Old Bulloch
Meeting Places

Edited by
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Auspices
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Introduction:

This 13th Book of Readings in Bulloch County History has been assembled and edited by Dr. Daniel Benjamin Good, Professor of Geography at Georgia Southern University and a member of the Board of Directors of the Bulloch County Historical Society. Since 1984 he has served as Papers Editor for our series of annual Readings.

With this book, Dr. Good has brought together student papers detailing the rise and decline of eight Bulloch County Meeting Places. They are welcome additions to local history.

Ms. Angel Reed, Senior Secretary of the G.S.U. Geology and Geography Department, prepared the manuscript for publication. She typed the articles, making them "camera ready" for publication and deserves our appreciation.

The eight articles add to our knowledge of the history of Parish, Pulaski, Jimps, Colfax, Clito, Leefield, Mill Ray and Emit. Pulaski and Parish are now in Candler County but they were in Old Bulloch -- before Candler was formed in 1914.

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The Evolution and Demise of Central Place Communities in Bulloch County, Georgia

by

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Several communities in Bulloch County, Georgia have lost their original functions as central places for their surrounding countryside and break-of-bulk points and passenger stops on the railroads and roads. Central places for the farming population were provided by points of focus associated with post offices, grist mills, retail establishments, railroad stations and other establishments. These created a variety of meeting places for farmers. Enterprising businessmen could take advantage of the accessibility to the consuming population that such locations provided. Combinations of these elements led to greater centrality for some of these places. Some of them developed into thriving central places.

Student papers from the Spring 1992 Urban Geography Class at Georgia Southern University examine Parish, Pulaski, Jimps, Colfax Station, Clito, Leefield, Mill Ray, and Emit. These communities, with the exception of Mill Ray and Emit, developed along the old railroads. The rural economy of Bulloch County was transformed by the completion of railroads in the 1890s and first quarter of the twentieth century. Railroads provided the area with access to the market economy of the nation, and the railroad stations were the collection and distribution centers through which the connections were
maintained. Farmers began to specialize, using the railroad to ship their products. It was an advantage for a town to have a railroad station. Later, paved roads made farms more accessible to their local market centers and enabled farmers, in their cars, to bypass the smaller centers and patronize the larger centers of Metter and Statesboro.

These papers will illustrate how the railroad influenced the communities and how all have been affected by modern highway development. Moreover, all these communities have been overshadowed by the larger nearby competing centers of Metter and Statesboro. These larger centers combine all elements of local centrality: (1) political (they are county seats); (2) railroads (they are the main stations); and (3) market attractions, for they have been able, through their cumulative advantages, to provide a greater variety of retail and service facilities; thus offering a more powerful appeal to consumers than their smaller competitors.

Parish (Parrish) Station, Georgia:
History and Evolution of a Railroad Community
by Mary Spivey
Georgia Southern University

In attempting to present the history and function of a small community, in which only a small proportion of its history is written, the author would like to extend her sincere appreciation to several people for their help in collecting the information. Without their help, the gathering of information would have been a long and arduous task and most likely would not have been as fruitful. The generosity of specific people of Metter and the small community of Parish should not be overlooked and it is here that the author wishes to thank them individually. Mrs. Ruthie May Georgia of Metter was extremely kind for allowing the author to contact her on several occasions, and for introducing the author to Mr. and Mrs. Cal Riverbark, two prominent members of the Parish community. Ruby W. Fisher, the librarian of the Metter Library was also invaluable and introduced the author to the great-granddaughter of the first postmaster of the Parish Community, Mrs. Jessie B. Bird. Mrs. Bird allowed the author to have a copy of a brief history that was written on Parish. Mrs. Carol Lee of Metter, who wrote this history several years ago, permitted the author to come to her house and talk with her about it. Another person who cannot go unmentioned, who aided the author in her research, was Dr. Daniel Good, Professor of Geography at Georgia Southern University. His patience and dedication in dealing with the students made this study an enjoyable learning experience.

Upon receiving the assignment and after studying several
maps of Bulloch and Candler counties, one could infer that the area known as Parish appears to be approximately the same size as some of the other towns surrounding it. But after attempting to find the area with the aid of these maps, one discovers that there are no road signs to direct the driver to Parish; and even after one has found the area, there are no signs to identify it as Parish. Parish Community is recognized on a variety of maps of Bulloch and Candler counties, but to someone who is unfamiliar with the area inquiries would have to be made as to what exactly includes Parish community and what does not.

Parish is situated off of Highway 46 between Pulaski and Metter. It is approximately four miles east of Metter and eight miles west of Register. In attempting to understand the close proximity of these towns, it is important to note that all of the above mentioned towns were built along a linear pattern. This means that they were “aligned along a transport route”\(^1\). This route was the Brewton-Pineora Railroad. (See Figure 1) After this railroad was completed, it connected with the Dover and Statesboro Railroad at Statesboro. But on June 1, 1901, the Central of Georgia purchased both of these railroads. About this time Parish had a population of around eighty-one and had already established a post office. Parish appeared to be off to a good start and would seem to “keep step with the march of progress”\(^2\). But somewhere along the way progress ended and Parish became dominated by Metter, Pulaski, and Register. They, in turn, were dominated by Statesboro and Savannah.

Another explanation in geography to help explain “the location, size, and spacing of cities”\(^3\) is the hierarchal pattern
which is apparent if there are: “several sizes of cities arranged relatively evenly throughout a region, with more smaller than larger sized centers”. This is related to a German geographer’s Central Place Theory. Walter Christaller was able to develop a theory which recognized an economic relationship between cities and their outlying areas. The larger sized centers in a hierarchal pattern provide goods and services to smaller sized areas. Often citizens of smaller centers like the wider selection of goods and services that the larger centers can offer. This can lead to the loss of threshold for a small community, “the minimum size population that will support a central place function”. The threshold concept is also interwoven with the idea of the range of a good. Christaller worked this out to be how far a consumer would travel to purchase a good or service. With high order goods, such as cars and appliances, consumers would usually travel further to have a better selection. In purchasing low-order goods, such as groceries, travel distances are usually much shorter since these items are purchased with regularity.

Obviously, Parish fits into the hierarchal pattern, with its role being that of one of the smaller centers. Parish originated for a purpose and that was as a stop along a railroad. When the railroad declined and rural free delivery (RFD) came into existence, Parish lost its post office and its function.

The area now called Parish is known to the surrounding residents as Parish Station because Parish was established along a railroad route. Even now people still refer to Parish as Parish Station. The station was assigned the name of Parish because of the prominent land owner Jefferson “Kit” Parrish.

Mr. Parrish owned a farm and land in the surrounding area. He was involved in the sawmill business and also owned a gin and sawmill on land that extended west to Lake Church. Before the Brewton-Pineora Railroad was built, residents in the area had received their mail from the Excelsior Post Office. However, shortly before the establishment of the railroad, a post office was established in Parish on July 1, 1884, and Kit Parrish was named the first Postmaster. The two story house he had lived in was destroyed by a fire in the late 1920’s. The house was later rebuilt with brick instead of wood and still stands today. Recently, though, the great-grandson of Kit Parrish, Blitch Parrish Daniel, had to sell his family homestead.

In conducting the study for this paper, all the maps consulted except one have Parish spelled with one “r”; but, in the 1909 county map Parish is spelled with two “r”s. Even in books consulted for research for this study, authors randomly assign either one “r” or two. Since Parish Station was named for the Parrish family, and the family spells their name with two “r”s, obviously new maps made in the future should contain two “r”s.

At the turn of the century, Parish was definitely growing. Near the post office a general store and hotel were built for the passengers on the railroad, “business men and traveling salesmen”, “drummers” as they were called”. At the time the community saw the need for a doctor and a young man, Dr. G.A. Burch from Telfair County, came to practice medicine. The trains were coming every day now, and it occurred to a young farmer by the name of M.F. Kilgo that “money could be made by local farmers by growing watermelons and cantaloupes. As a former resident of the Atlanta area, he was
able to secure large markets for the melons to be shipped there and other sales places". This was especially important for Parish and Pulaski in 1929-31 when this produce would be shipped to Atlanta. Parish received another improvement in 1901 when the Statesboro Telephone Company branched out and made connections to Metter, Pulaski, and Parish.

