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Tishomingo County Archives & History Museum

203 East Quitman Street

Iuka, MS 38852

Phone: 662-423-3500

E-mail: tishomingohistory@yahoo.com

URL: <http://www.tishomingohistory.com>



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HON. A. B. DILWORTH

The subject of this sketch was born in Rockingham County, North Carolina, on the 14th day of December, 1814, where he remained until twenty-two years of age, receiving the benefits of the best schools of the county and securing an education far above the average. In 1836 a man who was wanted by the officers of Rockingham County was located in this section of Mississippi and Mr. Dilworth was deputed to return the party to North Carolina. While on this mission, Mr. Dilworth visited the greater part of Northeast Mississippi, and was so favorably impressed with the advantages, both natural and to be acquired, that upon returning to his home he prevailed upon his father, Mr. John Dilworth, to emigrate to Tishomingo County. Successfully accomplishing the object of his first visit, Mr. Dilworth once more bade friends and relatives adieu and turned his face westward, being delegated by his father to purchase sufficient land for the family and await their coming. After a careful inspection of the county, Mr. Dilworth chose an ideal place for a home, about eight miles northwest of Rienzi, and went to work to prepare a home for his parents, who arrived in 1838.

The first few years of Mr. Dilworth's life in old Tishomingo County were devoted to farming and teaching school in his neighborhood. On January 7, 1840, he was married to Miss Sarah Catherine Taylor, an aunt of Dr. C. M. Taylor of Corinth. During the

forties Mr. Dilworth engaged quite extensively in the mercantile business in the county, doing business at old Danville as Dilworth & Brewster, at Jacinto as A. B. Dilworth & Co., and at Cartersville under the firm name of A. B. Dilworth & Bro., which establishments were successfully conducted until the county fell into the hands of the Northern army. During his business career, Mr. Dilworth impressed those with whom he came in contact as being a man of superior intelligence, strict integrity, and unquestionable honesty, and being an intense Democrat he was soon called upon to assist in the management of the affairs of the county. Mr. Dilworth's first official position was that of school commissioner for the second district in the year 1848, the management of the public schools and the immense sums of money steadily accumulating in the county school fund making this one of the most responsible of county positions. In 1852 it was decided to build a new courthouse, and a committee, consisting of one from each district was appointed by the Board of Police to select and adopt plans suitable for the new structure. The committee satisfactorily discharged the duties imposed, and Mr. Dilworth was appointed as one of the committee of three to superintend the erection of the new building on the part of the county. This building now stands in the town of Jacinto, and was for years the most imposing structure in the county. Mr. Dilworth served as overseer of the poor for the year 1853 and 1854, and also represented the county in the halls of the legislature. On January 10, 1855, he was appointed secretary of state by Gov. John J. McRae, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Hon. Wm. H. Muse; was elected to the office for a full term on the 15th of November, 1855, and again in November, 1857. Hon. B. R. Webb was elected to the office in 1859, but died a few days after qualifying, and in January, 1860, Gov. John J. Pettus appointed Mr. Dilworth to the vacancy, but he positively declined to accept the position. Mr. Dilworth urged to become a candidate for governor in 1859, and could easily have secured the nomination, but declined, giving as the reason that the ill-health of his wife would prevent the proper attention being given the social duties considered as a part of the position of the governor at that time. Mr. Dilworth returned to his home in January, 1860, after the induction into office of the newly-elected State officials, and after a short rest entered the political contest of that year in the interest of the Breckinridge-Lane Presidential ticket, and carried his county by a handsome majority for his favorites. But the Presidential election did not end the

struggle. The success of the Republican party caused elections to be called in each county of the south for the election of delegates to State secession conventions, and the bitter political campaign just closed was reopened with renewed energy. Mr. Dilworth was nominated by the secessionists as one of the delegates to the Mississippi convention, but was defeated by the “conservatives”, Tishomingo County voting over one thousand majority against secession. At the Democratic State convention held in Jackson on December 12, 1859, Mr. Dilworth was chosen to represent the First congressional District at the National Democratic Convention at Charleston. He also represented Tishomingo County at the Planters’ Convention of the South, held at Holly Springs, in October, 1860. He was one of the leading Masons of the county, and for several years was one of the trustees of the Corona College, the leading educational institution in North Mississippi before the war. He also served as State auditor for a short time during 1860. Being over age limit, Mr. Dilworth did not enter the regular army, but served as quartermaster general of State troops during the greater part of the war, being located until April, 1862, at Iuka. After the surrender, Mr. Dilworth retired to his plantation, where he lived until the death of his wife, which occurred in her fifty-eighth year, when he broke up house-keeping and lived the remainder of his life with his youngest daughter, Mrs. C. F. Robison, then residing near Memphis. During the stormy days of reconstruction, Mr. Dilworth again rendered his State valuable assistance, by speaking at a large number of places and lending his immense influence toward the only possible acceptable solution of the questions then confronting the people. He died on the 2nd of July, 1894, and was laid to rest in the family burying ground. Mr. Dilworth left three children: Mrs. G. W. Bynum, Mrs. C. F. Robison and Mr. J. A. Dilworth, all at this time residing at Corinth.

It is needless to say aught in praise of the Hon. A. B. Dilworth. Nearly sixty years of his life were spent in this section, where he was ever held in the highest esteem, admired and respected by both friends and political enemies, and his death even at the advanced age of eighty years was mourned by every citizen of the county, as well as by the leading men of the State with whom he had so long been associated. During his lifetime he enjoyed the confidence and esteem of the people of Mississippi, and today his name is never mentioned but with the highest respect and justly deserved praise.

