
Reflections of **HOLCOMB, MISSISSIPPI**

Native Americans/Settlers/Villages/Main Street/Homes/Album

Included:

As much as possible, I have copied the information from the website in the order in which it was designed: Holcomb, Native Americans, Settlers, Villages, Main Street, Homes, and Album. You may also see additional historical photos that were not on the website.

Thank you to...

I want to give credit for everything included in this new document to my sister, **Pat Holcomb Koester** (1946-2016). She was an excellent journalist, with a reporter's curiosity and committed to the integrity of her research. Also, without the technological skills of my brother-in-law, **Russell Koester**, the website would not have been possible, much less navigable. They supported holcomb.org until the present, and I am grateful to them both for their hard work and dedication to the project. I hope someone will find this useful.

Karen Holcomb Mason 2025



holcomb.org The following information comes from the holcomb.org website, which was created and supported by Pat Holcomb Koester and Russell Koester. It went online in 1994, and now, 30 years later, is being retired. All of the photos and descriptions remain, as well as any maps and historical information that were on the website. The historical data and stories are well documented, and the photos are copies of the originals. You will read information that, though up to date in 1994, has changed. People, businesses, churches, and community stories have come and gone, and while the ones on the website bring back memories to many, new ones have come along in the intervening years. Remember to take pictures of the world around you!



Holcomb

In a fast-paced era, the small town of Holcomb echoes an earlier America. From its roots in the Choctaw Nation through white settlement and the South's cotton boom, the town offers intriguing links with the past.

Native American Legacy

'A growing body of archaeological evidence of ancient mound-building cultures in the Southeast indicates **there were permanent settlements in the areas now called Mississippi, Louisiana and Florida even before the great pyramids were built in Egypt** and before the Mayan culture arose in Central America.



The findings are changing the whole picture of early life in North America and providing new opportunities for today's communities to connect with the past.



Dozens of Indian mounds once dotted the Yalobusha River valley and the area around Holcomb, many now vanished under farm fields. Their memory is a fascinating window into history.

Nothing is known of the purpose of these mounds, whether they had religious significance or ceremonial function. No human burials were found in them. But they show that the ancient people who lived in this land had the capability to plan and organize large-scale construction projects thousands of years ago.

At first, early hunter-gatherer people moved with the seasons and must have returned in spring and summer to river valleys such as the Yalobusha to feast on fish and mussels, edible plants, and woodland game. A climate change in the eastern part of North America 7,000 to 5,000 years ago had made these valleys much richer sources of food, and this may have attracted the hunter-gatherers to linger throughout the year.

Trading networks developed, followed by agriculture. As communities gained surplus food and trading wealth, they could afford to devote time and energy to more complex 'public works' projects. The mounds may have been a way of defining territory or celebrating victories. Structures may have been built on top to avoid flooding.

The coming of white explorers changed this world forever.

Robert Ferguson, tribal historian of the Mississippi Choctaws, writes: “The early European explorers came to plunder. To plunder, they conquered. To assure conquest, they established fortress and settlement ...A constant ally of the early settlers was epidemic disease... The story was the same everywhere: enormous reductions in population...It is important to remember when reading accounts of early observers of the southern Indians that what they saw and reported were not the pristine culture of pre-contact times, but the cultures constructed after pestilence had ridden its fatal, disruptive course.”

Nevertheless, throughout the South, both inter and intra tribal customs survived. Standards governed behavior between individuals and groups. There were established limits of tribal lands, trade routes, and trading languages. Some tribes specialized in producing goods, others in hunting or farming. Travel was widespread, and even faraway tribes were known.

The Choctaw Nation, a stable agrarian society with a wide trading network, included the area that is now Holcomb.

The name Choctaw means separation, and referred to the ancient separation of the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes.

Henry Heggie, in ‘**Indians and Pioneers of Old Eliot**’, writes: “As the Thirteen Colonies developed on the eastern American coast, those with unimpeded western borders pressed their territorial claims farther and farther into Indian lands. The lands of the Choctaws gradually were claimed by the fledgling state of Georgia, which drew its western border along the Mississippi River...Conflicts over these land claims quickly arose between Georgia and the new Continental Congress.



....An act of Congress in 1798 included an agreement that the western territory, which included the Choctaws’ homeland, should be reserved for a separate state and be admitted as such into the Union as soon as the population reached 60,000 inhabitants.”

“...In ceding the territory to the United States, Georgia recognized these Indian claims and mandated in the cession agreement that vacant land could be sold only after Indian title had been exhausted.

“In 1804, the land ceded by Georgia became the Mississippi Territory, and in March 1817, Congress authorized the western portion of the Mississippi Territory to begin to organize for statehood... the Choctaws began to feel growing pressure on their lands. Mississippi was made a state on December 10, 1817.”

According to the **Mississippi Band of Choctaws**, “between 1801 and 1830, the Choctaw Nation ceded to the United States government over 25 million acres of land and agreed to relocate the tribal government to the Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. Several thousand Choctaws, through love of their ancestral homeland and pride in their culture, elected to stay in Mississippi and become citizens of the United States.”

In one of the few direct descriptions of Choctaw life in the area that is now Holcomb, **Henry Sale Halbert** (1837-1916), a teacher among the Mississippi Choctaws, describes the founding of the protestant **Eliot Mission Station**, about a mile south of the present town, in 1818.

From a joint Presbyterian-Congregationalist outpost in the Cherokee Nation near Chattanooga, Tennessee, the **Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury** and **Mr. and Mrs. Loring Williams** set out in a flat-bottomed boat down the Tennessee River, taking a wagon with them on the boat and sending horses overland along the river to Colbert’s Ferry. From there, they sent most of their goods by water along the Tennessee, Mississippi and Yazoo rivers and then up the Yalobusha River. They proceeded by wagon down the Natchez Trace as far as possible, then turned off and “*set out with the wagon through the pathless woods for the settlement on the Yalobusha River ...and after much trouble in getting the wagon through the cane swamps and thickets,*” arrived at the settlement in June 1818.

The Yalobusha settlement was controlled by **Chief Isaac Perry**, whose mother was Choctaw and whose father, **Hardy Perry**, was one of the first white traders among the Choctaws. “The missionaries were most hospitably received,” Halbert writes, “...and Captain Perry offered them a house in his yard until they could put up buildings of their own.”



“A suitable place was finally selected for the mission station. **It was a slight plateau covered with lofty trees and dotted here and there with ancient mounds, showing that it had once been the habitation of prehistoric men.**” The station was named, ‘Eliot’ in honor of **John Eliot**, an English Puritan born in 1604 who had emigrated to America to educate the Indians of Massachusetts.

The little station grew with the arrival of more missionaries and the building of homes, a church, and a school. A doctor, a carpenter, and blacksmith also arrived and “a blacksmith shop, granary and other buildings were erected, and soon furniture, wagons and all kinds of agricultural implements were made at the mission.”

For more than 20 years, Eliot Mission was a center for Choctaw education. But in 1830, the infamous **Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek** began the removal of the Choctaws from their eastern lands, and by 1833 the mission had closed. Only a few Choctaws, including Isaac Perry, managed to retain a foothold in their homeland, but **geographical names recall their era.** (As listed below.)

Isaac Perry was granted, as a ‘reservation,’ **Section 22, Township 22 north, Range 3 east** in what is now Grenada County. **Seventy years later, the town of Holcomb was established on part of that section.**

Geographical guides to history

Mississippi, more than any Southern state, has kept alive in counties, towns, and rivers the musical names of its early peoples.

The state’s name, **Mississippi**, was the Indian name for the **Father of Waters**, or Great Waters.

Of the **82** counties in the state, **19** bear Indian names:

Attala was the name of a young woman of the Muscogee tribe whose love affair with the son of the chief of an enemy was an Indian ‘Romeo and Juliet’ legend.

The Indian word bogue meant ‘creek’, and chitto meant ‘not-so-big’, and they survive in the name of the town **Bogue Chitto**. Homa meant ‘red’ and is seen in the name of the **Homochitto** River and **Homochitto National Forest**. Hatchie was another name for a river or creek, as in **Tallahatchie River**.

Chickasaw, Choctaw and Yazoo were the name of tribes. The word Choctaw meant separation and referred to the ancient separation of the Choctaw and Chickasaw bands.

Coahoma means 'red panther.'

Copiah meant 'calling panther.'

Itawamba was an Indian nickname for Levi Colbert, the son of an early Scots adventurer who, when called before a tribal council, sat on a bench instead of on the ground, as was customary. For this, he became known as Bench Chief, or Itawamba (bench) Mingo (chief). In his later years, he lived near what is now Tupelo, Mississippi.

Issaquena, now a small Delta community, is a combination of the Choctaw word Issa, meaning deer, and okhina, a poetic name for river.

Leflore County, the small Leflore community and the nearby city of Greenwood all take their names from the Choctaw chief Greenwood Leflore, son of the French trader Louis Le Fleur. Greenwood Leflore, one of the signers of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek that cost the Choctaws their homeland. Leflore remained in Mississippi, however, an immensely wealthy man, and built the magnificent home Malmaison near what is now Teoc, Mississippi.

Natchez Indians are remembered in the name of the city of Natchez and the Natchez Trace, one of the most romantic trails in American history and now a scenic parkway.

Neshoba means 'Gray Wolf.'

The name of the **Noxubee** River meant 'stinking water.'

Oktibbeha, meaning Bloody Water, refers to a bloody battle between the Chickasaws and the Choctaws.

Panola means cotton, and that county has long lived up to its name.

