

A HISTORY OF CENTRE RIDGE
DALLAS COUNTY, ALABAMA

By

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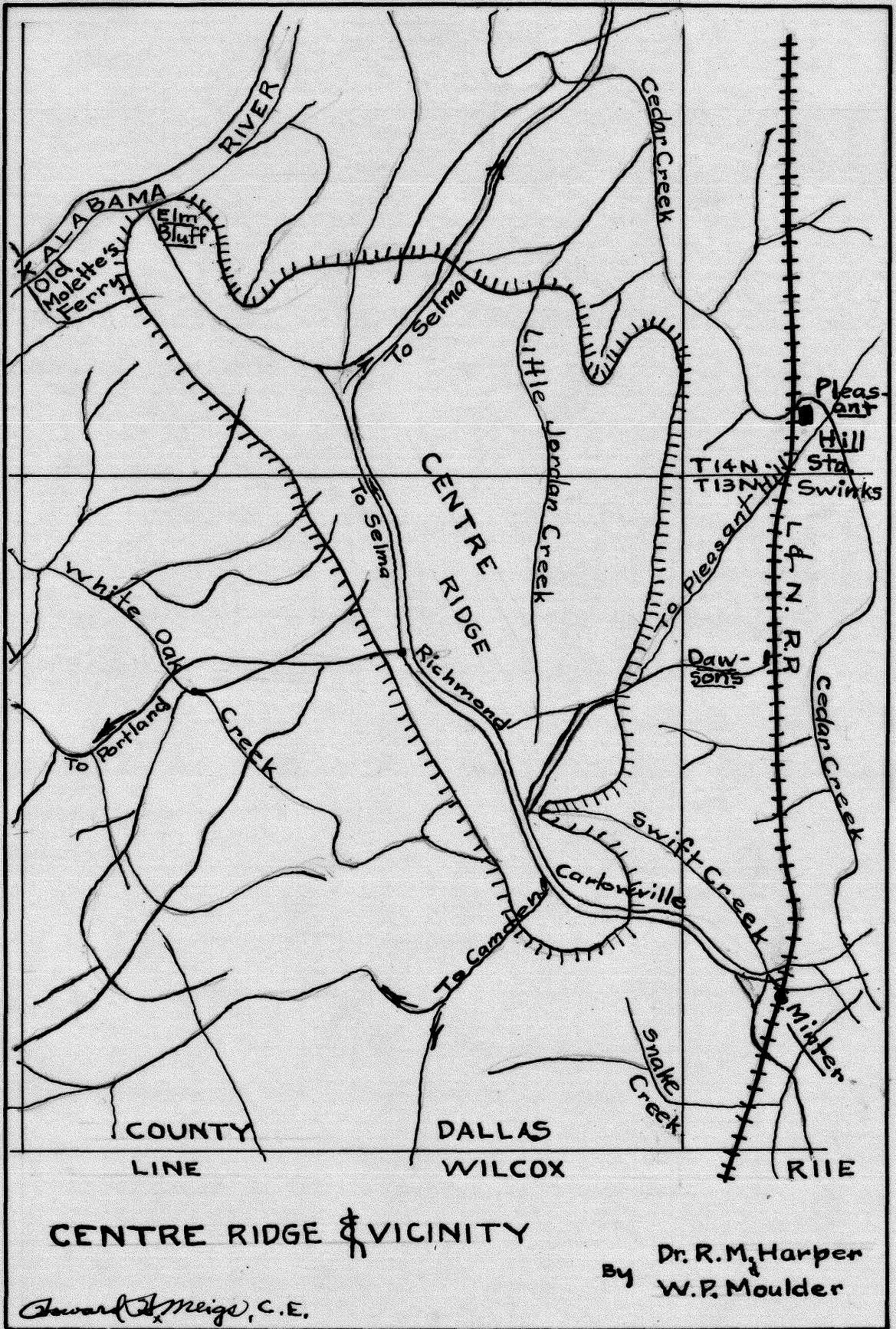
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CHAPTER I

THE GEOGRAPHY AND WILD LIFE OF CENTRE RIDGE

Location, Appearance, and Soil of Centre Ridge

Centre Ridge is located in the southern part of Dallas County, Alabama. From its southern end the Ridge runs in a northwesterly direction. A little over two thirds of it is in township thirteen, North, and the remainder of it is in township fourteen, North, in range ten East, St. Stephens Meridian. In length, it measures from five to six miles depending upon the points measured, while its greatest width is a little over one mile.

Centre Ridge is a flat-topped plateau, something like a miniature Lookout Mountain.¹ It is an outcropping on the broad expanse of the Black Belt. The Ridge is about two hundred feet above the nearby Alabama River and the creeks in the adjacent lowlands.

There are two or three similar plateaus in southern Dallas County, all having an elevation of probably two hundred feet above the Alabama River.²

"Nothing quite like them is known elsewhere in the state. They may represent very old river terraces, but they differ from typical terraces in being higher than the country all around them, instead of abutting against hills on the side away from the Alabama River, as some otherwise similar plateaus in Autauga County do."³

Without naming it, Dr. Eugene A. Smith, late State Geologist, describes the Centre Ridge area as follows:

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1. Harper, Roland M., Notes on Natural Features of Centre Ridge, Dallas County, Alabama, p. 1.
 2. Ibid., p.1.
 3. Ibid., p.1.

"Carlowville and Richmond are situated upon a high level plateau four or five hundred feet above tide level. This plateau, like so many others, has a capping of red loam underlaid by pebbles of the Lafayette formation, while the limestone ledges and calcareous sands of the Ripley are exposed at all points where erosion has cut through the underlying beds. Among the Ripley strata thus exposed and especially about Richmond, is a bed of phosphatic greensand which has been used to some extent by Dr. Kyser and perhaps others.

"Of the later formations in Dallas, the Lafayette is by far the most important, since it makes the surface of the very great proportion of the high uplands, as well as of the level terrace of the river above the Second Bottom plain..... The red loam soil upon the high dividing plateaus are almost all good farming lands and all in cultivation. While not so productive as the black prairie soils of the Selma chalk, and the red lime soils of the Ripley, they are yet sufficiently fertile, and are susceptible of indefinite improvement. They lie well, and the plains upon which they are found are particularly free from malaria.

"Where.....sufficiently large areas.....are covered by the sands and pebbles of our Lafayette, there is no lack of water and of the very best quality."¹

The surface material of the Centre Ridge plateau was formerly considered to be the Lafayette formation, but this identification has
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been changed. It has been found that some of the material thus classified is merely a weathered product of older formations, and some represents old river terraces of various ages.

Where the surface is level it is usually a pale sandy loam, underlaid by a reddish clay or reddish sandy clay. This reddish clay is exposed on most slopes. Some of the farming land now has a light red appearance, this having come about through deep plowing which mixed the

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1. Smith, Eugene A., and others. Report on the Geology of the Coastal Plain of Alabama (Spe. Rep. 6, Geol. Survey of Alabama, 1894) pp. 586-588.
 2. Interview with R.M. Harper.

soil with the underlying reddish clay.

On the Department of Agriculture soil map of Dallas County, published in 1905, the soil on Centre Ridge is classified as Orangeburg¹ fine sandy loam. This classification was made because of the supposed similarity of the Centre Ridge soil to some soils found in Orangeburg County in South Carolina. A re-survey made in 1931-32, but not yet published, divided it more minutely into series: namely, Norfolk, Orangeburg, and Ruston, the distinctions between which depend, mainly, on the color of the subsoil.²

Nearly everywhere on Centre Ridge beds of gravel can be found at a depth of a few feet under the surface.³ Where these beds come to the top or very close to the top, they are a detriment to agriculture. On the other hand, these gravel beds in recent years have been of enormous usefulness in making good roads in the southern part of Dallas County.

At a depth of about fifty feet below the summit of the plateau a Cretaceous marl is encountered. According to Dr. R.M. Harper,

"The underlying formation of Centre Ridge is Ripley (uppermost Cretaceous), while the other similar plateaus in the same county are on the next older formation, the Selma Chalk, which characterizes the black belt proper. Centre Ridge, therefore, is just outside of the black belt, geologically speaking, but in soil and topography, as well as in civilization, it differs in no essential particular from the other plateaus of southern Dallas."⁴

This underlying marl, referred to by Dr. Harper, comes to the surface all around Centre Ridge, and makes very fertile soil.

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1. Carr, E.P., and others, Soil Survey of Dallas County, Alabama, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Bulletin, 1905.
 2. Interview with Dr. R.M. Harper.
 3. Harper, op. cit., p. 2.
 4. Ibid., p.2.

Few white people live upon it, however, partly on account of the vile-tasting water which comes out of wells dug in the marl. White settlers in this area have generally preferred to build their homes on Centre Ridge, for wells can be dug on its summit deep enough to get water without penetrating the marl. Free-stone water is the rule, but there is one exception.

At one time there were some mineral springs on the western slope of Centre Ridge, back of the Community Cemetery.¹ There were at least six of these, five of which were predominately of different minerals. Iron and sulphur are known to have been the main mineral in two of them.

These springs were developed in the early forties.² Early settlers scooped out holes for the water and lined the sides of these holes with wood curbing. Seats were built around the springs and a pavilion also was constructed nearby.³ Prior to the war the springs were a favorite spot for picnics and frolics. People also came just to drink the water or to carry it away in jugs. It was supposedly efficacious in the treatment of certain minor disorders.⁴

During Reconstruction the curbing of the springs rotted away and the whole spot was neglected.⁵ As late as 1880 the springs were still used some, but shortly after this, sand clogged them up.⁶ Some of the springs quit running. A dam formed across a stream

1. Interview with Maggie Alison.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. This may have been due in part to the falling of the water level caused by an increased use of Centre Ridge land for agricultural purposes during and after Reconstruction.

nearby which served as an outlet for the springs. This in turn backed up the water and ruined the rest of the springs. Subsequently the dam broke, but the springs were not repaired and the habit of partaking of the mineral water was lost.¹ Today only the iron spring runs. The whole spot is a wilderness with nothing about it to suggest its former usefulness and value. A few of the older residents of Centre Ridge can remember the delapidated remains of the springs which they visited when they were boys and girls.

The residents of Centre Ridge live high above the surrounding lowlands and in most years are free of malaria. In addition they get the benefit of any breeze that may be blowing.

One drawback has been the soil, which is of only moderate fertility and rather easily exhausted unless its nutriment is replenished in some way.² The Centre Ridge soil is also quick to erode unless checked by terracing or the growth of vegetation. In these days, however, such handicaps have been minimized by scientific farming practices. In olden days most of the planters depended largely upon the surrounding lowlands for their livelihood.³ Then as now the soil of Centre Ridge was easy to cultivate and the fertile marly soils of the black belt were not far away. This combination of conditions led to the early occupation of the Ridge by prosperous planters, whose slaves worked partly on the uplands and partly on the lowlands.

The Climate

There is not a weather station on the Ridge, but records for

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1. Interview with Maggie Alison.
 2. Harper, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
 3. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.

Selma, located about twenty-five miles north, are representative enough. Selma's average annual temperature is 65.3 degrees Fahrenheit with monthly averages ranging from 48.6 degrees in January to 81.4 degrees in July. But as Selma is down in a river valley, the extremes are probably a little greater there than on Centre Ridge. It would probably be accurate to say that temperatures on the Ridge would run from about 50 degrees Fahrenheit in January to 80 degrees Fahrenheit in July.¹ Absolute extremes are much farther apart. Freezing temperatures and frost may occur any time during the winter months, while temperatures of 100 degrees Fahrenheit come occasionally, though not every summer.²

The average annual rainfall of Selma is 50.9 inches, March³ being the month of heaviest precipitation, with 6.2 inches. April, May, and June are drier. The fall is normally dry, with a minimum for the year of 2.3 inches in October. Of course, there is considerable variation in different years, both as to the amount of rainfall and as to the time of year when the heaviest rains occur. Some years have nearly twice as much rain as others.⁴ The climate of Centre Ridge is normally almost ideal for cotton, for there is usually plenty of moisture while the plants are growing and dry weather in the picking season.

Vegetation

As has been stated previously, the summit of Centre Ridge

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1. Harper, op. cit., p.3.
 2. Ibid., p. 3.
 3. Ibid., p. 4.
 4. Ibid., p. 4.

is fairly level and the soil easy to cultivate. This has resulted in the loss of most of the original vegetation of the Ridge.¹ There is a tradition, for example, that when the first settlers came to Centre Ridge, they found the ground covered with wild strawberries.² It is difficult today to find the wild strawberry plant on the Ridge. Probably the most reliable indications of what the original vegetation was can be found where there are still some wooded areas, on the slopes leading off of Centre Ridge to the lowlands, and in the ravines which run down from it.³ The following table of trees was compiled by Dr. R.M. Harper of the Alabama Geological Survey. Harper lists these trees in decreasing order of their probable original abundance and does not include the marly lower slopes of the Ridge or the trees found in ravines deep enough to cut into the marl.⁴

Larger Trees	Smaller Trees
Short leaf pine (two species)	Dogwood
Sweet Gum	Ironwood
White Oak	Sourwood
Poplar	Mulberry
Black-jack Oak	Chinquapin
Post Oak	Willow
Red Oak	Black Haw
Black Gum	
White Bay	
Red Elm	
Black Oak	
Long leaf pine	
Hickory	
Red Maple	
Cedar (perhaps introduced)	
Beech	

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1. Harper, op. cit., p. 4.
 2. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.
 3. These ravines were caused by the rapid fall of the streams starting on Centre Ridge and running to the lowlands.
 4. Harper, op. cit., p. 5.

Harper also has compiled a list of shrubs found on Centre
 Ridge.¹ They are as follows:

"Old field plum (Thought to have been introduced by
 the Indians).

Alder
 Red Buckeye
 Seven-bark
 French mulberry
 Myrtle
 Sparkleberry
 Hydrangea"

The shrubs are found mostly in ravines.² There are, of
 course, many herbs and weeds, but it is unnecessary to mention them
 here.

Wild Life

Centre Ridge, when first found by white people, abounded in
 wild life. Indians had hunted upon the Ridge but had left plenty of
 game for the earliest white settlers.³ The Centre Ridge pioneers found
 it easier to get a start in their new home because of the abundant wild
 life which existed here.⁴

The animal life of Centre Ridge at the time of its occupa-
 tion by white men probably included deer, fox, opossum, squirrel,⁵
 wildcats, catamounts, skunks, rabbits, racoon, and other animals. Of
 these, the deer, wildcat, and catamount have disappeared from the
 Ridge itself at the present time, and the racoon is very scarce. The
 rabbit is the most common of the remaining animals. According to tra-

1. Harper, op. cit., p. 5.
 2. Ibid., p. 5.
 3. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

dition, bears were found in the early days on Centre Ridge, but this was probably the case only when high water drove them out of the swamps between Centre Ridge and the Alabama River.

The first white settler of Carlowville and probably the first on Centre Ridge was a man named Carlow, a trapper and fur buyer for whom Carlowville was named.¹ He bought the furs of animals other than those already mentioned but he had more land from which to buy than that of the Ridge itself.

Centre Ridge pioneers also got a portion of their food from wild fowls.² The most common ones were wild turkey, wild ducks, wild geese, and wild pigeons. The wild pigeons were by far the most useful.³ It is said that they came in droves so large and so thick that people sometimes mistook them for a cloud. These pigeons were easy to kill and were excellent food. Hogs caught them and got fat off them, according to tradition. Sometimes they perched in trees, in such numbers that the branches broke under their weight.⁴ So much pigeon meat and other wild meat was eaten that bacon became esteemed as a delicacy by the early settlers.⁵

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1. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

CHAPTER II

INDIANS AND THE EARLY WHITE SETTLERS

The Mound-builders and Indians

The first people known to have lived on the land surrounding Centre Ridge were the Mound-builders, whoever they may have been. Although they built no mounds on Centre Ridge proper, it doubtless formed a part of the Mound-builders' domain. There are four mounds near Centre Ridge, one of which is located on what was known as the Hayne Boykin place, on Pine Barren Creek. This mound lies about nine miles from the Ridge near the village of Tilden. It has been excavated by W.W. Boykin and perhaps others.

Mr. Boykin describes his discoveries as follows:

"In this mound that I excavated, were bones and rocks. The Indians were buried one on top of the other, between layers of rock. I did not go to the bottom of the mound."¹

The three other mounds lie nearer to the Ridge than does the Pine Barren Mound. They are located about four miles from the Ridge near the road leading from Richmond to Portland on the Alabama River. They are close together and may have been constructed by the Indians. They are small as compared with the Pine Barren Mound, and their significance unknown since they have not been excavated.

When DeSoto explored Alabama in 1540, it is believed that he passed through Dallas County and probably near Centre Ridge.²

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1. Letter from W.W. Boykin to the author, June 23, 1935.
 2. Several Wilcox County citizens believe and are attempting to prove that DeSoto fought a gory battle with the Indians on the east side of the Alabama River near Camden. If this claim should be substantiated, it would seem that DeSoto passed near Centre Ridge or possibly across it.

Signs of Indian occupation abound to the west of Centre Ridge and on slopes leading up to the Ridge at several points,¹ but so far nothing has been found to prove that the Indians lived on the Ridge itself. According to tradition, the Indians had a camping ground by a spring which comes out of the southern slope of the Ridge.² A number of arrowheads have been found at this spot and an even larger number on Patton Hill, the slope leading off the Ridge to the west at Richmond.³ Indian arrows and hatchets have also been found near Portland. Tradition assigns two other places as Indian camping grounds, one, near Ackerville, and another between Tilden and Portland.

Although the exact centers of Indian life in southern Dallas remain obscure, there can be no doubt that Indians lived within its present bounds. There is no conclusive evidence that Indians lived on Centre Ridge itself. If they did not, as appears to be the case, it was probably because of insufficient water. There is only one stream on Centre Ridge which flows the year around, Little Jordan Creek, and this creek does not have fish in it large enough to eat and probably did not have then. With locations available on streams abounding in fish so close at hand, the Indians probably preferred these to Centre Ridge and used the Ridge only for hunting purposes, if at all.

The Indians who lived around Centre Ridge were either Creeks or some tribe subject to the Creeks.⁴ By the treaty of Fort Jackson in 1814, they were supposed to give up their lands now lying in Dallas County and those in many other Alabama counties.⁵

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1. Interview with B.L. Youngblood.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Interview with Dr. A.B. Moore.
 5. Ibid.

They probably did not leave at once, however. William Rumph, according to his daughter, encountered bands of friendly Indians when he was a lad of about twelve, while going to or from a Camden Academy on Mondays and Fridays during the 1820's.¹

Another tradition represents the Creeks as lingering near Portland until about 1830.² They became drunk whenever possible on the White man's firewater but were harmless and friendly. The Indians who apparently remained for several years in the section west of Centre Ridge probably made their living by trading and trapping. Their status, to say the least, was irregular and their presence unsanctioned by existing treaties.

The Indians made no permanent imprint on white civilization on Centre Ridge. None of the Indians stayed later than 1840, probably. If there was intermarriage or interbreeding, the progeny did not remain.³

When most of the whites came, the Indians' land claims had been extinguished. They stayed a few years, powerless and harmless, at the white man's pleasure and subject to his will. Centre Ridge was not settled until the Indian's power was broken.

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1. Letter from Alice Rumph of Birmingham to Maggie Alison of Minter, July 4, 1934.
 2. On F. Lucas' map of 1822, Portland is represented in fairly large print, indicating that it was a settlement of some size.
 3. There is no tradition that any of the very earliest settlers were Indian countrymen.

Earliest Settlers

Centre Ridge was divided into three parts. The northern part was first called Centre-Port and later called Elm Bluff. The middle portion was first named Warrenton, this being later changed to Richmond. The southern end was named Carlowville and still bears that name. These artificial distinctions meant nothing to the trappers and pioneers who first came. The earliest settlers are responsible for naming their Ridge Centre Ridge, at some time prior to 1837 though their reason for doing so is not definitely known. Probably it was because the Ridge was near the center of Alabama.

The earliest settlers of Centre Ridge probably came between 1816 and 1820. Some of the first settlers moved on. Those who stayed for the most part, kept no records and left no family traditions for they did not intermarry with the later settlers. The settlers who were buried here left no clue over their final resting places, as their graves were unmarked. Fairly accurate approximations can usually be made of the dates of the earliest settlers, however, for in nearly every case they are thought to have preceded someone whose dates are known.

