

seem to me like it was the Commercial.

BAGLEY: So as children were you supposed to read the paper along with your parents?

HOUSE: Well, if we wanted to. Current events were always discussed and we were supposed to know a little bit about what was going on and we always took the Outlook, which is a magazine that's not published any more. It was a monthly and then we took the Literary Digest that I think came out weekly, and I think that daddy took the Saturday Evening Post for the children's amusement because of the stories, and yet they had good articles in there. The Post at that time kept up with the national political figures. There were always good comments. Now, you might not agree with them but they were good ones, and the stories in them were good, and we took the Atlantic Monthly and I don't know what all. We took plenty of magazines so we certainly shouldn't have been illiterate when we grew up.

BAGLEY: Did your neighbors take this many newspapers and periodicals?

HOUSE: No, I expect not. I expect that we took more than the average and then too, you know, I didn't realize -- I was an adult teaching school - that people didn't have libraries in their homes? We had a beautiful library and I told somebody, I thought maybe we had 5,000 volumes, and they looked at me -- Well, we had a room that was lined with books. I don't know how many that were in it but there were a lot in it and they were varied. There were a world of political science

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and history books and then there was fiction and reference books. We had two or three sets of encyclopedias and when something would come up we'd look it up. They'd maybe ask us about it to see if we'd checked on it, but I realize that sometimes you have to get old to appreciate your childhood and the things that were given you. It never entered my head until, as I said, an adult teaching school, that everybody's parents weren't educated and that everybody didn't have libraries. Of course, I realized that we had a larger library than most, but later in life when I taught school I discovered that children didn't have books in their homes and it was a -- to take a book home -- I had a little library and the books that belonged to the school weren't permitted to go home. We had a store in our room and the money that came from the store bought books. Those weren't owned by the school. You know, I mean that the state hadn't appropriated money for them and those books could be taken home by the children and then I bought a lot of books that I gave to the room. Those books could be taken home and I used to let the children take them home on the week ends.

BAGLEY: Because your family was well read and discussed events in the paper, it certainly influenced your life.

HOUSE: I'm sure that it did, although you probably don't think about it as you are going along, you have to sort of look back and think about it, but I'm not sure that that's not the reason I have been interested in politics. Of course, when I was teaching I couldn't take an active part in them.

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BAGLEY: I wanted to ask you about that?

HOUSE: I always voted and I did some but you couldn't get out and really, truly be active because -- I remember that I got into something and Mr. Henry Starling came out and told me that if I wanted to teach I had to forget politics. I forgot them.

BAGLEY: Now that you have retired you can --

HOUSE: I can mess around in politics.

BAGLEY: You've been to Washington a couple of times, haven't you?

HOUSE: Yes, I've gone to the Mississippi Federation of Republican Women. I went to their convention in Atlanta, well that was a regional one. I went to a state one in Washington. I've been there -- I don't think I went up there but once and I went to a national one in Dallas and then a national one in Los Angeles, a National Federation, and then you know I've been to the regional one, they had it in Atlanta four or five years ago and they are going to have it again in Atlanta this fall for the Federated Women's - let's see what they call it They call it National Federated Republican Women.

BAGLEY: Do you hold an office now in the Republican party?

HOUSE: Not in the National. On the state level I'm Program Chairman and in the local level I think I'm Vice President. I don't know why, and I said that's a --

Somebody told me I was Program Chairman or something else that I didn't know that I've got to get programs up for,

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so I'd better get a good calendar to know -- (Laughter)

BAGLEY: What National Conventions have you been to?

HOUSE: I've never been to but one. The first one I went to was in 1976 and I was thrilled to death. I said that daddy had gone to every one that I can remember since 1924 and of course he'd gone to others. In 1908 he'd been put up for Vice President but he didn't get very many votes, but he never lost his interest and he went to, part of the time he went as a -- Well, of course, the Republican party in Mississippi wasn't recognized so he couldn't go as a delegate. He went as a guest, but because of his political connections in Nebraska, he knew a lot of the leaders and Senators and things like that. Then after they were recognized, I think that the last convention that he went to was in Chicago, probably. I'm not right sure. I know that he went to the one in Philadelphia and then Chicago and they didn't go to the one in San Francisco, but Anson, my brother, has been and Julia, my sister, had been because Julia went to the one that was in Cleveland, and I'd never been, so it was a big thrill.