Even though Parish was able to ship produce, the Great Depression moved in and the hotel and the general store had to close. The post office closed in 1909 since mail was then “delivered to homes by rural routes from Pulaski to Metter”. Though the post office officially closed in 1909, a resident of Parish, Mr. Cal Riverbark, still remembers that in the 1930's mail would still be picked up by the train when it was hung in a bag on a black spike. Most likely this was drop off mail, but residents were not able to receive mail except the RFD.

Parish once was a part of the 45th Militia District of Bulloch County. This was known as the Club House. This area received this name because:

“For many years the court ground, located at the residence of the late Kit Parrish, and here in the early days the people were wont to club together on court and muster days, and thus the district came to be called the Club House”. Around 1910, Metter began pushing for the creation of a new county. They got their wish and Candler County was formed in 1914. Parish and the whole 45th Militia District was lost to Candler County and Metter became the new county seat. A prominent member of Parish, Mr. O.L. Patterson, was named the first tax appraiser. Mr. Patterson was the last official postmaster, and he also held the position of freight agent. He is remembered as an unusual person who often teased the children, and “he was a 32nd Degree Mason and served as Grand Master of the Masons three times”. Mrs. Patterson helped her husband in the running of the post office and the general store.

Other families of the Parish Community included the Trapnells, who sold a portion of their land to the Kilgos. Today, Sara Kilgo Humphrey lives in a rose colored house on Highway 46. Nearby lives her sister-in-law, Catherine Watson Kilgo. The Mercer family owned large amounts of land in the area. Some of this land was donated so that the St. Matthews Missionary Baptist Church could be built. There are approximately 175 members of this church, with the majority of the families from either Pulaski or Metter and one family from Statesboro. The history of the community also includes the Farlows, Hartleys, Costons, and the Riverbarks, who still live in the area. Today, the Miles family lives in the old Farlow house and a sister of the Miles’ lives in the old Patterson home.

After the decline of the railroad, Parish basically lost its function. The railroad lines are still functional and the Central of Georgia, in the form of the Ogeechee Railroad, passes through Parish approximately three times per week headed for its destination in Metter. The trains end in Metter where grain is loaded to be shipped along with the train’s other cargo including liquefied petroleum, gas, grain, and bulk agricultural commodities. Although Parish is extinct, it will persist in the minds of its residents and to the people in the surrounding areas.
End Notes


2) Statesboro News. Friday, October 16, 1903. vol. 3.


4) Ibid, p. 59

5) Good lecture notes, May 1, 1992.

6) Lee, Lehman and Carol, “Parrish Station”, NPND, p. 2.

7) Ibid, p. 2

8) Ibid, p. 3

9) Statesboro News. Friday, October 16, 1903. vol. 3.


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Factors Surrounding the Evolution, Growth, and Decline of Pulaski, Georgia (1905-1992)

by Lisa Bray Brunson
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The old adage "time stands still for no man" can aptly be applied to small towns as well. At one time, small towns dotted this country much like stars fill a night sky. However, due to a variety of factors, many of these little entities have ceased to function or exist. Pulaski, Georgia is one such example. Once a thriving community, Pulaski today is little more than a bedroom town. The few hundred citizens there today are still holding on but for how much longer? Many of the "old timers" have passed on and others have moved away. Therefore, it is important to record as much of the history and life of Pulaski as is still available. This study was needed for this fact along with the need to supplement what little material is already available.

Towns such as Pulaski are fundamental steps in the way our country has developed. It is important to preserve the echoes and the footsteps of the men and women who gave birth to and nurtured the growth of these places. Perhaps this piece will in some way account for the factors which encouraged Pulaski's growth along with those which fostered its decline.

In my paper I hope not only to account for some of the recent and past history of Pulaski, but also to perhaps cite possible reasons for why certain things occurred as they did. Not only will I attempt to explain the site and situation as to where Pulaski is located, but I will also discuss factors which affected its growth and later its decline. I hope to show the effect of transportation, along with other developments, upon Pulaski's development over the years. It is my belief in part that transportation served a vital function necessary to Pulaski's growth and it also played a major hand in its subsequent downfall.

As was mentioned earlier, many of the native people of Pulaski have either passed away or as one said "moved away to other ends of the earth". Therefore, this study faced certain limitations in that first-hand accounts were somewhat hard to find. Also, there is a severe shortage of written information available on much of the town's history. I have tried to piece as much together through personal accounts of people remaining in Pulaski as well as through what information I could find at local libraries, businesses, etc. I have used written materials from local and national authors as well as statistical and demographic information.

I have tried to organize this study in chronological order beginning with Pulaski's history once she became an incorporated town in 1905. Included are descriptions of what the town contained and what life was like in the early days. From there I will try to describe Pulaski's growth as well as its subsequent decline. I will then try to give a brief description of what remains of Pulaski today. To the best of my ability, I will attempt to cite reasons as to why events have occurred in relation to the evolution, growth, and decline of Pulaski. In conclusion, I will offer my own predictions, as well as those of others, as to the fate of this once bright community.

"Most of the towns listed in 1920 remain in existence today, although some are mere crossroads and not such cities or towns as such..."1 The development of small towns occurs much like
the development of ideas - sometimes they just happen. Pulaski, Georgia in some ways is such a town. Located today in Candler County, Pulaski is a small community located off of Highway 46, between Register and Metter. It is situated about 65 miles west of Savannah. As the saying goes “If you blink, you might miss it”. However, there is more to Pulaski than meets the eye. Although some may see the town as little more than a few corn and tobacco fields and a few mobile homes with a run-down old store here and there, at one time, Pulaski was a bustling little town.

Pulaski was incorporated on August 24, 1905. At that time and until 1914, it was part of Bulloch County. Most agree that the name was based on Savannah’s Fort Pulaski in honor of Count Kazimierz (Casimir) Pulaski, an exiled Polish general and hero of the Revolutionary War. He was killed while defending Savannah against the British. Prior to this time it is possible that the name of the community was Sardis because when the Bulloch County Baptist Association was formed, a church at Sardis appeared. On a 1896 Post Office Route Map, Pulaski is not mentioned. The name of Pulaski was not mentioned until 1904, and at that time the name Sardis disappeared.

The founder of Pulaski was a man by the name of Lynn Franklin, who came from a prominent family in the area. What started out as a farming community quickly began to grow. One of the primary factors which fostered the growth of Pulaski, was the emergence of the railroad as a critical means of transportation for both human passengers and for cargo. Two sets of railroad tracks ran through the town. The Dover to Brewton Branch of the Central of Georgia made stops at Pulaski, as did the Pineora Railroad, as well. (See Figure 1)

As the railroad increased its impact on the town of Pulaski, the need to expand became evident. Warehouses were built along the railroad tracks along with a depot. A hotel was built by H.L. Franklin which was supported in part by the drummers who went from one small town to another selling their goods.

Local residents also made the hotel “home” from time to time either as a place to stay or as somewhere to find a good, home-cooked meal. Shops and stores began to appear to cater to Pulaski’s growing population. A corner drug store, a shoe store, and even a department store appeared in the town. Miss Maggie Green placed an advertisement in the Statesboro News:

“I am showing the newest and most desirable styles of the season in handsomely trimmed dress hats, ready-to-wear hats, street hats, and walking hats for ladies, misses, and children. Call and see them before buying elsewhere. I certainly will appreciate your trade. Miss Maggie Green, Pulaski”.

On May 27, 1907, H.L. Franklin, J.Z. Patrick (Pulaski’s town doctor), W.L. Street, J.D. Brannen, and O.M. Warren, filed a petition to organize the “Citizens Bank of Pulaski”. The charter was granted on June 24, 1907 and the bank opened shortly thereafter in July, 1907. This bank remained open until August, 1911. In 1912, L.H. Kingery, A.A. Turner, H.L. Franklin, I.A. Brannen, and J.A. Brannen, filed an application to open a new bank known as “The Farmer’s Bank” of Pulaski. It is unknown as to when this bank closed.

During its early days, Pulaski remained an agricultural community. Watermelons, cotton, and tobacco were major
Railroads in Bulloch Co.
1885 - 1920

(Figure 1)

Crops. Lumber was also a money-maker. By 1908, Pulaski had a grist mill, a turpentine factory, and also a pulpwood plant. A canning facility was also built.