One of the very first white settlers was one Carlow, who settled in what is now Carlowville. He apparently settled prior to 1820 because Thomas Rumph coming in 1823 from South Carolina found him

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1. Smith, Ellen, History of Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church, p.1.
 2. Interviews with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood, Mrs. Alice Alison Lide, Miss Hattie Ethridge, and others.
 3. Reference on cover of "Register of Centre Ridge Baptist Church." This church started in 1837.

well established.¹ From all accounts, Carlow was an ignorant trapper and fur buyer of the typical pioneer type. As his business shrank, due to the influx of planters, he attempted for a time to stay on by receiving mail and by putting up travelers overnight² in his two-room log cabin,³ but he moved when the section became well settled. He moved west between 1835-40, in search of better trapping land and was heard from no more.

A contemporary of Carlow was one Pagent who lived a short distance due west from Carlow.⁴ Pagent was a trapper and a hunter,⁵ but became a small farmer when the land became settled. The Pagent family stayed in Carlowville until after the War between the States.⁶

About a mile northeast of Warrenton several families settled prior to 1820.⁷ There were three Ethridge families, a Myrick family, and a Ladd family.⁸ Two of the Ethridge families soon moved away, as did also the Myrick family. One of the Ethridge families and the Ladd family remained on the Ridge but changed their location there.⁹

Settlers located at Warrenton prior to 1820, but none of the names of these are known. It is the closest point on the Ridge to Portland, which was well settled prior to 1820, and it may be that some of the Halls, Flournoys, or other New England and Huguenot fami-

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1. Based on interviews with S.A. Reynolds and Maggie Alison.
 2. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.
 3. Located where the Yates place now is.
 4. Interview with B.L. Youngblood.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid.
 7. Interview with Hattie Ethridge.
 8. Ibid.
 9. Ibid.

lies then living at Portland came to live at Richmond. Three other pioneering families which probably came prior to 1820 were the Christians, the Stouts, and the Brunsons.

From 1820 to 1830 the settlement of Centre Ridge proceeded steadily but not rapidly. Population must have remained sparse until after 1830, because of danger from the Indians.

The first of the prosperous planter type settlers to come to Carlowville was Thomas Rumph, who moved from Colleton District, South Carolina, in 1823.¹ The George Bibb family moved to Carlowville prior to 1830 and may have preceded the Rumph family, but this is doubtful. George Bibb probably was a second cousin of William Wyatt Bibb.²

In 1825, Dr. Joseph Patton moved to Warrenton from Chillicothe, Ohio.³ Dr. Patton devoted most of his attention to the practice of medicine and never became extensively engaged in agriculture. The fact that he was able to do so indicates that Warrenton was fairly well settled at the time. Unfortunately, few of the names of its settlers have been preserved. There was a land grant to a Bradley Dear from the Cahaba land office in 1823, which embraced territory near Warrenton. Littlebury Chun received land from the Cahaba land office in 1829.⁴ Dr. Patton found a Rives family, a Watts family, a Williams family from Buckingham County, Virginia, a Barlow family, and possibly a Todd family and a Houseman family. The Wade family from Georgia

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1. Kyser, Halsa, Notes on the Alison Family, p. 1.
 2. This is the consensus of opinion of Centre Ridge people who have been interviewed. Peter Brannon considers it likely that George Bibb was a son or a grandson of either William Wyatt Bibb or Thomas Bibb.
 3. Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.
 4. The Dear land grant and the Chun land grant are both held by Joe Kyser, of Richmond, Alabama.

settled near Warrenton at about the same time that Dr. Patton did.¹
 There probably were other families at Warrenton before 1825.

Centre-Port was founded prior to 1830 and possibly as early as 1820. The first permanent settlers here were the Crocheron family and its kin, the La Tourette family, both families coming from Staten Island, New York.² Another branch of the Crocheron family settled at Cahaba at an earlier date.³ It was probably from Cahaba that the possibilities of developing a profitable river port had been investigated. John Crocheron, who never married, had at least three sisters who came with him.⁴ One married George Bibb, an early settler of Carlowville. Another married Anthony Stoutenborough, who came to Centre-Port from Monmouth County, New York.⁵ He probably had already married Crocheron's sister before he came to Alabama and may also have traveled with Crocheron to this state.⁶ A third sister married John La Tourette, Sr. As both La Tourette and John Crocheron came from Staten Island, it is possible that La Tourette also came with John Crocheron and had married Crocheron's sister before moving.

John La Tourette was a map maker and made some of the earliest known maps of Alabama.⁷ It was probably through his brother-in-law, George Bibb, cousin of William Wyatt Bibb and Thomas Bibb, that he received his commission to map the state. When at home from trips, he

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1. Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.
 2. Owens, Thomas M., History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography, Vol. III, p. 437.
 3. Ibid., p. 437.
 4. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 5. Information on Tombstone of Stoutenborough at Elm Bluff.
 6. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 7. La Tourette maps are held by the Alabama Archives of History.

stayed with John Crocheron. Jacob Morgan also came to Centre-Port at about the same time that Crocheron did. He was from Staten Island, New York,¹ though his connections with others from the same place are not known.

Crocheron bought about five thousand acres of land around a bluff which is the second highest on the Alabama River.² The La Tourettes stayed with him, while Stoutenborough bought over a thousand acres of land to the northeast of Crocheron's holdings.³

Another contemporary of John Crocheron at Centre-Port was a Coleman family from North Carolina, which owned the estate now owned by Mae Kyser.⁴ The Colemans probably came a little later than Crocheron did.

The story of the coming of the South Carolinians to the Carlowville settlement is known in more detail than is the settlement of the rest of the Ridge. As has been noted previously, Thomas Rumph had already made the journey from eastern South Carolina and settled at Carlowville in 1823. The next of the prosperous and educated South Carolinians who settled at Centre-Ridge was Dr. Hugh Lee Alison and his family. Either he was in communication with Thomas Rumph or else he sent out a scout who saw Rumph. At any rate, Dr. Alison knew where his land was and had made arrangements with Rumph for the building of a house. Rumph invited him to live with him until his house was built,

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1. Information on Morgan's tombstone located in the Presbyterian cemetery at Elm Bluff.
 2. The highest bluff on the Alabama River is said to be at Claiborne.
 3. The Stoutenborough home was on the Ridge and is now owned by the Good Shephard Organization of Negroes.
 4. Interview with Alice Alison Lide.

but Alison declined. ¹ Dr. Alison purchased a medium size piece of land on the southeastern part of Centre Ridge and a larger one in adjacent lowlands.

Dr. Alison proceeded to settle up his land with his kin. ² He gave a ten-acre plot immediately across the road from his house to his son-in-law, Dr. Lockwood, and donated other home lots to Colonel Francis Lee, Dr. Joseph Dill Alison, Reverend Francis Beekman Lee, Jacob Alison, and Mrs. Samuel Lide. ³ All of these plots were home sites. ⁴ The plantations were in the lowlands surrounding the Ridge.

Dr. Alison not only helped a number of his kin to get settled at Carlowville, but wrote many letters to other relatives and friends ⁵ which resulted in their moving. For instance, he wrote to the Lides, who dwelt on the south bank of the Pea River in South Carolina, urging them to come and pointing out the virtues of the new land. One of his letters is said to have contained the following hyperbole:

"The Fet locks of a horse drip red with the juice of the wild strawberry, and the task stakes of the slaves bear ears of corn."⁶

For three consecutive years the Pea River had overflowed its bank and flooded the Lide's crop. ⁷ On Dr. Alison's advice, four fami-

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1. The house was not built when he arrived, so Dr. Alison found it necessary to live in tents until he could construct a house according to Mrs. Halsa Kyser in her "Notes on the Alison Family," p.2.
 2. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Kyser, Halsa, Notes on the Alison Family, p.1, unpublished. This quotation refers to a custom in South Carolina of putting out task stakes for the slaves to work to. Dr. Alison had corn planted in the cotton for stakes.
 7. Ibid., p. 1.

lies of Lides moved to Centre Ridge in the thirties, Eli Lide and family, Robert Lide and family, Samuel Lide and family, and James Lide and family.¹

It was also on Dr. Hugh Alison's advice that the Reynolds family came to Carlowville. The first to come was Captain Benjamin Reynolds with his family and his brother, State Reynolds.² They came from John's Island, South Carolina, in 1836. A few years later³ Dr. William Reynolds and Bernard Adams Reynolds came to Carlowville. There were others whom Dr. Alison induced to come to Carlowville. He desired to plant a bit of South Carolina in the heart of Alabama.

Other families made their homes on Centre Ridge, coming during the late thirties and the forties, independently of Dr. Alison. There were the Dawsons, the Peakes, the McIvers, the Bisells, the Pouncies, the Carvills, the Swinks, the Lees, the Coxes, the Merediths,⁴ the Townsends, the Nobles, the Dudleys, and the Hales.

Warrenton during these same years (1830-1845) was filling up even more rapidly than Carlowville, so fast in fact, that during the fifties it became a town. The most affluent and politically prominent of the settlers who came during these years was Judge James M. Calhoun, nephew of John C. Calhoun. Calhoun came to Centre Ridge in about 1840, coming from South Carolina by way of Selma where he had settled first.⁵ He bought a large tract of land extending from the

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1. The first Lide came in 1835.
 2. Reynolds, Benjamin, Table of Descent.
 3. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 4. Interview with Maggie Alison.
 5. James Calhoun was a judge at Cahaba while he lived in Selma. He continued to hold this office for a few years after he came to Centre Ridge. Interview with A.P. Calhoun.

southern part of Warrenton to Carlowville.¹ His selection of H.S. Yates as overseer for this plantation accounts for the coming of the first of the Yates family to Centre Ridge.² The Calhoun land holding was probably the largest one on the Ridge proper and the second largest held by a Centre Ridge citizen.³

Other families settling in or around Warrenton from 1830 to 1845 were the Dennises, the Hasselvanders, the Logans, the Smiths, the Goodmans, the Ashes, the Warrs, the Clevelands, the Kenans, the Howards, the Hearsts, the Mayos, the McKellars, and the Dills.⁴ A little later the Kysers and the Englishes settled in Warrenton. A considerable number of names of the early families are unknown on account of the transient nature of much of Warrenton's early population. Tradition assigns Virginians a prominent place in the settlements of Warrenton, but only two families are known definitely to have come from the Old Dominion.

One cannot say with certainty why this section was called Warrenton or when it was first so designated. It may have been because it was the home of the Warr family, the earliest known member being Evans Wilson Warr.

Centre-Port changed little in its population (from 1830 to 1845) on account of the early preemption of most of the land there by

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1. This was the estate on which he lived. He also had plantations in Wilcox and Clarke counties according to his grandson, A.P. Calhoun.
 2. Of North Carolina extraction.
 3. John Crocheron's estate was supposed to have been much larger than Judge Calhoun's estate, but much of it lay off the Ridge.
 4. Based on examination of cemeteries at Carlowville and Elm Bluff, and a perusal of Centre Ridge church records.

Crocheron, Stoutenborough, and Coleman. There were probably several men who helped Crocheron operate his port on the river, but the names of them are unknown.

Extraction of the Centre Ridge People

A major portion, but by no means all, of the Centre Ridge settlers moved from other southern states. Northern states and at least two foreign countries were represented.

A large majority of the early settlers of Carlowville came from South Carolina, especially from the section around Charleston.¹ John Peake, said to have been a British general,² was an immigrant from England.

In Warrenton, North Carolinians predominated among those whose original home is known.³ Virginia, Georgia, and South Carolina were represented.⁴ Dr. Patton came from Ohio. The first Hassalvander emigrated from Alsace-Lorraine.⁵

At Centre-Port, New Yorkers were first in influence and perhaps in numbers as well, though Centre-Port was not thickly settled by whites.⁶

How the Settlers Came

The early settlers came to Centre Ridge by land and by water.

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1. Based on an examination of cemeteries and a study of family tradition.
 2. There is no verification for the tradition that Peake was a general.
 3. Based on an examination of cemeteries at Carlowville and Elm Bluff.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Interview with Mrs. Alison Reynolds Wade.
 6. This was due to the early preemption of most of the Centre-Port land by Crocheron, Stoutenborough, and Coleman.

Those who came by water, traveled up the Alabama River from Mobile. The land routes varied somewhat, but most, if not all of those coming by land, traveled through Georgia and passed through what was later to become¹ Montgomery, along the old Federal Road. Sometimes when a family came by land, their belongings, or at least the bulkier part of them, were shipped by water.² The New Yorkers of Centre-Port came by ocean to Mobile and by river from Mobile to Centre Ridge as did some of the Carlowville people.³ Peake and Townsend came this way.⁴ No data are available as to how the Warrenton settlers came, but probably some of them came by water.

Taking the Ridge as a whole, however, there is little doubt that a large majority came by land. Most of the Ridge settlers came either from North or South Carolina, and found it both convenient and desirable to come by land. Nearly all of the Carlowville settlers came this way, according to the tradition of the descendants who have remained on Centre Ridge. While information is scarce concerning the Warrentonians, it is reasonable to believe that they, too, came mostly by land.

Their method of coming can best be described as trekking. In his "Table of Descent," Captain Benjamin Reynolds gives a graphic and perhaps representative account of the journey to Carlowville by land.

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1. Interviews with S.A. Reynolds and others.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Interview with Maggie Alison.

"Captain Benjamin Reynolds born March 26, 1806, married Hephziakah Townsend Jenkins, January 19, 1832. They moved from John Island, South Carolina in 1835, with their son Benjamin, brother States, and their negro slaves, in wagons reaching Carlowville Dallas Co. Alabama in March, 1836. On the trip they occupied tents, camping each night. They narrowly escaped massacre, by the Indians, being the last emigrants to cross the Chattahoochie River in Georgia before the Indians revolted and murdered all movers."¹

Few, if any, of the emigrants to Centre Ridge came so near a clash.

When trekking to Centre Ridge, the pioneer families were joined for a part of the way by other pioneers bound for other destinations. Sometimes these groups were, for at least a part of the way, of considerable size.² A pioneer who appeared honest and respectable³ was welcomed by other pioneers. There was a good reason for this banding. Prior to 1836, there was a possibility of Indian attacks, of course, but the principal motive both before and after 1836 seems to have been to control the slaves better.⁴ Many of the slaves had never seen a hill and were terrified by hills, especially the red hills of Georgia.⁵ Slaves also feared Indians and dark spirits in the forest.⁶

Guards were stationed over the camps at night to prevent the

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1. Reynolds, Benjamin, Table of Descents, 1845, unpublished. This manuscript is held by Mrs. Alison Reynolds Wade.
 2. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Kyser, Halsa, Notes on the Alison Family, unpublished, p.3.
 6. In order to ward off these evil spirits of the forest, the slaves chewed sweet gum and carried it about on their persons. This attaching of magic qualities to sweet gum prevails among colored folk of Centre Ridge even today.

slaves from escaping.¹ Even in the day, some member of the trekking group rode at the rear of the party in order to prevent escape.² These safeguards were not provided solely for the security of an investment; they were also done as a protection to the slaves for few of those who escaped ever got back to their old home. Most of those who escaped would get lost and die of starvation, or else be caught and re-enslaved by Indians or other settlers.³

Most of the movers by land had one or more covered wagons drawn by oxen.⁴ Slaves walked along beside these wagons. If the master owned a carriage, his wife and children rode in it; otherwise, the covered wagon was used for this purpose. Family belongings usually were transported in the covered wagon. The gentlemen rode horseback as a rule, a portion of whom rode at the front and a portion at the rear of the entire group. Tents were used while enroute for shelter and were useful as a first home when these pioneers reached their destination.⁵

Motives for Coming

Both social and economic motives impelled the coming of early settlers to Centre Ridge. These motives might be either general or personal in character. In all cases there were either general or personal economic reasons for coming. In many cases, and probably most cases if the full truth could be discovered, there were also social rea-

1. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. This, at least, was true for the Alison and Reynolds families and is said to have been the case for other families as well.

sons for moving. These social reasons might be intensely personal and affecting only one individual or family.

Those who came for economic reasons wished greater wealth and security. Land further east was wearing out and they did not know very well how to maintain fertility. With settlers all around, they could not get the additional land necessary to keep their families, which were usually large, intact. Public lands on and around Centre Ridge were relatively cheap and large tracts could be purchased. Some saw opportunity for profitable commercial ventures.

The Lides came because the Ped^{see} River of South Carolina over-
1
flowed its banks and ruined their crops for three consecutive years. In some way or other these pioneers hoped to better their worldly lot.

Sometimes powerful personal reasons spurred the pioneers on to Centre Ridge. The cases of Colonel Paul H. Hutson Lee, Adam Hassalvander, and of Dr. Hugh Lee Alison are examples of cases in which the personal reason seems to have been predominant.

Colonel Lee had lived in Charleston on such a lavish scale
2
that he had become hopelessly involved in debt. Soon, he was jail-
3
bound, and a portion of his property made subject to attachment. Lee married Linch Van Ryne, the daughter of a wealthy and successful
4
milliner of Alsatian birth. While this marriage alleviated his financial difficulties, his social troubles were only beginning. The elite

1. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.
2. Ibid.
3. One who was jailbound was not imprisoned, but was not permitted to go more than a specified distance from the jail.
4. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.

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of Charleston would not receive his wife which was because of the fact that her mother was a milliner.¹ As a consequence, Colonel Lee moved to Carlowville. It should be noted at this point, that for several years she failed to receive a cordial reception at her new home, despite the fact that she was a lady of unimpeachable character and a good wife and mother.²

As he wanted his new home to conform to the elegance to which he was accustomed, Lee went back to Charleston after being at Centre Ridge for two or three years, to select some materials for a permanent home, not locally available.³ While walking down the streets of Charleston a man asked him for work.⁴ Colonel Lee was able to tell by the stranger's accent that he came from Alsace-Lorraine, as it was similar to that of his wife. The foreigner was Adam Hassalvander, a skilled carpenter and a former soldier of Napoleon.⁵ Lee invited Hassalvander to assist him in the selection of materials and to come with him back to Carlowville. Lee employed Hassalvander to build his new home for him. The Hassalvander family settled at Warrenton and their descendents have resided there continuously since that time.⁶

Although Dr. Hugh Lee Alison's objects in coming to Centre Ridge were varied, among them seems to have been a desire to escape from the evil influences in his home town, Aiken, South Carolina, for the sake of his children.⁷ Even by 1830, Aiken was a winter play-

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1. Milliners were not deemed respectable folk in Charleston at that time, according to Alison Reynolds Wade.
 2. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid.
 7. Kyser, Halsa, Notes of the Alison Family, unpublished, p.1.

ground frequented by ribald gentry from the North, and as a consequence its moral tone was low.¹ Dr. Alison possessed a large family, a part of which was of an impressionable age, and he feared the possible effects of Aiken's loose life upon their character. He is said to have once protested against the northern vacationists: "They have more money than morals, and when they are in their cups, they forget they are the sons of gentlemen."²

As Dr. Alison gave up a lucrative medical practice to come to Carlowville, it is reasonable to believe that a desire to escape the environment of Aiken was the determining factor in his coming. He was also a scientific agriculturist and horticulturist and desired more land to give vent to these avocations. A further object of Dr. Alison's seems to have been a desire to get land enough to settle his immediate kin so that they would not be scattered about.³

Other movers doubtless had some personal reason for leaving their old home. One reason that was a determining factor in the selection of Centre Ridge for a new home rather than some other location, once the decision to move had been made, was, in numerous cases, a desire to be near blood relatives who had already moved there. This certainly was true in Carlowville, and to a lesser extent at Centre-Port. Warrenton may have had its family cliques also.

The Reasons Why Some Did Not Stay

It must not be supposed that all who moved to Centre Ridge stayed there. Some probably found the land to which the government

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1. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.
 2. Kyser, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
 3. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.

grants entitled them, unsuited to agriculture. Some, doubtless found pioneering life too arduous. Carlow, the trapper, and perhaps others were crushed out by the coming of agriculture. After Texas became a part of the Union, some left for Texas.¹ To escape from crime or from the effects of poltroonery, some found it safer and more desirable to go elsewhere. Others returned to their old homes. Those who left Centre Ridge during these formative years did so for varied, and in some cases, interesting reasons.

