

## Chapter III

### TRANSPORTATION

The Choctaw Indians spent most of their time in villages established throughout the area which they controlled until the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek resulted in most of these Indians giving up their lands and migrating west. Since they were social-minded, they visited from one village to another. They frequently gathered together to go on big hunts, and on occasion, assembled to defend against, or make war on other tribes. Because of these several needs for communication between the Choctaw villages, paths had been established between the centers of Indian population. These paths, which were mere trails, and not adapted to wheel traffic, served the Indians for a long time, but were not of much use to the white settlers who came into the area after the land was opened up for settlement.

The only north and south road of any importance which ran through the area which became Grenada County was the Rankin-Memphis road. This road had been established some years before the signing of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek. Its primary purpose was to give a route by which the people of South and Central Mississippi could cross the Choctaw country and reach Memphis and other Tennessee towns. When the North Mississippi Choctaw lands were made available for purchase by white settlers, this road was the chief route by which settlers from South and Central Mississippi reached the new area. We have been able, by a study of the field notes of D. W. Connely who surveyed the western part of the area which eventually became Grenada county, to establish the approximate location of the Rankin-Memphis road. It came into that part of Carroll County, which is now a part of Grenada county, in the eastern portion of Township 21, Range Two East. In a general way it followed the range of hills just east of the rich delta section of the area. It ran almost due north for a portion of its course across Carroll county, but as it reached the vicinity of the area where the village of LeFlore is now located, it began to bear northeast to a point about two miles south of the town of Chocchuma. At this point the field notes state that it crossed the Rankin-Elliott road. This cross road extended from this point, by way of the place sometimes known as "Duncan's Crossing" to the Elliott Indian Station which was located just a short distance south of the present town of Holcomb. The Memphis-Rankin road then began to bear more to the east, passing near the area where Holcomb is now located and on to the vicinity of Dubard, where Connely notes that the road crossed the farm land of Chief Turnbull. This point was the eastern boundary of the survey made by Connely and the man who surveyed the area on to the east did a much less adequate job in his field notes. He does not note the location of the roads which he crossed in his survey. The route might be lost were it not for the fact that a deed given to Hardy Perry, a half-breed Indian, helps us relocate the road. In that deed Perry received a deed to the land about the place of his residence, which land is described in the deed as being located "on the Rankin-Memphis road about six miles north of the Yalobousha River." By a check of the land records we find that Perry's reservation was in the Riverdale community, a little northwest of Grenada. In Connely's field notes he had mentioned crossing the Rankin-Memphis Road at a point which we discovered to be in the vicinity of Oxberry. Evidently, after reaching the vicinity of Perry's place, the road bore to the northwest passing through that part of Tallahatchie county which is now a part of Grenada county. This would place the road very near to the place where, in 1834, George W. Martin established the Auverigine Plantation. Mr. Martin had been a staff officer with General Jackson in the battle of New Orleans, and was a lifelong friend and supporter of the General in his political battles. He was the grandfather of the late W. B. Hoff who for many years was a prominent



businessman and constant booster of Grenada. Mr. Hoffa's mother, the daughter of Mr. Martin, was born on the plantation mentioned above. From the vicinity of Oxberry the Memphis-Rankin road continued on into the area which is still a part of Tallahatchie county. Oxberry is located on the land reserved for Chief Oxberry and his children. The chief had been one of the interpreters who assisted the land agents at Chocchuma. The only other road mentioned in the field notes was the Elliott-Mayhew road. After the Elliott Indian Mission had been established at Elliott, men from that station went across the country to set up another station somewhat north of the present city of Starkville, so we presume that they established some kind of passable road between these two Indian stations.

We do not have much information relative to the manner of establishing roads in the area after white settlers came to it. We do have an early record relative to the marking out of a road from Parsalia, located on the Yocona River in the northeastern part of Tallahatchie county, to Tusahoma on the Yalobousha River. Another early road was marked out from Charleston to the ferry at Chocchuma which road, after intersecting the Rankin-Memphis road a little south of Chocchuma, extended on to Carrollton. It was not until after the founding of the towns of Pittsburg and Tullahoma that any passable road was established through the eastern part of the area. Early settlers who came down the Natchez Trace and turned off that route near Houston reported the trails westward as almost impassable.

As the several towns of the area were founded and developed, roads were marked out between them. The people of the area which now comprises Grenada county had to go to four different countyseats to transact business. Those in the northwestern part of the present county of Grenada went to Charleston for this type of business; those in the southwestern part of the county went to Carrollton; those in the extreme southeastern part of the county went to Greensboro, and those in the remainder of the county went to Coffeeville. Of course these above mentioned towns were county seats of those four counties out of which Grenada County was created. Roads were marked out from the northwestern part of the county to Charleston; from the southwestern part to Carrollton; from the southeastern part to Greensboro, and from the central and northeastern parts of the county to Coffeeville. We do not have any authentic records of the establishment of most of these roads. The Yalobousha County Minutes of the Board of Supervisors were lost in a fire, so we have no official record of the establishment of much of the early road system of the area which is not Grenada county. Since Grenada county was not created until 1870, the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors does not record the time and manner of the establishment of the county roads, but does indicate the existence and names of the several roads, in those parts of the minutes which give the names of the men appointed as "Road Overseers." Overseers were named to supervise the maintenance of the following designated roads: Grenada-Graysport; Grenada-Houston; Grenada-Providence; Grenada-Pittsboro; Center Road branching off the Grenada Providence Road at a point four miles east of Grenada; Grenada-Duck Hill; Grenada-Coffeeville; Graysport-Torrance; Grenada-Carrollton; Grenada-Hardy Station; Grenada-Troy; Grenada-Greenwood; Charleston-Carrollton; Grenada-Greensboro; Troy-Charleston; and Tusahoma-Grenada. It is probable that at the time of the creation of Grenada county these roads were about in the same locations and the same miserable condition as they had been during the early years of their establishment. They were supposed to be maintained by the people living along the various specified sections of the roads. The county did maintain bridges and ferries, but otherwise spent no public funds on road maintenance. This condition was to continue for a quarter of a century after the creation of the county before the supervisors began to let road maintenance be bid in by private contractors. This was a little improvement, but it was not until well in the twentieth century that the roads were graded and covered with gravel. It was still later that some of the roads were paved.