BAGLEY: What did you do?

HOUSE: Listened, I goggle-eyed. I went as a delegate and, of course, Kansas City doesn't lend itself to National Conventions like that. The reason I say that is they housed them out as far as 30 miles from Kansas City, and your delegates didn't get to know each other and mingle with them. Now, we had a Mississippi delegate--

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BAGLEY: Who did you go with?

HOUSE: Oh, I drove up by myself to Kansas City, because I had a daughter living there and I was with her a week before and then I went over to the headquarters, which were at the -- the Mississippi delegation was at the Ramada Inn East. I drove over there and then when we went down to convention every day in the morning - I think you rode the bus at nine, we went down on the bus, and the reason they took everybody down on buses they couldn't have possibly parked their car and gotten the people into the arena because it was made into a convention hall, really it was a cow barn that they used to show prize cattle and horses in and they had renovated it and used it. They put people at this convention out at Lawrence and they put them out (Have you got that thing on?)

BAGLEY: Yes.

HOUSE: Well, the delegate from Michigan they said was going to be out at the Hilton across from the Airport and he said, "Well, I'm not going to stay in that hickey place", and they canceled his reservation. The hotel people got wind of it and they said, "Well, he's not going to stay here". "We won't let him stay here until he writes an apology", and he wrote an apology and they let him stay, but it's a lovely hotel, but it's 25 miles out but the Airport is 25 miles out and they just didn't have any facilities. All the hotels, when the news media - including TV, newspapers and magazines and what have you, heard that it was going to be in Kansas City they went in there and took all the down town reservations and they said none of the

NOTICE

delegates were housed down town. Well, they took the - what is the name of that hotel, it's a new one? - right down there in Kansas City, the Republican headquarters had gone in, National, and reserved the top two floors for the President and things like that, but as far as the rest of the people getting in they were stuck out every place that you could think of. But, I had a good time.

BAGLEY: Who, from here, were on the bus with you?

HOUSE: Well, the whole Mississippi delegation, some of them flew up, some of them drove up. Mary Wilson from the Gulf Coast was there, Nancy and Mike Retzer, Clarke Reed and Judy and daughter, Julia, were there at the motel. I can't remember who all -- Isn't it terrible to not know who all the delegates were? We had a real interesting group.

BAGLEY: Were you on any committees?

HOUSE: No, I wasn't on any committees. That was my first time and you don't get on any the first time, not when you have so many other people. I believe Clarke might have been on a committee, but that's the only one that I can think of out of the Mississippi delegation.

BAGLEY: Well, you were sent to the White House.

HOUSE: I went to the White House Conference for the Aged in 1972, I believe. Did they have one there in 1972? Well, that's when I went and Mrs. Montgomery that I was telling you that her daughter married the Mayor that I couldn't think of his name? She went too and we had a real good time. It was

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quite interesting but it was a real work schedule. You know, they had a meeting when they'd put you in small groups to discuss what they talked about and that would take the morning and then you'd have lunch, then you'd do the same thing in the afternoon and then again at night. It was pretty strenuous. I said that I thought that for people that were supposed to be sixty and over, they sort of went overboard on scheduling their -- but I learned a lot. I had a whole lot of material that I took out to the Church and I think they threw -- I don't know what they did with it, because it wasn't what I used, because I've got that -- what I used myself, but it was stuff -- you never saw so much literature in your life, the tables were all stacked full of things, so I got the kinds that I thought they might use about the Aged here and I expect there could have been a lot there of I don't know what. Some of it might have been thrown away, but you know, they write it and it gets out of date.

BAGLEY: Well, you taught school for how many years?

HOUSE: Twenty-seven and the only reason I didn't teach until it had been thirty years, because my husband was sick and he wanted me to stop, so when I was sixty I stopped and I taught - well, I taught more in 1927 because I taught one year in Geneva, Nebraska and I taught Math and daddy wanted me to come home because I was going to be married the next year and he called me up and told me that Mr. Bass had given me a place in the Greenville schools. Well, it never entered my head but what it was in high school math and I went to a party in August,

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I think, or a tea of some kind for somebody, and a mama said, "Oh, you're going to teach my child this fall and I looked at her and I said, "Oh, no." and she said, "Oh, yes you are."

