Railroads

- Ala-Fla RR from Montgomery to Pollard chartered in 1850
- Mobile and Great Northern completed from Pollard to Tensaw 1861; into Mobile 1872
- Pensacola-Selma completed 1881
- Escambia RR ca. 1890
- Gulf, Florida and Alabama (Pensacola-Frisco City) 1914
- Many logging RRs and spurs

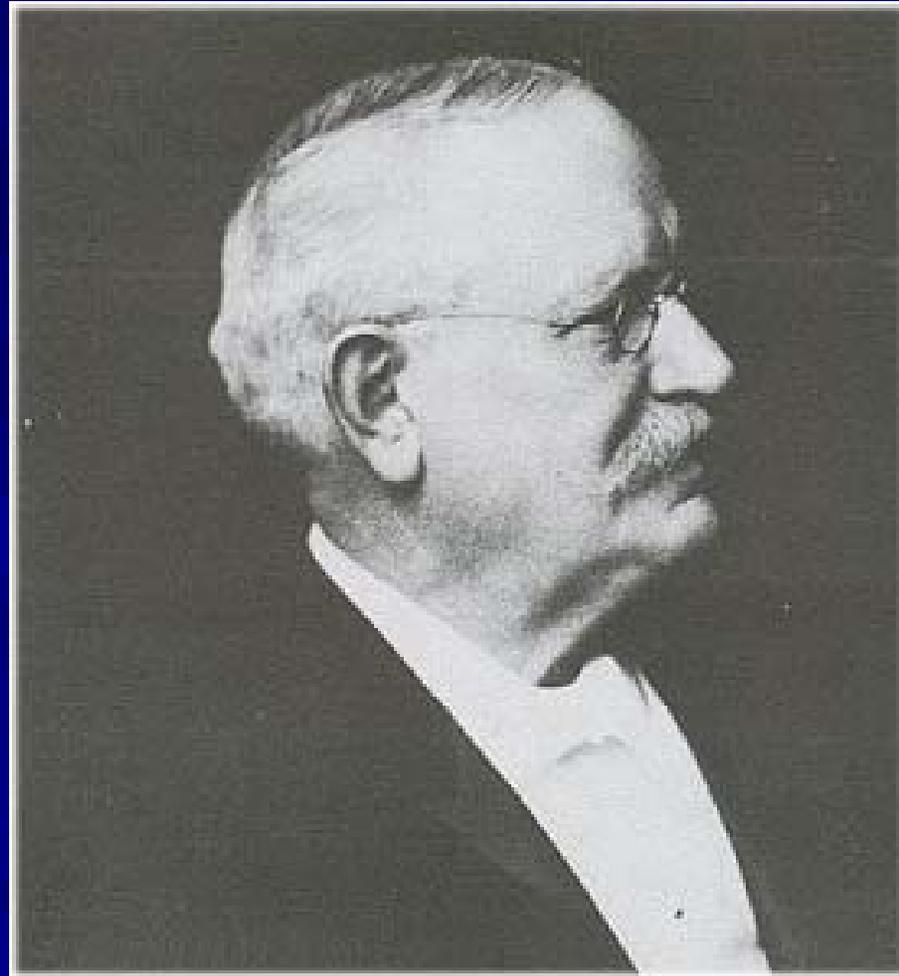
Atmore's Beginnings

At first Atmore was only
a supply stop for
William Larkin ("Uncle
Bud") Williams



C. P. Atmore

In 1897 the name was changed from “Williams Station” to “Atmore” in honor of C.P. Atmore of Louisville, KY, the General Ticket Agent on the Louisville Nashville Railroad which by then stretched to Mobile.



1870s



In the early 70s there were only two buildings: one dwelling and a post office, plus the railroad.

Local Transportation

“Hacks,” as horse and buggy “taxis” were called made daily trips to and from Blacksher Camp (Uriah) and Frisco City. This was almost an all day trip.

School children from Canoe caught the “Short,” a train running from Pensacola to Mobile and back daily, to go to school in Atmore or Flomaton.

An early Escambia Road

During the 1870s roads were primarily winding “settlement roads.” These were roads built by settlers who followed the path of least resistance.

In the early 1880s, the County Commissioners wanted to shorten and improve roads. They ordered that a new road be surveyed from John Bowman’s (Evansville) along the railroad to the Baldwin County Line. This took the new road by way of Canoe and Williams Station and is the basis for today’s U.S. 31, along the same route.

Elsewhere in the County

- Escambia County was created in 1868
- Pollard was busy town
- Pollard was the first county seat and first county commissioners' meeting was held there February 1869
- First courthouse burned in 1879 possibly by arson by someone who lost a trial
- Most records were lost

Pollard's loss was Brewton's Gain

- Pollard lost the new railroad junction
- Election set for April 12, 1881
- Pollard won with 131 more votes than there were registered voters
- A recount showed there were actually 215 votes too many!

Social Life in Early Escambia

- Walks
- Buggy rides
- Gathered at depot
- Churches



**Couple out for a Sunday ride near
Range, Alabama**

Churches

During this time the social life of every small settlement centered around its churches.

One of the earliest churches in Atmore was a little cedar log church.

Schools

- First public schools in Alabama began ca 1890s



The first consolidated school bus in Alabama.
Organized and put into operation by Ben L. Tew
in Sumter County in the Fall of 1912.

Escambia County Historical Society
Courtesy Escambia County Board of Education
Reprint by Jerry Simmons

Modernization

- In 1898 there was one telephone in Atmore
- First electricity was supplied by Carney Mill Company ca 1905
- Atmore was incorporated in 1907

Some newspapers

- *Atmore News*
- *The Atmore Spectrum*
- *Atmore Record*
- *The Escambia Record*
- *Atmore Advance*

Cash Crops grown in Escambia County

- Satsumas
- Tobacco
- Cotton
- Corn
- Potatoes
- Strawberries
- Cucumbers
- Radishes
- Watermelons

Sources

- History of Escambia County, Alabama, by Annie C. Waters – available from the Escambia County Historical Society
- Canoe, History of a Southern Town, by Kevin McKinley – available from Kevin McKinley of Canoe
- History of Atmore – Atmore Chamber of Commerce
<http://www.atmorechamber.com/hist.htm>