Around 1920, a high school was built along with a gymnasium. Mrs. Belle Williams, who moved to Pulaski upon her marriage in 1918, can remember being called to the school whenever an "extra" teacher was needed. Having graduated from Brenau College with a degree in speech, she and the students of Pulaski High School would perform plays in order to purchase supplies for the school. In her spare time, she would attend all of the school's basketball games, even traveling up to Athens to watch them play in the state championship game. She recalls Pulaski being a "wonderful, little town" during its boom-days. However, those days did not last forever.

Pulaski began to fall upon hard times during the late 1920's. When the Great Depression hit in 1929, the town began to suffer along with the rest of the country and the world. There is a chance that it was at this time that the town bank closed. It is known that the drugstore burned down around this time symbolizing the near-end of the happy, fun-filled days of life in Pulaski. Men were out of work, prices sky-rocketed, and it seemed as if no end was in sight. In 1935, the depot agent, Charley Peacock, shot himself perhaps in part because times had become so tough.

Pulaski never really seemed to regain her strength after the illness and despair of the Depression. With the building of Highway 46 linking Pulaski to larger areas such as Metter and Statesboro, the importance of the railroad began to decline. (See Figure 2) Automobiles took over as a new, efficient means of
transportation. Roads were improved, therefore, making the trip from place to place easier and safer. Cars and trucks, with their latest improvements became more affordable. Farmers now used trucks to transport their goods to market. Mrs. Cassie Tucker, a Pulaski native, remembers a time when trucks would line up all the way down Highway 46 on their way to distribution points. Consumers were also able to go further distances with relative ease now that the automobile had become such a functional part of everyday life. Rather than frequenting the local stores in Pulaski, it was now just as easy to hop into the car and drive to Metter, Statesboro, or even Savannah, in order to find better selections of goods. Local stores began to suffer from the loss of attention and many were forced to close. The railroad began to make fewer trips through Pulaski and it was that way in other railroad towns, also. The automobile had ushered in a new age, one which had no real place for a town like Pulaski.

As the years progressed, more and more people began to move out of Pulaski; fewer numbers, in turn came to or through the town. With the construction of Interstate 16, Pulaski suffered yet another hard blow. People could travel at higher speeds and without the threat of “getting stuck behind a tractor” by bypassing Hwy 46 and sticking to the interstate. Few people even ventured near Pulaski unless they somehow took a wrong turn or decided to “get off the beaten path”.

During the 1960s, the schools in Pulaski relocated students to Metter. The old high school was converted into a nursing home which is still in existence there today. People continued to leave the town over the next few decades with many going to Metter, Statesboro, and other surrounding places. Others went
even further in search of better opportunities.

In more recent years, Pulaski has faced the loss of one of its two remaining grocery stores. Upon the death of the owner, Mr. J.D. Sapp, Sapp's Store closed, leaving Pulaski Grocery and Market to serve the town. Located along Hwy 46, the store is owned and operated by Mrs. Cassie Tucker. She opens the store seven days a week at 6:30 a.m. She and her late husband took over ownership in August, 1968 from her brother-in-law. She sells primarily low order goods such as staple goods, sundries, beer, ice, gasoline, etc. Mrs. Tucker's store has a low threshold area with her primary customers being local people (all of which she knows by name), tourists, and migrant farm workers in the area. These people contribute a great deal of purchasing power to Mrs. Tucker's store during the four to five months that they are harvesting the onion and tobacco crops around Pulaski. Most of the low order and high order goods purchased by people in the area come from Metter and Statesboro. People are willing to make the drive to both places because they believe they are getting a better selection, better quality, and better value by going to bigger towns.

Pulaski today remains primarily an agricultural town, with farm land being used to grow such things as peanuts, cotton, watermelons, cucumbers, and tomatoes. Most of the people in Pulaski commute out of town to work, going to such places as ITT-Grinnell, Cooper-Wiss, Robbins Meat Packing, etc. Some people who teach at Georgia Southern live in Pulaski in order to get away from the hustle and bustle of the college students in Statesboro and to enjoy a more peaceful way of life. The Pulaski Nursing Home, which has eighty-eight full time residents, employs seventy workers. However, like most of the residents there, many of the employees come from places outside of Pulaski like Metter and Statesboro.

While the emergence of new, more efficient forms of transportation had a dramatic effect on Pulaski's decline, today, Pulaski remains a "quaint" place. Although most people have left Pulaski in order to move to "bigger and better" things, some people have chosen to remain. Today, the population of the town is approximately 285. The old post office still remains, as well as the Baptist Church, as symbols of a once glorious past. A series of small gift shops still face the railroad tracks as a reminder of times gone by.

The outlook for Pulaski remains about the same. While some people will continue to move outside of the town for better opportunities, some will continue to move in looking for the same thing. To some people, Pulaski represents a simpler time of life, one which is especially appealing in the busy lifestyles of today. I think Pulaski is a wonderful town, full of charm, special people, and wonderful memories.
"Nothing is constant but change," declares the familiar adage, but its significance is far more effective and appropriate when reflecting geographical concepts. Much of the environment that surrounds one today, whether an urban cityscape, rural countryside, or suburban township, is not the same as it was one hundred, fifty, or even two years ago. Technological innovations, advancements in transportation and industry, and the impulses of a migrating population, not only play roles in the formation of cities, but in their demise as well. Such destructive trends are threatening a way of life. In an effort to preserve information deeply rooted in our country's growth, Dr. Daniel Good's Urban Geography class set about studying the development of towns in southeast Georgia, particularly Bulloch County. These settlements typify a broad spectrum of growth; some are thriving cities while others merely "hang on". This research paper focuses on a rural community named Jimps, which, for all intents and purposes, is non-existent today.

The author's intent is to accurately describe the history of Jimps from a geographical perspective, which entails analyzing the factors that led to the community's location, growth, and subsequent decline. Such a study is bound to encounter
limitations though, due to the handicaps created by its small size, the time of origin, and its current status. Its beginning in the nineteenth century obscures the details of its initial settlement. And due to the fact that Jimps was never a legal city, one with official boundaries, a charter, and an elected governing body, makes written records quite scarce. Under the circumstances, this would demand a greater reliance on oral histories obtained from some of the older residents of the area. But, as stated before, the community of Jimps no longer exists, notably increasing the difficulty. Luckily; however, contact was made with people familiar with the final years of the town.

The organization of the study proceeded in such a manner: visits to the Statesboro Regional Library and GSU's Henderson Library were conducted to discover the extent to which Jimps was documented. This resulted in the finding of numerous "Readings in Bulloch County History" publications, which allowed for a profile of the community's history. In addition, the book "Statesboro 1866-1966 A Century of Progress" proved useful when learning about significant events in Bulloch County history and the relationship between Statesboro and the surrounding settlements. The maps and post office information provided by Dr. Daniel Good allowed for the establishment of a time frame from which to proceed with research.

Some of the concepts used in this paper are linear pattern, which involves cities along transportation routes like rivers or roads. A hierarchical pattern is when "a support base relies on the sale of goods and services to a surrounding, largely rural hinterland". Threshold is the "amount of purchasing power required to support a person engaged in a tertiary business activity". Low order goods are those purchased regularly, while high order goods are bought less frequently because of the higher cost.

Although Bulloch County was characterized by flat productive land promising high yields in agriculture, its settlement was slow to begin. The county had been originally carved out of St. John's Parrish in 1796, and the county seat of Statesboro was established in 1803. But despite this early start, the population of the county remained dispersed for quite some time.

By the year 1880, the census reported Statesboro as having a population of twenty-seven people, hardly what one would consider an influential center. Although it was during this period that Jimps gained a foothold, the exact date of settlement is difficult to determine, for it did not originate as a legal entity, but rather grew from the demands of the local farmers residing in the surrounding countryside. With Statesboro approximately six miles to the northeast, any businesses which could directly supply goods and services to the area residents were welcome. Details remain uncertain as to when the first merchants opened their doors, but by 1881 the community had grown so as to require its own post office. Applications for a post office required giving the community a one word name, so "Jimps" was selected and subsequently approved. As a result, William B. Corey became the first postmaster that same year. The origins of the town name have been speculated over many years, but the common belief is that it was derived from one of two local residents: Jimmerson Kennedy or Jimps Olliff.

In any event, the 1880's also brought a successful general
John and Lucinda Olliff, early settlers of the region. Their thriving business. He was one of seventeen children born to John and Lucinda Olliff, early settlers of the region. Their house remains standing in the former Jimps area off of US 301 south. The store proved successful, supplying staple items such as sugar, coffee, etc. to local farmers.