So I went and asked Mr. Bass and I wound up teaching fourth grade over at old Starling School but I had a lot of fun.

Mr. Bass said, "If you can teach high school, you can teach the fourth grade." Well, I had prepared all my education in high school work but there was a great deal of it, if you've got any ingenuity at all, you can transfer - you have to do it a little bit different - but you never can teach two classes the same anyhow. You have to use ingenuity as you go along and after I had taught then the next year I was married and I didn't teach any more until 1933 and then I went back and when I went back, the first year I taught a platoon and that's where you have a class an hour and a half, and then in another hour and a half you get another one, then right after lunch you get the one you had the first thing in the morning and the one in the afternoon the one you had the second. Mr. Forest Murphy, the principal, had to do that, we had so many children and didn't have any facilities and he said that Mr. Bass had bought so many books and owed every book company in the United States and so he just put one set of books in the desk and the children couldn't take them home. Well, that wasn't very popular with parents because they wanted the children to bring the books home, but they had to be in the desk. If the last ones in the afternoon took them home then when the first ones came in the

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morning there wouldn't be any books there for them, so the books didn't go home, and he got the debt paid off, but the room was beautifully equipped with Readers. I think Mr. Bass had bought from every Publishing Company that published Readers, a set of them. They were in sets of 12 or 14, and then you could divide your groups, you know, up like that and one group could be reading one thing and one another. He had bought them in series so, and that is an excellent idea, because one person that publishes a Reader, there are 300 words that are repeated 75 times, so the authorities say, in our reading. Well, one person entered this as one part of these 300 basic words in the Primer, and somebody else that puts out a Primer won't use those same words they'll use another set but by the time they've gone through the first three Readers they've gotten them all in there but they're never in the same sequence, - so by his having all these different Readers it helped the children, because we used to have - well, I guess we still do - but they used to send out good students from the Greenville Public Schools.

BAGLEY: Well, do you think that Mr. Bass was far superior to school superintendents -- ?

HOUSE: Yes, I think he was farsighted. So you know that when I went to the University of Nebraska in 1918, I had been in as well equipped laboratory in Chemistry as they had at the University of Nebraska, except, if you want to say miniature. You know, there weren't as many Chemistry desks as there were in

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this big laboratory but it was just as well equipped, and that was Mr. Murphy, and we had a swimming pool in that high school and we had a beautiful library. Caroline Badow says we had the best library by far in the state. (See note) You know in this old library there in, it was probably Junior High, there was a reference room and a reading room, then in the middle where the books set you couldn't go and get them but you could only go to the librarian and they always had a librarian there. I was taught how to use a card index so I could go to this reading room, the research room, and get my materials that were on the shelves myself. Of course, we couldn't go out of the door with any books unless we checked them out from the librarian and some of the books could be checked out and some couldn't. Then he had a beautiful gymnasium. He had gym, music and art long before any of the other schools. I'll have to bring you my little thing where it says "Greenville's first" and let you see all the, somebody got it up for something I had and it's in a little folder.

BAGLEY: What about Carrie Stern? Were you on in any of the planning for that?

HOUSE: Mr. Bass was gone then.

BAGLEY: Oh, he was?

HOUSE: Yes, and Mr. Murphy built Carrie Stern. He had every teacher - he was superintendent then - every teacher in Starling School and I believe in the whole school system but I may be wrong, to submit a plan of what they thought their room

Note: Caroline Badow was librarian for Junior High School and later for Bass Junior High School, 1925-1955.

ought to be like and at that time we had Starling School and Ella Darling School, or old Central, and Court or (now what did they call that after Court?) (up in North Greenville, it's McBride now). Susie Trigg, each one had a third grade and you see that made we'll say three third-grades or three-fourths but I believe over at Central they had duplicate classes, for instance, I believe there were, maybe say, two fourths and two firsts. Well, every teacher had to submit a room and workroom like she thought, and you know in Carrie Stern, the Drinking Fountain there - Mother Goose - well, some teacher submitted that, and I think it was Julia (my sister), and he kept that and he kept the ideas of our workroom like we suggested and there were a lot of things that he kept and I know that one thing --

(End Tape 2, 8/30-77)

HOUSE: Carrie Stern School is way beyond because when it was built we had our Class room and we had an Art room that was built for an Art room, equipped for an Art room, a Music room that was equipped for a Music room, we had a Science room and it was equipped with a science table, your water and your gas, all sorts of beacons and test tubes that you could do experiments with, and each room had a work room and each room had a display cabinet.

