

## The Ellicott Stone

The Treaty of San Lorenzo surrendered to the United States all Spanish claims on lands East of the Mississippi River between latitudes 31° and 32° in 1795.

STARS AND STRIPES were first raised on Mississippi soil in 1797. Land along the 31st parallel was surveyed. A 60 foot wide strip was cleared and marked with this stone by Andrew Ellicott. The original stone is still in place on the 31st parallel in North Mobile County and the 31st parallel runs through Forrest County, MS. A replica of the Ellicott stone is on display at the HAHS Museum.



### HAHS current project: *History of Forrest County*

#### *Mississippi*

This 500 page book will contain family and community stories **Of The People, By The People and For The People**, pertaining to the history of Forrest County. This archival quality book will contain over 500 family stories and several hundred community stories. This project, 3-5 years in the making, will be completed in 1996. The Pre-Publication Price is \$49.25 plus tax. Call 583-1362.

Join the HAHS for Annual Events  
in Downtown Hattiesburg:

**\*Olde Time Festival**  
**\*Hubfest**

The Society's activities include museum exhibits, arranging and/or providing guides for special tours, presenting programs, workshops and demonstrations. HAHS also serves as an information source.

Visit the

### HAHS Museum

127 Front Street-Saenger Center

Call 583-1362

Open Monday 2-4 p.m. or by appointment

The HAHS has adopted the  
**Hawkins Junior High School**  
**Library**

through the Hattiesburg Adopt-A-School Program

### HAHS Supports You- Support HAHS

Membership dues and donations are the primary financial support this non-profit organization receives each year. The museum is staffed by volunteers, who also conduct tours and host programs. The quality of this program is enhanced by your membership, donations and volunteer time.

Please allow us to add you to our mailing list:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: **I want to help with:**

HAHS **Membership** \_\_\_\_\_

P.O. Box 1573 **Donation** \_\_\_\_\_

Hattiesburg, MS 39403 **Volunteering** \_\_\_\_\_

## HATTIESBURG AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY & HAHS MUSEUM



*Life Along The Leaf*  
in the  
*Early 1800's*

HAHS is a member of:

Mississippi Historical Society  
The Society of Mississippi Archivist  
Mississippi Museum Association  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Historic Preservation Forum  
Hattiesburg Area Development Partnership  
Hattiesburg Downtown Association  
Federation of Mississippi Historical Societies

## EARLY SETTLERS AND THE KEELBOAT LEAF

by Andrew R. English

Following the heavy spring rains of 1990, the receding water of the Leaf River revealed the remains of an artifact from a forgotten era. A 32-foot-long section of a keelboat was removed from a riverside mudbank near New Augusta to Hattiesburg to await preservation.

Allen Saltus, an underwater archaeologist from Southeastern Louisiana University remarked that his study of keelboat construction "indicates that the craft was constructed in 1830, plus or minus seven years." The question remains: What factors existed to support the operation of a keelboat in the Leaf River some 160 years ago?

One possible answer comes from J. Greg Hinton of Middleburg, Va. A reference is made to Leaf River commerce in the Hinton family History: "The people of Perry and Greene County (sic) Mississippi traded in St. Stephens, Alabama, for supplies required. Later a Mr. Bartlett brought a trading boat up the Leaf River."

The account continues with the story that Bartlett buried several thousand dollars in Spanish coins south of Old Augusta. He died without revealing its location; however, it was eventually discovered by Allen Hinton in 1854.

Navigation of the Leaf was a necessity as settlers came into the region after the signing in 1805 of the Treaty of Mount Dexter. This treaty ceded over 4 million acres of Choctaw lands in southeastern Mississippi and Southern Alabama to the U. S. government.

The frontier outpost of St. Stephens was strategically located on the Southern reaches of the Tombigbee River and was the central way station along the "Three Chopped Way". By 1807, this route connected Natchez with Milledgeville, Georgia.

Settlement of the Piney woods began in earnest after the war of 1812, as the victories of that conflict freed settlers of both the Creek Indian threat and the meddlesome Spanish. Greene County was established December 9, 1811, by act of the Territory Assembly. The first courthouse was built at Boyce Hill overlooking the Leaf River near the present day town of McLain. Using the Three Chopped Way, pioneers homesteaded at Hickory Grove in 1817 near present day Glendale. Shortly thereafter, a nearby Leaf River trading post grew into the township of Monroe.

The pattern of settlement in south Mississippi was determined by migration up the Pascagoula, Chickasawhay and Leaf Rivers and westward along the Three Chopped Way. By 1819, a U. S. Government land office was established at a settlement along the Leaf that the Choctaw called "Three Smokes".

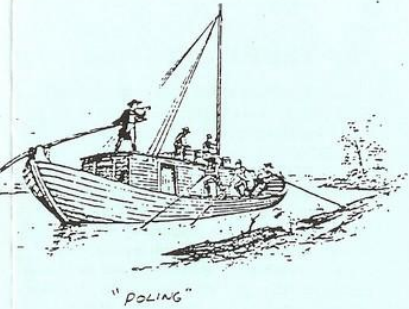
Eventually, overland trails connected this village, known to settlers as Augusta, with Mobile and another to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Today, Lorraine-Cowan Road in Biloxi runs over part of the Old Augusta Road.

The 1969 highway map of George County indicates a small cemetery named St. Stephens positioned along the Leaf River near Merrill. This cemetery suggests a possible link between the trading post on the Tombigbee River and Augusta.

As the seat of Perry County and the site of the government land office, Augusta grew as settlers poured into the region during the "flush times" of the 1830s; it is therefore logical that a keelboat would operate along the river.

In 1993, Allen Saltus conducted a survey of the keelboat Leaf and concluded that the vessel was approximately 53 feet long, 14 feet wide and drew two and a half feet of water. If indeed Bartlett was the "patron" (pronounced patroon) of the Leaf, his methods of propulsion would be backbreaking by today's standards.

See the **KEELBOAT LEAF** - on display at the MPC Boat Barn at 401 Southern Avenue in **DOWNTOWN HATTIESBURG**. *Donations toward the Preservation of this Historic Artifact ARE APPRECIATED.*  
**Contact the HAHS at (601) 583-1362.**



The keelboat would have been poled upstream or towed using a long heavy rope called a "cordelle". To cordelle a keelboat upriver, the cable would be let out and most of the crew would walk along the bank pulling the craft forward.

However, if the surrounding land were swampy, the vessel would have been "warped" forward. This method required the use of the keelboat's skiff to row ahead with the cordelle. The crew in the skiff would then tie the cable to a tree, and the crew of the keelboat would haul themselves forward.

Another technique was called bushwacking. During the spring floods, the keelboat men travelled near the bank by grabbing low tree branches and manhandled their boat forward.

The keelboat men were constantly on the lookout for underwater obstructions such as a "planter" or "sawyer". These jagged, submerged tree stumps could spell doom for any keelboat that happened upon them in a fast moving current. The Saltus study of the Leaf indicates the keelboat was sunk as the result of a collision.

*It is indeed fortunate that this mishap occurred, as today we have an invaluable link to our pioneer past!*