These county roads served, in a measure, to enable the people of the various towns and communities to go from their homes to the other localities in the area. They also served, during several months of the year, to allow farmers to take their produce to markets in the trading centers, and to take home necessary supplies purchased in those trade centers. During the heavy rains of the winter months this transportation over the county roads became very difficult and at times, almost impossible. The merchants in the trading centers who bought farm produce, and supplied the farmers with necessary supplies, needed a better system of transportation than these crude dirt roads. This transportation to the outside world was supplied first by water transportation, and later by railroad transportation.

#### The Yalobousha River--Early Economic Lifeline

Living as we do, in an age of rapid and efficient transportation, it is hard for us to envision the transportation difficulties faced by the early settlers of this area. Lacking all modern facilities such as railroads, well-developed highway systems, and speedy transportation by motorized vehicles, the early settlers had to depend upon un-improved, and at times, impassable trails which were called roads, and upon uncertain water transportation. Today, as we look at the Yalobousha River, shallow and filled with snags and sandbars, it seems a very unlikely channel of commerce, but in the early years of the settlement and development of our area, it was an economic lifeline connecting the settlers with the outside world. An indication of its early importance is the fact that the early towns of the area--Chocchuma, Troy, Tusahoma, Pittsburg, Tullahoma and Graysport--were located on the river. Because of a watershed, much of which contained heavy vegetation, much falling rain was absorbed to a considerable extent, resulting in a more gradual flow of this water into the tributaries of the Yalobousha river. This resulted in a more even level of water in the river channel than we have today, but even so, any heavy river traffic had to be confined to a few months in the winter and spring when heavy rains maintained a sufficient depth of channel to bear heavy traffic. During these months the agricultural products sold in the markets of the outside world went down-stream on the river while the up-stream boat trips carried cargoes to stock the shelves of the river-town merchants. During these early years small steam-boats, keelboats and even flatboats were engaged in Yalobousha river traffic. Some early steamers made the long trip from Grenada to Vicksburg on the Mississippi river, but the keel boats and flatboats, having only manual motive power while going up-stream, confined their trips to the shorter run to Williams Landing on the Yazoo River. This was a transfer point where goods were exchanged by the larger Yazoo river boats, and the smaller Yalobousha river boats. It was located near where Greenwood was later established. The keel boats and flatboats had a comparatively easy trip down-stream, but on the return trip upstream had to use long poles to push their craft up-stream, or to attach ropes to the boat and walk along the banks towing the vessel. This was not conducive to heavy loads being carried up-stream by craft of this sort. For a quarter of a century the Yalobousha bore most of the commerce of the region situated along its banks, and even later, it made a considerable contribution to certain types of transportation. When better methods of transportation began to divert most of the long haul commerce from the river, it continued to serve short haul traffic to Grenada from communities down and up the river during the winter months when impassable roads made it almost impossible for those people to get their cotton and other agricultural products to market by use of the county roads.

So far as we know, the first boats, other than small craft used by Indians and itinerate white traders, to come up the Yalobousha River were the keel boats used by Nat. Howard and Thomas Isom. Although they did not make the journey together, both tied up their boats in the vicinity of the plant of the Mississippi Cotton Seed Products Company. At that time the site was covered



with a cane-break. Later it was to become a part of the town of Pittsburg. Howard set up a tent here and began trading with the Indians. Isom took his goods overland to the territory occupied by the Chickasaw Indians. They came up the river in the spring of 1832, over a year before the sale of the Choctaw Lands began at Chocchuma. We have no information as to the first steamboat to reach this area. The second steamboat to reach the vicinity came after the establishment of the two little towns of Pittsburg and Tullahoma. Its arrival was announced by the PITTSBURG BULLETIN in its issue of December 10, 1835: "Our town was visited on Saturday last, by the steamboat RICHMOND, Capt. Savage. This is the first steam boat which has arrived here this season, and the second that has ever penetrated so far up the Yalobousha as Pittsburg, but surely two experiments are sufficient to test the practicability of navigating the river by steam. The Captain of the RICHMOND informs us, that between this place and Tuscahoma, there are fewer obstructions to steam boat navigation, with the exception of projecting trees, than below the latter place, and that with a small expenditure the navigation of the river to that point might be rendered excellent. With this fact staring them in the face, will not the citizens of Grenada, Pittsburg and Troy unite their efforts for the accomplishment of an enterprise so beneficial to those towns and their vicinities, as would be the improvement of the navigation of the Yalobousha?" Steam boat activity on the river increased from an occasional visit such as the one described above, to the regular schedules runs up and down the stream. We don't know how early regular schedules were established, but do have information to the effect that such a schedule existed in 1842. On January 22, 1842, the WEEKLY REGISTER carried the following advertisement: "YALOBOUSHA PACKET-The new light draught, staunch built steamer YAZOO PLANTER, S. M. Hall, Master, has now commenced her regular trips, and will continue to run as a Weekly Packet, during the season between Williams Landing and Grenada. For freight or passage, having very excellent accomodations, cabin all in state rooms." Steam boats did not oust keel boats as a means of river transportation. On January 29, 1842, the WEEKLY REGISTER carried the following advertisement: "Just arrived the new and splendid Keel Boat HENRY CLAY. From Maysville, Ky., with a full cargo of produce consisting of the following articles, Viz.; Four, best quality, best rectified whiskey, Bulk Pork, Lard, Bourbon Whiskey, five years old, assorted stoneware, cheese, wooden ware, small lots of medicine suitable for families, Window Glass large sizes, blue and black ink, Tin Ware, Books, Cog., Brandy, Pipes, Ploughs, Cigars, good quality chairs, Beef in bbls., a few barrels of best Ale, Salt in bbls., and various other articles which will be sold low for cash. The planters and citizens are invited to call and examine them. I will also take freight for New Orleans on low terms with privilege of re-shipping at Williams Landing." The above quoted advertisement is interesting, not only as it contributes information relative to Yalobousha River transportation, but also as an indication of the kind of goods in demand in Grenada nine years after the first white settlers came into the area. Bourbon whiskey and cigars were not usually found in pioneer settlements so soon after their establishment.

As the river began to get low during the late spring, river traffic gradually lessened, and did not pick up until the fall rains caused the river to rise to a satisfactory level. During the dull summer months the boat owners repaired their craft, and solicited business for the fall and winter season. On June 4, 1842, the WEEKLY REGISTER carried the following advertisement: "To Planters: The undersigned will run their good and substantial Keel-Boat 'NORTH STAR' between this place and Williams Landing the ensuing season, and will be ready to take COTTON, or other Freight, and give Bills of Laden through to New Orleans as soon as the river rises." River boats were owned by local residents of Grenada, and engaged in competition with boats not locally owned. Some of the local boat owners were in the business merely for the money to be earned, but we learn that other citizens banded together to build or purchase



boats in order that they might give enough competition to other owners to keep rates from becoming exorbitant. We learn that in 1840, three prominent local citizens were involved in a boat trade. William O. Bryan sold to A. C. Baine and George P. Morton a one-half interest in "the Keel-Boat MONROE, and the Flat-Boat S. S. PRENTISS."