BAGLEY: They didn't have an Audio-Visual room?

HOUSE: Later, when Audio-Visual came in they took the upstairs that had been built. Then we had a Cafeteria and a beautiful gymnasium, and the upstairs had been fixed for sick

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people and I don't know what they planned because they had never really finished it. The two rooms they had for sick rooms, and a room that they used for examining children when the Health Doctor came out. There was another room down the hall that Mrs. Dorothy Causey (see note) used that was lighted and then they had this dark room that they finished when Audio-Visual came in. At first we got our tapes from Delta State and the teachers had to order what they wanted the week end before, like on Friday or Thursday, and then they'd send the order to Delta State and then they came in every Friday. I don't know whether they picked them up by bus or whether they sent them back by mail or how they sent them, but eventually we got our own films and to start with - I believe there hasn't been a central location and you have to order to the building, but it is not like when you ordered them on Friday when you put in your plan book, and then they'd go over to the "Little White House", as they call it, and the man that has charge of the films delivers them on Monday morning so you have them on Monday morning, but we used to always get them on Monday morning, but Delta State had some excellent films. Most everything that came from Delta State was Britannical, they put out the pamphlet, and they were really good and I expect authentic film. I don't know what was bought here. I think that some of ours have come from Britannica and some Coronet. They come from different places because it always says when they start the film, but the room lent itself beautifully

Note: She was Director of Elementary Education.

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to the projector, but now I think Carrie Stern has two, well, I don't know what they have now, but they had two or three when I left, and each hall had their own projector where you could have it in your room. You could darken them and bring your screen down and you could darken the room so you could show the films there. That was really in a way was better than taking them way down the hall and up the steps and then you didn't disturb the classes so much.

BAGLEY: I remember the paid programs we went to sometimes, like Toby and Susie. Do you remember, was that the names?

HOUSE: Those programs came in - I suppose they came to the schools. We always had the schools set up so we had an Assembly program, and I can't remember whether we had them on Friday or whether we had it on Thursday, but we always had an Assembly program, then these people would come in and they'd do the whole town and they'd set up. They'd do it at Trigg, Central and Carrie Stern and I guess whichever one they went to first got the desirable time. You just changed your schedule around and went to the program, the ones that went, and usually one teacher, for instance, would keep all the third grade children while the other two went and took care of the children in the auditorium, and they did that with the other grades. Once in a great while you'd find that they all brought their 10¢ or 15¢, because I don't know, did they get to the place where they charged a quarter?

BAGLEY: Not while I was in school.

HOUSE: It was either 10¢ or 15¢, depending upon the program. Some of them were worth while. Some of them were like - but they were entertaining and I think the children enjoyed them.

BAGLEY: We always got such a big kick out of seeing Tobie and Susie on the Campus.

HOUSE: Yes.

BAGLEY: I wondered how the school got these people to come here?

HOUSE: They came in and solicited. It was just like these people that go in and take the pictures. They have headquarters in Jackson now but I think that they came out of Chicago or Atlanta to start with, and when they got enough schools that they could go in and take pictures, they set up an office in Jackson but I think that it's a circuit, a man comes and fore-runs and sees if he can get all the schools - they had to go to the office and clear with the office first, what I mean by that, the superintendent, but he would tell them that, "You'll have to go and talk with the principal." Well, maybe they'd just sell one principal then they wouldn't come, but if he'd sell all three of them they'd come. See, then it would be more money in their pocket, and the worst part of it was the class room teacher had to sell the tickets, take up the money and account for it, and they did get - at first they didn't give the school anything. I said, "Why, I don't think that's right", so finally they got a

percentage. Now, you know, I don't know whether it was 10% or 5% or what but they got a percentage of all that was taken in, and they used that to buy books for the library or films or different things that they needed, things in the office, sometimes things for a room. If they'd buy for one room one time and then another time they'd buy for another one. I mean it would go around like that. That worked out --

BAGLEY: Did you have a favorite superintendent that you enjoyed working under?

HOUSE: Well, of course, the first year I taught under Mr. Bass and I loved him dearly. I expect if there was a favorite it was -- but they were all so different, then Mr. Forest Murphy and Mr. Koontz and then I believe I taught under Mr. Buchanan. Now, I worked with Mr. Thompson but I don't believe that I ever taught under him.