Pascagoula, the name of a city and a river, meant 'bread people.'

Pontotoc was an Indian word meaning 'land of hanging grapes.'

Tallahatchie County takes its name from the Tallahatchie River, meaning 'River of Rocks.'

Tippah is named for the wife of a famous Chickasaw chief named **Tishomingo** who lived near what is now Pontotoc, Mississippi. One of their daughters is said to have married a man named **Tom Bigbee**, whose name reportedly meant coffin maker and lives on in the name of the Tombigbee River.

Tunica County takes its name from the Tunica tribe, which lived along the Yazoo River.

Winona, an Indian word for first-born daughter, survives in the name of the town.

Yalobusha County gets its name from the Yalobusha River, whose name means 'place of the tadpoles.'

And there are hundreds more, clues to Mississippi's Indian roots still alive in its modern geography.

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For more information, see:

Indians and Pioneers of Old Eliot

Henry Watterson Heggie, Tuscahoma Press, Grenada, MS 1989

Introduction of Christianity and Education into the Choctaw Nation

Henry Sale Halbert, Alabama Department of Archives and History,
624 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36130

A History of Grenada County

J.C Hathorn, 1967 Grenada County Library

A New Era

In an historic 1997 Thanksgiving week ceremony, Mississippi signed a pact recognizing 'the sovereignty of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.' The agreement pledges a new spirit of respect and cooperation between the state and tribal governments. The agreement makes the state the third (after New Mexico and Oregon) to sign such an agreement with an Indian tribe.



Land-Hungry Settlers and a Cotton Boom

The town of Holcomb, Mississippi was founded in 1901 on land that once was the home site of Choctaw Indian **Chief Isaac Perry**. (for more information, see ***Native American Legacy*** section, page 2–7)

In the public sales of ceded Choctaw lands (the Third Choctaw Land Cession under the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek of 1830) that began in the fall of 1833, 1,120 acres that included Perry's lands and the old **Elliot Mission** tract were sold to a group of speculators including John Smith (a former member of the mission staff) and speculator and land agent **James Girault** (1793-1851).



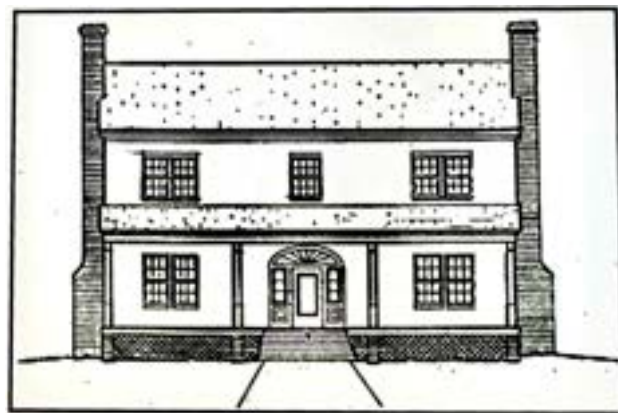
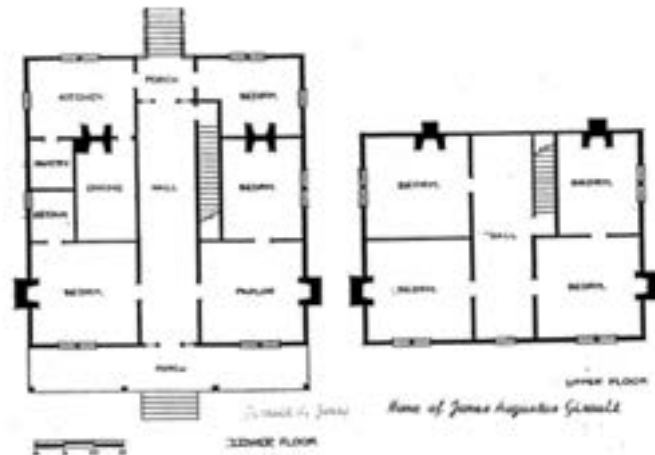
The Choctaw lands near Holcomb became part of new counties: Carroll, Choctaw, Tallahatchie and Yalobusha, all of which would later contribute to the formation of Grenada County. A Land Office was set up on the Yalobusha River at the new town Chocchuma, which consisted of little more than the Land Office and lodging facilities for the throngs of buyers. James Girault was appointed receiver of public monies at that office. A Choctaw, **James Oxberry**, whose name lingers in the Oxberry community near Holcomb, was the Land Office's interpreter. The Oxberry community is located on land originally reserved for Oxberry and his children.

J.C. Hathorn, in **A History of Grenada County** writes, "From the date of the beginning of land sales through the last day of December in 1833 was just 70 days. These must have been days of feverish activity at the Land Office. ... During that period 204 individuals and partnerships bought 80,592 acres in what is now Grenada County...The land was sold on very liberal terms, one-third down, with 10 years to pay off the balance....The prices paid ranged from 75 cents per acre to a high price of \$6. The average price paid was about \$1 per acre."

In 1834, Girault, who was a major land speculator as well as a Land Office official, began developing the town of Tuscahoma in Section 16, Township 22, Range 3 east on the Yalobusha River. The town was incorporated in 1836 and the first license to operate a saloon in Tallahatchie County was granted to a business in Tuscahoma. A school, the Tuscahoma Academy, was located about a mile and a quarter southeast of the town at Guy's Corner, named for Major Curtis Haywood Guy, who came to the area from North Carolina and operated a large plantation near the site of the later Holcomb School buildings.

About 1836, Girault built a large home, which he called 'Bellevue,' on a rise near the old Eliot Mission site, where he operated a plantation.

James Girault



According to the Grenada County Weekly, the large Colonial home was surrounded by crepe myrtle and maple trees.



Bellevue's hill, looking toward the town.

Tuscahoma gradually was abandoned, Girault's fortune dwindled, and 'the Bellevue Place' was bought by **Dr. J.M. Williams**, a circuit-riding physician who had come to Mississippi from Georgia, at an auction at Charleston for \$750 in gold.

During the Civil War, as Union troops moved through the area, Bellevue and most of its contents were spared, but soldiers seized all the doctor's medical books—but not for reference. Pages of the books later were found crumpled and strewn all over land where the dysentery-plagued troops had camped.

In 1884, Dr. Williams sold Bellevue to **David Lafayette Holcomb** (1844-1934), who had married his daughter Georgia. Holcomb, born in 1844 in Surry County, NC, had moved with his parents to Gonzales County, Texas in 1859. At age 18, he enlisted in the Confederate Texas Volunteer Regiment and fought in Texas and Arkansas throughout the Civil War.

In 1867, Holcomb left Texas with a herd of horses and headed for Mississippi, where his mother's family had settled, selling the horses as he went to pay his way. He settled near **Guy's Corner** and gradually began to acquire land.



David Lafayette Holcomb (seated) with his friend Jim Woods in 1900 following an event. They came to Mississippi from Texas after the Civil War and remained close all their lives.

On April 20, 1901, when the **Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad** linked Grenada with Parsons, Holcomb realized a depot on his land would draw considerable trade. On September 14, 1901, he filed a plat (surveyed and drawn by **Steve Ritchie** of Winona) of the new railroad town of **Holcomb**, with two main streets paralleling that railroad line. The name Holcomb derives from the early English words 'holt' meaning woods, and 'combe' meaning valley or 'wooded valley,' a fitting name for the area's lovely wooded countryside.

Early businesses included several general stores, the Bank of Holcomb, (established 1905), a stove factory, a saw mill, an ax-handle factory, a cotton gin, a blacksmith's shop, a hotel and a school.





The Holcomb Hotel

The hotel was built by **Jack Curry** and managed by his wife. They were succeeded by **L.T. Hayden** and his wife, then by **Lena Dear**, who owned and managed it until it burned in the 1920's.



The town was incorporated in 1905. Mayors included **W.H. Martin, R. A. McRee, John Brewer, M. Hey, John Hayden, C.O. Aven** and **J.L. Tribble**. Town marshals included **E.R. Beard, W.W. Williams, Murphy Shumate**, and a **Mr. McCaulla**. Incorporation lapsed during World War II.

Major fires struck the town twice, with devastating effect. In August 1927, a blaze that was believed to be arson destroyed more than half the businesses. A second fire in 1937 also burned many stores. Recovery was not easy. The Great Depression hit hard on the heels of the first fire. World War II closely followed the second. (**See details on page 45.**)

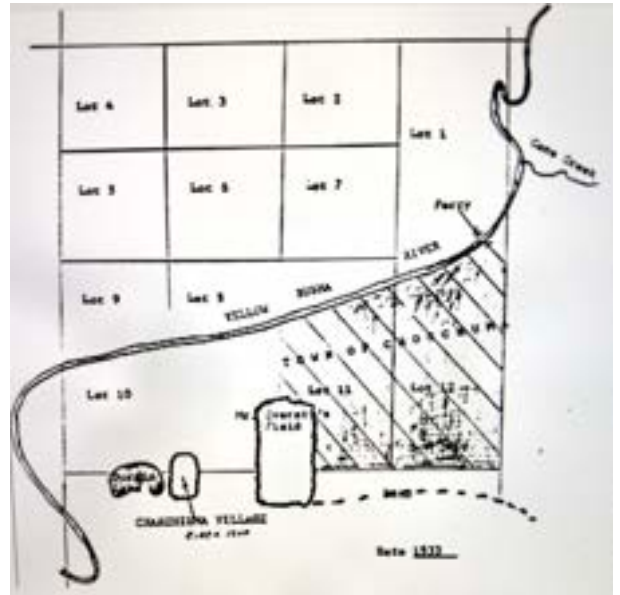
Bellevue was destroyed by fire in 1926, but many of the original homes built soon after the town's founding remain, their craftsman detailing and wide porches as welcoming as in Holcomb's early years. (**See the Homes section (page 18) for photos.**)

Vanished Villages

Chocchuma

The village of Chocchuma (in Lots **11** and **12** of **Section 19, Township 22, Range 3 east**) on the Yalobusha River grew up around the U.S. Land Office (1833-40), which was charged with selling off Indian lands after the removal of the Choctaws.