John Crocheron La Tourette, a son of John La Tourette, the map maker, and nephew of the wealthy John Crocheron, became sick with malarial fever. His fever grew worse, causing delirium.² A slave who was assigned to watch him, inadvertently went to his cabin for a few minutes during an apparent lull in the malady.³ When he returned his ward was gone and could not be found, for the night was dark. La Tourette made his way to the home of T.L. Bisell who lived over four miles down the road in Carlowville.⁴ He broke in Bisell's home and Bisell ordered him to stop. La Tourette advanced and Bisell, not knowing who he was or the state he was in, shot him and killed him.⁵

Bisell was exonerated of all blame in the matter, both by the law and by his neighbors. Nevertheless, the affair preyed on his mind and was particularly acute on account of La Tourette being a very promising young man of only twenty-five. Finally, after long brooding,

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1. Some of the Rumphs, Fountains, Dennises and perhaps others moved to Texas.
 2. Interview with Maggie Alison.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

Bisell sold his valuable properties and returned to South Carolina, where, according to tradition, he became one of the largest rice growers in the United States.¹

Herman Warfield and his neighbor, one Fowler, did not get on well. One day Fowler drew up a bucket of water from his well and found in it a one-pound package of arsenic with Warfield's name attached.² As soon as the news spread, Warfield left for other parts, not detaining himself to save any of his stock of goods.³ As this occurred in 1850, it was thought that Warfield joined the gold rush to California.

Several families moved to Texas during the fifties. The Fountain family did this as did also the Rumph family. The Rumph family moved back to Centre Ridge after the head of the house, William Rumph, and several of the slaves died of Cholera on the way to Texas.⁴ The McIvers moved to Louisiana.⁵ Benjamin Reynolds moved to Snow Hill in 1853, and farmed the land which is now the campus of the large Snow Hill Institute for Negroes.⁶ Dr. William Reynolds moved back to Charleston, South Carolina.⁷ These are but a few specific cases of the change in the Centre Ridge population.

As some retired, others came forward. New settlers not only filled the gaps left by those who moved, but increased the population as well. The population of Centre Ridge increased fairly rapidly every

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1. Interview with Maggie Alison.
 2. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Interview with Maggie Alison.
 5. Ibid.
 6. This branch of the Reynolds family subsequently moved back to Centre Ridge.
 7. Ibid.

decade up to 1860, and the gain from 1850 to 1860 was perhaps the largest
of all. ¹ While no population is static, there is a relatively high
rate of change in new settlements and Centre Ridge was no exception
to this rule.

1. Based on an examination of Baptist and Presbyterian church records.

CHAPTER III
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF
CENTRE RIDGE PRIOR TO 1861

The Problems and Labor of the First Settlers

The first problems which confronted the new settler on his arrival were economic ones. He needed to start a crop and erect a dwelling place. During the first year only a small crop could be planted and only the crudest shelter could be devised, but nearly all settlers made some beginning during their first year toward founding a new home in the wilderness.

Tents had been used in most cases for shelter while en route for the new land. When the pioneer arrived he would continue to use tents until a temporary home of logs could be built. The case of Benjamin Reynolds is a good example of this. Speaking of himself and his wife, he says

"On their arrival in Carlowville they continued using tents.... until their first Alabama residence, a one-room of 18 x 20 ft. was built. Cut of hewn timbers ... the frame after being put up was enclosed by sticks, Mud and Moss cut in small pieces, all Mixed together, there from the Walls. Making a comfortable... adobe house."¹

Sometimes the settler continued to use his log hut for several years, but as soon as he could, he began the construction of a permanent home. This he might complete shortly, or the process might take several years. Sometimes he completely gave up his log hut, using it only for a barn or a slave cabin. In other cases he covered over

1. Reynolds, Benjamin, Table of Descent, unpublished.
2. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.

the walls of his log hut and added to it.

The settler had his choice of two locally available materials for the construction of his permanent home, wood and brick. Wood was the more common of the two. Heart long-leaf yellow pine was the lumber used by nearly all builders.¹

Lumber was manufactured by at least two sawmills on Centre Ridge before or shortly after 1840. One Mallet owned the first mill set up for sawing lumber.² From all accounts Mallet's mill must have been a very crude affair with perpendicular saws. The next sawmill set up on the Ridge belonged to the mercantile firm of Bisell and Carvill.³ It also was crude but was an improvement over the Mallet mill. Both mills sawed only the best materials available, for some of their lumber now ninety years old is still in good condition.⁴

Shingles were usually made of heart long-leaf yellow pine, as were also the materials in the remainder of the house. Ordinarily they were made on the plantation by a slave artisan. The procedure in making them consisted of cutting the log into the desired length and then splitting the shingles to the desired size. Finally they were smoothed off with a drawing knife. Some of these roofs are said to have lasted as long as forty years.⁵

When the walls of the permanent home were to be of brick, the bricks were generally manufactured locally.⁶ Most bricks for chimney,

1. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.
2. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

foundation, and other purposes were made at home as well. When
¹
 Dr. Hugh Lee Alison built his second permanent home, he baked his own
 bricks from clay on his own place and they are in fairly good condi-
²
 tion today. Other bricks manufactured earlier than these and a lit-
 tle later are also in good condition. The brick-making process used
 on Centre Ridge consisted of first sun-drying the bricks and then
 fire-burning them after they were hard enough to be handled without
³
 breaking. Prior to the War Between the States, the finest homes on
⁴
 the Ridge were made from brick, either wholly or in part. Not all
 of the brick homes were made from local bricks, however. John
 Crocheron's home was made from bricks shipped from England to Mobile
⁵
 as ballast. Stoutenborough, who also built his home of brick, pro-
 bably got his bricks in this way through Mobile also.

During the settler's first year on Centre Ridge, he usually
 attempted not only to build a log hut but also to clear and plant some
 of his land. In most cases, slaves were used for this as well as for
 the heavier work in building a first house. It was seldom, if ever,
 possible for the earliest settlers to get all of their suitable agricul-
 tural land cleared during their first year. They cleared some land a-
 round their home site and patches here and there in their plantation
⁶
 land. It is safe to state that the Centre Ridge pioneer attempted to

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1. His first one burned. He built his second one of brick in 1843.
 2. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Several homes had the first story made from brick and the second from lumber. The James M. Calhoun home and the Paul L. Hutson Lee home were examples of this type of architecture.
 5. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 6. Ibid.

raise his food-stuff during his first year and usually succeeded. Some few were able to plant a little cotton as well. The process of converting the wilderness or the hard-turfed black belt into cotton plantations extended over several years.

Home Industries

Enterprising citizens of Centre Ridge during the thirties and forties set up several small industries for the purpose of manufacturing useful products for home consumption. As has been mentioned previously, Mallet and the firm of Bisell and Carvill owned sawmills. Brick-making industries were less regular, being set up on a particular residence to supply a particular demand. In addition to these building supply industries, Centre Ridge came to have a tannery, several cotton gins, and four grist mills.

In addition the furniture for the slaves and much of the furniture for whites was constructed by slave artisans on various
¹
 plantations.

Slaves also spun and wove their clothing for the most part.²

The tannery was located in a ravine back of the present
³
 Carlowville school building. Josephus Smith and R.J. Lide owned it and one Crow operated it.⁴ Huge wooden vats held the tannic acid which was made by grinding oak bark fine. Water was turned into the vats from a nearby spring and last of all the hides were dumped in. Smith
⁵
 and Lide ran a cobbler shop in connection with their tannery. In it

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1. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Interview with Dr. S.B. Alison.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

they made most of the shoes used locally out of some of the hides which they tanned. The remainder of the hides which the Smith and Lide tannery processed were marketed elsewhere. The tannery sold its shoe output at retail and people came from all around to buy them. Stores seem not to have been a factor in the distribution of shoes prior to 1870 except that they sometimes took foot measurements and ordered custom-made shoes for their customers.

Several but not all of the Centre Ridge plantations owned and operated cotton gins. These gins were crude affairs pulled by mules and horses with a two-bale per day capacity as a general thing. Most of them were built over streams in order that the cottonseed, then deemed a nuisance, could be easily disposed of. The press which packed the cotton as well as the screw which carried down the block was usually made of wood.

Judge James M. Calhoun seems to have had a monopoly of the grinding business of Centre Ridge. He owned three mills for grinding meal and one for grinding flour. Water propelled all of Judge Calhoun's mills. They are said to have produced a far better quality of meal than is at present ground by gasoline powered grist mills.

Transportation Facilities

There were three general modes of transportation used by Centre Ridge people in ante-bellum days. First, there were the convey-

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1. Interview with Dr. S.B. Alison.
 2. The finer grades of dress shoes had to be ordered from Mobile.
 3. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Interview with A.P. Calhoun.
 6. Ibid.

ances used on land for hauling freight such as wagons and carts.

Second, there were the boats. Third, there were several means of passenger travel by land such as the use of various kinds of carriages and horseback travel.

When Centre Ridge was first settled, the major portion of the hauling of goods probably was done by wagons and carts. Most of the settlers had moved in them and for a few years they apparently were used even for long distance hauling. By 1840 wagons and carts were supplanted by the river boats for long hauling of heavy goods, but nothing could take their place for transporting goods to and from the river or for general hauling of supplies to and from the plantations.

From 1840 to 1860 the river traffic must have increased rapidly. John Crocheron developed Centre-Port and made of it one of the most useful and convenient ports on the Alabama River. Centre-Port had a modest beginning sometime in the twenties.¹ Portland, a few miles south of Centre-Port on the river, received most of the traffic at first, but yellow fever and malaria killed or drove away most of its people. As Portland declined, Centre-Port prospered, but it must not be supposed that Centre-Port's gain came altogether at the expense of Portland. Centre-Port got most of the Centre Ridge traffic after the first few years. This river port lay on a high bluff which is on about the same level as the remainder of the Ridge.² This location made unnecessary a long up-hill pull with heavily laden wagons.

As Crocheron prospered, he equipped his port in such a way as

1. Provided Crocheron started his port soon after his arrival.
2. Based on observation of the port site.

to give superior service to his customers. As he expanded and improved his port, he drew patronage from points off the Ridge. By 1860 Centre-Port came to be the river port for western Lowndes, eastern Wilcox, and a portion of Butler County.¹ According to tradition most of the Greenville river traffic gravitated to Centre-Port.² Southern Dallas used Centre-Port widely also.

As the bluff at Centre-Port rises abruptly from the waters of the river, Crocheron found it necessary to construct an elevator to lift goods from the boats to the top of the bluff. The elevator car ran on a wooden track and was connected by a thick cable with a drum located at the top of the bluff.³ Mules pulled the drum round and round which in turning shortened the cable. In this way the elevator car finally reached the top. Steep steps for the use of passengers and port workers ran beside the tracks.

If the planter had not come to get his goods by the time they arrived, these goods were stored in a warehouse.⁴ Crocheron's warehouse was one hundred feet long by sixty feet wide. There was a fee for the use of the warehouse and also a fee for elevator service. If the planter arrived ahead of the landing of his goods, as was often the case, Crocheron made such a planter his guest and put up his driver or drivers in a nearby camphouse. Crocheron never charged for this service even if the planter and his drivers stayed a week or more. He kept per-

1. Interview with Alice Alison Lide.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

petual open-house in his palatial twenty-two room mansion.¹ It is probable that much of the good will felt for Centre-Port was built up in this way.

Although goods were hauled in wagons or boats, people themselves traveled mostly in carriages or on horseback. When Centre Ridge people wished to travel long distances, they did so by water if such was possible,² but even so, they had only occasional need to ride on the boats; carriages, and horses vitally affected their everyday life. The quality of the carriages used by Centre Ridge planters varied somewhat according to their means. Some were ornate and luxurious, while others were more simple and inexpensive.³ Most gentlemen owned at least one saddle horse which was usually of good blood. Horses were used more for every day business affairs than were carriages, while the latter were generally for ladies' use and for riding to church.⁴

Commercial Life

Commerce had its real beginning on Centre Ridge shortly after the coming of the first big wave of settlers during the 1830-1840 decade. Prior to that time, stores may have been started in Warrenton, but this is by no means certain. Commercial life in Warrenton depended to a considerable extent on the river traffic at Centre-Port and Centre-Port was fairly well developed by 1840. At Centre-Port there was not a single store for many years. During the late forties or early fifties, Zebulon Hearst established one there but the heavy spending by

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1. Interview with Alice Alison Lide.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.
 4. Ibid.

1

both planters and teamsters was done at Warrenton.

By 1840 Carlowville was served by four stores. The first store established there and easily the most important as long as it ran, was the one owned and operated by the firm of Bisell and Carvill. Bisell and Carvill were brothers-in-law. Bisell, the senior partner, made trips to Mobile and to England on which occasions he purchased goods to stock the store and also sold the cotton of his customers. On these trips, Bisell also brought special orders of fine goods for his customers, goods which he did not carry in his regular stock, such as silverware, fine silks and laces, expensive furniture, and custom-made boots and shoes. Carvill stayed at Carlowville and managed the everyday affairs of the firm. Bisell and Carvill closed out their stock of goods and returned to South Carolina by 1850.

The other stores in Carlowville were smaller than the Bisell and Carvill store. One was run by a German Jew named Bookman and was located across the road and slightly south of Carlow's former home. Another store was run by one Warfield, who hurriedly left for parts unknown after an altercation with a man named Fowler. This store stood on a plot of ground adjacent to the Community Cemetery. In addition to these three general merchandise stores, J. Alison Lee ran a drug store near the Episcopal Church. The Carlowville stores did not get much of the transient trade which passed through going or coming from Centre-

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1. Interview with Alice Alison Lide.
 2. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid.
 7. Ibid.
 8. Ibid.

Port. Its trade throughout the years was largely of a local character.

Warrenton on the other hand catered to, and succeeded in building up, a flourishing trade with the people coming from Centre-Port. The store at Centre-Port and the four stores at Carlowville combined probably did only a small part of the business of Centre Ridge. Warrenton got most of the Centre Ridge business. As the river traffic at Centre-Port increased, the commercial life of Warrenton expanded. During the fall and winter, mule teams passed through bearing cotton from Furman, Snow Hill, Farmersville, Braggs, Fort Deposit, Acquaville, Pleasant Hill, Pineapple, and even Greenville.¹ These argosies of commerce were gaily bedecked in bright colors while around the necks of the mules, tinkling bells were strung.² The wagons sometimes were pulled by as many as eight mules and horses.

During cotton shipping time as many as two boats a day³ landed at Centre-Port. During the remainder of the year bi-weekly service was all that could be counted on. When the planter had seen to the loading of his cotton at Centre-Port, or to its storage until it could be loaded, he returned by way of Warrenton. Here he might purchase many of his supplies for the next year and also buy some of the luxuries which most rural stores did not stock.⁴ At Warrenton the returning planter might amuse himself with a game of billiards or seek surcease from his cares in the flowing bowl of the bar-room. If he de-

1. Interview with Alice Alison Lide.

2. Ibid.

3. Interviews with S.A. Reynolds and Alice Alison Lide.

4. Ibid.

sired to spend the night, a tavern was glad to accommodate him.

Warrenton tried to give the returning planter whatever he desired and
¹
 welcomed him with open arms.

Warrenton by 1850 came to be built up solidly for about a
²
 mile with business establishments and churches. There were several
 general merchandise stores, a few blacksmith shops, a carriage shop,
 some saloons, a billiard parlor, a tavern, and other business enter-
³ ⁴
 prises. Warrenton was laid off in streets and became something more
 than a village, though it never got to be what would at present be
 classified as a small town.

Churches

Once the Centre Ridge people had become settled on the land,
 they proceeded with dispatch to organize the social institutions which
 had given them satisfaction and benefitted them in their old homes.
 As soon as it was possible, they started building churches and schools.

Probably the first church which ministered to the spiritual
 needs of Centre Ridge people was the Providence Church near Molette's
 Bend. West refers to this small church as follows:

"Providence, a small Society, with a log house,
 about two miles west of what was once called
 Warrenton, in Dallas County, was one of the preaching
 places, in early time in the Cedar Creek Circuit." ⁵

This Cedar Creek Circuit lay in the Cahawba district. The
 Providence Church was built prior to 1825 and was situated on land be-

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1. Interviews with Alice Alison Lide and others.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. West, Anson, A History of Methodism in Alabama, p. 212.

longing to the branch of the Molette family which lived on the east
¹
 bank of the Alabama River.

The first church built on Centre Ridge proper was a "new light"
 Presbyterian Church known as the Old Canaan Cumberland Presbyterian
²
 Church. It evidently was constituted before 1837 for in that year the
 Baptists on Centre Ridge were using the building of this Presbyterian
³
 group for services. The Old Canaan Church building probably was con-
 structed by 1830, but the exact date is unknown. Neither is it known
 who organized the church but it doubtless was done by part of its
 earliest known membership which included the McKellars, the Howards,
⁴
 the Brunsons, and the Ladd families. While the Old Canaan Church
 maintained a cemetery adjacent to the church building, none of the
 graves were marked. It is thought that the Old Canaan Church, while
 small in membership, ministered to numbers of people of other faiths
 who, pending the organization of their own sects, preferred it to no
 spiritual guidance at all. While it soon passed away, the Old Canaan
 Church served a useful function in the life of Centre Ridge.

The first two permanent churches which were organized on
 Centre Ridge were the Episcopal Church and the Baptist Church. As to
 which came first in point of time depends upon the use of terms. Ap-
 parently there was some kind of a parish organization among the
 Episcopalians of Carlowville as early as 1836 but there was no congre-

1. West, Anson, A History of Methodism in Alabama, p. 212.
2. Interview with Hattie Etheridge.
3. Records of the Centre Ridge Baptist Church.
4. Interview with Hattie Etheridge.

gational organization, no church building, and no services held until
¹ 1839. The Centre Ridge Baptist Church was organized February 4,
² 1837, and held its first meeting in April of the same year.

The Centre Ridge Baptist Church used the Canaan Church build-
 ing for its organization meeting in February of 1837 and continued to
 use this building for services until August, when it became necessary
³ to find another house of worship. For a short time David Lide's
⁴ store was used. Then the congregation decided to build a shed with
 an extension bush-arbour until a permanent house of worship could be
 erected. Sufficient funds were subscribed by the end of 1837 to enable
 the Baptists to begin to construct their church. It was completed in
⁵ 1838.

The names of the founders of the Centre Ridge Baptist Church
 were as follows: Jesse Hartwell, James Lide, Maria Lide, Calvin
 Kirven, Eli Lide, Robert Lide, Thomas Williams, Mary Lide, Jane Lide,
⁶ Martha Lide, Francis Lide, Mary Williams, and Harriet Kirven. Jesse
 Hartwell was elected pastor and Calvin Kirven was elected Church
⁷ Clerk. The organization meeting of February 1837 also selected the
 name Centre Ridge Baptist Church to distinguish this new spiritual
⁸ institution.

The Centre Ridge Baptist Church was particularly fortunate in

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1. Lide, Alice Alison, History of St. Paul's Parish, Carlowville, pp.4-5.
 2. "Records of the Centre Ridge Baptist Church."
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid.
 7. Ibid.
 8. At present this church is usually called the Carlowville Baptist Church yet there has been **no** official change of title.

having for its first pastor the Reverend Jesse Hartwell, D.D. from
¹
 Furman University. In 1842 Dr. Hartwell was elected president of
 the Association and in 1843 he was elected professor of the Chair of
²
 theology at Howard College. Dr. Hartwell's assistance in founding
 the Centre Ridge Baptist Church and his able ministry to it during its
 infancy, was a real and lasting service for which Centre Ridge people
 should be grateful.

During the month of August of 1838, a subscription was cir-
 culated for the purpose of erecting a Protestant Episcopal Church at
³
 Carlowville. T.L. Bisell and G.W. Carvill donated a lot, while a
 building committee consisting of Dr. H.L. Alison, John Peake, F.J. Lee,
 G.W. Carvill, and Edward Lovell, obtained subscriptions of \$1016. On
⁴
 Easter Monday 1839 the church was organized. F.J. Lee, H.L. Alison,
 John Peake, W.C. Clifton, and John Simpson were elected vestrymen,
⁵
 while G.W. Carvill and Edward Lovell were elected wardens. Reverend
⁶
 F.B. Lee was officially called as rector.

Mrs. Lide says:

"Although there was no church building as yet,
 services were regularly performed from this time
 forth....."

The church building for St. Paul's Parish was
 completed in 1839 and in that year the first person
 was buried in the Churchyard." ⁷

Mrs. Lide considers Anne Lee Beakman to have been the moving

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1. Riley, B.F., History of the Baptists of Alabama, p. 117.
 2. Riley, op. cit., pp. 141-142.
 3. Lide, op. cit., p. 4.
 4. Ibid., p. 5.
 5. Ibid., p. 5.
 6. Ibid., p. 5.
 7. Ibid., p. 5.

spirit in the organization of St. Paul's Church.