Since most all cotton produced was shipped by river, the problem of storage of bales of cotton, ginned before there was enough water in the river to justify navigation of the river, was a problem which was met by rough sheds called cotton sheds. At one time one of these cotton sheds was located on the lot at the intersection of Depot and Doak streets on which is located what is known as the Roane Building. It is probable that this shed was constructed after the traffic on the river ceased to be of importance, since during the hey-day of the river traffic it was more convenient to have the cotton sheds located on the banks of the river. On September 24, 1842, one of the owners of such a cotton shed solicited business in the following advertisement carried by the WEEKLY REGISTER: "Having procured a good Cotton Shed, lately occupied by Col. Morton, and put it in first rate order for the reception and preservation of Cotton, we are prepared to Store any Freight which may be consigned to our care, and will preserve it in good condition Free of Charge for storage, if shipped this season on our boats--if shipped on any other, the charge being at the usual rate. We will take cotton through to New Orleans at the lowest customary prices." The advertisement indicated that A. White and J. D. Jackson were agents for the owners of the enterprise. No indication is given as to the location of the above-mentioned shed, but it was probably on the river. We do have positive information relative to the location of cotton sheds on the banks of the river. This information is derived from an advertisement inserted in the WEEKLY REGISTER on November 5, 1842. In this advertisement George W. Lake informs the public: "Freight Storage: I have a cotton shed on each side of the river; and planters and others who may wish to haul cotton to this place can have their cotton stored on either side of the river at customary rates. I have also two good Keel-Boats, 'HENRY CLAY' and 'NEPTUNE' that will run between this place and Williams Landing through the ensuing season, and freight cotton and merchandise at customary rates." In the early fall of 1842, the river traffic was in full swing. On October 7 of that year, the following news item was printed in a local paper: "Something New: The Keel Boat NORTH STATE started in gallant trim from our wharf on Thursday last with a load of cotton for New Orleans and a market. Capt. E. Kerwin had the honor of commanding the first boat that ever descended the Yalobousha in the month of October." As late as March 11, 1843, the river was still navigable. On that date the newspaper HERALD ran the following news item: "The river is still in good boating order. Most of the cotton had been carried off and the boats are all returning with rich cargoes to our merchants and others. By the way, our friend Munford has some of the finest apples ever brought to this place only \$1.75 per bbl. Oats, Potatoes, Flour, Onions etc. are plenty in town, and low, for cash." On May 27, 1843, THE HERALD had an editorial relative to the prospect for increased river navigation: "The experiences of the last ten years have demonstrated the practicability of navigating the YALOBOUSHA RIVER from Williams Landing to this place, with STEAM BOATS from four to five months during the business season of the year, with as much regularity and certainty, and with much more rapidity, than half the expense, than it is now done with Keel Boats. Then why not have a regular packet between this place and Yazoo? Why do not planters & merchants of this vicinity unite together as one man and encourage the construction of a Steamboat especially adapted to their wants? The saving to the country in down and up freights in a single season would be greater than the outlay of capital necessary to effect so desirable an object. We are glad to perceive that the public mind is already directed to this subject by our enterprising fellow-citizen, W. W. Munford, whose proposition to raise one hundred hands for ten days in the month of August (a season when the planters are generally at



leisure) to remove obstructions on the banks of the river from this place to the mouth of the river. We understand that Maj. Munford, if properly encouraged, will have a regular Steamboat Packet from this place to Williams Landing the next freighting season." The editorial writer states that the greatest obstacle to a united front among business leaders to encourage the establishment of a regular steam river packet, would probably be the opposition of the owners of Keel Boats who had rather large financial investments in these boats. The editorial continued in the following words: "Some of our most enterprising merchants have withdrawn a portion of their capital from their regular business and invested in Keel Boats in order to prevent exorbitant rates in the transportation of their own freight."

Captain Munford must have succeeded in receiving the necessary encouragement to justify his project since on July 27, 1844, the paper HARRY OF THE WEST reports: "We are glad to learn that Capt. Munford has a Steam-Boat now building at Cincinnati expressly for this river, and will be in the Yazoo in October ready for the first rise to come up to Grenada. There are still some little funds yet on hand, and there are several who subscribed last year, both in labor and money, that have not yet paid. Capt. Munford intends commencing work again on the river in the first part of August, and is desirous that all who intend to help him, should come forward with their labor or money next month." From the above quoted news item it appears that a number of interested people had joined hands with Captain Munford in the project to clear out obstructions to river navigation. On August 17, 1844, the above named newspaper gives a progress report: "THE RIVER: we understand that the little company under the direction of Maj. Munford has proceeded as far as Troy, sweeping the river clean as they go. It shows what a little perseverance will do, and how easy the Yalobousha might be put in such order as to become an invaluable auxiliary in the prosperity of this part of the country. Let us all then put our shoulders to the wheel; Now is the time."

On December 14, 1844, the same paper proudly tells of the successful termination of the efforts to make the river safe for steam boat navigation: "The fine Stean Boat ENTERPRISE, Munford Master, arrived here on Thursday last. The ENTERPRISE carries 800 bales of cotton and was built expressly for the navigation of the Yalobousha river from this place. Captain Munford deserves great credit for his spirited efforts to improve our river and to put in trade so fine a boat. We hope that he will be liberally patronized and amply rewarded for his efforts. The ENTERPRISE left Tuesday on her downward trip." On January 18, 1845, the editor boasts of the speedy river transportation now available to the people of Grenada and vicinity: "Arrived on Sunday last, the Steam Boat ENTERPRISE, Capt. Munford, 18 hours from the mouth of the river. This is the quickest trip we believe that has ever been made. She brought freight to sundry merchants of this place, but as they don't advertise we shall not name who they were. She may be expected to make trips weekly as long as the water is sufficient; of which there is an abundance, and more at this time falling." On November 15, of that same year, the editor was concerned about the lack of water in the river channel: "The Yazoo River is so low at this time that our merchants cannot procure their goods; some are waggoning from Memphis, some from Yazoo City. Our Majestic Yalobousha is many feet below low water mark; but no danger of starving yet--wild ducks, squirrels, fish and rabbits are in abundance."