The rest of Bulloch County was stirring over possible plans to bring a railroad line through the area. These rumors did not become reality until 1885, when a manufacturing company in northern Bulloch used a locomotive to haul lumber. It was not long before “Statesboro had become railroad conscious and seemed determined to make Statesboro a rail center ... railroad fever (had) struck the community”. Jimps was not neglected for long as the Brewton-Pineora Railway, which had extended long before “Statesboro had become railroad conscious and northern Bulloch used a locomotive to haul lumber. It was not

Consequently, Jimps became a station along the line, complete with its own depot. (See Figure 1) Because of its proximity to Statesboro and its newly acquired position, Jimps began appearing on a number of maps, such as the 1889 and 1892 Georgia maps and the 1896 post office route map.

It was during this period of great change that Jimps began to flourish. With new access to modern transportation came additional markets. Trains began to make four stops a day: three for freight deliveries/pick-ups and one for passenger stops. Farmers could now easily export their crops, such as watermelons and cotton, as well as import much needed supplies, like fertilizer. Moreover, local resources were now being processed to take advantage of the naval stores industry,
including such items as tar, pitch, rosin, and turpentine. Railroad laborers, who performed maintenance on the track, now resided in Jimps. The railroad company built eight to ten small houses alongside the tracks for them and their families. Frank W. Olliff, son of Matthew, operated the depot, which now housed the post office, in addition to managing the general store. The *Cyclopedia of Georgia*, published in 1906, offers this brief description:

Jimps, a village of Bulloch County, is six miles southwest of Statesboro on the Dover & Brewton division of the Central of Georgia Railroad, and in 1900 had a population of 81. It has a money order post office, some mercantile interests, and is a shipping point of some importance.

Educational opportunities in the community were offered at Jimps School, a summary of which appeared in the *Educational Survey of Bulloch County* in 1915. It was quite typical of the era, a one room building with eight grades occupying it together, taught by a single teacher. The school year was limited to five months and financial support of $200 from the county and $125 locally was received annually. The date of origin is unclear, but Frank Olliff did attend as a child.

A cultural activity which played a vital role in the rural lifestyle was church attendance. Closest was Langston Chapel Methodist Church, built in 1903 a short distance from Jimps. Others chose to attend Lower Lotts Creek Primitive Baptist Church, which has been in existence since the early 1800's. Although it was farther, families were willing to contend with the added travel in order to satisfy their preferences. Health care was very poor at this time of the century, and Jimps was no different. There were no local doctors, the closest ones being in Statesboro or Register. Most of the births were aided by midwives or nurses if the doctor was not able to be called in time.

The introduction of Rural Free Delivery (RFD) in 1904 eliminated the need for most post offices. No longer would the train be responsible for delivering mail to a community, for now there were individual mail carriers for each assigned route. As a result, many post offices closed across Bulloch County, however, Jimps' post office survived until 1933.

In about 1915, Arthur Riggs opened up a general store across the street from the Olliff store. Although he offered many of the same goods, there was no fear for lack of customers between the proprietors. Instead, it was something entirely different which threatened the economic well-being of Jimps. By this time, the automobile had made its first appearance in the county, and many were against its use, as made evident by the petition published in the August 9, 1925 edition of the *Bulloch Times*: "We ... express our disapproval of the effort to construct an automobile highway ... at the expense of the taxpayers. We ... oppose the building of special roads for a favored few."

The effort was useless and the auto continued to gain wider acceptance. As a result, Jimps' school was closed and children were bused to Register, where they could receive an education to the eleventh grade. Trucks became a more common sight on the roads, slowly taking the transportation business away from the railroads and allowing people to visit Statesboro more often. In an effort to delay some of this lost trade, the Riggs' store built a cotton gin and seed storage house adjacent to the store in 1927.
Unfortunately, this did nothing to stop the trend.

All of these ill effects were amplified by the Depression in the 1930's. Because most of the farmers around Jimps were sharecroppers, they were hit hardest. Not being able to afford supplies caused many to go hungry and forced others to leave. After suffering losses from the failed cotton gin, the Riggs family quit the business. The railroad industry, once considered a bright hope for the citizens, now ceased, calling its workers away from Jimps.

In 1936, construction of Highway 301 added to the troubled times experienced by Jimps. Mr. Arthur J. Riggs, an informant, says that after this was done, the old Jimps-Statesboro railyard was fenced in and no longer used at all. Frank Olliff, still operating his general store though, moved it from the quiet area around the deserted railroad tracks closer to Highway 301.

This movement toward an increase in highway construction had been seen as a “quick-fix” by many. The Bulloch Times of May 25, 1922 states:

... one of the surest ways to bring a return of prosperity to this state is to establish a system of good roads ... which will assure them better marketing facilities for their diversified crops. ... with good roads, good markets will be brought within a few hours of every farmer ...

Following the construction of 301 there was the introduction of electricity, water, and other modern conveniences in Jimps, as well as an increase in motels and restaurants for the weary traveler. However, when I-95 was built, auto traffic slowed even further on 301. Frank Olliff closed the general store about 1950,

but other businesses remain in the general vicinity, like Biltmore Motor Lodge, and Brown's Auto Service.

It was not the site of Jimps that favored its development, but rather its situation. Because most of the county is not drastically different from one area to the next in terms of environmental conditions, each town is equipped with similar advantages or disadvantages. Instead, it is the differences in situation which give some areas an added benefit. Jimps is midway between two larger communities, so it uses this superior position to enhance its own status and gain more opportunities.

Because Jimps was initially settled prior to the railroad days of Bulloch County, it is not considered to be part of a linear pattern, but rather a hierarchical pattern. While Statesboro is the dominant city, Jimps, Dover, Portal, Register, and others supply the goods to the center. It was not until the railroad came though that Jimps took on the characteristics of a linear pattern city, namely functioning as a break-of-bulk point.

Investments in highways and transportation failed to revitalize the area, because it did not attract people to a small community, neither did it allow people to remain there comfortably. Instead, the ease of transportation pulled people toward the larger communities.

Merchandise offered in Jimps was strictly low order with an equally low threshold. Frank Olliff had told his son Beb, that if the general store earned $5 a day, he could stay in business. For Statesboro, the range of high order goods extended out to include Jimps. So, as transportation became easier, people began to see Statesboro as a source for low order goods too. This ultimately led to the demise of Jimps.
End Notes

1) Hartshorn, 61.
2) Hartshorn, 138.
3) Coleman, 79.

Bibliography


Colfax Station: A Family Community
by Michael T. Newell
Georgia Southern University

This paper relies on a few old newspaper articles, a train schedule, various maps, and a certain amount of oral history. Unfortunately, what I gleaned only served to whet my appetite to learn more about Colfax Station. The lament from my interviewees' was the same time and again -- "I wish so-and-so were still alive, he/she could tell you so much". I am reminded of a quote by Tommy Swann which proves to be very appropriate in this case: "When an old person dies, a library is lost."

Upon receipt of this assignment my initial reaction was "no sweat, this will be fun". However, that tune soon changed as I was faced with a lack of information that was unthinkable -- I actually believed Colfax Station to be a hallucination of Dr. Daniel Good. But, alas to my surprise, the dreaded piece of proof cropped up! So, I embarked on a journey that turned out to be a tremendous pleasure, an immense learning experience, and a confirmation of community commerce.

I would like to acknowledge the kind and generous people that welcomed me into their homes, giving of their time and memories: Mr. Carl Bishop of Colfax Station
Mr. Joe Oliff Akins of Statesboro
Mrs. Julian L. (Pearl) Brannen of Statesboro

I would also like to acknowledge the research assistance of:
Dr. Daniel Good of G.S.U. Geography Department
Dr. Frank Saunders of G.S.U. History Department
Mr. John Paton of Statesboro Regional Library, Research
Reverend James Barnes of Friendship Baptist Church

Approximately four miles northwest of Statesboro several families were endeavoring to take up the pieces of their lives that had been interrupted by the Civil War. This was proving to be an arduous task as the land these families was attempting to farm was pine barren soil and all but useless. It would take a miracle to make this land workable. Although progress was very slow to come this way, the miracle eventually showed up in the form of chemical fertilizers and guano.