"With one of the first little bands that set out with its caravan of carriages, covered wagons, household possessions, and slaves, came that indomitable mother in the church, Anne Lee Beakman. She and her two daughters, Anne and Mary Catherine, wives respectively of Francis Joseph Lee and Hugh Lee Alison, are credited with being leaders in the Movement toward forming that first Episcopal congregation of Carlowville."¹

After receiving his diaconate in 1839 at Charleston, the Reverend Francis Beakman Lee, came to Carlowville to shepherd the Saint Paul Parish flock. Prior to assuming this responsibility, Lee prepared himself for the ministry at the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church of America in New York City. To his training and to his native ability, Lee brought the gift of tact and humaness which endeared him to his people. For fifty-seven years he served St. Paul's faithfully and well. Even today he is affectionately remembered as "Parson" Lee. Centre Ridge abounds in anecdotes and legends about this beloved character.

In 1839, the Methodists of Centre Ridge formed a church organization and made arrangements to build a church at Warrenton.² September 16, 1839, William P. Molette deeded a lot of his in Warrenton³ for a Methodist Episcopal Church to be built upon. This lot lay in front of the present day Hassalvander home.⁴ A church was subsequently built upon the lot and Abner M. Coleman, Abner T. Howell, Samuel Mays, Edward Dudley and A.C. Ramsey served as trustees.⁵ The

1. Lide, op. cit., p. 3.

2. West, Anson, A History of Methodism in Alabama, p. 536.

3. Ibid., p. 536.

4. Interview with Hattie Etheridge.

5. West, op. cit., p. 536.

Warrenton Methodist Church, while neither as large nor as influential as the other churches of Centre Ridge, proved to be an asset to the religious life of the Ridge.

Presbyterian settlers came to Centre Ridge who had religious conceptions differing from their cousins the Cumberland Presbyterians. As there were churches already at Carlowville and Warrenton, and as a major portion of orthodox Presbyterians lived in the northern half of the Ridge, the founders of the Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church decided to build their house of worship at Centre-Port.¹ It was felt further, that a location at Centre-Port might draw Presbyterians living across Cedar Creek. John Crocheron, while not a Presbyterian, donated a two-acre lot and headed the subscription list with a donation of \$800.² With this contribution and that of many others, a fund was soon gathered which was used to erect a neat brick building capable of accommodating about two hundred and fifty worshipers.³

The new church was opened for divine service in December of 1843 by the first pastor, Reverend William McKelvey Smythe, licentiate of the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Presbytery.⁴ On the eleventh of May 1844 the church was officially constituted and organized as a part of the South Alabama Presbytery.⁵ At this important meeting William S. Smith and James E. Todd were elected and ordained as ruling elders.⁶ The first membership consisted of seventeen white and ten colored communicants.

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1. Smith, Ellen, A History of Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church, p.1.
 2. Ibid., p. 1.
 3. Ibid., p. 1.
 4. Ibid., p. 1.
 5. Ibid., p. 1.
 6. Ibid., p. 1.

The Episcopal, Baptist, and Orthodox Presbyterian churches all witnessed satisfactory increases in membership up to 1860. Possibly the Methodist Church gained also but by 1860 the Old Canaan Presbyterian Church was dead.¹ In 1860 St. Paul listed eighty-three communicants.² The Baptist Church experienced equally satisfactory gains while membership in the Presbyterian Church increased from sixty-five in 1850 to eighty-nine in 1860.³

Not only did the Centre Ridge churches increased in membership during their ante-bellum period; they also enhanced their prestige in state denominational affairs. Being free of all debt, the Episcopal church was consecrated by Bishop Cobb in 1845, and in the following year a State Episcopal Convention was held in it.⁴ Not to be outdone the Centre Ridge Baptist Church invited the Baptist State Convention to meet at Carlowville in 1849, and this invitation was accepted. According to Riley,

"The Baptist State Convention for 1849 met with the Centre Ridge Church, Carlowville, Dallas County. At that time Centre Ridge was one of the wealthiest and most progressive churches in Alabama. Reverend Thomas Chilton was again made president of the convention and Reverend Platt Stout, the pastor of Centre Ridge Church was elected secretary. The annual sermon was delivered by Reverend Basil Manly, Jr. A movement was begun at Carlowville during the session of the convention, for the first time in the history of the state, to provide a fund for aged and destitute Baptist preachers in Alabama."⁵

It is unusual that at the Episcopal State Convention, also,

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1. Interview with Hattie Etheridge.
 2. Lide, op. cit., p. 7.
 3. Based on examination of Baptist and Presbyterian church records.
 4. Lide, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
 5. Riley, B.R., History of the Baptists in Alabama, p. 191.

a movement for providing relief for disabled and superannuate clergy in Alabama was inaugurated.

At the closing of the ante-bellum period, the Centre Ridge churches, with the exception of the Old Canaan Church which had been abandoned, were firmly entrenched in the lives and sentiment of most Centre Ridge people, both white and black. The control which they held upon the Centre Ridge people is shown by the authority which they exercised in cases of improper, unethical, or immoral conduct. None of the Centre Ridge denominations hesitated to "church" or discipline its members when it seemed necessary to do so.¹

While variations existed as to manner of handling disciplinary cases, there was a mode of procedure which was usually followed.² First, a sin was reported or an investigation of an alleged sin asked. Second, a committee was appointed to investigate the facts and also to get the accused party to be present at the next meeting of the church. Third, the report of the committee was made, and the facts considered and weighed. Fourth, action was taken. This might be a reprimand or it might be expulsion from church membership. If the church excluded a member he could be immediately returned to church membership by humble repentance before the congregation. Sometimes in order to prevent going through the full process of accusation and trial or else to still the pain of a guilty conscience, a member would confess his sins before the congregation and ask for forgiveness from the congregation and mercy from God.³ While the pro-

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1. Based on examination of church records.
 2. Ibid.; Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.
 3. Several cases of this type are recorded in the Records of the Centre Ridge Baptist Church.

cess of church discipline brought out much that was best in the church life of the time, it also brought out much that was worst. The intolerance of the time is shown by the custom of turning people out of the church, after and because of affiliation with another denomination. This petty denominationalism tended to destroy good will among the various brethren. The most common causes of church discipline were drunkenness, immorality (especially among the blacks, failure to attend church, fighting, and swearing. ¹ Drunkenness was by far the most common charge, but not infrequently a member was accused of more than one offense. For example, in the Baptist Church record is found of the case of a man who got on sprees and when so inebriated was given to swearing terrible oaths and offering to fight one and all. In order to prevent church action on his case, he failed to attend church ² for several months. Finally the church took action in his absence.

In disciplinary cases, Negroes were summarily dealt with. In two months as a rule their cases were discharged. With white cases they were longer drawn out, due in part to the failure of the accused to come to church. As the churches disliked to consider a man's case in his absence, cases were often delayed for several months in this way. In the end, whether white or black, a guilty member would be tried and his repentance accepted after which he would be put back on the church roles. Some few, following exclusion, joined other denominations.

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1. Based on examination of church records.
 2. Records of the Centre Ridge Baptist Church.

Educational Facilities

Centre Ridge was served from almost the first by schools but by present day standards and by those of the 1850's, these first schools appear inadequate. The first four schools built on Centre Ridge were one-teacher affairs and at least two were one-room log structures.

The Old Canaan Cumberland Church in addition to furnishing religious organization, also supplied the Ridge with its first¹ school. The Old Canaan school stood a few yards from the church and was sponsored and at least partially supported by it.² The first school at Carlowville and perhaps the second school on the Ridge stood where Andrew Calhoun's water tank now stands.³ One Rockaway ran it. The second school at Warrenton and one which was built at approximately the same time that the Rockaway school was built stood across the road and north from the present day Powe home.⁴ It was a two-story plank affair with a Masonic hall occupying the top floor. It is thought that the Masons of Centre Ridge sponsored this school, although it is by no means certain that they did so. The name of this school is not known. Parson Lee built and ran a fourth school at Carlowville after Rockaway abandoned his school in the late forties. The Lee school stood on the campus of the present Carlowville High School.

Prior to 1850, no school on Centre Ridge with the possible exception of the school in the Masonic hall attempted to give second-

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1. Interview with Hattie Etheridge.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 4. Interview with Hattie Etheridge.

ary instruction. The student preparing for college could go to the Valley Creek Academy, the Camden Female College, the Dallas Academy in Selma, or the Compromise Academy located between Braggs and Farmersville in Lowndes County.¹ After 1850 Centre Ridge did not have to send its sons and daughters away in order to give them a secondary education, for in this year Thomas John Dill moved to Centre Ridge from Edisto Island, South Carolina,² and established a splendid academy between Carlowville and Warrenton. Until he moved to Marion in 1869, to head the department of classic languages of Howard College, Dill devoted his energy to the enlightenment of Centre Ridge students.³ From all accounts Dill maintained high scholastic standards in his academy and adequately prepared his students for college work as well as for their everyday needs. Centre Ridge people speak fondly and respectfully of Dill's Academy to this day. The academy died when Dill moved away in 1869, and the building was razed.

Until the cataclysm of Reconstruction carried all before it, a number of Centre Ridge students were able to attend college. More of the young men of the time seem to have attended the University of Alabama than any other institution of higher learning. In all, sixteen took work at the "Capstone" prior to 1865.⁴

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1. The trustees of this Academy were Col. W.T. Minter, S.D. Crum, E. Dudley, Wm. Cox, and others.
 2. Owens, Thomas M., History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography, Vol. IV, p. 491.
 3. While in Carlowville, Mr. Dill married a daughter of Jacob Alison. Their son, Joseph Mason, was the first president of Troy Normal School.
 4. Palmer, Thomas Waverly, A Register of the Officers and Students of the University of Alabama, 1831-1901. (Students from the Ridge picked out by the writer.)

1

Dr. Joseph D. Alison and Nathaniel Henry Rhodes Dawson attended Spring Hill College at Mobile in about 1850. It is thought that some of the Centre Ridge Baptists attended Howard and Judson. Possibly a few of the Ridge people matriculated at out of the state institutions. College training to say the least was fairly widespread on Centre Ridge in the ante-bellum days. Culture and polish as well as knowledge were highly prized by Centre Ridge people from the very start.

Politics

When Centre Ridge was first occupied, the early settlers are said to have given a hearty measure of support to Andrew Jackson and felt a keen admiration for him. It is probably true that the Centre Ridge people sympathized with and supported his nationalistic sentiments. With the passing of the bears, however, Centre Ridge became increasingly addicted to the states' rights conception of government. This typical Alabama development was accentuated by the fact that on Centre Ridge resided a states'rights leader of Alabama, Judge James M. Calhoun, nephew of John C. Calhoun.

Soon after Judge Calhoun's coming to Alabama, Dallas County sent him to the lower house of the legislature. Here he served from 1834 to 1836.² In 1837 Dallas County sent Calhoun to the Alabama Senate where he served till 1839.³ In 1842, he returned to the

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1. Mr. Dawson was U.S. Commissioner of Education under Cleveland. Dawson, Alaska, is thought to have been named for him. He married a Todd, a sister of Abraham Lincoln's wife. Owens, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 471.
 2. Owens, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 451.
 3. Ibid., p. 451.

lower house and served another term. In 1857, Judge Calhoun was elected to the Senate again and served there till 1860. It is probably not inaccurate to say that in ante-bellum days, Centre Ridge enjoyed a far greater political influence than the size of its population would lead one to expect. Judge Calhoun was one of the committee sent to Texas to urge its secession from the union. Judge Calhoun kept in contact with his illustrious uncle and derived much of his political philosophy from that source. Unfortunately, the correspondence has been lost or destroyed and one can only speculate as to how the oracle of states' rights instructed his kinsman.

Life on Centre Ridge

On Centre Ridge the plantation system in contrast to the small farm system came to be predominant. Of course, there were some farms but most of the land holdings were large. To that extent agricultural life in the three divisions of the Ridge was similar, but beyond this general similarity, the contrasts are more striking than the likenesses. Recreational habits, morals, and life attitudes differed widely in Carlowville, Warrenton, and Centre-Port.

Life in Warrenton prior to 1860 resembled in many ways the life in a western town during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The men of Warrenton held small regard and felt little pa-

1. Owen, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 451.

2. Ibid., pp.451-452.

3. Interview with A.P. Calhoun. This is ironical in view of the fact that John C. Calhoun played so conspicuous a part in getting Texas annexed to the union.

4. Interview with Mrs. T.L. Wade.

5. Ibid.

1
 tience for ordinary law processes. Grievances were apt to be set-
 tled on the spot where they occurred or inside of a few hours. Duel-
 ing of an informal type was practiced in Warrenton until Civil War
 2
 days. The dueling ground existed on the lawn of what was the
 3
 Brunson home. One combatant would stand in front of a Paulow~~nia~~
 4
 tree and the other combatant would stand a specified distance away.
 At a given signal both principals would fire. The duel as fought in
 Warrenton differed from the gentlemen's duel in that the former was
 fought as soon as possible after the difficulty arose and also in
 5
 that no definite seconding procedure prevailed. Sometimes people
 did not even go to this much trouble in settling altercations. It of-
 ten happened that they would go after each other with shotguns, pis-
 6
 tols, and knives and fight until one of the combatants fell.

It was largely because of the cheapness in which human life
 was held that Warrenton derived its reputation for being wild and law-
 less, but it earned it in other ways as well. Warrentonians deemed it
 7
 great sport to ride through the streets shooting a pistol hot. This
 was done on Saturday nights, election days, and holidays especially.
 Life on such occasions was not safe for women and children. Gander
 8
 pulling was another favorite sport in Warrenton. The gander was tied
 to a pole about the height of a horse and had his head greased. A
 horseman rode by at full speed and attempted to pull the gander's head

1. Interview with Alice Alison Lide.

2. Ibid.

3. Now known as the J.D. Alison home.

4. This Paulow~~nia~~ tree still stands. It is marked by scars made by
 bullets which hit it rather than the dueling principals.

5. Interview with Alice Alison Lide.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

off without slacking his pace. Other fowls were sometimes used when ganders got scarce. Warrentonians were also addicted to horse racing and liked to make huge wagers.¹ The race track occupied a piece of land back of the present day home of Hattie Etheridge. Warrentonians imbibed incomputable quantities of hard liquors.² In a day when drinking was common, they had a reputation for lack of sobriety and restraint. Although the rowdiness of Warrenton was probably confined to a small part of its total population, the name of the whole town suffered on account of the exploits of its worst element.

While a lack of restraint was one of the chief characteristics of Warrenton, the very opposite was true in Carlowville. A citizen of Carlowville in ante-bellum days deplored excesses just as he does today. He loved pleasures but was moderate in their uses. He drank but was apt to be temperate in his drinking and in addition drank partially of milder liquors such as wine, brandy, and champagne.³ He cultivated good taste and searched for the golden mean, eschewing exhibitionism in all its forms. He was not a Puritan, neither was he uncharitable, but he had scant patience with the love of display then manifest at Warrenton.

It was not accidental, then, that Carlowvillians and Warrentonians got on poorly together and shunned rather than sought each other's company.⁴ Though near in distance, Carlowville and Warrenton were far away in spirit. Carlowville considered Warrenton to be crude, boorish, vulgar, shallow, unrestrained, drunkenly, and im-

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1. Interview with Alice Alison Lide.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Dr. H.L. Alison made champagne in his home.
 4. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.

¹
 pious. Warrenton considered Carlowville to be snobbish, austere,
 clannish, uncharitable, effete, and Puritanical. ² Centre-Port people
 with the exception of the Crocherons and the Colemans were deemed by
 Carlowville people to be on a par with Warrentonians, especially the
 hangers-on around Crocheron's port. ³ On the other hand, most of the
 Centre-Port people held the Carlowville people in slight regard. This
 social isolation of the three areas of Centre Ridge was by no means
 complete, however. Men like Judge Calhoun, John Crocheron,
 Dr. Patton, Abner Coleman, and others stood well in Carlowville, while
 some Carlowville people cultivated the friendship of people living
 at Warrenton and at Centre-Port. ⁴ A certain amount of contact was al-
 ways maintained through the agencies of church and school. While the
 villages of Centre Ridge did not care for each other, they did not
 hate each other. There was little, if any, blood ever shed as a re-
 sult of this estrangement.

Summary of Ante-bellum Development

By the coming of the War Between the States Centre Ridge had
 changed from a pioneer society to a planter society. The land had
 been cleared and comfortable permanent houses had been constructed.
 Several local industries had been developed to supply some of the man-
 ufactured goods needed. A functioning commercial system had sprung up.
 Facilities for transportation which were apparently adequate for the
 time, came into being. Churches and schools were established. Polit-

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1. Interview with Alison Reynolds Wade.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

ical institutions came to be well developed.

Centre Ridge citizens collectively could take pride in what they had done in the wilderness. From log cabins in the forest some had changed to two-story mansions with stately gardens and walks. Others lived in comfortable one-story buildings. Culture was coming to be widespread before the war catastrophe.

In 1860, Centre Ridge knew that when it spoke in the councils of state and county affairs its voice was heard. If things became a bit wild and unrestrained, life at least was interesting and not very hard. It is easy to see why Centre Ridge people look on ante-bellum days as the "good old days."

CHAPTER IV

WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

The Growth of War Sentiment

It is difficult to say with any degree of certainty just when the people of Centre Ridge became mentally and emotionally prepared for secession and its probable outgrowth, war. When the first permanent settlers came in goodly numbers during the thirties, a certain amount of anti-Northern sentiment is said to have been felt in the settlement on the Ridge;¹ but, if such was the case, it could hardly be considered as being of a serious and uncompromising nature. The Centre Ridge settlers apparently were irked by the protective tariff policy and by the sponsors of this tariff; but until the forties there seems not to have been any great fear of loss of the slaves. On the issue of states' rights, Centre Ridge probably was as stern and unbending as the man whom it helped again and again to a seat in the Alabama Legislature, Judge James M. Calhoun.

Apparently the reaction of Centre Ridge on the great problems of tariff, slavery, states' rights, and secession paralleled in a general way the reaction toward those same problems in other areas in which a planter aristocracy was predominant in influence. If there was an essential difference in the way in which Centre Ridge responded to the great problems of ante-bellum days, it lay in the fact that there may have been less personal rancor toward Northerners and Northern institutions. Several Northerners helped to settle Centre Ridge. The close personal and business contact between former

1. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.

Northerners and the remainder of the Centre Ridge folk probably made for an absence of personal prejudice against Northerners. As it happened, the Crocherons, Stoutenborough¹, and the Pattons became converted to the Southern cause, but their presence at Centre Ridge probably contributed to a more tolerant attitude toward Northerners generally.

The experience of Dr. Patton with his family gives some key to the increasing tenseness between the North and the South.² Dr. Patton, who came to Warrenton in 1825 from Chillicothe, Ohio, depended largely on his medical practice for his livelihood.³ As a consequence, he needed only a few servants to do his work in the house and about his estate. Dr. Patton purchased slaves to do this work. His family probably did not favor the ownership of slaves from the first, but failed to take any definite action until the middle fifties, when they made him the definite ultimatum of giving up his slaves or being disinherited.⁴ Despite the affluence of his family, Dr. Patton chose the latter alternative and lost his interest in a valuable estate thereby.⁵ Needless to say his decision met the approval of his neighbors.

There were at least two different ways in which Centre Ridge people viewed secession. William Rumph's view was typical of one group which was opposed to secession, feared a war would come, and felt that the South would be wrecked should it decide to secede.⁶ Rumph loyally

1. Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Letter from Alice Rumph, Birmingham, Alabama, to Maggie Alison, Minter, Alabama. July 4, 1934.

supported the Confederacy when war arose, but he did not want war. Another group of Centre Ridge people, while not desirous of war, felt that the South had to secede to maintain its rights even if secession came at the cost of an unequal war and of great hardships. Judge Calhoun held this view,¹ and possibly a majority of the adult white population of Centre Ridge as well. Perhaps there was a third group which was unalterably opposed to the war and did not support it until forced to do so. If such a group existed, it apparently was small and inarticulate.

Centre Ridge in the War Between the States

When secession came and the call for arms sounded forth, Centre Ridge responded with enthusiasm. The most striking community effort made by Centre Ridge in behalf of the War Between the States was the organizing and training of Crocheron's Light Dragoons. John Crocheron, not only a convert to the Southern cause, but also a public spirited man who gave liberally of his wealth to worthy causes, was² the moving spirit in the organization of Crocheron's Light Dragoons. He outfitted this entire Company out of his own pocket and equipped it with horses. As a consequence, the Company received its designation in his honor.