It is probable that Yalobousha River traffic followed the uncertain pattern given above until the arrival of railroads to Grenada. After that date, river traffic practically ceased, with the exception of some short-haul Keel Boat runs up and down the Yalobousha and Schooner river, to carry supplies and bring to Grenada cotton for the benefit of planters who lived near the rivers, and who had difficulty in making trips to and from town over



the roads which were usually almost impassable for any considerable load during the winter months. There were also spasmodic attempts made to run cargo to the Yazoo River, which continued to serve as an important channel of commerce. These attempts were made in protest to rates sometimes charged by the railroads on freight shipments.

In 1879 the Grenada County Board of Supervisors made a feeble attempt to improve the river channel. They passed the following quoted order: "Ordered by any money in the County Treasury not otherwise appropriated for the purpose of cleaning out the Yalobousha River in the County of Grenada, and that Dr. William Mcswine, Capt. R. H. Turner, and Capt. R. N. Hall, be and are hereby appointed a Committee to authorize the drawing of the said money when the work is done, or as it is being done." A report in the GRENADA SENTINEL, published in February, 1882, may indicate that this effort on the part of the Supervisors to clear part of the river from obstructions, was made in behalf of the short-haul Keel Boat traffic on the river. That report in the form of a letter written from Graysport reads: "We are expecting a visit soon from a large size craft, a flatboat now in Grenada, sails for this place tomorrow morning, as we learned today. The boat is laden with corn, meal and other necessary supplies purchased by our enterprising merchants Messers, Parker and J. Walters & Son. The boat, I believe, is owned by Captain Perkins, and will probably get a full load of cotton on its downward trip, as the roads between here and Grenada are almost impassable with a loaded wagon. This opportunity to move their cotton and bring supplies should be hailed with delight by the farmers along the Yalobousha." Another account of the influence which the bad winter roads had on short-haul traffic on the river was given by the GRENADA SENTINEL on February 25, 1882: "The Keel Boats plying the Yalobousha river and the Schooner east of this place, came down last Sunday afternoon loaded with cotton. One of the boats takes freight up the Yalobousha River and the other up the Schooner, and we understand, both are doing a profitable business. The boats ought to be encouraged in their undertaking, as it saves our farmers a great deal of hauling over the bad roads. The boats on their return trip carried over two thousand dollars worth of goods purchased from two of our popular merchants."

In December, 1883, the GRENADA SENTINEL reports another venture at Steamboat navigation of the river: "The Steamboat J. H. Williams, recently purchased by the Grenada Oil & Compress Company to run between this point and Greenwood for the purpose of bringing cotton seed here, landed at our town on Wednesday the 19th inst., loaded with 1300 sacks of cottonseed. The boat is 92 feet long; 22 feet wide and one hundred tons burden." Evidently this attempt to bring delta cotton seed to the Grenada mill was not profitable, since the March 1, 1884, issue of the SENTINEL reports the boat as operating under a new owner: "The steamer J. H. Williams, Capt. Walter Crump Commanding, is now making regular semi-weekly trips between this place and Greenwood. The WILLIAMS was formerly owned, the Grenada Oil Mill, but is now the exclusive property of her Commander, and prepared to do a general freighting business between here and Greenwood. She makes connection at that place with packets for New Orleans and all intermediate points." In a late, and final report on the steamer, the SENTINEL passes on this information: "The steamer J. H. Williams has transported 488 bales of cotton during the cotton season on 1883-1884." This very small use of the steamboat for the transportation of cotton probably put an end to this venture. At least, the newspaper had no further new items relative to it. In order to explain this continued effort to use the river as a transportation channel to Greenwood, we should remember that Grenada had no railroad connection with Greenwood until April, 1901.

Keeping in mind the fact that railroad connection had been made with Greenwood in the spring of 1901, we are a little surprised to find that some of the best businessmen of Grenada organized a company for the purpose of



transporting freight to and from Greenwood by way of the river. On January 3, 1903, the GRENADA SENTINEL printed the following quoted news item: "Grenada Transportation Company was organized last Wednesday with the following officers: Joe Newburger, President; Robert Doak, Vice President; J. P. Broadstreet, Secretary; George W. Field, General Traffic Manager and Treasurer; Board of Directors: Joe Newburger, K. W. Hornsby, Robert Doak, D. L. Holcomb and E. L. Gerard. The steam tug MOLLETTA has been purchased from J. W. Stipe and will tow as many as two barges...The promoters of this enterprise are determined that they will ply the waters of the Yalobousha for at least two years." Since the completion of the Illinois Central branch line to Parsons, thereby giving Grenada Rail connection with Greenwood, would seem to mitigate against the success of the river transportation venture, it would seem that this was a very foolish move on the part of hard-headed businessmen such as those mentioned above. We find the explanation of the cause for the venture in an out-of-town newspaper. In January, 1898, the CARROLLTON CONSERVATIVE printed the following quoted news item: "The citizens of Grenada held a meeting last week for the purpose of discussing propositions looking to the establishment of a steamboat line between Grenada and Yazoo City. This is a good move, and should they succeed no doubt would prove a great benefit to Grenada. The greatest object in opening the steamboat line is to secure a cheaper freight rate which will be a great saving to the people." It is rather ironical that the last service which the river rendered the community should have been its use as a threat against the monopolistic freight charges when the railroads had superseded the river as the economic lifeline of the region.

#### Railroad Development in Grenada County

Railroad development in North Mississippi came at least a quarter of a century later than such development in South Mississippi. Until the removal of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians from the north part of the state there was little white settlement in the area. After the land was opened for purchase by white settlers, it would take almost twenty-five years for the economy of the region to justify the construction of railroad lines into the area. For this period of time Grenada and Grenada county would have to continue to look upon the Yalobousha River as the principle channel of transportation to and from outside points of importance. South Mississippi had been settled at an early date, and by the year 1831 some of the planters whose property was not located upon or near navigable streams, began to advocate construction of short railroad lines to transport their cotton to Mississippi River Ports. In 1831 Judge Edward McGehee and other planters of Wilkinson county organized, and had chartered, the Woodville & St. Francisville Railroad. This twenty nine mile railroad line was completed just about the time the Federal Land Office began operation at Chocoma. When the first settlers in this region were obtaining their land, the planters in Wilkinson county were shipping their cotton by rail to a Mississippi River port. In 1834, the year when the little towns of Pittsburg and Tullahoma were organized, a group of Natchez businessmen applied for a charter for the Natchez & Jackson Railroad, and actually constructed seven miles off the road in anticipation of the granting of the charter. By 1836, the year Pittsburg and Tullahoma united to form Grenada, three other proposed railroads had been chartered. They were the Vicksburg Commercial & Banking Company; the Grand Gulf and Port Gibson; and the Lake Washington & Deercreek. Although these roads were charted in different geographical locations they had two things in common: each line ran roughly in a east and west direction, connecting the interior of the state with the Mississippi River, and each had, as a part of its operation, a Banking House to finance railroad construction. The building constructed in Woodville to house the offices and banking business of the Woodville and St. Francisville Railroad is still standing. It was for many years the location of the town post office. The Grand Gulf & Port Gibson road was designed to connect the interior of Claiborne county with the then thriving river port of Grand Gulf