Its name (translated Red Crowdad People) recalls the powerful **Chakchiuma Indians**, who were believed to have come from west of the Mississippi River and once lived along the Yazoo, Tallahatchie and Yalobusha rivers. Known for their large stature and hunting skills, they often warred with the Choctaws and Chickasaws for territory on the Tombigbee prairies.



According to Indian lore, the Chakchiumas were wiped out by the combined forces of these two other tribes in a battle six miles west of what is now Belle Fountain, Mississippi. But their name, like many other musical Indian words, has survived. (see *Native American Legacy*, page 5-7 for a list.)

In 1835, the bustling little town of Chocchuma had five businesses, a saloon, three hotels (one known as the Planters Hotel) and five boarding Houses to serve the eager land buyers who flocked to the area. Keel boats large enough to carry 300 bales of cotton plus passengers plied the Yalobusha. Fortunes were made, risked and lost in the fever of land speculation.

In **Indians and Pioneers of Old Eliot**, Henry Heggie quotes a resident of Chocchuma who describes the homes in the Yalobusha country as “crude and rough. They were made of rough-hewn logs and had one to two rooms, rough floors, window shutters instead of glass, roof of boards, chimneys of sticks and mortar and wide fireplaces with no mantles. They were furnished with chairs, tables and beds made of hickory. The chairs had seats of cow or goat hide.”

In 1842, the land office was moved to Grenada and Chocchuma gradually died out. Today there is no evidence of the early presence of the town, about three miles southwest of Holcomb, described by J. C. Hathorn in his **History of Grenada County** as “sitting on the last high ridge of land before the river fell away into the lowlands of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta.”

Tuscahoma

About three miles up the Yalobusha River from Chocchuma, the town of Tuscahoma was founded by **James Girault**, the 'receiver of public monies' at the **Chocchuma Land Office**.

It was located in Section 16, Township 22, Range 3 east, and according to J.C. Hathorn, "During its heyday it was probably the second largest town in what is now Grenada County. It originally fell in Tallahatchie County and was incorporated in 1836. Shortly afterwards, the first license to operate a saloon in Tallahatchie was granted in Tuscahoma. According to Hathorn, the town had a ferry, numerous businesses and a hotel, the **Wayside Inn**, the remains of which survived into the 1930's. The Wayside Inn was set up by **Loring S. Williams** and his wife, former staff members at **Eliot Mission**. A school, **Tuscahoma Academy**, was located about a mile and a quarter away at **Guy's Corner** (named for **Maj. Curtis Haywood Guy**, who came from North Carolina and owned a large plantation there) near the later site of the Holcomb School. A newspaper, **The Tuscahomian**, began publication in 1835.

By 1842, however, a traveler wrote, "A few days ago in company with Maj. James A. Girault, a planter residing near Tuscahoma, I visited that place, once the principal commercial emporium of North Mississippi, but now a deserted village." At that time, according to Hathorn, "Girault was living on the plantation known as Bellview Place...later bought by D.L. Holcomb." (the spelling was changed to *Bellevue* at some point.)

The ferry, however, continued to operate until well after the Civil War, and the Tuscahoma post office was in operation as late as 1873.

The name Tuscahoma remains as the name of one of Holcomb's streets.

Oxberry

The nearby community of Oxberry, just across the Yalobusha River from Holcomb, also has early roots. The name comes from the family of **Chief James Oxberry**, who was a Choctaw interpreter employed by the Chocchuma Land Office. His family was on of those native families determined to remain in the area. Under the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, they were able to claim 'reservations,' and several Oxberrys are listed in the Tract Book of land sales.

The early Memphis-Rankin road ran through their land, and it is here that the Oxberry community developed.

Early White families in the area included those of Will Hoffa and Hernando DeSoto Staten. Bethel Baptist Church and a general store run by LaRue Fite and later Gladys Staten were centers of the community. An immense tornado, the longest continually on the ground in recorded history (as of 1994) destroyed the store in 1972.



Main Street

In a time when Small-town America, with its independent stores, family farms and local characters is being swept away by interstates, television, the internet and mega-marts, small towns that have survived offer a tantalizing memory of years when time moved slower and summers seemed to last forever.

Holcomb, Mississippi echoes that era, even as the old stores have crumbled and the town has become a bedroom community for larger towns nearby.



Stores on North Main looking east
Toward the cafe with the Jackson
Store on the left.



The original Holcomb Bank on
North Main Street, later a grocery.



Lucy and Lincoln Jackson in their store.



Originally Bill Martin's store at the corner of Tuscahoma Street and North Main Street, later C.W. Lott's store and the office of the Justice of the Peace, with the Hayden cotton gin in the background.



The Old railroad depot between South Main and North Main Street.



The old gin on the right, looking east down North Main Street, and, at the end of the street, the fertilizer and seed house.



The road to Guy's Corner, known as Honeysuckle Lane, just west of Holcomb School.



Looking east at the stores on North Main Street, with the old gin on the right.



The Holcomb Post Office on North Main



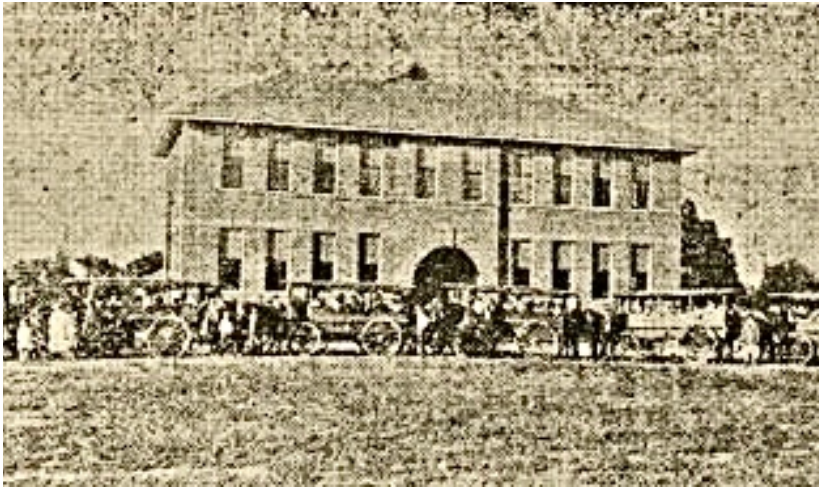
D.L. Holcomb's original service station, later used as a post office, at North Main Street and Tuscahoma.



Looking west on North Main Street, the Harris-Nason store, the third post office, (later a pool hall) and the McRee Store.



The old railroad Section House in the railroad right of way.



Holcomb School,
shown in a 1919
newspaper photo...



...and with
students out front
in the 1920's.

The first Holcomb school was a small building with one teacher. This later was enlarged and a second teacher added. Then a two-story building was constructed and remained in use until a brick building (shown above) was built in 1916-17. This was replaced in 1936 by the larger brick building (shown below).