Crocheron's Light Dragoons was composed solely of Dallas Countians, most of whom came from southern Dallas, but it was not composed solely of Centre Ridge youths as has frequently been supposed. For example, the Captain of Crocheron's Light Dragoons was an Edwin

1. Interviews with Andrew Calhoun and Martin Calhoun.
2. Owens, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 427.

Holloway, who was not a Centre Ridge citizen, but was a Dallas Coun-
¹ tian. Since the Company was recruited, equipped, and drilled at

Centre Ridge, and manned by several youths of that area, Crocheron's
 Light Dragoons seems to be the most distinctive and most important
 single effort made by Centre Ridge during the war. The personnel of
² Crocheron's Light Dragoons coming from Centre Ridge included:

James Smyley, First Lieutenant; Benjamin D. Crum, Third Lieutenant;
³ Benjamin Reynolds, First Sergeant; William Wade, Third Corporal; and
 the following privates: George W. Kyser; Edwin Lide; ? Dennis;
⁴ Ed. Youngblood; Tobe McIver; and J.D. Alison.

Other members of this Company came from Tilden, Pleasant
 Hill, and other points near the Ridge.

Crocheron's Light Dragoons received preliminary training
⁵ on the village green at Carlowville. Afterwards it went to Pensa-
 cola for final training and while there, General Bragg asked it to be-
⁶ come his escort. Every man in the Company is said to have volun-
⁷ teered for this assignment when General Bragg's wish was made known.
 Crocheron's Light Dragoons proceeded with General Bragg to Shiloh.
 While at Chattanooga, George Kyser, then partially trained in medi-
⁸ cine, was transferred to do chemistry work for the Confederate States.
 Subsequently, Crocheron's Light Dragoons was turned over to General
⁹ Hood for his escort. Crocheron's Light Dragoons Company is said to

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1. Interview with Peter Brannon.
 2. Muster Roll of Crocheron's Light Dragoons, as of May, 1862.
 3. Later a First Lieutenant.
 4. Later transferred to the Medical Corps.
 5. Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.
 6. Ibid.
 7. Ibid.
 8. Ibid.
 9. Interview with Peter Brannon.

have been striking and correct in appearance and highly suitable as a military escort for the two generals whom it served.

Another Confederate Cavalry Company which several Centre Ridge youths joined was Company I, of the Third Regiment of Alabama Cavalry. Company I was first called Boykins' Company, but later it was known as Lenoirs' Company.¹ This Company contained William Julian Lee, Second Sergeant; and the following privates: Isaac Youngblood; John Watts; William G. Curry; W.J. Rumph; Joseph Lide; Bernard Reynolds; Charles Warr; Peter Youngblood; and Joseph Reynolds.²

Company I served as an escort first to General Withers and later to General Hindman.

The Third Alabama Cavalry Regiment, of which Company I was a part, fought at Murfreesboro, Shelbyville, Chickamauga, and Knoxville.³ It suffered much during Longstreet's winter campaign.⁴ In the Atlanta Campaign it fought well but with heavy losses.⁵ Reduced to a skeleton, the Third Alabama Cavalry Regiment surrendered in North Carolina at the close of the War.⁶

Company D, a part of the Third Alabama Cavalry, Commanded by Samuel Pegues, contained Samuel D. Kyser, Robert Dennis, and James Barner,⁷ all of Warrenton.

A number of Centre Ridge youths belonged to Company I in the

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1. Interview with Peter Brannon.
 2. Muster Roll of Company I, Third Alabama Cavalry, as of May, 1865.
 3. Interview with Peter Brannon.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid.
 7. Muster Roll of Company D, Third Alabama Cavalry, as of October, 1864.

Second Alabama Cavalry Regiment. These men were A. McIver, First Lieutenant; L.B. McIver, Fourth Corporal; and the following privates: W.H. Bolton, B.F. Bolton, Thomas Etheridge, T. Scriven Lee, James Lide, Manly Rumph, Thomas Rumph, Henry Sumner, Peter Ulmer, Molette¹ Ulmer, and Jim Ulmer.

A Muster Roll of this same Company taken in July, 1864, reveals that N.H.R. Dawson had joined it and assumed command. Three other Centre Ridge men, Benjamin R. Townsend, Andrew Calhoun, and Joe Pounce had also joined Company I by July, 1864.

In addition to the regularly organized regiments, Centre Ridge youths also served in at least two independent commands. The so-called McKellar Company, organized at Warrenton in 1862, by D. McKellar, was attached to White's Cavalry Regiment, an independent² command. It was composed of the following men from Centre Ridge:³ D. McKellar, Captain; L.A. Powe, First Lieutenant; and Privates R.H. Coleman; J.C. McKellar; and N. Coleman.

A number of Centre Ridge men joined the Jeff Davis Company of Artillery, which apparently was an independent Company. Seventeen Centre Ridge men belonged to the Jeff Davis Artillery Company but none were officers. These men were: Augustus Patton; W.T. Dennis; Adam Hassalvander; Calvin Kervin; W.F. Wade; W.R. Etheridge; M.N. Etheridge; James Fountain; A.K. Hale; J. Hassalvander; I.N. Kyser; James M. Kyser; Joseph Swink; Cornelius Lide; John Minter; W.H. Cravy; and S.T. Ingram.

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1. Muster Roll of Company I, Second Alabama Cavalry, as of May, 1862.
 2. Interview with Peter Brannon.
 3. Muster Roll of D. McKellar Company, December, 1862.

William Page Molette belonged to Company F, Third Alabama Cavalry while his brother, Charles, joined Company E of this same regiment. Two other Centre Ridge men are known to have participated in the War whose Company affiliations are not known. Their names do not appear on the Muster Rolls of the Companies to which most Centre Ridge soldiers belonged. These men are Samuel Dennis,¹ and Frank Lockwood.²

Four Centre Ridge physicians served in the Confederate Army, probably in the Medical Corps. They were Dr. Joseph Dill Alison,³ Dr. John Drish Molette, Dr. Paul Cornelius Lee, and Dr. Thomas Fishburne Lee.⁴

Dr. Alison began his military career as a member of Crocheron's Light Dragoons. He was trained as a cavalryman at Pensacola.⁵ When the Dragoons marched north as Bragg's escort, Dr. Alison was transferred to the Medical Corps when this Company reached Montgomery on its way to Chattanooga.⁶ Ordered to report to Corinth, Dr. Alison took charge of eighty sick men there and also organized a hospital.⁷ Not long after, Dr. Alison was sent to Vicksburg, where he was captured when Vicksburg fell.⁸

Little is known about Dr. Paul Lee except that he gradua-

1. Possibly Samuel Dennis was in Crocheron's Light Dragoons. A Dennis without a Christian name marked is listed on one of the Muster Rolls.
2. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
3. Diary of Dr. J.D. Alison.
4. Palmer, op. cit., pp.158, 119 and 121.
5. Alison, op. cit.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

ted from the University of Alabama in 1856, and received his medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania in 1858.¹ Several Centre Ridge people think that Dr. Lee was killed or died during the War, but A Register of the Officers and Students of the University of Alabama, 1831-1901 represents his death as occurring in 1875. It appears probable that the community tradition is correct as so vital a matter as death would hardly be mistaken.

Dr. John Drish Molette graduated at the University of Alabama in the class of 1862, and studied medicine at Tulane.² He entered the War as a private, but was transferred to Halonquist's staff.³ The latter assignment is thought to have involved medical duties.

Dr. Thomas Fishburne Lee received his preliminary college training at the University of Alabama, and studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received his M.D. Degree in 1860.⁴ He served in the Confederate Army and probably in the Medical Corps. At least, his name appears on none of the Muster Rolls of the regular Companies organized in Central Alabama. Dr. Lee died in Mobile in 1865,⁵ probably in a federal prison.

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1. Palmer, op. cit., p. 119.
 2. Ibid., p. 158.
 3. Ibid., p. 158.
 4. Ibid., p. 121.
 5. Ibid., p. 121.

Centre Ridge Casualties in The War Between the States

Death came to at least five Centre Ridge men in the War Between the States. These casualties were W.T. Dennis, Samuel Dennis, Dr. Thomas Fishburne Lee, William Julian Lee, and Charles Caldwell Molette. As has been noted, Dr. Paul Cornelius Lee also may have been a victim of the War.

W.T. Dennis was killed in action while fighting with this Company, the Jeff Davis Artillery, at Fredericksburg, Virginia.¹ Samuel Dennis, a graduate of the University of Alabama and trained in law at Princeton, was captured at the Battle of Stone River, Missouri, in 1864, and died in a federal prison at St. Louis.²

Dr. Thomas Fishburne Lee died in Mobile in 1865.³ William Julian Lee came to his end during this same year while serving as a Lieutenant in Company I of the Third Regiment of Alabama Cavalry.⁴ Charles Caldwell Molette died of wounds received in a skirmish near McNut's Mill in eastern Tennessee in April of 1864.⁵ As has been noted, Dr. Paul Cornelius Lee is also thought to have perished in the War.

In addition to the casualties, Frank Lockwood was severely wounded in the arm and could never use it well.⁶ Others who were imprisoned were permanently weakened by this experience. Nevertheless, the casualties and injuries of Centre Ridge soldiers must have

1. Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.

2. Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

6. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.

been much less proportionally than was the case in most southern communities. Not over seven or eight per cent lost their lives while most of the remainder passed through the War unscathed. Centre Ridge was not as fortunate, however, as would seem.

All of the six possible War fatalities were college men. The two Dennis boys held law degrees from Princeton, as well as A.B. Degrees from the University of Alabama, while Drs. Thomas Fishburne Lee and Paul Cornelius Lee both held M.D. Degrees from Pennsylvania and A.B. Degrees from the University of Alabama.¹ William Julian Lee was a graduate of the Class of 1858, at the University of Alabama. Of the six, only Charles Caldwell Molette had not graduated. Molette left college in 1862 to join the army. It can be easily seen that while the war casualties were not large in number, the victims were some of the most promising youths of Centre Ridge.

The way the losses fell was particularly tragic. W.J. Dennis and Samuel Dennis were brothers as were also William Julian Lee, Thomas Fishburne Lee, and Paul Cornelius Lee.² Three homes sustained all the losses.

Economic Effects of the War and Reconstruction

The War Between the States left Centre Ridge in the exhausted condition that characterized most Southern communities. While not touched by actual invasion, most of the liquid wealth of the Ridge had been destroyed and property had been neglected.³ Poverty pre-

1. Palmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-158.
 2. Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.
 3. Interview with S.A. Reynolds and others.

vailed almost everywhere. One of the greatest property losses, of course, was the loss of the slaves. The loss of the slaves and the general poverty necessitated fundamental adjustments in living.

Before the War, the standard of living among Centre Ridge whites had been high. The ownership of slaves had made it unnecessary for white people to do heavy work. Even the abnormal conditions which existed during the War were not sufficiently hard to prepare the people for the economic difficulties that were ushered in by Reconstruction. From an economic standpoint, Reconstruction was far more dreadful than the War itself.

With Reconstruction came a systematic exploitation of such property of the Centre Ridge people as could be easily liquidated or consumed.¹ Cotton, for example, was confiscated in a thorough and business-like manner, while in a more irregular way, cattle and other livestock were stolen and driven away.² Even foodstuffs were taken.³ In short, the War impoverished the people, the loss of livestock made agricultural recovery difficult, while the theft of food often reduced the people to the verge of starvation. Somewhat better conditions prevailed on certain more fortunate Warrenton estates,⁴ but a marked decline in living standards existed everywhere on Centre Ridge. The customary difficulties with a politically excited and unenlightened Negro population inclined to petty larceny, did not simplify matters any. Clearly, order had to be brought out of chaos. A new economic system embracing the whites and the blacks, and in which the

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1. Interview with S.A. Reynolds and others.
 2. Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.
 3. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 4. Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.

latter were free men, had to be established.

The New Economic System

The first attempt which the Centre Ridge people made to put the Negro back to work ended in failure. According to this new system, the landlord furnished land, livestock, and a house, while the tenant gave his labor. Landlord and tenant shared equally in the returns.¹ This plan was reasonably successful in putting the Negro to work, but it did not prove profitable, nor were good crops produced while it was used.² With unrest rife among the Negroes, probably no plan would have worked. After two or three years it was abandoned.

Centre Ridge planters next tried a cotton rental plan. This plan called for a certain number of pounds of cotton for each acre rented.³ The cotton rental plan worked better than the share-crop plan, but was not an unqualified success. Gradually, it was abandoned in favor of a cash rental plan,⁴ but during the last six years of the Reconstruction period on Centre Ridge, a cotton rental system existed. For several years after Reconstruction ended, cotton rental continued to be the most common form of land rental.⁵

The Coming of the Railroad

In 1871, a development occurred which was destined to have as lasting and as far-reaching an effect on the economic life of

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1. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Interview with Mrs. Alice A. Lide.
 4. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 5. Ibid.

Centre Ridge as the War and Reconstruction. Rail transportation was afforded the Ridge when the Selma and Gulf Railroad Company completed a line from Selma to Pineapple in May of 1871.¹ This line had been organized in 1858,² with the assistance of several Centre Ridge men and was capitalized at \$1,000,000. William Rumph, F.A. Lee, D.C. Smyley, James M. Calhoun, and Colonel William Minter are known to have been financially interested in the road, while Minter served as its president at one time.³ The grading of the road was almost completed when the War broke out and development stopped.⁴ With the state government endorsing the bonds of the road during Reconstruction days, work proceeded slowly.⁵ It was completed to Pineapple in the early part of 1871, despite the fact that a legislative investigation in that year had revealed that unbridled corruption had existed in the construction of the road and that laws regarding the issuing of bonds had been violated.⁶

The presence of this line, which ran only two miles from the Ridge, affected the life of the people in several ways. It meant less reliance on the river traffic, which shrunk gradually until by 1900

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1. Owen, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 1239.
 2. Report of the Railway Commission of Alabama for the Year Ending June 30, 1886.
 3. Interview with J.A. Minter.
 4. Owen, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 1239.
 5. Ibid., p. 1239.
 6. Ibid., p. 1239.

it had practically disappeared. As a consequence, the population around Elm Bluff steadily declined. Quicker, surer, and more convenient shipping resulted from the widespread use of rail facilities. Old stores were moved to Minter,¹ the station built to serve the Centre Ridge people. New enterprises were established there. Bishop Melvin, Benjamin Reynolds, Oliver Whatley, G.W. Culverhouse, and C.C. Cox set up stores very soon after the road was completed while at a later date Isaac Youngblood, Smith and Lamar, Alison Brothers, Francis Lee, and the Wade Brothers entered the retailing field at Minter.²

Minter was mapped out and plotted.³ Many felt that Minter was destined to become a great commercial center. Bishop Melvin once boasted that it would run a race with Birmingham.⁴ Disappointed when his prophecy proved fallacious, Melvin returned to Selma to enter the warehouse business there.

The Negroes' New Status

The first reaction of the Centre Ridge Negro to his new found freedom seems to have been tears and sorrow.⁵ This was soon followed by a vast bewilderment often expressed in idleness and curiosity. After this came some kind of orientation which was either a willingness to go back to work on a new basis or a desire to eke out a precarious livelihood by stealing and politics. Fortunately, the exploiting group of Negroes composed only a small minority of the Centre

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1. Named for Colonel William Minter, Casualty of the Battle of Selma and one time president of the Selma and Gulf Railroad.
 2. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Interview with Emily Lee.

Ridge black population and might not have existed at all had it not been for outside agitators, but it was sufficiently large to cause some anxiety and eventually brought forth a white organization to control it.

The organization which sprang up in the latter part of Recon-
¹
 struction days apparently was the Ku Klux Klan. This new organization overlapped in membership the ante-bellum County Court and also the
²
 Home Guard to some extent, but its most active members were the vet-
³
 erans.

No authentic information is available as to the extent of un-
 rest which agitators succeeded in causing or who the agitators were. Older citizens of the Ridge have intimated that two or three of these agitators were slain. One by one these trouble-makers were removed. Bloodless measures were used wherever possible but the agitators were removed, nevertheless, when their activities became highly objection-
 able.

An incident during the Reconstruction period which might eas-
 ily have resulted in wholesale bloodshed, occurred on the village green
⁴
 at Carlowville. A mass meeting of Negroes had been called by a
 carpet-bagger, and was supposed to have been kept strictly secret, but

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1. Interviews with Dr. S.B. Alison and B.L. Youngblood. The Knights of the White Camelia was the leading secret society in most of Dallas County, according to Prof. Charles Summersell of the University of Alabama.
 2. Men too old to fight who stayed at home and stabilized social conditions during the War.
 3. Interview with Dr. S.B. Alison.
 4. The following incident has been related to the author by a Centre Ridge citizen who requested that his name be withheld. His father led the band which dispersed the assembled Negroes. While no account of this or other Reconstruction disorders on Centre Ridge is given in the so-called Ku Klux Conspiracy, the author is convinced that the incident as related to him was at least as serious as represented.

the secret was discovered. No one knows what the purpose of the meeting was but it was feared that the burning of certain homes was contemplated. As the meeting might prove to be a large one, the Ku Klux Klan in nearby villages were called on for reenforcements. When the Negroes assembled, the leading white men for several miles around were in a nearby ravine waiting for them. When the agitator's speech had barely begun, the whites charged out of the ravine. Some fired over the heads of the assembled Negroes while others withheld fire in case the Negroes should make a stand. Fortunately, all of the Negroes hurriedly dispersed and little bloodshed resulted from a potentially nasty situation.

It should not be supposed that Reconstruction on Centre Ridge was a constant turmoil. Many Negroes followed their new bosses as blindly as they had followed their old masters.¹ Most of those who did cause worry were largely excited and bewildered, not vicious.

Such defense measures as Centre Ridge whites undertook were largely of a preventive nature and were directed primarily at the outsiders who attempted to mislead the negroes.² For the most part, peace and confidence prevailed. Most Negroes did not expect too much and most whites realized that an improved social status for the Negroes was clearly indicated.

This mutual desire to be helpful is clearly shown by the gradual instead of abrupt separation of the races in their common

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1. Interview with Emily Lee.
 2. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.

churches.¹ Prior to the War Between the States, there were no churches strictly for negroes on the Ridge. The slaves were members of the regular white churches and usually belonged to the churches of their masters. In the Centre Ridge Baptist Church, as well as in Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, special galleries were built for seating the slaves. The original Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church building and the Warrenton Methodist Church building may have supplied special facilities for its black members, although this is not certain as these buildings have long been destroyed. In addition, the Centre Ridge Baptist Church had sometimes permitted separate Negro services² and perhaps the other churches had also done this. Apparently this mixed membership had worked well enough, for with the freeing of the slaves there was no immediate agitation on the part of either race for church division. The first step toward church separation came between 1867 and 1870 in the various Centre Ridge churches when the colored members asked for dismissal. The colored members of the Centre Ridge Baptist Church asked to be dismissed on December 6, 1868.³ This petition was granted. One Negro, Robert Nelson, asked to remain and was granted permission to do so.⁴ At this same historic meeting the white members helped the Negroes to organize their new church, and a pastor, a board of deacons, a clerk, and a committee to select a name⁵ for the new church, were chosen.

Complete separation did not come for several years, however, as the Negro Baptists did not finish a church building quickly and

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1. Based on examination of Centre Ridge church records.
 2. Records of the Centre Ridge Baptist Church.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

continued to use the old building. The Negroes did not seem to have been in a hurry to get away to themselves and the whites apparently did not rush them. Quite possibly, the continued church contacts may have served to moderate unrest during the Reconstruction period. The process of separation in the Centre Ridge Baptist Church was gradual and apparently devoid of strife.¹ It was closely paralleled by similar developments in the other Ridge churches. In no case does there seem to have been abruptness or ill will manifested.²

Local Significance of Reconstruction

The general significance of Reconstruction on Centre Ridge probably was little different from its significance elsewhere. Certain local aspects need special comment, especially the forming of lasting racial attitudes. In ante-bellum days Negroes were looked upon and treated as children.³ A tolerant paternalistic attitude prevailed.⁴ The possibility of social equality was so remote as to be unconsidered.

In Reconstruction days this mellow attitude was replaced by something far more grim and alert. A determination sprang up that at all cost social separation must be maintained.⁵ Centre Ridge folk also wished to prevent scars that would never heal and did so at the price of constant vigilance. Ridge folk felt that the Negro must be respectful at all times, that he must work, and that the local race

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1. Records of the Centre Ridge Baptist Church.
 2. Based on examination of the records of the Centre Ridge Baptist Church and Presbyterian churches.
 3. Interviews with S.A. Reynolds, Mrs. B.L. Youngblood, Alison Reynolds Wade, and others.
 4. Interviews with Dr. S.B. Alison, B.L. Youngblood and S.A. Reynolds.
 5. Ibid.