which was an important river town until the 1850's. The Mississippi & Alabama road, chartered in 1836 was organized for the purpose of linking the river port of Vicksburg with the country east in the direction of the new capital of the state which was just coming into being. In the early 1830's the L & N road, the only road of that period which proposed any extensive mileage, was being built across the south part of the state in the direction of New Orleans. All the chartered lines were not constructed, but all of them, constructed or proposed, were intended to connect the interior of the state with the Mississippi River, which for many years thereafter would continue to be the main route of transportation for the commerce of a large portion of the nation.

This philosophy of considering railroads as merely feeder lines for the more important Mississippi River transportation system prevailed for a quarter of a century, and it was not until a few years before the outbreak of the Civil War, that railroad men were bold enough to begin thinking of establishing a north and south system which would challenge the river as the chief means of transportation of the traffic which was following the river in these directions. The first Mississippi railroad to begin construction of a line which was not constructed to feed traffic to the Mississippi River, was the New Orleans, Jackson & Great Northern. Early in the 1850's this road began construction, working north from New Orleans in the direction of Jackson. By 1856 it had completed its line north to Canton, Mississippi. One hundred and eighteen miles of this road was in Mississippi. This was the first serious railroad threat to the dominant position which the Mississippi River had held in attracting to its waters the commerce of the south part of the state. Just a little after the above mentioned railroad began construction of its line, the Mississippi Central Railroad began construction of 187 miles of rail line from Canton, Mississippi to Jackson, Tennessee. This line reached Grenada in 1860. When it reached Jackson, Tennessee, a little later, the three hundred and sixty-five miles of the two roads, offering convenient and rapid means of transportation, was a serious blow to the river transportation of the time. The arrival of the Mississippi Central line in Grenada changed the mode of life in the area. The cotton warehouses were moved from the river bank to the railroad line. The people who had formerly gathered to watch the arrival or departure of small river steamers and keel boats now went to the railroad station to watch the arrival and departure of the trains. The Mississippi & Tennessee Railroad was organized to connect the Mississippi Central line with the city of Memphis. This last named road was organized and constructed by a different group of men than those who had built the Mississippi Central, and for a considerable period of time, was independent of that line. The Mississippi & Tennessee line covered a distance of approximately one hundred miles. The charter stipulated a capital stock of \$825,455. Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars of this stock was subscribed by the city of Memphis, which was anxious to attract to its cotton offices and merchants, trade which was now going south along the railroad. The remaining \$575,455 of stock was subscribed by planters and other businessmen along the railroad line. The line had been chartered by a Mississippi Legislative Act of October 16, 1852. On December 5, 1853, the Tennessee Legislature approved the charter which had been issued by the Mississippi Legislature, so the line was thereby authorized to do business in both Mississippi and Tennessee. The officers of the line were authorized by the Legislature to issue \$125,000 in scrip to help finance the construction of the road. Some of the individuals who subscribed for stock in the Mississippi and Tennessee Railroad were: Dr. Henry Dockery, T. W. White and General C. N. Robinson of DeSoto County; Colonel F. L. White, Donald White and C. F. Vance of Panola County; and Joyn G. Brady, Samuel Garner and Nathaniel Howard of the town of Grenada. All of the above named stockholders were railroad directors. The Directors elected F. M. White as President of the Railroad; C. F. Vance, Secretary & Treasurer; and Minor Merriweather as Chief Engineer. In 1854 a contract was let for the grading of



fifty miles of the road-bed. The one hundred miles road was completed early in 1861, shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War. Early in the year 1862 marked the last trip of a train over the whole distance from Memphis to Grenada until late in 1865. During this period military action of the Federal and Confederate forces caused much of the line to be unusable.

The Mississippi Central Railroad was financed by stock subscription, script, of the road in the amount of \$300,000, and about two million dollars derived from the sale of bonds. We have very little information relative to the men who organized and constructed the Mississippi Central Line. Perhaps they weren't in control of the line long enough for any of them to become well known. Soon after the outbreak of the Civil War the Confederate government took over control of the southern railroads. When the Mississippi Central was returned to its officers after the war it was in such bad physical and financial shape that the original owners found it advisable to sell the line. The state Legislature tried to help the road during the last days of the war by providing that an indebtedness of a million and a half dollars could be paid off in depreciated Confederate currency, but this action was eventually declared unconstitutional when it was subjected to judicial review. The impoverished condition of the Southern states made it impossible for many of the railroads to pay off indebtedness contracted in the more prosperous years before the war, and to meet the expense of repairing the very extensive damage done to the roads by the contending military forces. In 1871 Colonel H. S. McComb of Wilmington, Delaware organized a syndicate which linked up the New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern road with the Mississippi Central. Both of these roads had been built by Southern capital but had been obtained by Northern interests during the period of financial hardship suffered by the Southern states just after the close of the war. Although each of these roads continued to operate as separate entities, they were made part of an organization called the Chicago, St. Louis & New Orleans line. The ultimate objective of this organization was to link Chicago with New Orleans by a consolidation of and extension of existing lines. It would take some years to achieve this objective. When the Northern capitalists secured the possession of the Mississippi Central, it was indebted in the amount of \$1,350,000 for mortgage bonds issued in 1854; for \$1,279,000 in bonds advanced by the state of Tennessee authorized to do so by a legislative act entitled "An act to establish a system of internal improvement in the state of Tennessee," and \$2,000,000 in mortgage bonds issued to Jacob Ryer, Daniel Raverl and William Sharkey, trustees for the capitalists who had bought the bonds. Soon after acquiring the road, eight million dollars in mortgage bonds were issued by the road for the purpose of "paying off existing bonded indebtedness and to extend the Mississippi Central Line to the left bank of the Ohio River opposite the southern terminus of the Illinois Central so as to make a contiguous line of railroad from its southern terminus at Canton to the Ohio." A little later the Mississippi Central and New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern lines were leased to the Illinois Central, thereby placing under the control of the last named road a rail system reaching from Chicago to New Orleans.