Holcomb School, facing Highway 7

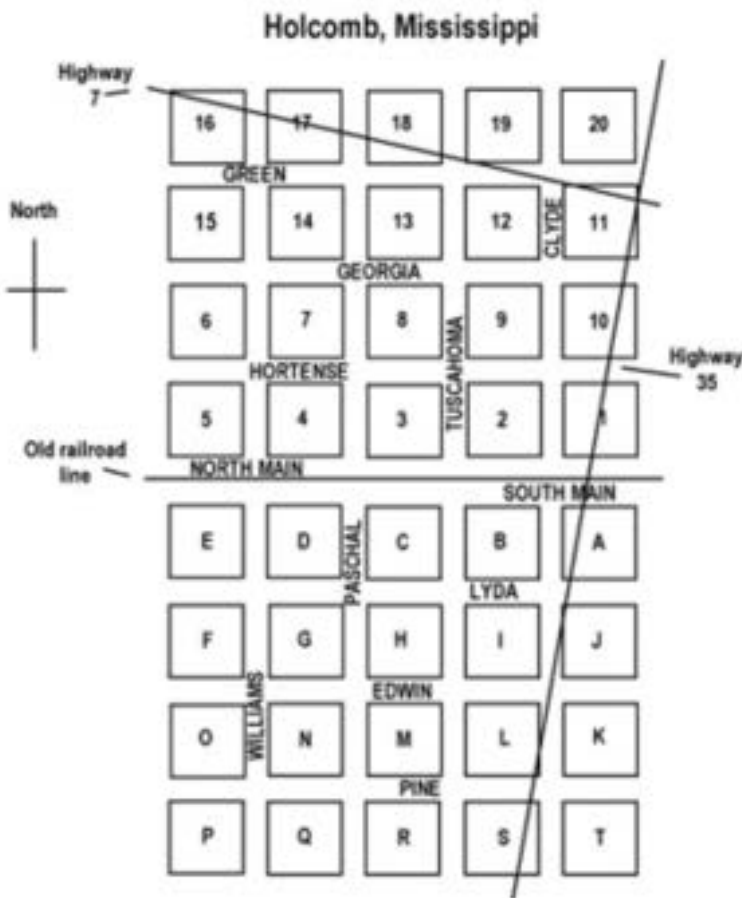
Homes

An Era of Porches

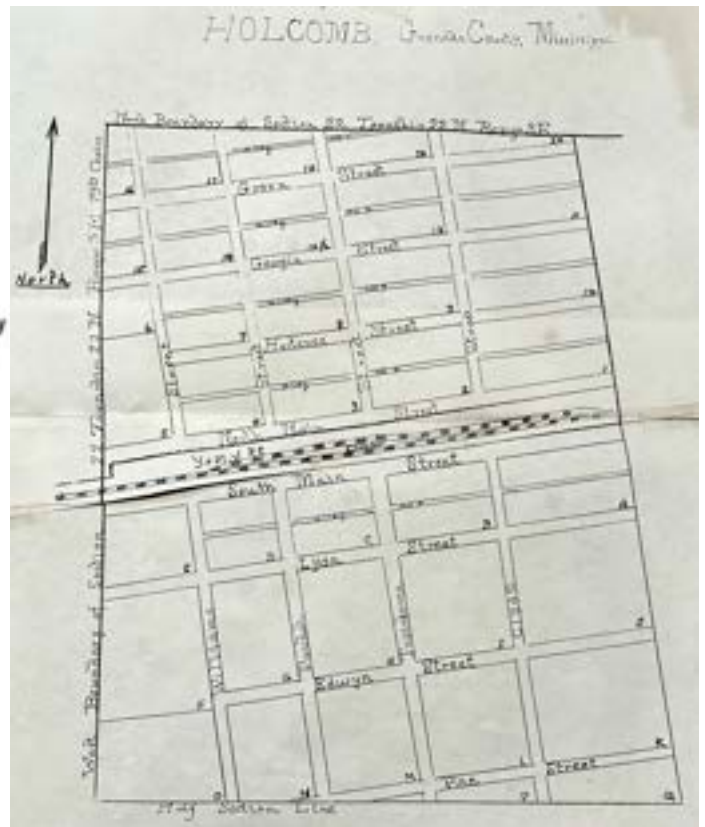
Like most small Southern towns, Holcomb, Mississippi's oldest homes were clapboard with wide porches to catch the breezes and high ceilings to keep the rooms cool in summer.

Most were built in the two decades after the founding of the town in 1901. By the 1970's, when most of these photos were taken, many already were in decline, but these images give a flavor of that earlier era. Today, many of these homes have been extensively renovated as new generations have turned Holcomb into a thriving bedroom community.

By now (2025), some of these homes exist only in photos and in the memories of long-term residents.



Map to help orient the homes.



An older, hand-drawn map, showing the railroad.



This house in Block 6 facing Williams Street was home to the families of Gus Arnold (who built it), Dr. B.W. Farr and J. Fulton McRee.

The right side of this home in Block C at the corner of South Main Street and Tuscahoma was the town's first post office when its owner, Lyda Holcomb, was the first postmistress.



The families of Dr. E.W. Curle, Mrs. M.L. Williams, E.D. Holcomb, Helen and C.V. Gibson (who owned the drugstore) and Shaw Williams have lived in this home in Block F on Williams Street/Sparta Road.

Edwin Holcomb, son of D.L. Holcomb, built this home in 1918 in Block 17 facing Highway 7 South.





The Jim Elliott-W.F. Watson home is in Block Q on Williams Street/Sparta Road. Elliot was the town's mail carrier for many years.



This home in Block 7 facing Paschal Street was home to the Hardwick family, Mrs. M.L. Williams and Dr. A.S. Hill.



This home in Block G facing Williams Street/ Sparta Road was home to the families of Lige Clark (who built it) the "Punch" Jacksons, Kathleen Oakley and Gary Clanton.



Built by Dr. C.C.Moore, this house in Block 17 facing Highway 7 South later was home to D.L. Holcomb, then his daughter Hortense Matthews.



The families of Robert Turner (who built it), Vennie Turner, C.H.Shaw, Kirk McRee and Noel Staten lived in this home in Block E at the corner of South Main Street and Williams Street/Sparta Road.



The families of Joe Harris, Volney Nason and Charles Holland lived in this home in Block F facing Williams Street/Sparta Road.



Sam J. Curle (who built it) and H.K. McMahon (whose wife, Duckett, was a long-time Holcomb postmistress) lived in this home in Block G facing Paschal Street.



John Howard Aven, W.H. Rice, Ida and Donna Singleton and Lewis McCalop, lived in this home in Block H. Facing Tuscahoma Street.

In Block 4 facing Williams Street, this house was home to the families of Rodney Brewer, R. A. McRee, W.H. Rice and W.T. Hill.





This was the L.T. Hayden home in Block M facing Tuscahoma Street. Hayden oncer owned the town's hotel.



The A.J. Fonville and Vernon Fonville families and Ruby Owens lived in this home in Block 2 facing Tuscahoma Street.



Dr. Mays (who built it) and W. B. "Uncle Mose" Simpson, long-time depot agent, lived in this home in Block 13 facing Tuscahoma Street.



Owners of this home in Block 9 facing Tuscahoma Street include Wes Hayden and Ruby Wilson.



The families of Bun Holland and George Keasler lived in this home in Block H facing Tuscahoma Street.



Murf Shumate and Vernon Carver were among the owners of this home in Block I facing Tuscahoma Street.



Dr. L.T. Hightower (who built it), Ben Smith, C.C. Mullen and Verne Workman (whose wife "Miss Sally" taught generations of Holcomb schoolchildren) were among the owners of this home in Block F facing Williams Street/Sparta Road.

Bates Curry owned this home in Block 12 facing Tusahoma Street.



The Norris home in Block 19 at Tusahoma Street and Highway 7 was the home of Jessie and 'Uncle Sam,' whose filling station was a favorite town gathering place.

The Will Gray-John Bloom home is in Block 8 facing Tusahoma Street.





This home in Block 8 facing Tuscahoma Street was built by D.L. Holcomb as a rental house. Among those who have lived there are Mrs. M.L. Williams, Carmel and Mary Ella Norris and the Corder family.

This home in Block 8 facing Tuscahoma street was built by D.L. Holcomb as a rental house. Among those who lived there are the families of Earl Lord (who had the chair factory), Wade Carver and Phil Cordero.



This home in Block 8 facing Paschal Street was home to the Tribble family, then to Fitzhugh and Hattie Singleton, who taught at Holcomb Elementary School for many years. It was later owned by Gary Jackson.

This home in Block F facing Tuscahoma Street was the John Hayden family home, then the home of Arthur and Addie Laura Williams.





The home of Thelma and Roland Hill in Block 8 facing Paschal Street.



Gary and Cletia Clanton share the holiday season at the Clark-Jackson-Oakley home in Block G facing Williams Street /Sparta Road.



This house in Block 8 facing Paschal Street was some to the family of "Bud" Minyard, Gladys and J.P. White and Bena White.



The Cecil Jacks home in Block C facing Paschal Street.



In Block N facing Williams Street, the Charles H. Aven house also was home to Landis and John Eddie Little.



Carmel and Mary Ella Norris lived in this home in Block 9 facing Tuscahoma Street.



The families of C.C. 'Foots' Clark, D.K. Hayden and Ward DeLoach have lived in this home on Williams Street/Sparta Road.

The Payne Home is in Block B facing Tuscahoma Street.



The home of Tommy and Esther Faye Jackson is in Block B facing Paschal Street.

The Hye-Townsend-Knights-R.L. Harris home is in Block 12 facing Tuscahoma Street



A Community Album

Holcomb, Mississippi

Old photos evoke the town's past and bring back memories of some of its favorite characters.



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Fishing was popular in an area rich with wetlands. These photos capture the flavor of a summer in the 1920's.



Young campers in the pre-backpack era of the 1920's were (from left) Jack McRee, Edgar Cole Clark, Archie Hill, Wade Rice, William Holcomb and Kirk McRee.



L.T. "Junior" Hayden shows off a bike he got in 1939 for selling newspaper subscriptions.



A crowded canoe was an escape from school.



Among the pupils is a young Dot Hayden (third from left, top row.)



Mary Jane Williams drives and rides her beau Edwin Holcomb's favorite horse, Dan.



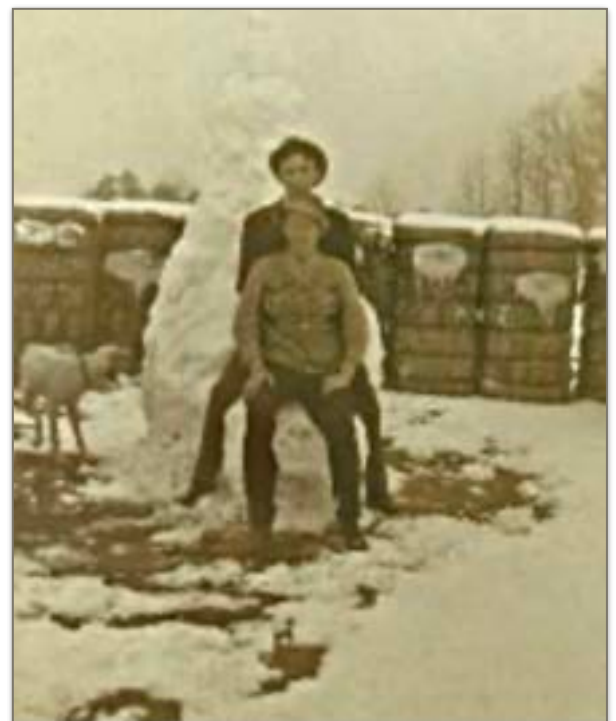
Sunday car rides and playhouses were many children's delight. At left are Ruby Hayden at the wheel with her daughters Marianne in the car and Jeanette hanging onto the door. In the playhouse are (from left) Marianne Hayden, Shirley Bloom and Jeanette Hayden.