By the late 1860's, life began to take on a normalcy and seemed to progress. Although church meetings were held at various friends and neighbor's homes, there were those that felt a meeting house needed to be built to further stabilize the community. Reverend William G. Chester and his son Robert A. Chester donated the grounds upon which Friendship Baptist Church stands today.

Life for this small community continued in like manner until the early 1900's, farming and eking out an existence. Supplies were purchased once a month in Statesboro during good times, and less than that during bad times. The journey to Statesboro was accomplished in a wagon pulled by a horse and took about an hour because there was not much of a road at this time. However, newspaper articles taken from The Statesboro News foretold of a railroad being built from Savannah through Statesboro to Augusta. This railroad came through the small family farm community located near Friendship Baptist Church. (See Figure 1)

The following is really speculation on my part. From the few bits of oral history and news articles, it seems that the railroad people found this community to be sufficiently
SAVANNAH AND AUGUSTA AND NORTHERN RAILWAY

Another gang of foreign laborers arrived Monday to begin ten miles of grading on the right of way west of town on the S. A. and N. railway. There were 27 Irishmen in the bunch, and they came here by way of Savannah. They had three hours with the saloons in Savannah Monday morning, and they hit Statesboro in a hilarious mood. Likewise number of them struck each other shortly after arrival here, about the time their liquor began to work well. Half a dozen blood noses were reported by no fatalities.

If this importation of labor continues, the Statesboro city officials will be put to the necessity of employing a translator for the transaction of business. There is only one man on the city force who speaks more than one language: the garbage man talks English and Vulgar fluently, but the gang of Russians can understand neither.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 3, 1907

After a fourth sitting on the case, the arbitration in the case of the S. A & N. railway against W.B. Williams for a right of way through the Shivers property was decided last Saturday with a verdict of $2,125 in favor of Mr. Williams. The exact amount of land consumed by the right of way is 2.34 acres, which was proved to be worth approximately $1,000 per acre. Williams' demand was for $4,000 and the railroad offered him $600. The Shivers tract consists of 46 acres for a half interest in which Williams recently paid $1,550.

(Figure 1)
By 1922 Colfax Station had lost its railroad service due to the Midland Railroad Company going bankrupt. I am not sure if the good people were mind readers or not; however, prior to this development Bulloch countians had begun to demand that Moore Road (what is Highway 80 today) be improved.

Either way, road or railroad, Colfax Station has continued today and through time as it has since its inception. The community has experienced only two tragic mishaps in its long history: one being the fire that destroyed their church and church records, and the second when a tornado came through the heart of the community in 1929 killing a child. I say these are the only true tragic happenings because that is how they were described to me - everything else was just life.

Eventually the railroad came in and removed the railroad tracks. By this time the small family farm community had adjusted to any possible inconvenience this may have caused. Automobiles, farm tractors, and electricity began to pop up throughout the community. No matter whether it be railroad or road, Colfax Station has remained essentially the same as it was in yesteryear.

(Figure 2)

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GEORGE M. BRINSON, President.
C. E. CLARK, Superintendent.
Clito: The Growth, Decline, and Survival of a Rural Community
by Scott D. Keller
Georgia Southern University

In today's society, many once prosperous rural communities are dying or are already dead due to the migration of people to more urbanized areas. A prime example of this migration can be seen in Clito, Georgia. The once bustling center of Clito is no more; only ITT-Grinnell, the church, a few small businesses and the memories of those who have spent most or all of their lives there keep Clito from disappearing. This study will examine not only the origin, growth, and decline of Clito, but how it exists and survives in today's society. Unfortunately, there were some limitations to this study as Clito has very little written information on its history, and sadly, some of the older residents have forgotten a lot of the important aspects which this study will try to relate. Although these setbacks are frustrating, the need for this study becomes more important as the United States further travels into the Technological and Information Age. As this country becomes increasingly urbanized, more of these rural communities will begin to disappear, causing not only scholars, but the public, to lose a lot of this country's valuable history and tradition.

Clito came into existence shortly after the completion of the Statesboro to Dover Railroad Line in 1889. Even though it was only five miles north of Statesboro, Clito became one of the few stops on the line.1 (See Figure 1) After the railroad's completion, Mr. Benjamin F. Hogan submitted an application to the Postal Service to open a post office in the area. Although the Postal
Service rejected the town's proposed names of Hogan and Troy, it did accept Clito; the post office opened on April 11, 1890.²

To this day, no one can figure out why Mr. Hogan named the post office Clito, but there are two theories which are widely believed. Some think that Mr. Hogan’s wife may have been named Clito or Clita, while others, knowing that Mr. Hogan was a religious man, think the town was named for the term Clito, which in biblical Greek means “called out”.³

One of the primary reasons for Clito’s origin and subsequent growth has to do with the growth of transportation in and around the area, especially the railroad. Major J.H. Burkhalter and Son were both the builders and promoters of the Statesboro to Dover Railroad, which connected Statesboro with the Central of Georgia Railroad at Dover. In November of 1889, the line opened, offering two trains daily (7:40 a.m. and 2:40 p.m.) between Statesboro and Dover. By February 1890, the Burkhalter had sold their interest in the railroad to a Mr. George Curry of Augusta and left the area to build another railroad. Due to an R.W. Inman defaulting on his mortgage, the railroad was sold again in the fall of 1893.⁴ In 1901 the Statesboro to Dover Line was finally bought by the Central of Georgia Railroad, which to this day still retains ownership of the line. This caused Clito to experience much expansion and prosperity because of new opportunities from Savannah and the cotton producing areas of middle Georgia reached Clito.⁵

As Clito began to expand, many different services came with it. Besides the post office, Clito had a cotton gin, a turpentine still, a grist mill, and several stores. Mr. McDougald and Mr. Outland owned one of the stores along with several warehouses near the railroad. These warehouses were used to store the supplies being brought in and taken out by the railroad.⁶

Like other communities in the area, Clito had a school. It was located off Highway 301N, then called Olliff-Ford Road, across from the Clito Church. In the early 1920’s, Clito, Beaver Pond and Eureka combined their schools into one. It was named Cliftonrea and was located farther north in the community of Eureka.⁷

Clito was without an effective communications system until 1901, when the telephone was introduced to Bulloch County. By the end of its first year in business, the Statesboro Telephone Company owned more than seventy miles of line. Stations and towns along the Statesboro to Dover Railroad Line were connected by telephone lines; almost every one of these towns had at least one line extending into adjoining communities. Besides Statesboro, the telephone company kept offices all over Bulloch County, including one in Clito.⁸ In addition to these services, Clito, for a time, had its own newspaper, the Clito Clippings. This weekly paper was circulated mainly in the Clito area, but fell victim to the more desired Bulloch Herald.⁹

Perhaps the most important and certainly the oldest building in Clito is the Clito Baptist Church. Clito’s first church originated in 1895, in Mr. Hogan’s schoolhouse, under the direction of the Reverend O.G. Brown and Reverend J.J. Miller. The church became known as the Calvary Baptist Church, but only one month after its organization, the church changed its name to Clito Baptist Church. After going through several pastors in as many years, Reverend William Hursey moved the church into its first and only building in 1900. The
congregation still worships in the same building that it moved into ninety-three years ago.\textsuperscript{10}

The most observable structure in Clito today is the ITT-Grinnell Plant, located off Highway 301N, alongside the old Statesboro to Dover Railroad Line. ITT-Grinnell is a major factor in Clito's survival. Built in 1965, the plant opened a year later, manufacturing cast iron pipe fittings, flanges, and valves. The plant expanded in 1973, raising its total area to over 500,000 square feet. As the plant began to automate its manufacturing process, Grinnell's workforce and payroll also rose. Today the plant employs 650 people and is still involved in the production of cast iron fittings and valves.\textsuperscript{11}

Both the growth and decline of Clito can be attributed to advances in transportation. During the early 1900's, Clito served as the central place for the surrounding areas of Donegal, Eureka, and Beaver Pond. Because of the railroad and it's being relatively close to the hinterland, Clito became a wholesale and retail center, providing many goods and services for the area. Although one could catch the train into Statesboro to shop, most people found it unnecessary to travel any further, for Clito could meet all of their needs.\textsuperscript{12}

Whether driving an automobile or riding on the Fulford Bus Lines, people began to bypass Clito as they headed into Statesboro to fulfill their shopping needs. Most people believed that the larger the central place, the better quality, selection, and prices they would find. With advances in transportation, many of Clito's businesses experienced a decline in their threshold level to such an extent many of them closed down.\textsuperscript{13} This factor combined with the fact that Clito had no bank, hospital, or doctor further contributed to its decline.\textsuperscript{14}

By June of 1939, Clito's demise seemed imminent as one of the foundations on which Clito was built closed down. The post office had been part of Clito for nearly fifty years, but due to the economic situation, it was closed down on June 23, having its mail sent to Statesboro.\textsuperscript{15} Immediately before and especially after the paving of Highway 301N, Clito moved its central location to the highway in order to take advantage of the traffic going into and coming out of Statesboro.\textsuperscript{16}

Today, Clito functions as a bedroom town: a place where people reside, but commute to work in other areas. The main industry is provided by ITT-Grinnell. Today the rail lines that run through Clito are usually silent, except when raw materials are delivered to the ITT-Grinnell plant. Except for a small residential area, the church, and a few businesses, most of the area in and around Clito, like so many years before, is still used for agricultural purposes.