For a few years after the end of the war, the Mississippi & Tennessee Line continued a precarious independent existence. It had been hard hit by the ravages of war. The road had been badly damaged except for a stretch between Grenada and the Tallahatchie River over which stretch some attempt was made to run trains during the war years. In a report made in late 1865, the Superintendent of the line gives an account of the condition of the road. "We are operating thirty miles off the road. The remaining seventy miles of the road is a mere wreck of a railroad, bridges destroyed, trestle work and culverts rotted by time and disuse, depots, water tanks and station houses destroyed, crossties rotted, track torn up, embankments reduced to a mere skeleton with barely enough rolling stock to make up one train." In October, 1874, McComb purchased a controlling interest in the road, but allowed it to remain in the



hands of the officials who had been in charge previous to this purchase. It remained in their control until after the death of McComb in 1881. After his death his executors sold his interest in the road to the railroad promoter Harriman, who subsequently transferred his stock to the Illinois Central System. Soon thereafter, the minority stockholders sold out their interest in the road. During the period when McComb controlled the road E. C. Walthal, a Grenada attorney and war hero, acted as the legal agent for the road. The line was sold for \$1,000,000 of which \$470,000 went to the widow of McComb, and the remainder going to the other stockholders. In announcing the sale THE GRENADA SENTINEL commented: "This hundred miles of railroad had long been regarded and cherished as peculiarly the outcome of Mississippi enterprise and capital. Built, originally by farmers living along the line, nine tenths of whom are dead, and as many bankrupt in estate, it always has had a claim upon the sympathy as well as the patronage of the people between here and Memphis. The connection of Colonel F. M. White, its original and present President, has been one unbroken link between it and the people, and as long as he stood at the head of it, it was recognized as a Mississippi Corporation." The Mississippi Central road had suffered similar, but not as extensive damage. At the time of the close of the war, passengers were transported between Oxford and Holly Springs by hand car, and at Grenada, they had to be ferried across the Yalobousha River, the railroad bridge over that stream having been destroyed.

The years following the Civil War was a period of feverish activity in railroad promotion and construction. The great trans-continental lines were in process of construction and many shorter lines were proposed, and some constructed. Although Grenada county had suffered severe financial reverses because of the war, it is indicative of the general interest in the construction of new railroad mileage that one of the first acts of the Supervisors of the newly created county of Grenada was to consider the advisability of the county subscribing to stock of the Grenada, Houston and Eastern Railroad. This proposed railroad seems to have been an ambitious plan by citizens of the city and county of Grenada to construct a feeder line through the area east of Grenada in order to bring the trade of that area to Grenada where the line would connect up with the Mississippi Central and the Mississippi & Tennessee lines. The proposed railroad was incorporated by the Mississippi Legislature in 1859. The men named in the act as incorporators were R. D. Crowder, G. W. Lake, B. C. Adams, J. J. Gage, A. S. Ross, Nathaniel Howard, J. L. Davis, P. Tillman, John B. Ross and R. Richardson, all described as being citizens of Yalobousha county. The proposed route was to be from Grenada, through Pittsboro and Houston to the Alabama line. Capital stock was not to exceed six million dollars. Thirteen directors were to be appointed, and shareholders were to be allowed to work out the price of their shares by use of their slaves and teams in construction work. The outbreak of the Civil War occurred before any construction was started.

The Grenada, Houston and Eastern was not the first railroad incorporated by the citizens of the area in and about Grenada. On May 13, 1837, a little over a year after the union of Pittsburg and Tullahoma, the State Legislature issued an act of corporation of the Grenada Railroad Company with an authorized capital stock of \$800,000. The length of the proposed road was to be thirty five miles, extending from "Grenada, on the Yalobousha River, to Douglass, on the Yazoo River in Carroll County." James Smith, J. T. Talbert, J. A. Turatt, Uriah Tyson, A. C. Campbell, R. S. Bryley, and E. Luter were named commissioners of the proposed road. Just as the Civil War prevented construction of the Grenada, Houston and Eastern Railroad, the Panic of 1837 ruined any chance of construction of the proposed Grenada Railroad.

Within six years after the end of the Civil War, promoters were again busy in an endeavor to finance the Grenada, Houston and Eastern Railroad. In 1860 just before the outbreak of the war, the Mississippi Legislature had



passed an act entitled "An Act to Aid In The Construction Of The Grenada, Houston and Eastern Railroad." It would seem that this act authorized counties and towns along the proposed route to subscribe for stock in the proposed railroad. In August of 1871, just a few months after the creation of the county of Grenada, the Grenada County Board of Supervisors received a petition, signed by more than twenty five citizens of the county, requesting that the Board order an election to determine if the county should issue bonds in the amount of \$100,000 to buy one thousand shares of stock in the Vicksburg & Grenada Railroad Company and in the Grenada, Houston and Eastern Railroad company. So far as we have been able to determine, there was, at the time the petition was received by the Board of Supervisors, no actual connection between the two railroads, although later developments seem to indicate that through a later amendment to the original charter of the Grenada, Houston & Eastern Railroad, there was a consolidation of the two lines under the title The Vicksburg, Grenada and Nashville Railroad. In their petition the citizens cited the authority of the county to subscribe to the stock as being contained in the afore-mentioned "An Act To Aid In The Construction Of The Grenada, Houston and Eastern Railroad." The question as to whether the county was authorized by the act to subscribe for stock in a railroad by any other name later became a bitterly contested court issue.

The petition proposed that the stock subscription, if approved by a two thirds majority of the qualified voters of the county, should be paid off in eight installments, which installments should begin to bear interest from January 1, 1873. The Board set up an election to be held in the month of August, 1871, and the resulting election provided the necessary majority vote to authorize the Board of Supervisors to issue bonds to purchase the railroad stock. Although the Board was authorized to purchase stock up to the amount of \$100,000 in the two railroads, we have been unable to find any record of any stock having been purchased from the Vicksburg & Railroad Company. The Board did issue \$50,000 in bonds to pay for stock in the Grenada, Houston & Eastern Railroad. In court litigation which was to result in later, questions arose relative to the obligation of the county to the \$50,000 authorized, but not used, for stock subscription in the Vicksburg & Grenada Railroad Company.