Young people pose on North Main Street (above) and a child poses on the hood of a car at an early service station.



A car door frames Ruth Holcomb on her wedding day.



Snow blankets cotton bales as Edwin Holcomb (front) and Lee Casey show off a snowman.



Cotton was king, and one of the top growers was also one of the town's most beloved characters. Dot Hayden shows off his crop early in the year (top left) and when it's ready to pick (lower left.) Above, workmen pose inside one of the town's cotton gins.



Saddle horses were a passion with Edwin Holcomb all his life.

His sister, Hortense Matthews, is shown in the 1970's with her trademark cigarette.



At the intersection of Highway 7 South and Highway 8, the Norris service station was a town gathering place. Lamar "Slim" Norris is at right.



Horsepower was in the future. Holcomb's children first harnessed goat power. From left: Kirk McRee, Jack McRee, B.F. Smith and William Holcomb.



"Mr. Buck," Webster Buchanan, was the longtime Holcomb school superintendent.



This first grade class at Holcomb Elementary included (from left rear) Marguerite Bibb, B.F. Smith, Marjorie Gibson, William Holcomb and Margaret Stewart Carver. B.F. Smith was later president of the Delta Council.

William Holcomb in his goat cart.





Gloria Norris and a schoolmate pose in front of Gloria's home on Tuscahoma Street on the first day of school.



Years later, Gloria Norris, who went on to become editor of the Book of the Month Club, stands outside a Holcomb school building.



Among the Y-Teens in this photo are Gloria Norris, Barbara Cunningham, Virginia Ferguson, Joy Allen, Barbara Corder, Jeanette Hayden, Patsy Hammons and Jingle Edison, with their advisor, Bena White, at right.



This 7th grade class includes Glenda Minyard, Alma Grantham, Patsy Payne, Rose Anne Dunn, Dorothy Hayden, Woodsie Hill, Lavonne Jackson, Oglelene Cunningham, Buddy Clark, Vernon McNeer, Billy Bills, Jack Holland Curry and Cebo Little.



Gladys and J.P. White stand outside their South Main Street store, where generations of Holcomb residents bought everything from bacon to long johns.

Lucy Jackson pauses on South Main Street in 1958 after picking up her mail.





Duckett McMahon (left) and Mary Ella Norris were at the center of Holcomb life, dispensing the mail and the news at the post office.



Mary McRee (left) and Helen Gibson went after catfish.



This 1958 photo shows more of the post office crew. From left are postmistress Duckett McMahon, mail carrier F.B.Scott, mail carrier William Holcomb, mail carrier Richard Carver and mail carrier Jack Hey Curry.



Chick Cresswell and Dot Hayden show off a fine catch.



Everybody in Holcomb had fish stories, including Ruth and William Holcomb, who show off a catch at Dan Blue's home on Black Hawk Lake in the late 1940's.



Fulton McRee (right) does the dirty work of cleaning huge buffalo fish on the porch of his Main Street store.



Recollections of Fulton McRee invariably include "Fulton was just a lot of fun." He's shown here in 1941.



Fulton McRee wasn't the only one smiling as he reads headlines announcing the end of World War II.



Long, flat boats were perfect for fishing on the lakes edged with cypresses in 1945.



Jimmie Hill (left) and Kathleen Oakley ran the school lunch room in the 1950's.



Miss Sally Workman was the beloved teacher of generations of second graders.



In 1945, Katie McRee (far left), Mary Alice McRee (above left) and Bernice Curry pose for photos on a picnic outing. Mrs. Curry also taught third, and later, first grade at Holcomb School.



In 1950, Pat Holcomb and Benny Rose put their toys on parade.



Karen Holcomb and Charlie Morrow consider leaving home in 1958.



Andrew Jackson Curry (left) and Jack Hey Curry ran the drug store in what was later Gibson's Drug Store and then the post office.



The Holcomb Girl Scout troop poses for a group photo in the 1950's.



Beulah Elliott and the unidentified wife of a soldier tend turkeys at Camp Main during World War II.



The McRees tend their garden during War II.



The B.S.Elliott family included Uncle Sunnie and Becky and children Lois, Will, Archie, Johnnie, Nora, Williard and James Longley.



The Holcomb Methodist Church choir at the church dedication in 1951.

Ties that bind

Like all rural communities, Holcomb is both a central village and a widespread community of homes and farms. In today's interconnected world, it's easy to forget what vital lifelines early roads, the post office and the railroad provided.

Post Office



The Holcomb Post Office was established in 1903. It has moved at least five times since the town's founding.



This mail wagon photo, discovered by Mike Lott, may be the oldest image of mail service in early Holcomb. It is believed to date between 1901 and 1905 because the larger train depot had not yet been built.



The first post office was in the right side of the Lyda Holcomb home (shown in color at left), originally a small 'shotgun' (below, left of the hotel) that was later doubled in size. Lyda (the town's first postmistress) dispatched the mail from her front room.



Hotel

The second post office was in a building on North Main Street that burned in the 1927 fire that devastated the town. The third was in what was later a pool hall on North Main (below, right), and the fourth was in the old filling station (below, left) until 1940.



D.L. Holcomb's original service station, later used as a post office, at North Main and Tuscahoma



Looking west on North Main. The Harris-Nason store, the third post office (later a pool hall) and the McRee store.



The fifth Post Office was in the original drug store from 1940 until 1982. For many years mail was sorted and handed out by the postmistress. After the post office moved to the drug store building, individual boxes were installed. Other early postmasters included C.O. Aven and Sarah Townsend.



Rural mail carrier service was begun shortly after World War I. Among the early mail carriers were Jim Elliot (above) and Bates Curry. The original two routes covered about 30 miles each. Now routes stretch more than 100 miles each into parts of Grenada, Tallahatchie and Carroll counties.



Duckett McMahon (left) and Mary Ella Norris were at the center of Holcomb life, dispensing the mail and the news at the post office.



This 1958 photo shows more of the post office crew. From left are postmistress Duckett McMahon, mail carrier F.B.Scott, mail carrier William Holcomb, mail carrier Richard Carver and mail carrier Jack Hey Curry.



Postmaster Phillip Flemmons shows off the post office built in 1982 in Block 13 on the south side of Highway 7.

Railroad

The Yahoo & Mississippi Valley, also known as the Peavine, Railroad connected Grenada and Greenwood and led to the development of Holcomb. The original line, begun in 1885, ran 15 miles from Greenwood to Parsons. The Parsons station was built in 1886, making Parsons a major cotton shipping point. Grenada merchants, scenting lost business, were behind extension of the line to Grenada in 1900. Taking advantage of this line, Holcomb quickly became a shipping and ginning center. The line ran until 1947, when on April 10, Potococowa levee broke above Avalon and washed away a railroad bridge. The bridge was never replaced, and service ended.

Roads

Travel in the area was first by trail, then dirt road, then gravel. A highway was paved from Grenada to Holcomb in 1948. Grenada merchants fought extending the paving to Greenwood for fear of lost business, delaying that stretch of paving until the early 1950's. Bridges were often the weak link. In 1947, the old iron bridge between Holcomb and Oxberry fell in, for a time forcing long detours through Grenada, Rosebloom and Cascilla and separating the Holcomb-Oxberry community.

Electricity, water

Electricity came to Holcomb in the years shortly before 1920. D.L. Holcomb and his son Ed Holcomb set up a Delco electric plant to light their homes. Some of the stores also installed units. In 1927, Mississippi Power & Light Co. extended electrical lines to Holcomb.

Early residents had their own wells, either hand-pumped or artesian. With the advent of electricity, electrical pumps came into general use.

Telephones

Holcomb's first telephone was a simple line "hanging up in the tree limbs" in the 1920's, providing service only between D.L. and Ed Holcomb's homes. In the 1930's a public line reached Holcomb, and there was one phone, a crank wall phone in Joe Harris's store on Main Street. Residents used that phone free for 'local' calls in the Grenada service area. In the late 1940's, 8-party lines were established, opening a new communications era in sometimes unintended ways, including frequently overheard personal calls. All calls were placed through an operator.

Television

Television arrived in 1947. Craig Mullen had the first set, and poor reception was no deterrent to viewers. Young Judy Hayden, fascinated with the phenomenon, sat watching it 'snow' as static scrambled the picture. The early stations were in Memphis, Tennessee, 100 miles north, then, a few years later, in Greenwood, 26 miles west. Few in today's era of cable and 'streaming' can imagine how rapt the audience was despite the awful reception and extremely limited programming.

Movies

Many residents fondly remember early movies in a makeshift theater in the former Arthur Williams store on North Main Street near the old bank. Featuring an often balky projector and reels of flickering images, as well as rough stair-step bleacher seats, the cinema was a weekend tradition. Tickets were 10-15 cents, and the doors were flung open in the summer because it was so hot.

Other sights from around town...



Fire has played a tragic role in Holcomb's history

In the early 1920s the town's hotel was destroyed in a night blaze that William Holcomb vividly remembers. "I was 3 or 4 years old," he says. "All the town was there. And to keep me from getting in the way, Mother sat me on top of a grand piano they had carried out of the hotel." The hotel furniture that could be saved was carried to the train depot nearby. As in all fires of that era, once the blaze began, the townspeople tried to rescue the contents, but were forced to watch the building burn. Fortunately, this blaze didn't spread.