Clito was founded and grew due to the introduction of a railroad. As long as the railroad and the horse and buggy were the dominant types of transportation, due to its relative location and availability of supplies, Clito flourished. As transportation improved (introduction of the automobile, paving of roads, etc.), and travel times between destinations decreased, people began to bypass Clito, traveling to bigger, more urbanized areas to fulfill their needs. While other areas of Bulloch County continue to grow, it is hard to predict whether Clito will or not. Current indicators show that Clito is in for much of the same; whether or not this will be true is something only time can tell.
Notes


7. Mr. Albert Evans, Interview.


11. Mr. Don Lanier, Interview.


13. Ibid, 137-140.


I would like to thank Dr. Daniel Good, Mrs. Mary Nelson, Mr. Albert Evans, Mrs. Lillybelle Phillips Hodges, Mr. Don Lanier, and all others I may have neglected to mention for their participation and contribution to this study.
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Evans, Albert. Personal Interview. 30 April, 1992.


Leefield:
Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow
by
Cameron W. Andrews
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Leefield, Georgia, a community of great change; has a very diverse and interesting past. The vision of the people of Leefield has changed many times to adapt to life as it has been dealt to them. Perseverance and character seem to describe the community as it is today. The community has experienced economic as well as transportation change throughout its long history in Bulloch County. Leefield has felt the pull of larger urban areas around it and has also learned the concept of competition between the cities. Leefield over time has evolved in many different ways to become a small bedroom community in the quiet countryside of Bulloch County. Nothing much of major consequence happens around Leefield nowadays, but the community itself is still stable. This is highly unusual because there is not a large economic base that can sustain the community. A great majority of the residents of Leefield have to find work elsewhere to support families at home.

The site and situation of Leefield is not very difficult to describe. It is located about 6 or 7 miles northeast of Brooklet, Georgia on a high bluff overlooking Mill Creek. It lies roughly 10 miles southwest of the Ogeechee River which forms the Bulloch-Effingham County line. Leefield is a 15 minute drive from Statesboro in a very rural area with approximately 300 families in or immediately surrounding it. Within a 50 mile
radius of Leefield, two major regional centers can be found, Statesboro and Savannah. Both cities offer a great deal of amenities and cities of this magnitude seem to stagnate small town growth. This may be part of the reason why Leefield is staying where it is today; without a great outlook for economic advancement in the near future.

There is a great need to study places like Leefield to understand what causes and, in turn, what actions are necessary to promote growth in small towns. To preserve this nation’s small town communities, they must be studied to see what makes them successful or not so successful. Only by doing this will we be able to preserve small town communities.

When this type of study is done many limitations surface as they did in the Leefield project. Time and information are not friends because the people with the information often lose or forget it. Age can cloud a memory so much that the real history can sometimes not be seen; but, a good analysis can usually paint a broad summative and closely accurate viewpoint based on the outcome of all the research as this Leefield paper intends to show.

As the quarter passed, a great deal of information came into being while Leefield was the topic of study. A great number of maps were solicited for this project along with newspaper clippings and personal photographs of the community itself. Library research helped a great deal with a number of readings from the research in Bulloch County by Dorothy Brannen. Her studies of the county were very extensive and conclusive. Her works and research paid off when researching Leefield and for the personal enjoyment of historical reading.

Leefield community is situated on land owned by the Lee family of Bulloch County. In 1883, Postmaster Winfield S. Lee began his job as postmaster. The town was then called Blackacre; however, this name was later changed to Black.¹ No one knows for sure why these two names were created for the community, but some say that it was named after the J.W. Black family who lived in the area. The area itself went through two more name changes before eventually ending up with the name Leefield.

Before the Leefield area became what it is today, it belonged to the Lee family and was not more than just an area full of rich farmland.² The fact that you could look as far as the eye could see without seeing anyone is a sentiment that both Lee sisters, Ruth and Francis, expressed as they talked of their childhood days growing up on and around the land that Leefield is now situated on.

The land that the Lee’s owned was attained by a Land Grant in the early 1770’s by King George. Lees lived on the land during this period of time; however, it is unknown if they lived on the land or not after 1777 because no records were kept and there was no solid proof until 1883 that the Lees were in the area. Both Lee sisters believe that there were Lees on the land during the years after 1777, but they cannot definitely prove this with hard evidence. This of course changed after 1883 as Blackacre had been established and notable influence from the Lee family was well recorded in the area.

Not long after the late 1800’s, the community began to see sweeping changes across not only the county, but the country as well. Railroad technology and popularity were new things in
the country and they were very efficient for the time period. It was a new and exciting era in American history and Leefield was about to become a part of it all. Prospects for the town began to look very good and exciting for the small rural community. In 1914 a man named George Brinson bought the right of way for his railroad, the Midland, from Thomas F. Lee. The railroad would run near the back of the Lee family farm through Leefield and on to Savannah from Midville. A great deal of speculation came about as a result of these two men dealing with each other. The two got together with another man, A. Davis, and created the Leeland Land Company. The company had great visions of an agricultural and railroad boom town. Plots of land and street were drawn out and land was sold in expectation of the railroad creating big business for the area. Almost 200 plots of land and more than a dozen streets were drawn out by J.E. Twitty of Sylvania.3 (See Figure 1)

Speculators from the Shearwood Railroad also saw enough big business for the area to build a junction to the Midland Railroad at Leefield. The Shearwood headquarters were in Brooklet where the timber company was located. This action increased the outlook of Leefield in a very positive way. It looked as if Leefield was going to be another boom town resting on its railroad capacity and its agriculture base. It seemed as if everything was going perfect for Leefield and at that point in time no one in the community could have ever imagined bad times or the community's decline in the near future. Leefield was able to ride the wave of progress while both the Shearwood and Midland Railroad Companies were strong. In 1915 many stores were built in Leefield because the threshold of buying
power was there and local entrepreneurs jumped at the chance to get in on the business. One man in particular, Mr. Wolf of Egypt, came into Leefield during this time and built a store that was run by Emmet Coursey. Mr. Coursey became the postmaster of the town because the postal service for the area was run out of this store. At the time, the town was called Leeland, but the name had to be changed because there was already a Leeland in Georgia. The postal service required this name change of the community so there would not be any confusion with mail service.

A railroad depot was built between the two rail lines so as to better serve them both. (See Figure 2) A cotton gin was also built to serve the needs of both rail lines. Mr. A. Davis built the cotton gin at an unfortunate time; because soon thereafter he went out of business due to the Boll Weevil having made its way from Mexico and affecting cotton production in the Southeastern United States. This created a great deal of hardship on Mr. Davis and he had to diversify and eventually went into the lumber business. With all the growth going on in Leefield, the school and church grew considerably. The school became such a focal point that a decision was made to consolidate other area schools and create one larger school called Leefield School. The church experienced a good deal of growth during the early 1920's. It was formed in July 1921, and met in Leefield School's building; the first minister was W.H. Robinson. T.F. Lee donated land to the church and the first church building was erected in 1926 on this land. The church had a very stable membership during this time and continued to do so to this day. Present membership is around 210-240.
Leefield experienced a great deal of success and along with it great change during this period of the railroad. No one knew or even expected the railroads to decline or go out of business; however, the strength of the agriculture and railroad business seemed to slip away from Leefield and when it did - it would never be found again. This was a severe blow to the economy of the community.