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problem must be settled at home.

With the restoration of normal conditions, the grim and alert attitudes fostered by Reconstruction gradually relaxed, but have never entirely disappeared. Such attitudes are a cultural heritage, absorbed, but not taught and seldom even spoken.² The ante-bellum attitude has largely returned and is far more apparent and articulate, but it is modified by a subconscious alertness.

The refusal of Centre Ridge men to let conditions get out of hand during Reconstruction has paid the richest dividends. Lynching³ has been unknown as have also the general causes of lynching. Respect as well as good will runs too deep.

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1. Based on twelve years of observation by the author.
 2. Ibid.
 3. The oldest residents of the Ridge can recall no cases of lynching since Reconstruction.

CHAPTER V
ECONOMIC TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS OF CENTRE RIDGE
FROM 1876 TO 1936

Economic Readjustments Following Reconstruction

Only after the disorganizing influences of Reconstruction had past, could Centre Ridge fully cope with the new economic problems and make permanent readjustments. Many of the economic changes made on the Ridge from 1876 to 1895 grew out of the problem of putting the Negro to work on a new basis but other changes were caused by the coming of the Selma and Gulf Railroad Company. The general poverty of the time and especially the impoverishment of the planter class were also conducive to fundamental economic readjustments.

Before the War Between the States, little farming was done on Centre Ridge itself. People lived there and had their plantations in the rich bottoms and lowlands just off the Ridge. Garden truck, fruit trees, and some cotton was planted on the Ridge it is true, but the vast bulk of the cotton and corn was raised off the Ridge. Some of the Negroes lived about the home sites while others lived on the plantations.

Reconstruction disrupted this old system. Livestock and farming equipment became scarce and the labor supply unreliable. As living on the Ridge and farming elsewhere became more difficult, more and more of the Ridge land was cleared and planted in staple crops.¹ This land was much thinner than the surrounding Black Belt soil. Be-

1. Interview with Mrs. Alice A. Lide.

fore the War the patches about the home sites could easily be kept rich by use of the barn's manure but obviously this practice could not be relied upon to nourish wide-scale plantings of cotton and corn. As commercial fertilizer was scarce and practically unknown at the time, the land became poorer and poorer and the crops increasingly less satisfactory.¹ Corn crops were especially lacking. As a result, Centre Ridge received the ~~unenviable~~² nickname of "nubbin ridge."

It must not be supposed that the large old plantations just off the Ridge were left idle. Portions of these holdings may have lain fallow for a while but with the return of normal conditions after Reconstruction, a new system of utilizing them was developed. When the railroad came to Minter in 1871, a number of business enterprises started there. The proprietors of these business establishments owned some of the large lowland plantations when they set up their businesses at Minter and in the years following 1871 they rapidly acquired other old plantations.³ The Minter merchants,⁴ in addition to selling goods, rented the land which they owned or controlled to Negro tenants to whom they generally advanced supplies. While risky, the advancing business was usually profitable and sometimes remarkably so. In the quarter of a century following Reconstruction, the Minter merchants became the most affluent citizens of Carlowville. They supplanted the planters to a considerable extent as the men of prestige and means in the neighborhood.

1. Interview with Mrs. Alice A. Lide.

2. Ibid.

3. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.

4. Most of them lived at Carlowville and commuted daily. Their successors still do.

The Richmond stores which still ran during the last quarter¹ of the nineteenth century did some advancing business also. The J.Z. Hearst store, later bought by J.D. Alison and the J.D. Whittington stores were the main ones to engage in an advancing business, but other merchandizing firms which operated at Richmond from time to time, found it expedient to advance supplies.² The system of advancing coupled with the cash rental system of land tenantry also prevailed at Elm Bluff.

Centre Ridge planters, while impoverished by the Civil War and Reconstruction, were, nevertheless, more fortunate in one respect than planters in many Alabama neighborhoods. Throughout its history, Centre Ridge had to a considerable extent "lived at home." That is to say, it had produced most of its foodstuffs and some of its manufactured products as well.

When the hard times of the post-Reconstruction period settled on the land, the practice of partial self-sufficiency was reinforced. Sweet potatoes were raised and consumed in huge quantities.³ Most of the corn was raised locally and ground into high quality meal by two watermills in Carlowville and one at Richmond.⁴ Many peas and beans were planted. Much fruit was raised, a portion of which was either dried or preserved. Most of the families owned cows, chickens, and pigs in adequate numbers. This agricultural self-sufficiency made it unnecessary to buy many things at the local stores; indeed, the people could not have done so had they desired, for they had very little money.

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1. Interview with Mrs. Alice A. Lide.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 4. Interview with A.P. Calhoun.

"Living at home" went farther than agriculture. Nearly all
of the shoes were made locally just as in ante-bellum days. The local
merchants let out cloth to the ladies of the section, who made it into
shirts, pants, and even suits, and put these articles of clothing back
in the stores on consignment. Wine was made and sold to citizens of
the Ridge and to others who came from a distance to buy it.

While the process of "living at home" made it possible for
the Ridge people to live much better than would otherwise have been
possible, it should not be supposed that they were prosperous. Flour
was used once or twice a week; sugar went to the table a little often-
er; but coffee, which was highly prized not only for its scarcity, but
also for the memory of happy days that it revived, was rare, indeed.
Hard times prevailed for most families until after the panic of 1893.
The years from the beginning of the white regime until 1895 must be
considered as lean and trying years. While the Ridge folk were able to
live without real suffering after 1876, they were nevertheless unable
to acquire surplus capital which they could risk in any experimenta-
tion which might lead to prosperity and ante-bellum affluence. From
1876 to 1895, Centre Ridge stayed in a rut of poverty and humdrum exis-
tence, for the most part.

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1. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Interview with Mrs. Alison Reynolds Wade. Wine could be sold without license in those days. At first Centre Ridge wine was sold in barrels, then in gallon jars.
 4. Many white families learned to be their own servants.
 5. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.

Despite the economic difficulties experienced by Centre Ridge people from 1876 to 1895, there was little tendency on the Ridge to fall in line with the Grainger and Populist movements. At Richmond, Nat Etheridge is said to have sympathized with Populism but the Ridge as a whole evidently staunchly adhered to old line Democracy. In a speech to the 1929 graduating class of the Carlowville High School, Judge Walter B. Jones referred gratefully to the political support which Ridge people gave to his father, Thomas Jones. Oates fared equally well with Centre Ridge people in his gubernatorial race.

The Story of the Railroad, 1871 - 1900

The Selma and Gulf Railroad Company completed its line from Selma to Pineapple in 1871. With only one terminus of substantial size, with a top-heavy financial structure and competing in a period of economic depression, the line found it hard to carry on with its old capitalization. In 1876, the road went into receivership but continued to operate under a temporary management until 1879, at which time it was sold under foreclosure. Interests connected with the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company purchased it and re-named it the Pensacola and Selma Railroad Company. For all intents and purposes it became a part of the Louisville and Nashville system at once. Despite its new name and affiliation, the road apparently failed to make money. The line was allowed to deteriorate and the road-bed to get in a deplorable condition. Despite these facts, a new depot was

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1. Interview with Dr. S.B. Alison.
 2. Speech heard by the author.
 3. Interview with Dr. S.B. Alison.
 4. Owens, op. cit., p. 1240.
 5. Ibid., p. 1240.
 6. Report of the Railway Commission of Alabama for Year Ending June 30, 1886, p. 18.

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built at Minter in 1886.

Another line, the Southern Alabama Railroad Company, apparently had the same connection with the Louisville and Nashville which the Pensacola and Selma Railroad Company had. All of the time from 1879 to 1900, the Pensacola and Selma Railroad Company failed to add to its line but the Southern Alabama had not been idle. By 1899, the Southern Alabama had built its line north to Repton, which was forty-four and one-half miles from Pineapple.²

In 1900 the Southern Alabama Railroad Company closed this remaining gap, and opened traffic from Selma to Pensacola on March 19th of that year.³ At this time this line technically became an integral part of the Louisville and Nashville System. The completion of the line from Selma to Pensacola gave Centre Ridge direct railway connection with the Gulf.

Agricultural Experimentation

In the late nineties Centre Ridge farmers bestirred themselves strenuously to get out of the doldrums. This attempt was largely centered around a series of efforts to get away from cotton planting as the sole cash producing activity. Some individuals would have liked to have done away with it entirely, feeling it to be a primary cause of stagnation.

The Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company was back of the first effort to change the agriculture of Centre Ridge and the

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1. Report of the Railway Commission of Alabama for Year Ending June 30, 1886, p. 18.
 2. Owan, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 906.
 3. Ibid., p. 906.

agents of this company worked in a fertile field when they began to ad-
 vocate the planting of strawberries in the late nineties.¹ The rail-
 road company felt that a different type of agriculture would bring in
 new revenues as well as affect a desirable change in farming. In ad-
 dition to strawberries, the road also advised increased planting of
 peaches.²

Centre Ridge people cooperated with the railroad by planting
 both strawberries and peaches. The Ridge folk held high hope of par-
 tially breaking away from cotton and beginning a new period of pros-
 perity. Peaches and strawberries were both easy to raise on the
 Ridge. The grade of these products may have been inferior but the
 chief difficulty lay in the marketing.³ Wholesale dealers to whom
 the berries and peaches were shipped would claim that shipments ar-
 rived in damaged condition and refuse to pay in full.⁴ Sometimes the
 Centre Ridge planters could not collect at all and the Louisville and
 Nashville furnished them no protection against this. On the other
 hand, slow transit on the line may have caused some valid claims of
 spoiling.⁵ At any rate, very little was made out of the whole attempt
 to plant peaches and strawberries. It is said that such profits as
 were made came from express shipments of strawberries.⁶ In a few years,
 practically everyone on Centre Ridge abandoned the raising of peaches
 and strawberries on a commercial scale. The chief historical value in
 this experiment lies in the fact that the planters had attempted to de-

1. Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.

2. Ibid.

3. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

throne King Cotton.

Other experiments followed the ill-fated peach and strawber-¹ries venture. A few Centre Ridge people next tried radishes. The radish boom never reached the proportions of the preceding experi-²ment and soon played out for similar reasons. In this same period (the early twentieth century) Dr. George W. Kyser started a dairy farm³ at Richmond. While Dr. Kyser's dairy caused widespread interest, he soon discovered that he lived too far from a suitable market and decided to sell his cows.

In 1905, the United States Department of Agriculture made a soil survey of Dallas County and mapped most of Centre Ridge as⁴ "Orangebury fine sandy loam." It was concluded that the Ridge soil was unusually suitable for the production of cigar tobacco, both wrapper and filler. Soon the Department of Agriculture sent its "experts" down to talk to the Ridge planters. These agents found ready listen-⁵ers and when markets were guaranteed for three years, dozens joined in production of tobacco. The Department of Agriculture sent one of its agents to Centre Ridge to supervise the planters and to check re-⁶sults. Under the guidance of the agricultural supervisor tobacco houses were built and the other necessary equipment procured, while to-⁷bacco, both shaded and unshaded was produced in large amounts.

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1. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.
 4. Carr, E.P., and others, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Survey of Dallas County, Alabama. Based on examination of soil map in this pamphlet.
 5. This merely protected the planter against loss.
 6. Interview with Dr. S.B. Alison.
 7. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.

For two years tobacco was planted and sold at a fair profit. In the last year of the experiment tobacco buyers protested at the poor and uneven burn effect of the tobacco. When the tobacco expert left the community, the experiment was abandoned. All who had been associated with it, had made reasonable returns and one year's partial failure probably should not have deterred them. The tobacco houses were easily converted into barns and outbuildings.

Another experimental effort, coming about 1910, apparently had little connection with the general desire to break away from cotton as the sole cash producing activity. About 1910, silos became the fad on Centre Ridge. The construction of these silos was due to the overzealous activities of a county agent who obviously did not realize the difficulties involved in making ensilage this far South. Nevertheless, most Centre Ridge people feel that failure of the project was due in part to faulty handling of the silos. At any rate, ensilage spoiled and the idea was given up after a few years. Four silos are still in existence. Commonly referred to as "thousand dollar monuments," their cost was actually about half of this. Attempts to improve the technique of making ensilage have not been revived because of the introduction of winter cover crops which furnish better winter food at lower cost.

The period from 1895 to 1914 is notable for its bold but fruitless efforts to dethrone King Cotton. Though the efforts failed

1. Interviews with Dr. S.B. Alison and with S.A. Reynolds.

2. Ibid.

3. They are on these homesteads: S.B. Alison, B.L. Youngblood, Mrs. T.L. Wade, and Joe Kyser.

and were in some instances costly, the people of Centre Ridge were still in a mood to try again. This period is also notable for the better times which it brought to the communities of the Ridge. As yet, however, an economic level equal to that reached by 1860 had not returned. The Ridge was still in a mood for more trial and error method in her agricultural pursuits. Some of these experiments attempted after 1914 were crowned with success.

Lumbering Since Reconstruction

After the War Between the States and Reconstruction, the lumbering industry on Centre Ridge continued to be small and largely local¹ in character. As the need for lumber for local consumption was never large, the cut probably never exceeded the growth for any substantial period of time. At any rate, the Ridge entered the World War period with a large and valuable stand of timber.

During the War, lumbering interests of Tuscaloosa and Birmingham bought up most of the timber available at the time and started three planing mills at Minter which in turn had subsidiary sawmills on and around the Ridge and on the east of Minter. Lockwood Brothers set up the first mill at Minter after their purchase of the² Kyser Timber. The Fitts-Turner Lumber Company of Tuscaloosa³ set up the Minter Lumber Company at Minter with Robert Jones as manager, and proceeded to cut millions of feet of good lumber. The other mill set up at Minter during the World War period was owned by the Rumley-

1. Mills were owned by J.N. Hassalvander, G.W. Kyser, J.H. Alison and others prior to 1914. These mills were small.
 2. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 3. Ibid.

Allison Lumber Company, also from Tuscaloosa.¹ Later this mill sold out to J.W. Hassan.

The lumber cut by these mills and by their subsidiaries belonged originally in almost every case to someone in Carlowville, Richmond, or Elm Bluff. The people of the Ridge were doubly benefited by the cutting of their timber. Ridge folk received the purchase price for the timber; the stores in Minter were owned by them and the pay rolls of the mills gravitated to them also in this way. As a consequence, a most welcome prosperity set in. Unfortunately, timber was cut far beyond its normal rate of growth and capital was thus eaten up. One by one the planing mills and sawmills left after the War was over. The last planer closed its doors during the present depression.² Only two sawmills remain, the largest of which is operated by Harvey Rowell of Carlowville.³ Centre Ridge is agriculturally dependent again.

Changes in Farming from 1914 to 1936.

The World War brought great prosperity to Centre Ridge farmers as it brought good times to the rest of the farming areas of our country. At Centre Ridge, the War era was also replete with fundamental agricultural changes. The first farming innovation tried during the War period failed, however, to effect any lasting change.

In 1918, Judge S.F. Hobbs⁴ organized a county-wide coopera-

1. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.

2. This was the Hassan Mill, formerly owned and operated by Rimley-Allison Lumber Company.

3. The rough boards made by these mills are trucked to Selma and planed there.

4. Present (1936) incumbent of the fourth Congressional District.

tive sweet potato enterprise. This potato company issued stock to all those who wished to grow potatoes, obtain curing service, and have the potatoes marketed.¹ Centre Ridge people became interested in Hobbs' scheme and purchased sufficient stock to finance the building of a potato house in Minter and to bear a full share in the expenses coincident with the first marketing.² Carlowville and Richmond began earnestly to raise potatoes on a large scale. Good potatoes were raised and properly cured, but soon the company got into financial difficulties, caused largely by the marketing of the potatoes. For a few years profits were large and the enterprise indeed promising.

The failure of the potato venture was more than offset, however, by a splendid success eventually achieved in cattle raising. This agricultural innovation came toward the end of the World War. The state experiment station at Uniontown had demonstrated the feasibility of cattle raising in the Black Belt.³ Even so, Centre Ridge might not have turned to cattle raising in a big way had not labor become scarce during the War. Cattle, requiring little attention and bringing in good profits, seemed ideal for the situation. Before the War, there had been several small herds of inferior cattle on the edge of Centre Ridge and in the valleys around.⁴ During the War, fine bulls of Hereford and Angus strains were purchased and bred to the scrub cows native to the Ridge. The resulting half-breed calves commanded a moderate price and brought very satisfactory profits. Since that

1. Interview with B.R. Alison.

2. Ibid.

3. Moore, A.B., History of Alabama and Her People, p. 843.

4. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.

time, profits have become smaller but are consistent. Something is made each year as the cost of production is exceedingly low.

Herds are being constantly improved at the present time by the introduction of more pure-bred stock and by the saving of some of the best half-breed calves for breeding purposes. After crops are laid by, and during the winter months, pastures are cleared by cutting down the brush and small trees. Better pastures and better cattle have together brought better profits to the Centre Ridge cattle raisers. Even the face of the Black Belt is being changed by this cattle invasion. Cattle raising is furnishing the Ridge planters another money crop, one which has probably been more reliable since 1920 than cotton as a profit producer.

Another agricultural change which was as important in remarking the economic system of Centre Ridge as the introduction of cattle, came when winter legumes began to be planted for soil building purposes. Prior to the War Between the States, the Reverend Francis Beekman Lee¹ had planted vetch as an ornament in his flower garden. In 1904,² T.L. Wade and S.A. Reynolds jointly planted it with oats as hay. None of these men knew of its soil building properties as this knowledge only came during the World War period.

Andrew P. Calhoun made the first planting of vetch as a winter cover crop for soil improving purposes on Centre Ridge. He found that vetch was very effective as a soil builder and that fertilizer bills could be radically reduced when vetch was planted during the win-

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1. Some of it washed away into a nearby gulley and has been coming up ever since.
 2. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.

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 ter. Other planters readily saw its value. At the present time some winter cover crop is planted on nearly all of the cultivated land on Centre Ridge which is personally looked after by the white planters. Even gardens are planted with winter legumes. Some of the tenants are following the example set by progressive planters and are sowing it. A few years ago, an effort was made to substitute Austrian peas for vetch because of the superior grazing qualities of the former. Unfortunately, it was found that the winter peas blighted when planted frequently on the same land, so vetch is still relied on principally.² Vetch on Centre Ridge seems to have no enemies and is hardy enough to withstand the most severe winters easily.³

The clay subsoil of Centre Ridge seems especially able to hold the nitrogen stored by winter legumes and prevent it from leaching. Winter cover crops have so enriched the Ridge soil that it has been years since anyone thought of calling it "nubbin ridge." Land which formerly produced one bale of cotton to ten acres is now growing a bale to an acre with small fertilization beside winter legumes.⁴ Other lands which are sowed in winter cover crops are producing from three-fourths of a bale of cotton an acre to a bale an acre in good years. Corn and other crops planted behind winter legumes have also made spectacular improvement.

It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that winter cover crops have been the agricultural salvation of Centre Ridge. These crops

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1. Interview with A.P. Calhoun.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Land on the A.P. Calhoun farm.

have so lowered the cost of production that even from 1930 to the advent of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, small profits were usually made by Southern Dallas farmers. Winter cover crops apparently have come to Centre Ridge to stay.

The agricultural changes ushered in by the New Deal have, for the most part, been welcome to Ridge planters and have also proved profitable. All engaged in agriculture directly or indirectly were hard hit by the depression beginning in 1929. Those who advanced supplies apparently were harder hit proportionately than others, though none escaped the devastating effects of the economic cataclysm. Ridge planters have cooperated and are cooperating loyally and almost one hundred per cent with the National Government in its agricultural recovery efforts. Ridge folk love and have faith in Franklin D. Roosevelt, especially in his farm policy. Little dissent is heard concerning this portion of the New Deal.

The depression has not proved as destructive to Centre Ridge as it has to many Southern communities. Throughout its history, the Ridge has deemed no home complete without fruit, vegetables, poultry, milk, cows, and porkers. In short, it has for the most part fed itself. When the depression came, cash became scarcer, but not food; at least, this was the case among the whites.

Some Negroes have suffered. The efforts of the Carlowville
1
branch of the King's Daughters in the early stages of the depression, the distribution of Red Cross supplies, and relief financed by the

1. A charity organization.

Federal Government have reduced suffering among Centre Ridge Negroes to a minimum. Little unrest has followed in the wake of the 1929 crisis.