On the night of Aug. 23, 1927, it was a different story. On that night, a fire blamed on arson began in the stores on North Main Street in the middle of the night. Again the town raced to save the stores' inventories. Before the blaze died out, seventeen of the town's twenty two stores were gutted. The date of this fire would prove to be a sad turning point for the bustling railroad town. Hopes of rebuilding were crushed by the Great Depression just two years later.

Ten years after the 1927 blaze, in the winter of 1937, fire struck again. This one started at night in the barber shop, where an oil heater may have been left on. This time, ten Main Street stores burned. This blaze, too, had a grim aftermath that slowed recovery: the beginning of World War II.

But things have changed...



Lining up with their pumper truck, are:
(front row from left) Jeff Vincent, Jed Perry, Chief Danny 'Dump' Thomas, Joss White, Dusty Blackwelder, Glenn Perry, Bob Hayward, Tyler Kelly,
(back row) Taylor DeLoach, Mike Perry, Jeremy Hayward, Jason Coffman, Shane White, Red Lea, Marc Hayward, and Brandon Mabry. (2025)



Holcomb Volunteer Fire Department.
1 (662) 226-7414

These memories make the town especially proud of today's **Holcomb Volunteer Fire Department**. A dedicated team of firefighters, modern trucks and equipment, plus fire hydrants throughout the town provide safety earlier residents never dreamed of. Holcomb now has two fire stations, Station 1 at the Hwy 8/7 intersection /4 way stop, and Station 2 on Highway 35 S/Sweethome Road. Holcomb volunteer firefighters now protect a district that has grown to 109 square miles.

A Community of Faith



Holcomb United Methodist Church



Holcomb Baptist Church

Today, (1994), Holcomb has four churches: **Holcomb Baptist Church** on Tuscahoma Street, **Holcomb United Methodist Church** on Paschal Street, **New Tuscahoma A.M.E. Church** west of town on Tuscahoma Road and **St. Andrews Baptist Church** at the corner of South Main Street and Tuscahoma Road. Nearby churches also are part of the community. **Bethel Baptist Church, St. Peter Missionary Baptist Church, the Church of God of Prophecy** at Turkey Foot Fork and **Mount Zion A.M.E. Church** are near the Oxberry community. **Sparta United Methodist Church**, south of town, was built in 1835, long before Holcomb was founded.



A snowy photo from the 1950's shows the old Holcomb Baptist Church in the background.



Jeanette and Derrill Webb and their son Steve sit on the steps of the Old Holcomb Baptist Church.



St. Andrews Baptist Church



New Tuscahoma A.M.E. Church with the bell from the old church.



Steps and a pew remained from the old Tuscahoma A.M.E. Church.



Sparta United Methodist Church



Details of the Sparta church entry

The first **Holcomb Methodist Church** was built on the south side of the railroad close to the east end of town shortly after the town was established in 1902, according to research by **Ruth Holcomb**. Services were held in this building prior to completion in 1903. E.H. Rook was the first minister, with a congregation of ten. This building was destroyed by a storm in 1908.

A new church, built by Sam Curle and located at the corner of Paschal and Lyda streets, was completed in 1910. It was a white frame building on pillars with four steps up to flush double doors. These opened into a foyer with small Sunday school rooms on each side and double doors opening into the sanctuary. The sanctuary had tall narrow paned windows on each side. The choir was on a platform behind the lectern and altar rail. Hanging lamps, first oil and then electric, lit the chamber. Several student pastors served this church. In 1916, a parsonage was completed and C.T. Floyd became the first resident minister.

The present brick church was built in 1951 by A.L. Jackson on a lot on Paschal Street donated by Edwin Holcomb, and a new parsonage was built on the site of the second church by Eugene Blaylock in 1961.

The Sparta Methodist Church was built in 1835. According to a “**History of Sparta Church**” by **Eliese Dunn Estes**, the cemetery predated the church. The first burials on the site were Indian graves, and early settlers buried their dead in the same area. Several early flat stones are marked with only a last name or “unknown Indian.” The earliest settler stone is marked simply “Rozier.”

Sparta church began with a log building that served as a church and a school. This structure was replaced by a “plank” building and then by the present church. Early church families included the Carvers, Hobgoods, Neals, Sabins, Mullens, Clarks, Dunns, Fielders, Hightowers, Curses, Peets, Parhams and Atkinsons. Services were led by a circuit-riding preacher.

The present church was built by Richard and Jim Lester and completed in 1898. Many men and boys in the community helped in its construction. J.L. “Keats” Carver remembered helping haul brick for the foundation in an ox wagon when he was 12 years old. Bob Fielder and William H. “Babe” Clark made the church altar and benches. A cistern at the northeast corner of the church provided water. In the late 1940’s the adjoining educational building was added.



St. Peter Missionary Baptist Church



Mount Zion A.M.E Church



Bethel Baptist Church



Church of God of Prophecy at Turkey Foot Fork



Nature offers its own sanctuary for baptisms at the 'highway pond.'

New Tuscahoma A.M.E. Church, according to history shared by **Rosalee Topps**, was founded in August 1851 by the Rev. Willis Reynold and the Rev. William Walker on an acre of land donated by J.K. Ash. (Later the Rebecca Reed Elementary School at Holcomb was named for one of his daughters, who was a teacher. It was near this school the Freedom Riders rested overnight during a civil rights march in the summer of 1966.)

The earliest converts at the church were 21 year old Jordan Martin, who was still a member when he died at age 94, and Lucinda Ross, who remained a member until she died 70 years later. Among the early families in the church were the Ashes, Washingtons and Williamses.

The original building was framed of unfinished wood planks with a wood stove for heat and oil lamps for lighting. Gas heat and electricity came later. The old building was replaced in 1973 by a new church built of concrete blocks and running water and restrooms were added. In 1994, this church was remodeled to add a kitchen and dining room, pastor's study and baptismal pool.

New Tuscahoma's bell could be heard all over Holcomb on Sunday mornings, ringing a half-hour to call people to Sunday school and tolling for funerals. The early church cemetery was on the nearby Ash land, but this has fallen into disuse.

Saint Peter Missionary Baptist Church, near the Oxberry community, also has a long history. According to information collected by **Karolyn Bridges** and provided by **Diane Kincaid**, the first church was built on a hillside around 1899. The structure was of unmilled lumber. Oil lamps and lanterns hung from the ceiling.

In 1926, the church was relocated lower down in a valley to make access easier. The builder was a man named Bohannon from Leflore. Lumber from the old church was salvaged for the new construction. New lumber was milled by hand. The roof was covered with cypress shingles donated by Ed and Will Harbin and Jasper and Louella Perry.

Church members rode to services on mules and in wagons and buggies. Some walked many miles. The church's deacons provided wood for heating. Facilities included an outhouse at the rear of the church and a cistern for water. To help support the church, women sold basket meals of fried chicken, egg custard and sweet potato pies and vegetables in season.

St. Peter Missionary Baptist Church, (cont.)

Wednesday night prayer meetings and revivals were integral parts of community life. When weather made it difficult to reach the church for prayer meetings, members often gathered in each other's homes. In times of flooding, the church served as a place of refuge. It also provided education. Revivals traditionally began in the last week of July and lasted until the first Sunday in August, when baptisms were held. These occurred at the "**highway pond**," a serene pool reflecting fields and cypress trees, as the congregation gathered singing and the pastor and deacons led candidates into the water. The church now has a new concrete block building on Highway 35 near Oxberry. Behind it rises the Saint Peter Hill Cemetery.

Mount Zion A.M.E. Church also is more than 100 years old. Located on Old Highway 35/Oxberry Road, the original church is described by 93 year-old Edd Topps as a wood frame building heated by a wood stove with oil lamps for illumination and a nearby well for water. Early families included the Scotts, Reeces, Hughes, McKinleys, Lotts, Bridges, Davises, Adamases, Pittmans and Topps.

This building, about six miles from Holcomb, was abandoned in the 1950s and replaced by a new structure of concrete block and wood at a site about two miles closer to Holcomb on the same road. The new church has a paneled sanctuary and fellowship hall and gas heat. The Mount Zion Cemetery lies on a hillside not far away, its mellow old stones a landmark to the church's deep roots in the community.



Sparta's hillside cemetery is one of the area's oldest.

Weathered stones and old trees give Sparta Cemetery timeless grace.





In the Mount Zion Cemetery, a stone cross rests against a moss-covered marker.



"Sleep on Mother" is a fond epitaph for Mount Zion's Mary Perry, born in 1878.

A stone lamb marks a child's grave in the Holcomb Cemetery.



A stone tree with lopped trunk and branches symbolizes a life cut short in this Holcomb Cemetery marker.



The Holcomb community sent many of its sons to America's wars. This Holcomb Cemetery stone marks a World War I veteran's grave.





Old Trees shade the Bethel Cemetery, creating a sense of peace and reflection.



And in a community that loves animals, this rustic chapel marks the pet cemetery on a sunny hillside south of town.