BAGLEY: Well, would you think, say --

HOUSE: Mr. Bass was superior to any of them because he had so much foresight and vision of what was coming and what children needed. Mr. Murphy had -- I don't know whether he was any smarter than Mr. Bass, but he was extremely smart and the reason they had the platoon system, that really cost him his job, was he couldn't get the people of Greenville to be willing to have a bond issue and build another school and there wasn't anything to do with the children but to have part of them come and then the next part come. That was the only way to accomodate the children. Of course, later in this platoon system, we'd have

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them a half a day at a time. You know, you'd get a group and you'd have them until noon and they you'd get them in the afternoon, a group, and the one that you got in the afternoon at semester time would change and come first thing in the morning, and the ones that you'd had first thing in the morning they'd come in the afternoon after semester time, so I don't know whether it helped or it hurt them. You taught instead of 30 or 35 children, you taught twice that. You taught 75 or more.

BAGLEY: Were the black schools doing the same thing?

HOUSE: I don't think that the black schools ever had the platoon system because I don't think they ever -- I'm sure they were crowded because the population of Greenville was -- It's always been predominantly black. They tell me now that it's 52%, but one time when we were children it was three-fourths black and one-fourth white, because when it was 12,000, there were 8,000 blacks and 4,000 whites, and I think that as the years have come and gone, a lot of your negroes went north but they began to come back later. I expect Mr. Koontz did more for the blacks than maybe any other, although Mr. Bass, you know, he was in a difficult place because at the time that he was superintendent a lot of people didn't believe in educating the blacks and he said you couldn't have good citizens unless they were educated and he worked awfully hard and he worked on a shoestring to get schools for blacks and of course he laid the foundation and Mr. Murphy had taught under him. He thought Mr. Bass was as

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smart as he could be, and so I think that he went along to help with the black school. Now, Mr. Koontz came in and did the building - expanded then, because I think that Mattie Akin, Fulwiler and Solomon, there's another elementary school. Oh, and new Trigg was built. I'm pretty sure that all those were built under Mr. Koontz. Of course, he was here 12 years or more, and he was an excellent school man. He was extremely difficult to talk to. Now, if you asked for a conference he would always give it to you and if you wanted to sit there three hours he was a perfect gentleman in that he'd sit and listen to you, but when you'd gotten through you wondered if you had gotten your point across. You know, I mean, you didn't know where you stood any more than you did before.

BAGLEY: Did you have a special year that you enjoyed the most?

HOUSE: Teaching? Oh, I don't know. No, I enjoyed them all. I liked children. You know, some groups of children are easier to teach than other groups because you'll go along and get a group of children that are comparatively slow, then you may get another group that the whole group is pretty fast. Then you may get a group that you have four or five different, you may have some of them that are real fast, some that are just ordinary, and some that are real slow and where they bussed in the children like they did. I think they all started out all down to Trigg. There were too many for Trigg and so they began to divide them up and some of your bus children that came from poor tenants,

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where they'd had no advantages, were slower. They didn't have the background to know about the city and things that were happening there. My sister used to say, Julia used to say, that all your tests and things were geared to city children, that the people who made the tests never thought about rural children and I think she's right.

BAGLEY: Well, I think I've pretty well exhausted you on reminiscences.

HOUSE: I don't know whether you -- I hope it's what you want.

BAGLEY: It is.

HOUSE: If you don't, you put down some questions and I'll put my thinking cap on and see if I can answer them for you.

BAGLEY: Well, you had no difficulty living out in the county and teaching in the city?

HOUSE: Now, the first year that I taught, Mr. Starling, I don't think particularly wanted me to. You see, I live in the Greenville Separate School District. What Mr. Bass did, he had a Greenville Separate School District, and when he needed more money he went out and enlarged that district. I live at Black Bayou - I'll correct that, I live in Black Bayou District. It wasn't that they've changed it, but that's what I live in now. At one time the children that came into Greenville paid tuition. The County had paid it and then they ran out of money, and I don't think that the school ever collected from all the patrons for that. The City ran out of money too. They didn't have any money to

