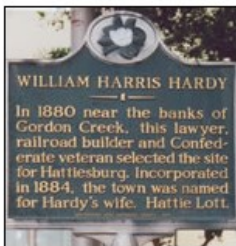


Hattiesburg Area Historical Society



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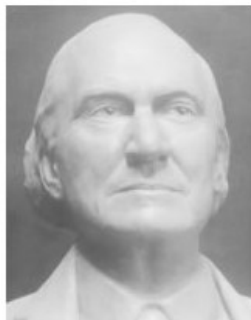
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Hattiesburg - The Beginning



Captain William Harris Hardy, founder of Hattiesburg, was born at Collerine, Alabama on February 12, 1837. He received training in education, law, and surveying. During the War Between the States, he served as Captain of Company H of the 16th Mississippi Regiment.

In 1868, he conceived the idea of building a railroad from Meridian to New Orleans. The preliminary survey was completed in 1872, and the next several years were spent in promotion and organization.

Captain Hardy, a widower with six children, met Hattie Lott on a visit to Mobile in April of 1873. He was so impressed with Hattie's kindness of heart that he cultivated the acquaintance, and they married on December 1, 1873. The couple was extremely happy and made a home in Meridian, Mississippi, where their two sons and a daughter were born.

In August of 1880, during a survey trip from Meridian to New Orleans, Captain Hardy stopped to rest and have lunch. This lunch spot was on the north side of Gordon Creek near a large Oak tree and several Hickory trees. This location is now in the downtown section of Hattiesburg, across the street from the United States Post Office.

While resting, Captain Hardy spread a map of Mississippi on the ground and studied the surveyed line of the New Orleans and North Eastern Railroad. He was familiar with the harbor at Gulfport and believed that a railroad from the Gulf Coast to Jackson would be beneficial and would help develop southern Mississippi.



He drew a line through the virgin pine forest and intersected the New Orleans and North Eastern Railroad where the city of Hattiesburg is now located. Hardy decided to locate a train station here and named it "Hattiesburg" in honor of his second wife, Hattie Lott Hardy.

Tragically, Hattie died in 1895 without ever visiting the city named for her. To make a fresh start, a grief-stricken and now Senator Hardy moved his law practice to Hattiesburg. In 1900, he married Ida Viola May. Three boys were born to the couple while they lived in Hattiesburg. The now Judge Hardy died on February 17, 1917, at 80 years of age. He is buried in Gulfport, terminus of the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad, which he founded in 1887.



There is a collection of William H. and Hattie L. Hardy papers in the McCain Library Archives at The University of Southern Mississippi.

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