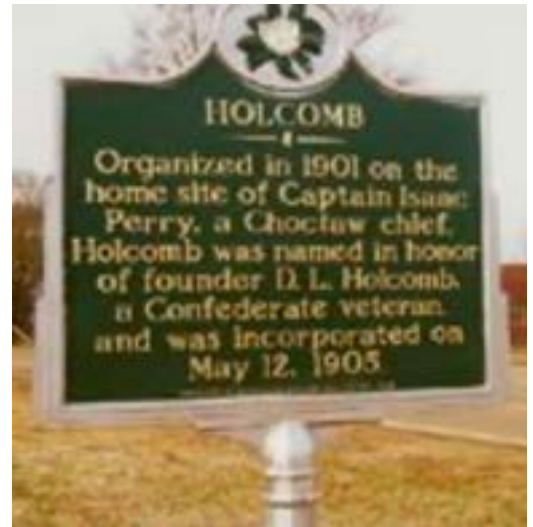
Guideposts to history



Organized here in 1818 by the Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury. The 1st in a series of 13 missions for the education of the Choctaws into western culture. It was closed in 1832 due to removal of many Choctaws to Oklahoma.



Extinct village 3 mi.. N.W. on Yalobusha River. Once a busy shipping point & site of U.S. Land Office. 1833-1840. Declined when office moved to Grenada. Probably named for Chokchuma Indians.



Organized in 1901 on the home site of Captain Isaac Perry, a Choctaw chief. Holcomb was named in honor of founder D.L. Holcomb, a Confederate veteran, and was incorporated on May 12, 1905.

Three state historic markers point to Holcomb's history, recalling the founding of the Eliot Mission, the first Protestant mission to the Choctaw Nation; the vanished village of Chocchuma, from which Indian lands were sold to white settlers; and finally the founding of the town of Holcomb itself. (The last was damaged by an auto accident and removed from its location on Highway 7 in 2011.) But there also have been human guides to Holcomb's history who have cared enough to keep the past alive and share it with those of us who follow them.



J.C. "Happy" Hathorn

J.C. "Happy" Hathorn, a much-loved superintendent of Grenada County schools, privately published **"A History of Grenada County"** in 1967. It has vivid descriptions of the county's early history, including the area that is now Holcomb. Although it is long out of print, copies are available at the Grenada County Library.

Henry Watterson Heggie in 1989 gathered a wealth of information on the Choctaws and Eliot Mission in his **“Indians and Pioneers of Old Eliot,”** published by Tuscahoma Press in Grenada. This book included previously unpublished journals of Henry Sale Halbert, who lived and taught in the Choctaw Nation in this area of Mississippi.



Henry Heggie

But history is never perfectly told. There's always more to find out. Archives, memories rich in information are waiting for new researchers to bring them to light. Oral history is there to be recorded. You never know 'til you look. You never hear 'til you ask.

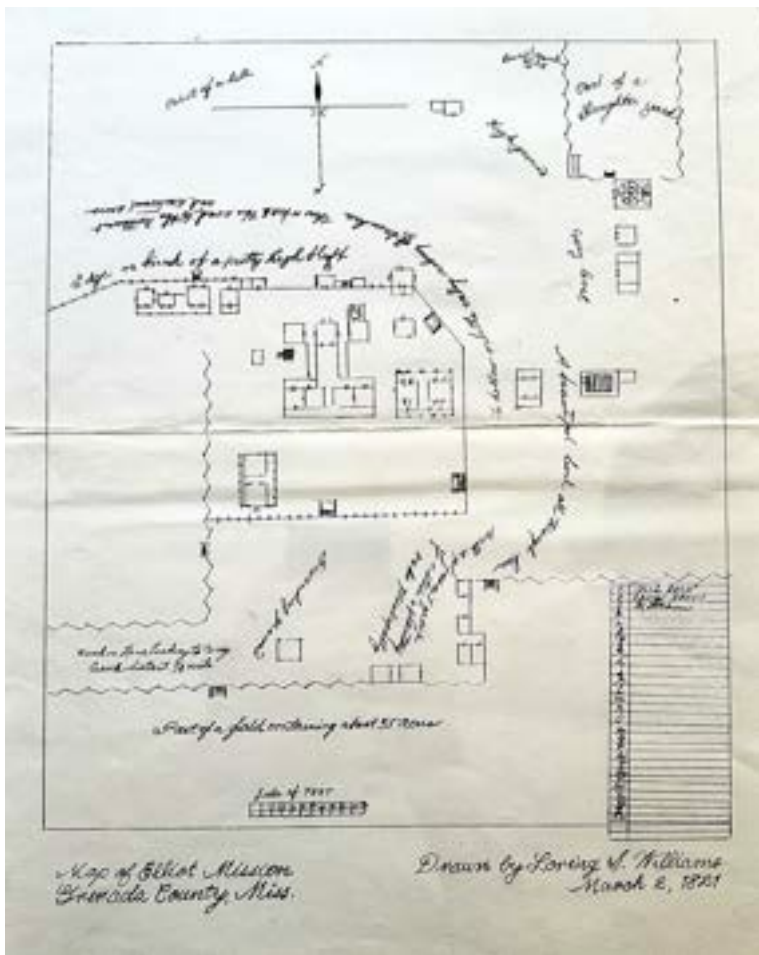
Some of history's best researchers haven't been scholars, they've been children asking their parents and grandparents questions, keeping family and community traditions and memories alive, giving future generations a sense of place and meaning in a fast-changing world.

Thanks for stopping by!

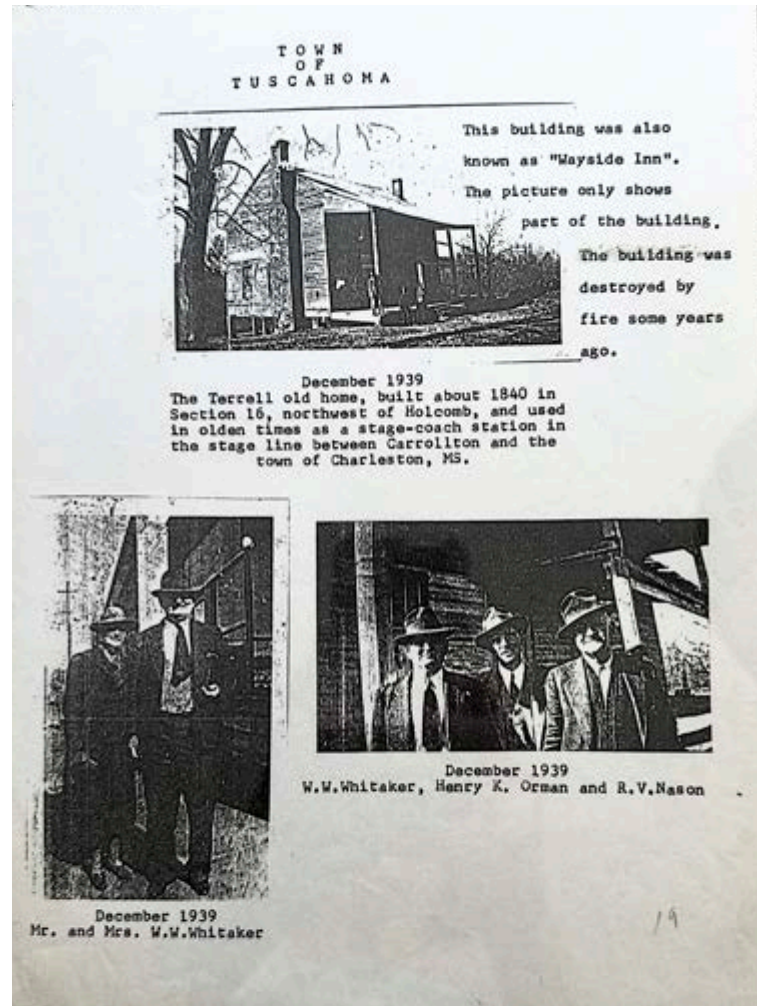
Atlanta, Georgia
August, 2025

Additional photos and information...





Early settlements and new beginnings...



SALE OF LOTS BUSINESS AND RESIDENCE AT HOLCOMB, On Extension of the J. C. F. January 15, 1901.