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pay the teachers and the only money the teachers got was what the County could collect and pay the City, because, you see, they contracted. This Black Bayou District contracted with the City of Greenville to take the children for, say \$9.00 or \$10.00 a month. It really was cheap education for the County because they didn't have a school. Now they had to furnish the buses but they didn't have the maintenance of a school, they didn't have the bond issue to build the building. The City had to build all these buildings to take care of the children and I think for a long time never paid more than $4\frac{1}{2}$ or 5 mills for education. Now I think they pay more, and they ought to, and they ought to help Greenville build their schools - I mean, that's the way I feel about it because they used them. Not all the County had, but the north end of the County - you see, this special district went from the edge of Greenville - well, the special one went all around Greenville. It went to Reed Road, but I expect the one that you'd be more familiar with is the Barnes Landing Road that goes from Number One over to the Metcalfe Road. There's a road in there. It went a little bit above that, and then it went over past where the Formigonis live. It goes over their land over the bridge where you cross the Number Nine Canal, but I think that they have used Number Nine Canal as a sort of land mark, and then everybody that didn't live in the county had to pay for it, and that was right. They didn't charge much, considering, because Greenville had to build the schools to take care of them. They had to hire more teachers to keep your class room per pupil down.

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INDEX
OF MARY SHELDON HOUSE
BY SHERILYN D. ALLEN

Abraham, Doug, 62
Aldridge, family (descendents of the Buckner family), 6,7
Alexander (Street), 15, 48
Alfalfa, 27, 28
All Saints College (Vicksburg, Miss.), 14, 15, 48, 52
Allen, Seguine, 53
Archer High School, 17
Arcola (Miss.), 62, 63, 67
Ashland Plantation, 4, 6, 9, 37, 39, 40
Atlantic Monthly, the, 72
Avon (Miss.), 4, 7, 8, 10, 31, 40, 43-45, 48, 51, 58, 60, 61, 67
Badow, Caroline, librarian, Junior High School, Bass Junior
 High School, 81
Bardette, mentioned, 33
Barnes Landing Road, 90
Bass, E. E. (Mr.), educator, 13, 16-19, 22, 78-81, 86, 87, 89
Bass Junior High, 15, 48
Bayou Road, 23, 24, 55, 56
Bear Hunt (with President Roosevelt and Holt Collier), 5
Belmont, 7, 46, 48, 49, 60
Bergman(s), the, 51
Beulah (Miss.), mentioned, 56
Bilbo, _____ (Governor), 68-70

Black Bayou, 89, 90
Black Schools, 88
Boer War, 65
Bowen, Belle Wade, 57
Bowman, McClain, 60
Branton, _____ (Mr.), family, 10, 65-67
Broadway (Street), 10, 23
Brocato(s), _____ (Mr.), 8, 45, 59
Buchanan, _____ (Mr.), 86
Buckner, family, 6, 7
C and G Railroad, 12
California, mentioned, 1-3
Carrie Stern, 23, 81, 84
Carter, _____ (Mr.), 71
Cass County, 69
Causey, Dorothy, 83
Central (St.), 13
Central (School), 82, 84
Cherry (Street), mentioned, 13
Citizens Bank, 62
Civil Service, 33
Civil War, 39, 49, 58, 65
Clara, Nellie, 62
Clarksdale (Miss.), mentioned, 26, 54, 55
Clinton (Miss.), 36, 37, 40, 68

Clouston, 7
Collier, Holt, 5
Columbus, 33
Commercial, the, 71, 72
Company "A", 4, 39
Connecticut Life, the, 58
Convent, 46, 48
Court (School), 82
Court House, 12
Crosby, _____ (Mr.), 33, 41, 42
Crump, Brodie, 27
Crump, Louise, 71
Crump, Will (Mr.), 23, 24, 27
Cuba, 39
Davidson, Phillip, rector, 10
Delta, the, 4, 5, 26, 27, 37, 39
Delta Democrat Times, 71
Delta State, 83
Depression, (The Great), 26, 27
Downs, the, 62, 63
Eddy, _____ (Mrs.), 44
Edwards Hotel, 36
Elizabeth (Miss.), 29
Ella Darling School, 82
Federal Land Bank, 56, 62, 70