During the late 1940's, roads coming into Leefield were paved and a spark of encouragement came to the people of Leefield. But, once again, prosperity was shortlived. The old rail lines were paved over and nothing was left but old buildings. As time passed Leefield stabilized and started the transition into what it is today, a bedroom community with most of its inhabitants working outside of Leefield.

This stable community will, most likely, stay the way it is. A forecast for decline would only be pessimistic and seems unlikely for the time being. Its role as a bedroom community will not change because there is no economic base to depend on for income inside the town. Leefield will continue to exist as it exists today for some time to come.

End Notes

1) Good, Daniel B. and Delmas Presley
2) Ruth and Francis Lee
3) Ibid
4) Ibid
5) Good, Daniel B. and Delmas Presley
6) David Forro
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Emi: From the Past and Into the Future
by
Debra L. Barber
Georgia Southern University

When I began this paper, I knew Emit, Georgia, as the place along Highway 67 that I passed going home every weekend. To me Emit was an old store that appeared to be a truck stop, and the place with the big red brick colored house that I was dying to go in. Along with this topic came the fear of not finding enough information, but with the help of some of Emit’s citizens, I gained enough resources to complete a text that I hope will give some insight into Emit Community.

I would especially like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Issac Bunce for all of the insightful information on Emit they provided. I am also grateful to Mr. Bunce for driving me around Emit one April afternoon. My thanks also go to Mr. and Mrs. Otis B. Clifton and Mr. Joseph Hagan for the information and stories they provided. I would also like to recognize Mr. Hubert Tankersly, Pastor of the Emit Grove Baptist Church, and Jeanie Jewell for the questions they answered in reference to Emit.

Dr. Daniel Good, Professor at Georgia Southern University, should also be recognized for providing me with such a challenge as Emit. He should also be recognized for his dedication to his students in their pursuit of knowledge and the geography around them.
The small rural South Georgia community of Emit is located between Denmark and Statesboro. (See Figure 1) A more precise location would be approximately five miles southeast of Statesboro, Georgia and six miles northwest of Interstate 16, which links Savannah, Georgia with Macon, Georgia. Emit received its name, which many state jokingly as “time” spelled backwards, from Emit Anderson who became postmaster of Statesboro in 1904.

The reason for the study of Emit is reflective in the growth and decline of a rural central place. Transportation is critical to a central place, and this is true of Emit. Was transportation the “maker or breaker”¹ of this small southern community? The ties between Emit and Statesboro are unquestionable, and what role does this tie play in Emit’s future in Bulloch County? Also the issue of a “bedroom community” must be considered when looking at Emit.

Walter Christaller, a noted German geographer, recognized a central place as a city and its economic relations with its hinterlands.² Christaller also considered the central place in relation with the goods and services it provides for its hinterlands.³ Emit can be used as an example of this theory.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Emit was considered as the future site of the county seat of Bulloch County. However, some wealthy farmers in the northern part of the county joined together and used their influence to have the county seat placed at Statesboro. In January 1893, Judge C.S. Martin came to Statesboro, and following his arrival, a courthouse was constructed in Statesboro “which seemed to permanently scotch the county seat question”.⁴ This blow to Emit could be
considered as the first step in the decline of Emit as a Central Place.

Emit at its peak was a very influential crossroads and central place for its time. The crossroads were the center of the Georgia Militia District (GMD) 1547 and was the central business district of Emit. This area contained a store owned by Lee Hughes Hagan which sold low-order goods (goods which are purchased frequently and easily accessible, like groceries) as well as high-order goods (goods which are purchased less often and require more time and money to purchase). As Joseph Hagan, son of Lee Hughes, said, "the store sold everything from bobby pins to bulldozers". Farmers, turpentine laborers, and other people from the hinterlands would travel only a short distance to Hagan's Store in a horse and wagon.

Hagan's Store had, on the side of it, a small room called the courthouse, where voting took place. People from all around GMD 1547 would place their votes at this courthouse adding influence to the crossroads area as a central place.

Another example of Emit's influence and size is the establishment of a post office route in 1891 with Emit Anderson as postmaster. A place must have influence over an area to receive a post office. Around this same time, Emit Grove Baptist Church was established on Pembroke Road. The church was built on land donated by Stephen H. Kennedy, a Civil War veteran, in 1892. This added a service to the area that was located slightly off the crossroads but would still be influential. Also, not far from the crossroads is Harmony Baptist Church established in 1893 for the black families in the community.

Across from Hagan's store was another influential service to the area, a school. This was not a large school by any means, for it was only one room, but it did offer a service to the area and increased the reality of Christaller's theory in Emit. At its crossroads, Emit provided goods and services to a central place and its hinterlands satisfying the Central Place Theory definition.

The census records for 1900 and 1910 provide approximate statistics showing growth in the Emit area during this ten year period. All of the results of the information are based on the occupation listed by the name of the head of the household who was usually male. The results do not include those who worked and lived at home or those who may have worked and boarded at a house in Emit. The 1900 census showed that there were 117 farmers, 19 farm laborers, 50 turpentine laborers, and 42 others who performed miscellaneous occupations that were also of value. The census conducted in 1910 showed 241 farmers, 24 farm laborers, 9 turpentine laborers, and 22 who held other jobs in the community. The total number of heads of household for 1910 was 294. The difference between the two census is: 68 new household were established in the Emit community. This shows increased growth in the area allowing for the crossroads to flourish as they provided more goods and services to fulfill the increased needs of the threshold.

Transportation was very important to the growth and decline of Emit. Early in Emit's history, there was a road that connected Nevils with Statesboro that ran through the rural farming area. The road twisted and curved through the large pine trees which are today fields of diverse crops. Rebel Road, as it was called when the postal route was set up in 1891, was the
main road through the central business district of Emit, bringing the citizens of GMD 1547 to get supplies, groceries, mail, and other necessities. This road was essential to Emit's survival at the turn of the century because it carried people to and from the main business area. To stir even more growth in the area, the Macon and Atlantic Railroad proposed a line that would run through Emit to assist the farmers in transporting their crops to market. The right-of-way was built for the laying of the tracks, but the tracks were never laid. It is hard to predict if the railroad station would have helped Emit grow, but it is well documented that the more transportation outlets an area has, the more likely it is to grow.

Two transportation changes did hurt Emit. The first was Rural Free Delivery (RFD) which was established in 1904, and the second was Highway 67 constructed between 1937 and 1940. With the establishment of RFD, Emit no longer needed a post office and Emit Anderson, the postmaster, became postmaster in Statesboro. The new delivery service meant that people were less dependent on Hagan's Store for goods and services. Highway 67 was constructed through Emit leading to Statesboro, but the new road did not include Rebel Road, which is currently called Clifton Road, and really hampered the Emit business district, particularly Hagan's Store. Lee Hughes, from an unknown source in 1937, learned the plans for Highway 67 and built a new store that would face the new road thus receiving business from it. However, Highway 67 made travel easier to and from Statesboro, which had a better variety of goods and services. Also, there was more competition in Statesboro resulting in lower prices which made it harder for Hagan's Store to compete. The new road also allowed people to work in Statesboro which hurt progress that Emit might have experienced in its central business district.

Emit today has not changed much over the years. It is still the quiet farm community it always was where the people are friendly and warm, but with time some changes have been made. Hagan's Store no longer exists, but in the building where it once stood is now a truck repair shop and a scrap metal business. The "courthouse" is no longer the little room on the side of the store, but it is now housed in its own building across the street from where it once stood. The "courthouse" is not titled Emit Precinct, and is the site of any voting that takes place in the Tenth District of Bulloch County where some 583 voters (the number comes from the number of registered voters as of March 1992) place their ballots. (See Figure 2)

Is Emit an example of a "bedroom community"? This question should also be addressed in this section. A "bedroom community" is a residential community outside the central city, Statesboro. Based on this definition, Emit is a "bedroom community" because many of its citizens work in Statesboro but go home in the evening to Emit.

Emit Grove Baptist Church and Harmony Baptist Church are still in existence today. The Emit Grove Baptist Church has changed little over the years, but some changes have been made. The church building is no longer clapboard; it is now brick. A small addition has been made to the back of the church since its original construction, and it no longer has the steeple. It had to be removed because it was too heavy. Both churches are still active and are still a major part of Emit's character.
Farming is still the main industry of the area, but it is not limited to any one crop as it might have been at one time. More than one person has commented on the fact that Emit has some of the best soil in Bulloch County and is well suited for continued agricultural growth and diversification.