Centre Ridge, like the rest of the nation, longs for the upturn to materialize further. In the future it cannot count on returns from trees for its support. First and last, it is an agricultural community. With the new national policy of promoting agriculture, however, it apparently has nothing to fear if it continues in the line of progressive agricultural method and technique.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL CONDITIONS SINCE 1876

Centre Ridge Schools 1876-1924

The War Between the States and Reconstruction proved destructive to education on Centre Ridge. During the decade 1850-60, educational facilities had been expanded and improved. In 1850, Dr. Thomas Dill established his well-known academy at Warrenton. This school was well attended and apparently gave instruction on a secondary as well as a primary level, as did the Carlowville School established at Carlowville in 1855. Either in the latter part of the War or in the early part of Reconstruction, the Carlowville School was abandoned.¹ Dill's Academy continued until 1869,² but its last years were characterized by reduced matriculation and inadequate support. Both schools were private and found it difficult to collect sufficient fees during Reconstruction. When in 1869, Dr. Dill was offered the chair of Classic languages at Howard College, he accepted.³ His Academy was never reopened after his departure.

It should not be supposed that the Ridge people were willing for their children to grow up in ignorance. Many determined that education should continue whether fees could be paid or not. In Carlowville, Dr. Joseph D. Alison established a small school which his sister Annie L. Alison taught.⁴ Dr. Alison's primary purpose was to provide instruction for his family of twelve but his sister also taught

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1. Interview with Dr. S.B. Alison.
 2. Owens, *op. cit.*, p. 491.
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 491.
 4. Interview with Dr. S.B. Alison.

several of the Reynolds, Lee, Rumph, and Fountain children and perhaps
¹ others. At times, Annie Alison was assisted by Sallie McIver. Some-
times Sallie McIver taught a separate school for the McIver family and
² others. Miss Alison taught several years in a school building near
the abandoned Carlowville School on the village green.³ Later, she
gave her instruction in a building to the rear of the present Alison
Wade home.

About 1882 Annie Alison quit teaching and one McArthur took
⁴ her place. He taught one year in the village green school and for
several years after in the second Carlowville School building, com-
⁵ pleted in 1883. The second Carlowville School building was at first
a one-story, two-room wood structure.

The second Carlowville School building stood essentially un-
changed until 1907, in which year a group of public spirited Centre
⁶ Ridge men sponsored a movement to enlarge and improve it. They suc-
ceeded in collecting \$800. and with this they added a wing and a sec-
ond story. The wing gave the building another classroom while the
second floor was an auditorium which also might be used as a class-
room. In this improved form the second Carlowville school served
⁷ Carlowville and Richmond until 1924. A list of the principals of this
school from McArthur to the opening of the present Carlowville School

1. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
2. Ibid.
3. Interview with Dr. S.B. Alison.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
7. Warrenton beat was divided into Richmond and Elm Bluff in 1876.

is as follows: a Mr. McLure, a Miss Motes, a Mr. Cox, W.B. Riley,¹ a Miss Penic, a Mr. Myrick, a Mr. Glenn, H.M. Summerville, Georgia Kyser, Alan Kyser, a Miss Hobdy, Christine Nicholson, Mae Kyser,² Milton Carothers,² H.D. Baldrige,³ W.J. Jones,³ and a Mrs. Waters. On the whole, a very able and well trained group taught and managed the second Carlowville School.

Schools at Richmond and Elm Bluff

When Dill's Academy at Warrenton closed its doors in 1869, the Warrenton people were no more willing than the Carlowville people for their children to grow up in ignorance. Both places faced a similar problem and solved it in a similar way. Mary Patton organized a school at Warrenton very much like the one taught by Annie Alison at Carlowville. Mary Patton's school was private but was less a family school than Annie Alison's was. Mary Patton got fees wherever possible but turned none out for inability to pay.⁴

Mary Patton continued her school until 1888, at which time Mary and Nettie McKellar took it over. The McKellar sisters kept the school only three years. After 1891, four young college graduates, James Kyser, Herbert Kyser, Hattie Harper, and Eliza Wade,⁵ taught the school until it closed its doors in 1896. The school was located in front of the present day Hassalvander home in Richmond, but has long been torn down.⁶ The good work of the school is attested by

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1. Present Superintendent of Macon County.
 2. Present Superintendent of Tampa, Florida.
 3. Present Superintendent of Wilcox County.
 4. Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid.

the fact that Kenneth Douglas McKellar, present United States Senator from Tennessee, the Harper boys, and the Kyser boys received all¹ their education prior to college here. Dr. George Kyser and Nat Etheridge were its trustees.

Another school quite similar in most respects to the Alison and Patton schools operated in Elm Bluff, probably from about 1880 to 1900. Ina Powers ran it.² It is supposed to have had fewer students even than the Alison and Patton schools.

When the Patton school closed in 1896, some of the students may have gone to Miss Powers but a major portion came to Carlowville. The crowding of the second Carlowville school thereby³ led to its enlargement in 1907, by which time it was the only school which functioned on the Ridge. This consolidation of students eventually produced a united school patronage enlightened enough and wealthy enough to construct the third and present Carlowville School.

School Terms and Support

In the latter part of Reconstruction or shortly afterward, a weak and ineffectual public support was granted the Centre Ridge schools. Carlowville, Richmond, and a part of Tilden are in the⁴ fourth school district of Dallas County. The first public support consisted of four month's pay to one teacher in the whole district, but as there were always at least three schools until 1890 in this district, two schools did without public pay each year. No regular

1. Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.

2. Ibid.

3. At present used as a dwelling by the Vaughn family of Carlowville.

4. Interview with Dr. S.B. Alison.

rotation plan prevailed. Nat Etheridge dispensed the fund each year¹ as he had charge of its disposal in the fourth district. School² terms in Carlowville and Richmond ran nine months each year. Thus, for at least five months and possibly nine months, the Centre Ridge schools had to depend on fees. These ran at various times from three³ to four dollars per pupil per month. Some poor but deserving students paid less or even nothing. The chief aim of the teachers was to educate. Reward was a secondary consideration.

As time went on and the Ridge recovered from the War and Reconstruction, property evaluation increased and tax receipts rose. By 1885, it was possible to give all the district schools some public support each year. By 1901, six months of free school and three⁴ months with tuition prevailed over the whole Ridge. When in 1901 the new constitution was adopted which provided a three mill state-wide tax for education, it was possible for the Carlowville School to⁵ offer a full nine month's term free of charge. This was a new and most welcome development.

The Third Carlowville School

Most Centre Ridge people made money during the World War. After the War and after the short-lived panic of 1921 had subsided, good times continued. Farmers received good prices for their products as did the lumbermen, while the Minter merchants, perhaps, prospered most of all. The good times of the early nineteen-twen-

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1. Interview with Dr. S.B. Alison. Etheridge probably was on the Dallas County Board of Education.
 2. Interview with Maggie Alison.
 3. Interview with Dr. S.B. Alison.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

ties encouraged the Centre Ridge people to undertake the most ambitious educational effort ever made on Centre Ridge.

Perhaps by 1920, Centre Ridge folk began to desire an adequate educational plant which could be developed into an accredited school. On the Ridge lived several young people who would soon have to be sent elsewhere if they were to receive the preparatory work needed for college entrance. Centre Ridge parents felt it would be about as cheap and far more desirable to build an adequate and accredited school as it would be to send their sons and daughters off to board.¹ Active agitation for a modern brick building which could meet state requirements for accredited standing,² started in 1922. Citizens held a mass meeting and decided to undertake the building.

A large committee was selected to solicit funds while another was named to manage the actual construction, buy materials, and pay bills contracted. B.L. Youngblood headed this building committee and bought all materials used at wholesale prices.³

No contract was let for the Carlowville School building.³ A contractor, one W.E. Ward, was paid one thousand dollars to supervise actual construction. One of the better state-aid architectural plans was followed. This plan usually called for an expenditure of more than \$30,000, according to a State Department of Education inspector who was assigned to inspect the Carlowville building.⁴ Fig-

1. Interview with B.L. Youngblood.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

ures as high as \$37,000 had been reported.¹ When the Carlowville building was completed, it cost less than \$20,000.²

Despite the economy with which the building was constructed, it was not easy to finance it. Eight thousand dollars was subscribed locally.³ Three thousand dollars of state aid was obtained, while a similar sum was granted by the Dallas County Board of Education.⁴ A district school tax of three mills was voted for five years to retire the remaining six thousand dollars.⁵ At the end of this five year period, the Carlowville School was free of all debt.

For several years prior to the construction of the third Carlowville School, the trustees were Dr. S.B. Alison and Henry Yates. These men continued to serve as trustees after 1924, and to this group B.L. Youngblood was added. All of these men have continued to serve since that time except Henry Yates who died in 1926 and was succeeded by A.P. Calhoun. All of these men have served with fidelity and intelligence and much of the progress of the Carlowville School is attributable to their conscientious efforts.

The Carlowville trustees selected J.L. Moulder, then of Plantersville, as the first principal of the new school and four assistants, two of whom were his wife and daughter, Evelyn. The other two teachers chosen were Elsie Shuter and Mrs. Abner Perrin. Professor Moulder has continued as principal since that time, while his wife has continued to serve as one of his assistants.

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1. Interview with B.L. Youngblood.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

The school opened its doors in September of 1924. During the first year small effort was made to obtain accredited standing for the school, but considerable money was raised which materially¹ helped to procure necessary equipment. A determined drive to get the school accredited began in September of 1925. During March of 1926 the State Department of Education officially designated the Carlowville School as accredited and gave the first graduating class² of that spring full college entrance credit. Approximately one hundred and fifty pupils have graduated from the Carlowville High³ School since it was accredited in 1926.

The Carlowville School has steadily developed since 1924. The faculty of five teachers has been expanded to nine. Enrollment for all grades has increased from less than a hundred to an average⁴ of about one hundred and seventy during the last four years. As more room was needed for this faculty and student increase, the near-⁵by town hall was taken over in 1927 and partitioned into two classrooms. Subsequently this building was remodeled with another room being added, and at present serves strictly as an elementary school building. After accreditation, busses from nearby neighborhoods be-⁶gan carrying high school students to the new Carlowville School. First a bus from Pleasant Hill in Dallas came. Then one from Furman and Snow Hill in Wilcox began to operate. Next, another Dallas

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1. Interview with J.L. Moulder.
 2. From Principal's Permanent Records. Held by J.L. Moulder. The 1926 class consisted of John D. Culbreth, Martin Hassalvander, Loyle Jones, Rose Woodruff, Eleanor Youngblood, and Isabelle Youngblood.
 3. From Principal's Permanent Records. Held by J.L. Moulder.
 4. Interview with J.L. Moulder.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid.

County bus serving the Sardis and Central neighborhood was added. The fourth bus to come was one from Lowndes County, which brings students from the Braggs, Farmersville, and Fostoria neighborhoods.

About \$8,000 has been spent for new space and for school¹ equipment. The school library is surprisingly adequate for a school so small.

The faculty of the Carlowville School has sponsored extracurricular activities of various types. Most of the time since 1926 the school has had a band. Active and enthusiastic Four-H Club work has been done. Athletics, while receiving no undue emphasis, have been on the whole successful. Numerous cups and medals have been collected² by the school in commemoration of victories won. Plays and entertainments have enlivened the school and community life.

No discussion of the new Carlowville School would be complete without mention of the school grounds. For seventy years or more prior to the completion of the third Carlowville School, these grounds were used for nothing except a public playground, and have³ been known through the years as "the village green." Beautiful pines and turf are the chief natural feature of the grounds, but since the construction of the new building many flowers and shrubs have been⁴ planted. Foundation planting of good taste outlines both the elementary and high school buildings. To the north of the high school

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1. Interview with J.L. Moulder.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 4. Interview with Mrs. J.L. Moulder.

building, a sunken garden of formal design increases in loveliness every year. The excellent playgrounds of the school lie to the south. They are level or gently rolling. In the fall and winter the grounds serve as a gridiron and as basketball courts. In the spring they are made over into a baseball diamond and other playing fields. The blue-green Virgin pines behind the buildings and playing fields make a background of majesty and grace.

While public education for Negroes is not neglected, the Negro school located between Carlowville and Minter does not compare favorably with the Carlowville Consolidated School. The Negro public school is characterized by inadequate equipment, poorly trained teachers, and irregular attendance. The Manuel Brown School, a private school at Richmond supported largely by Northern philanthropists, is much better than the public Negro school near Minter. The curriculum of the Manuel Brown School is said to resemble that of Tuskegee for similar grades.

Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church

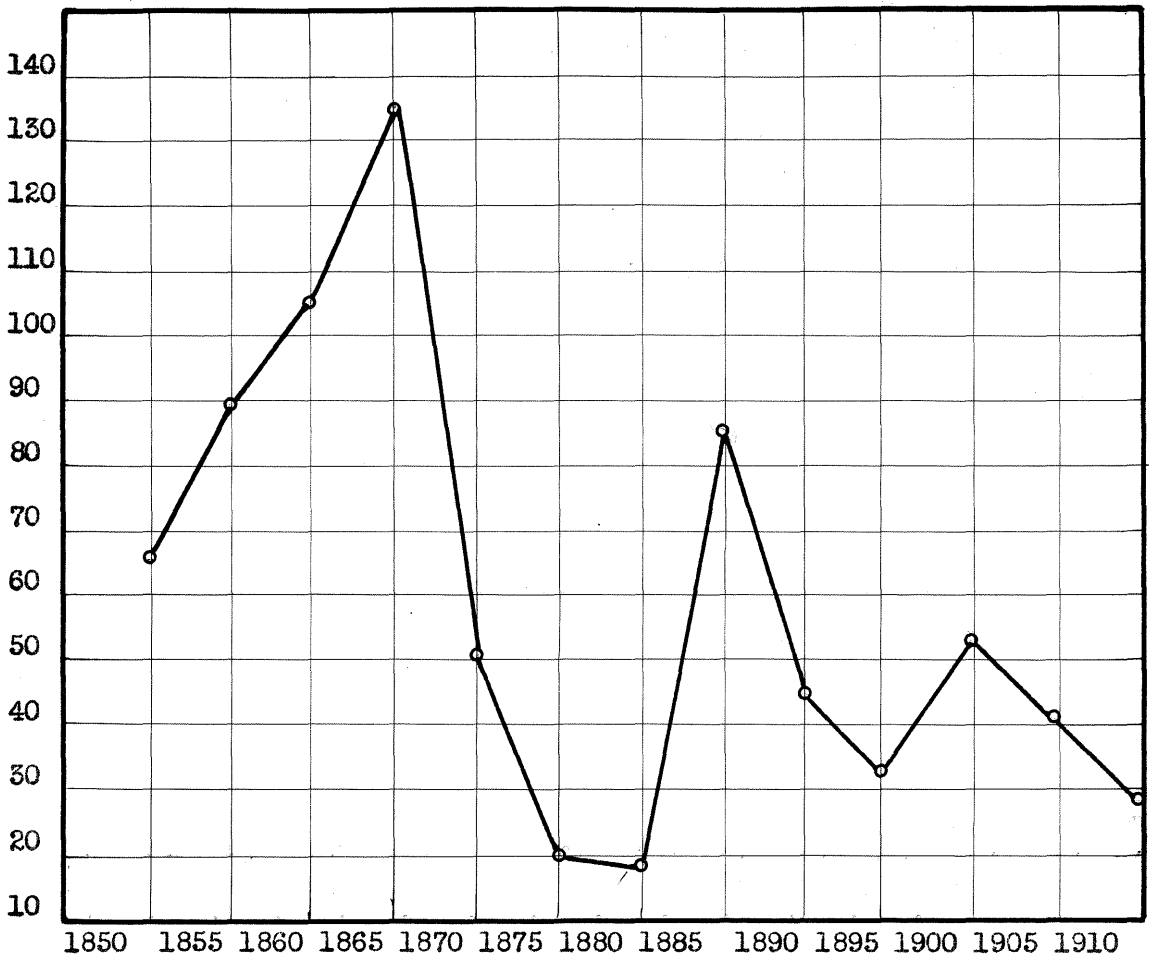
During Reconstruction the Centre Ridge churches lost all of their colored members. ¹ The Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church, in addition, steadily lost white members as well. The following *GRAPH*,

1. Based on an examination of church records.

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compiled from annual reports, reveals this decline.

Fluctuations in membership of Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church.



1. Records of the Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church. Accurate figures are not available for dates later than 1910.

This decline in church membership is attributable to a number of causes. The white population of Warrenton, which until 1876 included what is now Richmond and Elm Bluff for census purposes, in 1850 was 419.¹ By 1870 it had declined to 246 and has steadily declined since that time.² The 1930 census gave Elm Bluff only twelve whites and only one hundred and thirteen to Richmond.³ From this decline the Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church naturally suffered greatly.

Mrs. Ellen Smith, the last surviving member, who was present at the organization of the Presbyterian Church in 1844, wrote a brief account of its life from 1844 to 1889. In Mrs. Smith's The History of Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church, Dallas County, Alabama, the decline of the church is revealed.

"In 1868, we found that by death, removals, and want of conveyances to attend the services at Centre Ridge Church, that our congregation had become quite small (the colored people having left us to attend their own meetings), so we concluded best to close our dear old house of worship, with its cemetery adjoining, where many of our loved ones were buried (although it made our hearts truly sad to do so), and accept the kind offer of our Methodist friends to have our services in their church at Richmond where we would have much larger congregations and better sabbath school."⁴

The Presbyterians used the Methodist church until 1882 at which time they had succeeded in constructing a church of their own at Richmond.⁵ This was possible partly by razing their then decrepit

1. Harper, Roland M., Population Statistics of Centre Ridge Beats, Dallas County, Alabama, p. 1.

2. Ibid., p. 1.

3. Ibid., p. 1.

4. Smith, Ellen, The History of Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church, p.2.

5. Ibid., p.3.

brick church and selling parts of it and using other parts.¹ The bal-
 ance of the needed funds was donated.² The pastor, Reverend Peter
 McGowan seems to have directed the drive for getting a new building.

Much of the time since 1895 the Centre Ridge Presbyterian
 Church has been without a pastor.³ Ministers, for the most part, have
 not remained long as the size of the congregation has excluded the
 possibility of adequate remuneration. The longest and perhaps the
 finest period of ministerial service which has been rendered at the
 Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church is of recent origin. In 1921,
 Dr. W.C. Henderson came to serve this little church during the twi-
 light of his long and useful career.⁴ Dr. Henderson shepherded his
 flock faithfully and well until within about a year of his death in
 1933.

The Presbyterians of the Ridge tried to carry on for a
 while after Dr. Henderson's passing but soon gave up. For over two
 years, no services have been held. There is no movement on foot at
 the present time (1936) to reopen and re-organize the Centre Ridge
 Presbyterian Church.

The Methodist and Christian Churches

The same factors which caused a marked decline in the Centre
 Ridge Presbyterian Church, brought death to the Methodist Church.
 This church probably would have closed its doors during Reconstruc-
 tion had it not been for the Presbyterians coming to hold worship

1. Smith, Ellen, The History of Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church, p.2.

2. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

3. Records of the Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church.

4. Interview with Willis Henderson. The Interpretation of Dr. Hender-
 son's service is the author's.

there. The Methodists and Presbyterians held Sabbath School together, attended each others services, and to some extent helped to pay each other's ministers. The arrangement was mutually beneficial but was terminated in 1882 when the new Centre Ridge Presbyterian Church at Richmond was completed. Occasional services were held in the Methodist Church until after 1885. The last surviving member of the Centre Ridge Methodist Church now living on the Ridge is Hattie Etheridge. No other Methodist Church has been established on the Ridge. There is a small one at Minter which has been built in recent years.

In the early nineties a rather unexpected page in the religious life of Centre Ridge unfolded. With both population and church membership declining, several Ridge people, nevertheless, became interested in a new denomination, the Christian sect. The Christian Church in Richmond was organized by one Reverend Moore. The leaders of the new church were J.Z. Hearst, J.D. Whittington, John Rives, the Hassalvanders, the Stallworths, and the Goodmans. The Christian Church at Richmond declined as suddenly as it rose. By 1905, it was dead and not even occasional services were held after 1910.

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1. Smith, op. cit., p.3.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Interview with Mrs. B.L. Youngblood.
 4. Interview with Hattie Etheridge.
 5. Ibid.