First National Bank, mentioned, 19
Flood of 1927, 23-26. See also Great Flood
Fontaine, Lamar, 63, 65
Footes, the, 61
Formigonis, the, 90
Fulwiler (School), 88
Geneva, Nebraska, 22
Giddens, _____, 45-47
Giddens, Sarah D., 13, 14, 65
Glen Allen (Miss.), 29
Gold Rush, 1
Goyer Company, 12
Grand Theatre, mentioned, 19
Great Flood (1927), 24. See also Flood of 1927
Greenville High School, 17-19, 48
Griffins, the, 61
Gunter, Esther, governess, 44
Harrison (County), mentioned, 42
Harvard, 39
Hatch Act, 28
Hatch, B. L. (Mr.), Superintendent of Schools, 45, 47, 50
Highway Number One, 24, 60
Hinds (Street), mentioned, 13
Hollandale (Miss.), 29, 67
Homestead Exemption (Bill for), 35

Hoover, _____ (President), 28, 31, 33

Hoover Administration, 33

House, Gordon, farmer, manager, Locust Plantation, 23, 24;
rural letter carrier, 27, 28

House, Mary Sheldon: born in Nehawka, Nebraska, 1; the
Sheldons biological background, migration to the U. S., 1-5;
father, 3-6; schooling, Avon School, 7, 8, 44, 45;
Lily Plantation Private Academy, 14; St. Rose of Lima
Academy, 14; All Saints College, 14, 48; University
of Nebraska, 16, 20, 21, 52, 80; Greenville High School,
15-17, 48; graduation from Greenville High, 19, 48;
teacher, Carrie Stern, 23; children-Gordon, Julia Anne,
William Crump, George, 24; life during the flood, 24-26;
life during the Depression, 26; life on the plantation,
10-12; religion, Episcopalian, 10; father's political
life, 29-44, 67-70; political involvement, 74-77

Howard, Perry (mulatto), National Chairman, Republican Party
in Mississippi, 34

I. C. (Railroad), 68

Internal Revenue, 31, 32, 38

Jackson (Miss.), 36, 37, 40, 42, 68, 85

James, the, 40

James Crossing, 67

Jeffreys, the, 50

Key, H. H. (Mr.), 15, 47, 50, 51

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Keystone, property, 25, 40
 Kilpatrick, _____, 2
 Knox College, 19
 Koontz, _____, 86-88
 Lake Washington, 46, 60
 Lee, _____ (Dr.), 61
 Leland (Miss.), 29
 Leota, 49, 52
 Levee Board, 53
 Lewis, _____, 8
 Lilly Plantation, 14, 46
 Lima Academy, 14
 Lincoln, Abraham, 65
Literary Digest, the, 72
 "Little White House", 22, 83
 Locust (St.), 13, 24
 Locust Plantation, 23, 26, 54, 56, 60
 Longwood, 59, 61
 Loudon, 6, 23, 37, 40, 51, 63
 "Lovers Lane" Road, 53
 Lyell, Arthur, 4
 Mississippi Federation of Republican Women, 74
 Mississippi River, the, 5
 Mississippi State University, 30
 Main (Street), 12, 13, 19

Marquerite, _____ (Miss), 45, 46
Mattie Akin, 88
McAllister, house, 60
McBride (School), 82
Memphis (Tenn.), mentioned, 12
Metcalf (Miss.), mentioned, 1
Metcalf, Harley, 5, 38
Metcalf, Harley Jr., 5
Metcalf Road, 90
Mississippi College, 36
Mississippi Delta, the, 11, 24, 67
Mississippi River, 5, 38
Mississippi State University, 30
Missouri River, 2
Montgomery, _____ (Dr.), 23, 55
Montgomery, _____ (Mr.), 54, 55
Montgomery, Captain, 56
Montgomery, D. C., 55, 56
Montgomery, Inez, 23, 24, 26, 54, 55, 57, 58, 60
Montgomery, Jeff (Mrs.), 56
Mound Bayou (Miss.), mentioned, 34
Mount Holly, 61
Murphy, Forest (Mr.), 79, 81, 86, 87
Natchez (Miss.), mentioned, 6
National Federated Republican Women, 74