The future of Emit is hard to predict and is based on its relationship with Statesboro. Georgia Southern University will continue to grow, and Emit could be the site of future housing for students. Emit’s future; however, is based mainly on the farmers that reside there and their willingness to part with the land that, in some cases, has been in the family for generations.

There is a big possibility that more businesses, such as Bulloch Marine and the truck repair shop, will set up in Emit since it is so close to Statesboro. Bulloch Marine not only attracts local people, but has customers in Metter, Swainsboro, and even South Carolina.

Emit’s proximity to Statesboro means that there is a good chance that many in Statesboro will move out of the city and to the “bedroom community” which could mean even more growth in Emit. However, for this growth to occur, farmers will have to part with some of the land.

It is a fact that Emit will grow both agriculturally and residentially in the future, and perhaps many years down the road it will once again have the central business district that thrived at the beginning of this century.
End Notes

1) Good, Daniel. "Transportation Lectures", Geography 452, (Spring Quarter 1992), Georgia Southern University.


3) Ibid.


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Mill Ray: Changing Transportation Technology and the Demise of a Farmer's Post Office

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Bulloch County’s designated area was in a region known, according to one author, as the “wire grass counties”. These counties stretched from the coastal counties to the Piedmont section of the state. Until the early 1800s the Bulloch area was considered a great wilderness. White settlers in the area had drifted down the Ogeechee River from South Carolina. The population began to grow rapidly with settlers bearing evidence that they were entitled to grants of land in Georgia. A Revolutionary War soldier, Joshua Hodges, presented such a letter. The letter, dated April 3, 1803, is in the Bulloch County clerk’s office. It was issued by the land office of the state of North Carolina. The letter promised a grant of land to Joshua Hodges who settled near New Hope Methodist Church, on present day Highway 24 near Old River Road. Upon the death of Joshua Hodges on March 3, 1809 the land title was passed down to one of his four sons, Joseph Hodges who married Sara Carr in 1799. One of their sons, Hardy Bell Hodges, married Margret Bird Kennedy, the daughter of Eli Kennedy. The couple settled down near the Kennedy home which served as a drop off point for Statesboro mail delivered by stagecoach down the River Road in route to Savannah. In 1838, Mr. Kennedy became postmaster of Statesboro. For a short time in 1843, Mr. Kennedy’s son-in-law, Hardy Hodges, also served as postmaster for Statesboro. Later a post office was established at the Kennedy home with Hodges serving as Mill Ray’s first postmaster. Later in 1872, Hardy’s son, William Asbury Hodges began service as Mill Ray’s postmaster. After his marriage to Emma Slater, they built a home along the River Road down from the Kennedy place. This is the present home of Fred H. Hodges where a small room served as the post office. An old hand stamp that reads “Mill Ray”, Ga. can still be seen there today.

Travel is linked with the evolution and history of towns. Initially it was the critical factor in the location of cities and then became the driving force in their configuration. Travel before the 1830s and 40s was by stagecoach or horseback. Maude Brannen Edge recalled stagecoach travel on the Old River Road from Milledgeville to Savannah. Stops were located every fifteen to twenty miles where tired horses could be exchanged for fresh ones. The stagecoach brought with it mail and passengers. The stops were probably located at Blitch, Mill Ray, Stilson, and Ivanhoe. (See Figure 1) These stops are examples of settlements developing along a linear pattern along this transportation route. Even though no post office had as yet been established in Mill Ray, it began serving a central place function by acting as service center for the passing stagecoach and by serving as a “break-of-bulk point” at which mail could be taken from the stagecoach and delivered into Statesboro.

As transportation technology changed, the railroads ushered in a new era. By 1842 mail ceased to enter Mill Ray by stagecoach. This eliminated Mill Ray’s central place function as a service center for the stagecoach passing through with the mail. A stretch of the Central Georgia Railroad was completed.
Stage Coach Stops on Old River Road - Early 1800's

(Figure 1)

in 1847 linking Savannah to Atlanta. One of the stops along the railroad was station number 5 at Halcyondale in Screven County. Located five miles from Mill Ray across the Ogeechee River, and 248 miles from Atlanta, the station began to serve as a post office on May 20, 1842. Instead of the stagecoach coming into Mill Ray, mail would be brought to Halcyondale then brought across the Ogeechee River into Mill Ray. With decreasing travel times by train and increasing the capacity of each load, mail delivery became much quicker and easier. This probably led to an increase in correspondence by mail which, in turn, led to the formation of a post office at Bulloch County's mail distribution point at Mill Ray. The post office was established on June 16, 1847, with Hardy Hodges serving as the first postmaster.

The Civil War also brought change to Mill Ray. After burning Atlanta, General Sherman and his men began their march through Georgia. The right wing of Sherman’s army, composed of the fifteenth and the seventeenth corps, traveled down the Old River Road enroute to Savannah. These men, according to Fred Hodges, camped out near Mill Ray on December 4, 1864. The men moved onward the next day. (See Figure 2) Fred Hodges also told a story about the Yankees' march through Mill Ray that was passed down through the ages. According to Mr. Hodges, his grandmother pleaded with a commanding officer not to burn down the only cotton gin. The officer agreed to leave the gin alone, but said it would be difficult to control all of the men in the army, and it would take several days for the army to pass. The officer placed soldiers around the gin in order to protect; however, this effort failed when a couple
of days later the gin was burnt to the ground. Other effects of Sherman's march through Georgia were also felt by Mill Ray. After the Civil War was over, the post office at Mill Ray was discontinued; probably due to the destruction by Sherman's men to many sections of the Central of Georgia Railroad. The postal service was reestablished in Mill Ray on September 5, 1872. The route of delivery changed somewhat from what it had been prior to the war. On July 1, 1880, mail for Mill Ray and Statesboro again was arriving at the train station in Halcyondale.

In 1890 the first railroad was built in Bulloch County. This railroad connected Statesboro to the Central of Georgia Railroad and changed the mail route again. This decreased the chance of Mill Ray ever developing beyond a small farm settlement. Although Mill Ray would have a post office until the turn of the century, its central place function as the “middle man” for mail delivery from the outside world to Statesboro was removed.

The passing of the Rural Free Delivery Act in 1900 would deliver the final blow to Mill Ray’s economic growth. This would mark the beginning of the end of rural post offices such as Mill Ray’s. An article appeared in the October 16, 1903 edition of The Statesboro News which talked about rural free delivery saying, “The rural mail delivery will put the farmer in close touch with the outside world, in fact the most distant farm will be a suburban home, enjoying all of the facilities of large cities.”. The article went on to say, “Each one of these mail carriers will be a traveling post office.” As the need for a post office in Mill Ray no longer existed; on May 15, 1907 it was discontinued.

At the turn of the century, Statesboro was experiencing an economic boom as railroads gave it better access to its
hinterlands. This economic growth had a “trickling down” effect on some surrounding locations. While Mill Ray did not benefit as greatly as some, there is evidence it felt some aspects of Statesboro’s growth.

A branch of the Masonic Lodge was established in Mill Ray. The lodge was located about one mile from the Union church and the first floor of the lodge was used as a school and a church. There was a store in Mill Ray located at the intersection of the River Road and Burkhalter Road. According to Fred Hodges, another store also existed in the vicinity of Mill Ray. These stores probably sold low order goods such as, food, simple hardware and some farm equipment. They probably closed due to a lack of a threshold population to support them.

Mill Ray was an example of a settlement that began in a linear pattern along a trade route, the River Road. It served as a break-of-bulk point by performing a central place function by getting the mail from the stagecoach and into Statesboro. As transportation changed with the coming of the railroads, it lost its significance as a post office. As Statesboro experienced an economic boom, Mill Ray experienced somewhat of a “trickle down effect”, but not enough to overcome Statesboro’s economic dominance, leading to Mill Ray’s economic death. Mill Ray today consists of a few people who enjoy the beauty of rural Bulloch County. A few descendants of the original settlers, such as Fred Hodges, Jr., still reside there. Mill Ray serves as a historical reminder of a time when changing transportation technologies and Statesboro’s economic growth dictated the future of the settlement.

End Notes


2) Coleman, *The Story of Bulloch County*.


5, 6) Fred Hodges, Jr. Personal interview.