The Centre Ridge Baptist Church

The history of the Centre Ridge Baptist Church since 1876 has not been spectacular. Since the heavy loss in membership during Reconstruction, the Baptist denomination has not fluctuated greatly in its number of communicants, but slowly declined until about 1900. Preachers' salaries have been small, and monthly service the common practice. A list of ministers since 1870 in order of succession is as follows: ¹ W.C. Cleveland, B.F. Riley, E.J. Forrester, John L. West, W.G. Curry, J.E. Chambliss, Gay William, W.G. Curry, W.M. Blackweeder, J.B. Powell, H.F. Crumpton, W.J. Ray, D.P. Lee, D.W. Ramsey, L.N. Brock, B.M. Pack, J.J. Justice, H.W. Francher, C.J. Bentley, E.B. Farrar, L.A. Nall, J.G. Dobbin, E.C. Osburn, ? McKay, J.P. Maxwell, ? Carter, H.W. Francher.

Periods of ministerial service have been short in the Centre Ridge Baptist Church since Reconstruction. The longest tenure was that held by W.G. Curry from 1882 to 1887. ² Three periods of service of about a year's duration are recorded. ³ The average tenure has been about two years and three months.

Saint Paul's Episcopal Church

By the year 1860, the congregation of Saint Paul's Episcopal Church at Carlowville included eighty-three communicants. ⁴ Some of these were lost when colored members separated during Reconstruc-

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1. Reports to the Association of the Centre Ridge Baptist Church.
 2. Records of the Centre Ridge Baptist Church.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Lide, Alice Alison and Johansen, Margaret L.A., History of St. Paul's Parish, Carlowville, p. 10.

tion, but the loss was probably proportionately less than the loss in the other churches, as a larger percentage of St. Paul's membership was white. The rector, the Reverend Francis Beekman Lee, included the Prayer for the President of the United States in his services a few months after the War ended, but "the congregation listened perforce,¹ but for many a long year they refused to 'Amen' such a petition."

In the twenty years following the close of the War the most interesting activities of the church were the organization of a choir and the repairing of the pipe organ.²

The success of St. Paul's Church as a spiritual institution in the lean years during and following Reconstruction is due in considerable measure to the diligent and faithful labor of the beloved "Parson" Lee. In 1889 the church memorialized his fifty years of service in the parish with a Jubilee Celebration.³ A recess chancel, begun previously, with triple stained-glass windows behind the Altar and with a Gothic arch above the Chancel with the words, "The Lord is in His Holy Temple" carved in wood, was pushed to completion in time for the Jubilee.⁴ William Rumph carved the ornament above the Chancel. Ministers from all over the Diocese sped to Carlowville to honor the Reverend Lee.⁵ Gifts of all types were showered on the aging rector, such as turkeys, cakes, dainties, silverware, money, china, and quilts.⁶ Soon it was necessary to name a lay-reader to as-

1. Life, Alice Alison and Johansen, Margaret L.A., op. cit., p.11.

2. Ibid., p. 11.

3. Ibid., p. 12.

4. Ibid., p. 12.

5. Ibid., p. 13.

6. Ibid., p. 13.

sist Mr. Lee, and J.D. Alison, Jr., was given this post.¹ One of the entries of the vestry record of 1895 reveals that the venerable rector was too feeble to be present. On Christmas, 1895, he conducted his last service.² His death occurred in April of the next³ year.

In September of 1896, Saint Paul's procured the services of Mortimer Garnett Cassell of Portsmouth, Virginia. Mrs. Lide refers to his ministerial service as follows:

"The Reverend Mr. Cassell like his grand old predecessor made the care of the Parish his life work and died in harness. He served truly and nobly for twenty-two years and was beloved by the entire community."⁴

From 1918 to 1921 the Parish was without a rector but the church was kept intact by the service of the lay-reader, J.D. Alison,⁵ and by occasional services by the Reverend Gamble, Rector of Selma. Saint Paul's third rector was Paul E. Engle, who stayed at Carlowville from 1921 to 1926. Coming as only a lay-reader, Engle was granted both the offices of Deacon and Priest while at Carlowville.

It was during Engle's ministry that a special Diocesan Council assembled at Carlowville, July the fifth and sixth in 1922. When it became known that St. Paul's invitation to be host to the Council had been accepted, Carlowville began to groom itself to receive its guests. The church building and the town hall were set in order, while in the homes preparations were made to entertain

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1. Lide, Alice Alison and Johansen, Margaret L.A., op. cit., p.11.
 2. Ibid., p. 11.
 3. Ibid., p. 12.
 4. Ibid., p. 12.
 5. Ibid., p. 16.

the visitors.

When preparations were well under way, some of the newspapers of the state began to express opinions that Carlowville was too small to entertain a Council. ¹ Not only the communicants of St. Paul's felt offended at this unpleasant notoriety but also the non-Episcopalians of Centre Ridge and in nearby villages. ² Loyal offers of all kinds of help came from the whole nearby section. ³ Only the offers of Centre Ridge people however, were accepted as these proved adequate to entertain what was said to have been the largest Diocesan Council ever held in Alabama. ⁴ Despite some crowding, every delegate was housed and most lavishly fed.

The purpose of the Council was to elect a Bishop Coadjutor to assist the ailing Bishop Beckwith. Following Algernon Blair's nomination, William ⁵ McDowell was elected to this office. His sobriquet "William of Carlowville" honors the place of his elevation.

Since 1926, the Reverend Justice Jones has served St. Paul's ably and satisfactorily as its rector.

Social Trends Since 1876

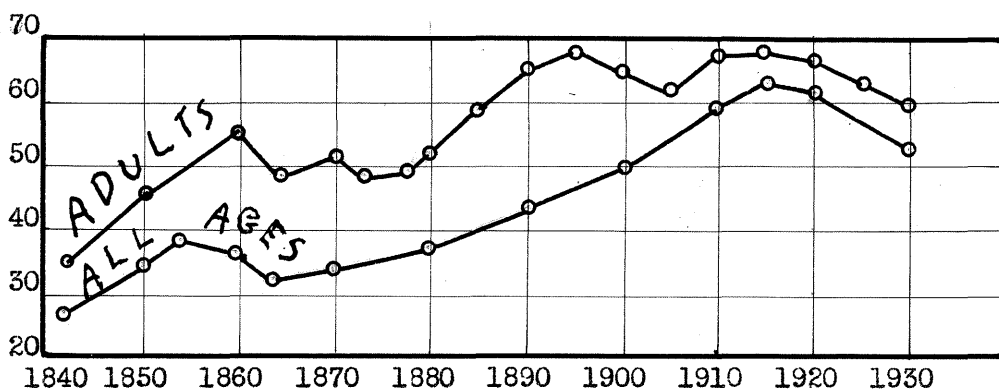
Several social trends which have been noticeable on the Ridge since 1876 appear significant. For one thing, the average life span has steadily lengthened. A table compiled by Dr. Roland Harper

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1. Lide, Alice Alison and Johansen, Margaret, L.A., op. cit., p.17.
 2. Ibid., p. 17.
 3. Ibid., p. 17.
 4. Ibid., p. 17.
 5. Ibid., p. 18.

of the Alabama Geological Survey reveals the increase in the life span of Centre Ridge whites:

Average Longevity of White People on Centre Ridge,
Dallas County, Ala.

Based on three cemeteries, with 264 dated graves,
(189 adults, 75 children). Averaged by decades.¹



While the curve of the average age of Centre Ridge whites, both for the all-ages group and for the adult group, has fluctuated considerably, it is easy to see from Harper's graph that the general tendency has been up. No figures are available for the average longevity of Centre Ridge Negroes, but it is safe to state that at present the Ridge Negroes live longer on an average than formerly, owing to improved conditions of living and the advance of medical science.

The figures for whites compare favorably with national statistics on the complete expectation of life. For example, the com-

1. By Roland M. Harper.

plete expectation of life for white males at 1901 was 48.23 years,¹ while at the same time white females might expect to live 51.08 years. For the period 1929-31, these life expectations had increased to 59.31 years for white males² and 62.83 for white females.³

One of the most striking social developments on the Ridge since Reconstruction days has been the fusing of the three villages⁴ into a common community. In ante-bellum days the three villages held each other in suspicion and rivalry. Now, all Ridge folk are neighbors, bound together with many common purposes, sentiments, memories, and interests.

A number of causes have contributed to this development, the most important single one being the spread of kinship. Through inter-marriage the Ridge folk have become related. Another cause has been the joint school patronage which started in 1907. Improved transportation facilities which have brought more contacts and a larger vision, have also helped to reduce friction and erase antipathies. Common war memories and joint Reconstruction effort have made for unity. Time itself has brought forgetfulness of ancient hurts and served to mellow one and all. Of late years, Minter has increasingly been as one with Centre Ridge in community sentiment,

1. Dublin, Louis I. and Lotka, Alfred J., Length of Life, p. 68.

2. Ibid., p. 346.

3. Ibid., p. 354.

4. This interpretation of the social unification of the Ridge villages is based partly on the author's observation, and partly on interviews with Alison Reynolds Wade, Mrs. B.L. Youngblood, Alice Alison Lide and others.

while citizens of other nearby villages and the Ridge people are coming in closer contact.

High living standards prevail on Centre Ridge. Almost every white family has an automobile, while some have more than one.¹ Radios are also very common. Homes are for the most part spacious and are usually surrounded by broad lawns and grounds. Most of the Ridge people own the homes they live in and the land surrounding. One servant or more can be found in or about most of the houses. Centre Ridge whites are almost without exception well fed, well clothed, and well housed. This is also true of most of rural Dallas.

More important, however, than the high living standards, is the high cultural standard of Centre Ridge. In 193~~2~~, one of the worst years of the depression, thirteen of Carlowville's one hundred and thirty-six people, were matriculated in college, or approximately ten per cent.² At the time the national average had fallen to less than one per cent. During the last ten years the percentage of Carlowville youths in college has been at least five per cent or about five times the national average. A substantially similar proportion of Richmond youths matriculated in college. Most homes have large libraries of both old and new books, while newspapers and magazines are subscribed to in considerable number.

The lawns and flower gardens around the wealthier homes are planted in the best of taste and are quite beautiful.³ The affluent

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1. Count made recently by the author.
 2. Census taken by Dr. Roland Harper and the author.
 3. The grounds around the B.L. Youngblood home are particularly charming.

and poor alike delight in enhancing the home's charm with flowers, shrubs, grasses, and trees. Despite the necessity of work, which none entirely escapes, Centre Ridge people for the most part are able to lead pleasant, cultivated lives. This helps to compensate for the lean years after Reconstruction when the cultural level fell so sharply. From 1870-1895, only six Centre Ridge youths matriculated at the University of Alabama, while from 1840 to 1865, sixteen young men from the Ridge took work at the "Capstone."¹

Another significant social trend of recent years is the fact that Centre Ridge is beginning to function as a social, recreational, and cultural center for a wide surrounding territory.² This development is centered around the Carlowville School and its grounds, and has resulted in part from the coming of school busses. People from southern Dallas, western Lowndes, and eastern Wilcox come to Carlowville for dances, plays, entertainments, and athletic contests, as well as to school. The contacts engendered thereby have been beneficial to Ridge folk as well as the visitors. They promote understanding and make for a wider and more cosmopolitan viewpoint.

Another social trend which apparently set in only after Reconstruction has been the tendency of many of the ablest young men of the Ridge to go elsewhere to work. Economic opportunities for over fifty years have been unequal to the local demand for them. After procuring an education, a considerable proportion of the young men and women of Centre Ridge are forced to go away for an opportunity to pur-

1. Palmer, op. cit.,

2. Based on observation of the author.

sue their professions. This tendency has been especially marked in the last ten years for college trained youths. In this way, the Ridge has lost and is losing some of its best talent and blood. Centre Ridge's loss has been other communities' gain in most of these cases, and Ridge folk take pride in the success of many of its former citizens.

Recreation Since 1876

During the Civil War and Reconstruction, some of the antebellum forms of recreation disappeared such as horse racing and ¹gan-der pulling. When the railroad came through in 1870, Richmond began to decline as a business point and with this decline came the ²end of its pool rooms and most of its saloons. The more expensive and the commercialized forms of recreation tended to draw to a close from 1860 to 1880. Cheaper and more wholesome pleasures superceded the old amusement forms.

Some time between 1875 and 1879, some Centre Ridge men, especially a few from Carlowville, decided that the Ridge needed a town hall to function as a recreational center. As Ridge folk at the time were unable to subscribe liberally to a fund to construct the building, a scheme of raising the necessary money was hit upon. ³Dr. Joseph D. Alison organized and directed a local theatrical troupe. These amateurs toured nearby towns and raised most of the cash re- ⁴quired. In 1880, the hall was completed and was the scene of many

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1. Interview with Alice Alison Lide.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.
 4. Ibid.

good times in the years to come. The most common use of the hall was for dancing, but entertainment of other types and speakings have been held in it. The town hall continued as a community center until 1927, when it was taken over by the Carlowville School and made into elementary classrooms. The town hall was located on the village green. Usually a local orchestra played for the dances held in the hall.¹ The school auditorium now takes the place of the town hall as a social center.

The village green, now a part of the campus of the Carlowville School, surrounded the old town hall. Here athletics of a wholesome kind have been practiced for a long time. From 1880 to 1920, baseball was by far the main sport engaged in, but occasionally a tennis court was set up. It is difficult to set any particular date for the beginning of Centre Ridge's deep and lasting interest in baseball. In the years not long after Reconstruction teams were organized of local men which played the nearby villages. These games, which were usually played on Saturday, were well attended and supplied a much needed outlet to players and spectators alike.

Of course, after 1876 the Ridge people continued with the old sports of hunting and fishing.² Dances were sometimes held in the homes but not on the lavish ante-bellum scale. Ridge people also played cards for amusement, but probably not as extensively as at present. The first score of years following Reconstruction were

1. Interview with S.A. Reynolds.

2. A favorite spot has been Pompey's sandbar, two miles up the river from Centre-Port.

years of economic scarcity but not always of humdrum existence.

At the present time none of the post-Reconstruction forms of recreation have been abandoned, but new ones have been added. With the coming of the accredited school, basketball (for both boys and girls), and football have made their appearance. Ridge people enjoy basketball about as much as they enjoy baseball, while football is gaining in popularity. Swimming and tennis are perennial favorites, as is also cards.¹ Travel, dancing, and picture shows in Selma (26 miles away) continue to be popular. Centre Ridge people also devote a considerable part of their leisure time to reading.

Distinguished Sons of the Ridge

Several sons of the Centre Ridge have succeeded eminently in the outside world. The most notable of these are the three listed by Who's Who in America 1932-1933, Kenneth Douglas McKellar, William D. Kyser, and William Wade Harper, but to this list should be added the names of two well known educators, John Caldwell Calhoun and Joseph Mason Dill. Two other people known far beyond the confines of the Ridge are Mrs. Alice Alison Lide, writer, and Samuel A. Reynolds, present Sheriff of Dallas County.

Kenneth Douglas McKellar was born at Richmond, January 29, 1869, the son of J.D.W. McKellar and Caroline Howard McKellar.² He received both his B.A. and his M.A. degrees at the University of Alabama in 1891, while during the following year, he procured the Bachelor

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1. Pedro for men and Bridge for women are the favorites.
 2. Marquis, Albert Nelson, Who's Who in America, 1932-1933, p.1438.

of Laws degree at this same institution.¹ McKellar removed to Memphis, Tennessee, shortly after 1892, where he became sufficiently known by 1911 to be elected to the United States House of Representatives.² Here he stayed until 1917 when he successfully ran for United States Senator.³ Senator McKellar has represented Tennessee in the Senate continuously and satisfactorily since 1917 and is now a valuable administration leader in the upper house.

William Wade Harper was born in Richmond, February 26, 1868, the son of William B. Harper and Georgia Wade Harper.⁴ He received his A.B. degree at the University of Alabama in 1877 and his A.M. in 1891.⁵ Harper studied medicine at Tulane and received his M.D. degree at this school also in 1891.⁶ Dr. Harper practiced medicine in Selma until our entry into the World War, at which time he joined the Medical Corps, receiving the rank of Captain.⁷ Dr. Harper is, at present, the chief surgeon of the Alabama Baptist Hospital in Selma.⁸ He is a fellow in the American College of Surgeons. Dr. Harper is also a trustee of the Selma City Schools, a director of the Selma Y.M.C.A., and was once president of the Alabama Medical Association.

William D. Kyser was born at Richmond, July 17, 1882, the son of Dr. George W. Kyser and Sallie Patton Kyser.⁹ He received the B.A. degree at the University of Alabama in 1902 and the L.L.B. degree

1. Marquis, op. cit., p.1438.

2. Ibid., p. 1438.

3. Ibid., p. 1438.

4. Ibid., p. 1438.

5. Ibid., p. 966.

6. Ibid., p. 966.

7. Ibid., p. 966.

8. Ibid., p. 966.

9. Ibid., p. 1243.

at Cumberland in 1903.¹ William Kyser began practicing law soon after-
ward and moved to Memphis in 1906 to practice there.² From 1914 to
1921 he served successively as Assistant United States Attorney of
the Western District of Tennessee and as United States Attorney of
this same district.³ Shortly before his death in 1933, William Kyser
became President and General Counsel of the Memphis Power and Light
Company and Memphis Street Railway Company.⁴

Probably the greatest scholar to come from Centre Ridge
was John Caldwell Calhoun, born December 4, 1850, between Warrenton
and Carlowville, the son of James Martin Calhoun and Susan Pickens
Calhoun, and great nephew of John C. Calhoun. He went to Washington
College, then under General Robert E. Lee, and graduated in 1872
with the C.E. and B.S. degrees.⁵ The following year he received the
M.A. degree and subsequently studied at Heidelberg.⁶ In 1877, John
Calhoun returned to America and obtained a position at the Univer-
site of Alabama, teaching Latin and Greek there.⁷ Later Calhoun
went to William and Mary College to teach modern languages and died
there about fifteen years ago.

While John C. Calhoun was probably the greatest scholar the
Ridge ever produced, Joseph Mason Dill seems to have been its great-
est contribution to the cause of general education. Joseph Dill was
born November 4, 1852, the son of Dr. Thomas John Dill and Jane Lee
Alison Dill.⁸ Prepared for college by his father, he studied at

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1. Marquis, op. cit., p. 1243.
 2. Ibid., p. 1243.
 3. Ibid., p. 1243.
 4. Ibid., p. 1243.
 5. Owen, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 287.
 6. Ibid., p. 287.
 7. Ibid., p. 287.
 8. Ibid., p. 491.

Howard College and received the A.B. degree there in 1874.¹ Joseph Dill returned to Howard in 1878 and earned an M.A. degree, after² which he taught at Tuscaloosa and at Howard College. Next, he became principal of the Tuscaloosa High School and then Superintendent³ of the Troy Schools. His chief claim to fame, however, is that he became the first president of Troy Normal School in 1887.⁴ Subsequently, Joseph Dill was president of the South Alabama Female Institute at Greenville and from 1901 to 1908, superintendent of the⁵ Bessemer school system.

Mrs. Alice Alison Lide is a post-war notable of the Ridge by virtue of the dozen or more books she has written, part of which have been in collaboration with her sister Margaret Johansen. Mrs. Lide's books are both fiction and non-fiction and vary in type within these classifications. Her latest^{test} book, a novel entitled Dark Possession, attracted the attention of many literary critics. While Mrs. Lide has never written a national best seller, she is growing in her profession.

Samuel A. Reynolds is mentioned as a Centre Ridge notable chiefly on account of his assistance in obtaining a living wage and satisfactory working conditions for the rural letter carriers of the United States. For ten or fifteen years, prior to his retirement in 1933 as a letter carrier himself, he was one of three or four men who represented the Rural Letter Carrier's of America at the National

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1. Owen, op. cit., p. 491.
 2. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 491.
 3. Ibid., p. 491.
 4. Ibid., p. 491.
 5. Ibid., p. 491.

Capital. During his service as lobbyist, rural letter carriers obtained better pay and better working conditions.

At present, Samuel Reynolds is sheriff of Dallas County, and is considered as being among the best that Dallas County has had.

Centre Ridge is proud of her native people who have made real contributions to the general civilization, but vast credit is also due to those who quietly stayed at home and maintained worthwhile conditions of living there. The living pillars in church, school, and political affairs are B.L. Youngblood, A.P. Calhoun, Dr. S.B. Alison, and B.L. Alison. To this list of living leaders should be added the names of the late lamented B.R. Alison and Henry Yates. All of these men are or were depended upon by the community at large for guidance. They have served their people with fidelity and wisdom.

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