Nebraska, mentioned, 2

Nebraska State Journal, the, 71

Nehawka, Nebraska, 1, 2, 13, 20, 39

New England, mentioned, 1

New Orleans (La.), mentioned, 4, 38, 60

Number Nine Canal, 90

O'Bannon, _____ (Mr.), principal, Carrie Stern, 23

Ole Miss, 35

Outlook, the, 72

Parks, Annie Grace, principal, Carrie Stern, 23

Payne, _____ (Dr.), 44

Payne, Monty, 56

Percy, _____ (Mrs.), 58

Percy, LeRoy, 28, 31, 70

Perishing Rifle Company "A", 39

Petit(s) (Miss.), mentioned, 8, 60

Picayune (Miss.), 33, 41

Pollard, Julia (Mrs. Lawson Sheldon), 3

Pollard, Isaac, 1, 3

Poplar (Street), 13

Priscilla, 29

Profit, _____ (Miss), 47, 50

Prohibition, 66

Rattle Snake Bayou, 54

Readers, 80

Red Cross, 25
 Redmonds, the, 34
 Reed, Clarke, 58, 77
 Reed Road, 90
 Reilly, _____ (Captain), 13, 14, 46
 Republican Party (in Miss.), 32-34, 40-42, 55, 74, 75
 Retzer, Mike, 77
 Retzer, Nancy, 77
 Robertshaw Street, 15
 Riverside, 44
 Roosevelt, Theodore (President), 5, 31, 38
 Rowland, Lamont, 33, 34, 41, 42
 Rosenstack, _____, 59
 Russian Army, 64
 St. James Church, 10, 12
 St. Joseph Church, 14
 St. Louis, 4, 6, 38
 St. Rose, 14
Saturday Evening Post, the, 72
 Savannah, 39
 Sharecroppers, 9, 10. See also Tenants
 Shaw, _____ (Mrs.), 15, 48
 Shelby (Street), 13
 Sheldon children (Lawson Sheldon and Julia Pollard Sheldon):
 Florence, Gertrude, Frank, George Lawson, and Vilas, 3

Sheldon, George Lawson, father, 3-6, 29-44, 67-70
 Sheldon, Lawson, grandfather, 1, 3
 Sillers, Walter, Speaker of the House, 35
 Simpson, J. A., 30
 Sisters of Mercy, operators, St. Joseph Church, 14
 Smith, _____, 71
 Smith-Hughes, grant, 43, 44
 Smith, J. O., 58
 Solomon (School), 88
 Southern (Railroad), 68
 Soybeans, 37
 Spanish-American War, 4, 39
 Starling, Henry, president, School Board, 4, 19, 39, 74, 89
 Starling, Lyne, 4, 39
 Starling School, 22, 81
 Starling Street, mentioned, 29
 Stone, Alf, 27, 69, 70
 Stuff, _____, 20
 Sunnyside, 52
 Susie Trigg (School), 82, 84, 88
 Swiftwater, mentioned, 12
 Taft, 3
 Taylor, Edmund, 13
 Tenants, 9, 25, 59, 61. See also Sharecroppers
 Thompson, _____, 86

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Times-Picayune, 71
Tobie and Susie, 84, 85
Trail Lake, 29
Trailway Bus Station, mentioned, 12
Uncle Remus, 64
Underhill, _____ (Dr.), head, State Department, Miss., 20
University of Chevron, 30
University of Mochigan, 68
University of Nebraska, 16, 19-21, 39, 47, 52, 80
Vardaman, _____, 68, 69
Vicksburg, Mississippi, 14, 26, 53, 68
Walnut (Street), mentioned, 13
Washington Avenue, 10, 13
Washington County, mentioned, 1
Washington Hotel, 12
Watson, Scott, 62
Wayside, 7, 8, 14, 31, 33, 40, 45-53, 60, 61, 63, 67
Wayside Plantation, 7, 15, 47
Weathers, Jane Metcalfe, 5
Weathers, Walter, 38
Weeping Water, 2
White Hall, 37
White House, the, 5
White House Conference for the Aged, 77
Wilkersons, the, 56

Wilmot, 67
Wilson, _____ (Dr.), 63
Wilson, Mary, 77
Winterville, 29
Woodville, 41
World War I, 10
Worthington, Amanda, 53
Worthington, Caroline, 49
Worthington, Edward, 7
Worthington, Lilly, 14, 46, 49
Worthington Plantation, 14
Worthington, Theodosia (Theo), 49
Worthington, Thomas, 49, 52, 53
Worthington, Will, 48, 49, 53
Worthingtons, the, 6, 7, 48, 52, 53
Yankees, 65
Yazoo River, 26