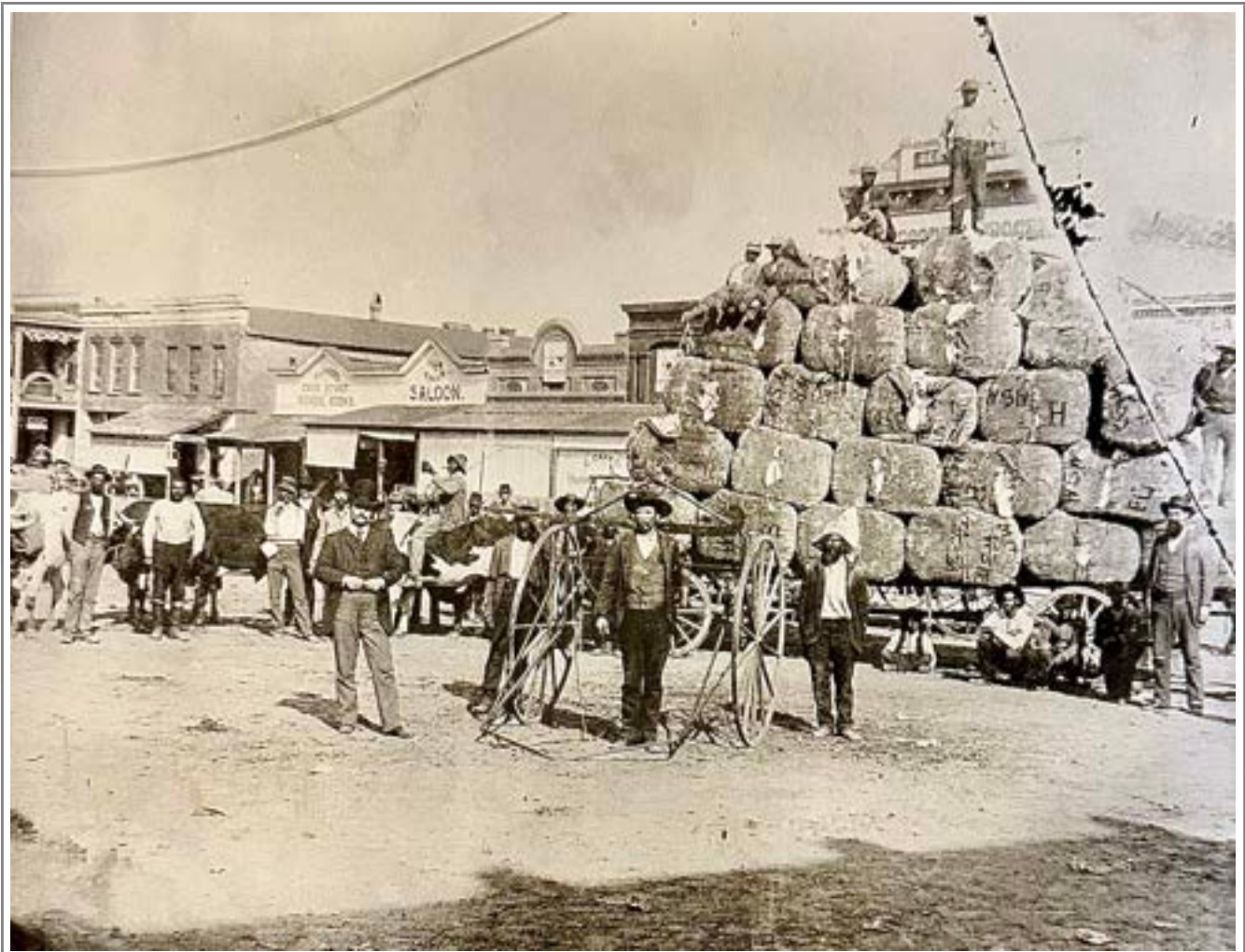
These lots offer extra inducements to purchasers of the investment. Holcomb is destined to be an A No. 1 business point. Several business lots have been sold already. A large manufacturing plant will locate here, the site having been purchased. A large ginnery and a saw mill are to be put up. Other enterprises are contemplated.

Holcomb is in the midst of a splendid agricultural section. Location, ten and a-half miles west of Grenada, and five miles east of Parsons.

All are invited to attend the sale of these lots. Come and "look the land over."

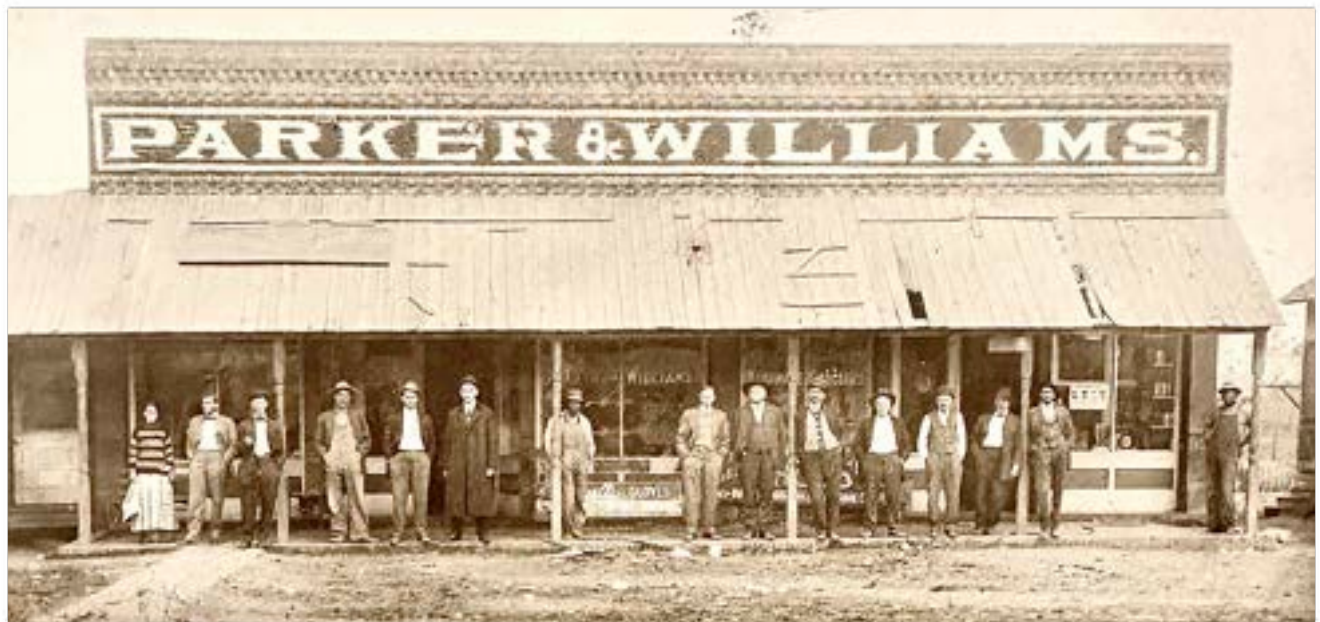
D. L. HOLCOMB.

A few more views of Main Street in the early years...





When the old corner gas station was new...



An old favorite gets a facelift

By GWEN WOODS
Staff Writer

With a coat of fresh paint to revive that effin' gleam, "Sparkle" has returned to Holcomb thanks to the artistry of Cristen Craven Bainard.

Bainard was commissioned by Mike Lott, owner of the former Bank of Holcomb building, to paint a new smile on "Sparkle" as a means of putting a little life in the downtown area of Holcomb.

The sign was originally painted in the 1950s, while the building was being used as the Corner Grocery for many years. Over time, the Coca-Cola

Company stopped using this form of advertising and the signs were neglected.

Bainard said she has been commissioned for many projects, but none quite like this one. Bainard, from Tutwiler, has had her work featured in numerous churches and homes throughout the state. She has also had her work featured in promotional pieces of The King Biscuit Festival.

Bainard said she enjoys creating large murals for various cities and organizations but said she has never been asked to paint a sign or mural which had been previously painted.

"It is so interesting to see what was

there before, what is behind the layers of paint," Bainard said. "It is real unusual to see a sign like this still around. This little guy used to be featured in ads in all of the little towns and most of those buildings have been torn down."

"Sparkle", with his five-cent bottle-cap hat, was the featured mascot for Coca-Cola in the 1950s, before he was used for the company's advertising for their new product, Sprite. For this restoration project, the Coca-Cola Manufacturing Company was contacted and after a time, granted permission to repaint the sign.

The facelift comes as Lott makes plans to begin a laundromat in the old Bank of Holcomb building, which was established in 1905.

Combining the new with the old, Lott has also commissioned Bainard to paint scenes of "old Holcomb" on a concrete horse and mule water trough which was built in 1916 in front of the bank building. As customers deposited their money, their horses and mules could "Pause and Refresh" at the trough which had a steady stream of water thanks to an Artesian well near the building.

Work on the trough has been on hold while Lott begins construction on the building, keeping a close eye on maintaining the architectural integrity of the building.

"Sparkle" can be seen at the corner of North Main and Tuscohomia Street in downtown Holcomb.



staff photos/Gwen Woods

Sparkle returns ...

Cristen Craven Bainard of Tutwiler (top photo) begins the restoration of the Coca-Cola sign in downtown Holcomb. The finished product (right photo) can be seen on the corner of North Main and Tuscohomia Street in Holcomb.



Announcements of new things when they happened...

Holcomb on map of information highway

By TOBIE BAKER
Staff Writer

What is Holcomb, Miss.? Today, it's a small community west of Grenada, and it's not impossible to miss the township on Highway 8 if you blink your eyes while driving at high speeds. However, if you do keep your eyes open, then check out a web site developed by a native of the little township, and you will see that the name Holcomb, derived from early English words, means "wooded valley."

This is just one tidbit of information obtainable from the informative internet site developed by Pat Koester, and it also contains a vast record of the history of Holcomb. The www.holcomb.org site includes early Indian legacy, the first settlers, vanished villages and a collage of photographs of bygone businesses, homes, and people.

"History interests me and I think it's important," Koester said in regard to providing the internet site. "There's some really important history in that part of the country. I wanted the people, especially school kids, to know that the web site is there."

Holcomb was founded by Koester's great-grandfather, David Lafayette

Holcomb, in 1901 on land that was once the site of Choctaw Indian Chief Isaac Perry. Koester reveals the community's roots from the Choctaw

Indian Nation through white settlement and the South's cotton boom. The web site provides insight into the rise of this once thriving cotton town; however,

Koester also reveals the fall of Holcomb.

During the early 1900s, two fires destroyed most of the businesses, including several general stores, a bank, a hotel, and an ax handle factory. The community was never able to recover from the destruction of arsons due to the economic hardship brought on by the Great Depression, yet many of the original homes still exist today.

"She's a very civic minded person," said Mrs. W. E. Holcomb, Koester's mother. Koester is originally from Holcomb, and her mother, who still lives there, said the web site was a way for Koester to enlighten the people of Grenada County about their history. Koester graduated from Grenada High School, and later studied journalism at the University of Missouri. She now lives in Atlanta where she works as a copy editor for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Koester said the internet provides "an easy, cheap" way for small town people to keep their history alive, and she's excited to have been able to keep the history of Holcomb alive for future generations. After checking out the web site, maybe the next time you drive by Holcomb you will be a little more bright eyed.



This is the opening page of the Holcomb website designed by Pat Koester. The address is: www.holcomb.org