In its July, 1872 meeting the Supervisors levied a "special railroad tax" of seven-eighths of one percent on each dollar of county assessment of property, and ear-marked this levy to pay off the bonds issued to cover purchase of the railroad stock. On August 6, of the same year General W. F. Tucker, President of the Vicksburg & Nashville Railroad, issued a citation on the Board of Supervisors, requesting that the Supervisors deliver to him the bonds which had been authorized to purchase the railroad stock. It would seem that in the time elapsing between the election authorizing the bonds and their delivery in payment of the stock, the proposed Vicksburg & Grenada and Grenada, Houston & Eastern lines had been consolidated into a more ambitious project to build a line from Vicksburg to Nashville. We find that the Supervisors were disturbed relative to their obligation to deliver bonds intended for the Grenada, Houston & Eastern Line, to the line now called the Vicksburg & Nashville Railroad. Their doubts must have been resolved since we find that, in their October 1872 meeting, they decided to deliver the bonds to the Vicksburg & Nashville Railroad Company. In May 1874 bond coupons in the amount of \$22,320 were cancelled by the County Treasurer, and this amount made available to the Supervisors for partial payment on the railroad stock. In the same meeting in which this sum became available to the Board of Supervisors, E. T. Fisher, an attorney and owner of considerable real estate in the county, entered a protest against the collection a special tax levied to pay off the railroad stock subscription. His contention was that the stock subscription was illegal on the ground that the Vicksburg & Nashville Railroad Company had never been chartered by the state legislature, but was operating under the 1871 amendment to the charter of the Grenada, Houston & Eastern Railroad Company. The Board overruled Fisher's



objection, but in December of the same year, the Supervisors suspended collection of the special railroad tax levy.

In March, 1875, a large number of influential citizens of the town and county of Grenada, including such men as Oscar Blédsøe, John C. Stokes, John Moore, J. R. Baker and R. J. Pass, secured an order from the Circuit Court providing for a temporary suspension of the collection of the special tax. It is possible that the action of these citizens was for the purpose of justifying the earlier action of the Supervisors suspending the collection of the tax. This legal relief was only temporary. In December of the same year the Circuit Court, hearing the case on its merits, ruled in favor of the legality of the bond issue and the special tax. In its judgement the Court ruled that the county was obligated to the Railroad Company in the amount of \$42,000. It is not clear from the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors, which has been the source of our information relative to the litigation, if the court determined that the county was obligated only for the \$50,000 stock subscription to the Grenada, Houston & Eastern Railroad Company or if the county was also obligated for the stock subscription authorized by the election for purchase of stock in the Vicksburg & Grenada line. If the \$42,000 obligation set up by the Court was only for the obligation to the Grenada, Houston, & Eastern Railroad Company, this would seem to indicate that the county paid off only \$8,000 on its stock purchase, whereas we know that the County Treasurer had cancelled bonds and made available \$22,320 for payment of stock at least a year before the court verdict. If this amount had been paid to the railroad company, and there was still an obligation of \$42,000 due on railroad stock subscription, this would indicate that the county had an original obligation of \$64,320 for the railroad stock, which obligation was considerably greater than the stock subscription of \$50,000, to the Grenada, Houston & Eastern Railroad, and less than the \$100,000 authorized for stock subscription in the Vicksburg & Grenada and the Grenada, Houston & Eastern Railroad companies. Of course, there could have been some interest due on the \$50,000 stock purchase, but interest due on unpaid bonds would not likely amount to \$14,320.

During the time between the issue of the bonds and the court litigation, the bonds had come into the hands of A. R. Houston of Aberdeen. It was the demand of Houston for past due installment payment which set up the suit which resulted in the judgement against the county. The lower court verdict resulted in a series of appeals, both to state and Federal courts. Evidently the court procedure was a long drawn out affair. In the minutes of the Board of Supervisors of May, 1879, four years after the first court judgement against Grenada county, we find the following notation: "The Board met at the call of the President for the purpose of employing counsel to represent the county in a suit against the county for the collection of railroad bonds against the county." In this meeting the Supervisors adopted the following order: "Ordered that W. H. Powell, President of the Board, go at once to Coffeeville and employ the firm of Golloday & Freeman, and Mays, of the firm of Lamar, Mays and Branham of Oxford, and if the said Powell should find it necessary to go to Oxford, he is ordered to do so, for the purpose of defending the said suit." The name Mays, in connection with the Oxford law firm, should have been spelled Mayes, since he was a member of the Oxford firm. The upshot of the litigation was that a judgement of \$85,000 against the county was sustained by the Federal Court. If the county had made a payment of \$22,320 when the County Treasurer turned this amount of railroad tax to the Supervisors in 1874, this sustained judgement of an \$85,000 obligation still due by the county would seem to indicate that the county was held obligated for the stock subscription authorized for the Vicksburg & Grenada Railroad Company as well as for the stock subscription in the Grenada, Houston & Eastern Railroad Company. To make the subject still more confusing we find that a compromise was finally worked out between the litigants, whereby the county agreed to pay the bondholders three installments of \$20,000 each in full payment of their obligation to the bondholders. Of



course the proposed Vicksburg & Nashville Railroad was never constructed, and the people of the county learned that there was a vast difference between proposed railroads and their actual construction. They paid dearly for that lesson. Although there was still much activity on the part of promoters seeking to promote railroad lines to link the eastern part of the state with the I. C. Railroad system, Grenada citizens, having once had their hands seared in such promotion refused to become excited at the optimistic plans of promoters of such proposed railroads. From a local newspaper we learn that in 1885 a group of promoters of a proposed Artesia, Starkville, & Grenada Railroad Company, came to Grenada in the interest of their project and received a very cool reception. When the Georgia & Pacific Railroad proposed an extension of its line east and west across the state it seems that Grenada made no effort to bring that road through Grenada. The railroad company did construct such a line by way of Winona to Greenville on the Mississippi River. The extension later came to be called The Southern Railroad and remained for many years as an affiliate of the Georgia Pacific Railroad, which system through its various affiliates had direct rail connection between Richmond, Virginia and Greenville, Mississippi. The connection of Winona by rail with the area east of that town, and to the west in the rich delta territory, was a blow to Grenada which had no direct rail connection with those areas. Winona began to draw much trade from those areas which Grenada had hoped to make a part of its trade area.

The Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad was another line interested in tapping the rich resources of the delta area. We have been unable to determine when its first construction began but from a mortgage recorded in the office of the Chancery Clerk of Grenada County we learn that some time before December 1887, the date of the recording of the mortgage, that line is described as extending from its junction with the Chicago, St. Louis & New Orleans Railroad in Hinds County, Mississippi, by way of Yazoo City, Tchula and Greenwood to its terminus at Parsons, Mississippi, a town in the western part of Grenada County. The description also noted that the line had an extension from Tchula through Lexington to Durant. The total mileage was stated as 140.36 miles. The mortgage was for the purpose of obtaining \$2,800,000 to be used for the purpose of consolidating and paying off previous loans and for extending its line to a northern junction with the Chicago, St. Louis & New Orleans line. This last named line had been leased by the Illinois Central system. In their endeavor to tap the resources of the delta area, the officials of the Y. & M. V. system had routed their road as far west as Yazoo City, and then made a curve to the right bringing the road to Parsons which was only about fifteen miles west of Grenada. Thus in 1887, Grenada lacked only a short distance of rail connection with the delta area. The railroad officials considered Grenada and Batesville as the most logical points for the junction with the I. C. system. By 1890 the I. C. system had gained control of the Y. & M. V. system. It was the general opinion that the railroad officials were delaying construction of the line to effect the northern junction with the regular I. C. line in anticipation of the people of Grenada and Batesville offering inducements for the construction of the line into their particular localities. In August of 1890 J. W. Buchanan, Editor of the Grenada Sentinel, called the attention of citizens of the city and county of Grenada to the importance of the construction of the line from Parsons to Grenada. In a later editorial the same editor printed an excerpt from a Greenwood paper plugging Greenwood as a fine cotton market and giving as an example of the popularity of the cotton market in that city the fact that a farmer living "four miles west of Grenada" had carried his cotton to the Greenwood market. The editor of the Grenada paper stated that the Grenada county farmers lived four miles from Parsons rather than four miles from Grenada and explained that it was much easier to go four miles to Parsons by wagon and the remainder of the distance to Greenwood by rail than it would have been going fifteen miles by wagon and the remainder of the distance to Greenwood by rail than it would have been going fifteen miles by wagon to Grenada. Again the editor urged consideration of an attempt to have



the lines completed to Grenada "Provided the I. C. Branch from Parsons to Greenwood could be leased from the I. C. System." This editorial sounds as if the editor was urging the people of the town and county to get back into the railroad business. A little later he writes that the I. C. System might go ahead to complete the line if the people of Grenada and Grenada county would "be generous in the matter of right of way." We assume that by this statement he felt that the people over whose land the proposed extension might be routed might make a free gift of the right of way across their property. If the proposed extension were to be taken to Batesville it would have the advantage of traversing a longer stretch of delta land, but if it should be extended to Grenada, there would be the advantage of a considerably shorter distance necessary to effect the junction with the I. C. System. There was an additional advantage to the junction at Grenada, which arose from the fact that a junction in that town would give the branch line direct connection with the branch of the I. C. System which ran north to Jackson, Tennessee, and also with the I. C.

Line which went to Memphis. The choice of a route for the extension was hanging in the balance as late as April 18, 1892, when on that date the Sentinel published a news item to the effect that J. C. Mann, Chief Engineer for the I. C. System had arrived in Grenada to begin the survey of a route of the proposed extension from Parsons to both Grenada and Batesville, the most advantageous route to be determined by the results of the survey. It would be eight years before the railroad company announced its decision relative to the route selected.

During this period of indecision and uncertainty relative to the possible extension of the line from Parsons to Grenada, there was a revival of interest in the construction of a railroad along the route originally selected by the defunct Grenada, Houston & Eastern Railroad Company. In 1895, just about twenty-four years after the ill-fated Grenada, Houston & Eastern Railroad Company began promotion of the road, and about fifteen years after the county of Grenada had been held liable for its subscription of stock in that railroad venture, two men, H. L. Underwood and Judge J. W. Buchanan arrived in Grenada to try to induce the citizens of that town to contribute to the construction of a railroad called the Nashville & Mississippi Delta Railroad, which company, as a beginning of its ambitious project, contemplated construction of a road between Nettleton and Grenada by way of Houston and Calhoun City. The overall plan contemplated an extension of this line to Nashville. The promoters claimed they had financial backing to construct the road, provided the towns and citizens of the country areas, through which the line would run, would provide right of way and forty thousand acres of land, or the equivalent value of such land. They announced to the committee of Grenada people who met with them, that the citizens of the towns of Nettleton, Houston, Calhoun City, and the citizens of the counties in which these towns were located had already pledged thirty thousand acres of land to the project. They were requesting that the citizens of Grenada and Grenada County pledge the remaining ten thousand acres, or money equivalent. Realizing that the three counties of Grenada, Calhoun and Chickasaw had invested a total of three hundred thousand dollars in the Grenada, Houston and Eastern Railroad Company without receiving any benefit in the way of railroad construction, their proposal to the citizens of Grenada and that area was that deeds to the ten thousand acres required of Grenada citizens should be placed in escrow with the Chancery Clerk of Grenada County and not delivered to the railroad company until the proposed railroad line was "constructed, equipped and in operation." It is assumed that the same proposal had been made to the other towns and counties involved.

Max Ginsburger, William C. McLean, Alex Allison and Judge A. T. Roane were appointed to a committee to sound out the people of Grenada and Vicinity on the proposal. A mass meeting of citizens was called and considerable interest was incited in the project. For some reason, possibly because of the previous bad experience with the former railroad project, the people of Grenada never carried through on the project. Eventually the company did construct a portion



of the proposed line from Calhoun City to Houston, but failed in its proposed construction of the longer line visualized in the original plan. The short line between Calhoun City and Houston operated for a period of twenty five years or more before operation was discontinued. Their venture ended the original dream of a railroad line connecting Grenada with the county in the direction of the Alabama state line.

With the failure of this railroad to connect with Grenada there was increased interest in the completion of the line from Parsons to Grenada. If Grenada could not have a line which tapped the resources of the country east of Grenada, it seemed imperative that such a connection should be made with the fertile area west of Grenada. For five years the Illinois Central System delayed announcing a decision relative to which route it would take from Parsons to effect its junction with the main line of the system. On April 21, 1900, the Grenada Sentinel released the following news item: "W. G. Sloan, Assistant Engineer of the Illinois Central has arrived in Grenada for the purpose of constructing the railroad line from Parsons to Grenada, the road to be completed in October or November of this year." The predicted completion date was overly optimistic since it was not until April 20, 1891, that the editor of the Sentinel was able to announce that the last spike has been driven and that the road was ready to announce a schedule of trains operating between Grenada and Tchula by way of Greenwood. Thus, seventy four years ago, the era of railroad construction in Grenada county ended. The next several decades would be a period of struggle to build a system of dirt, gravel and paved roads which would make it possible for the people of the county to take full advantage of the railroad facilities which had already been provided.