

History of Talmo

The small community of Talmo, located some 10 miles north of Jefferson and 13 miles south of Gainesville on what used to be the Gainesville-Midland Railroad Line, was little more than a vast wilderness in 1865 with only a few houses scattered here and there. The first Land Grant was issued to Stephen Whitmire and consisted of 375 acres of good land on January 24, 1816.

The origin of the place named Talmo is somewhat a mystery, yet one reliable source says that the name derived from the Creek Indian word Talomeco, which means Home of the Chief Tallassee.

The first recorded settler in this area was a Mr. Hemphill who arrived sometime prior to 1840. After that time this section of northern Jackson County began to be settled more rapidly. Early settlers included Moses Smith from Union County, Jimmy Rogers settling near Pendergrass, Billy Wood settling near where Mountain Creek now stands, Rev. Jesse Human near Hickory Sideling, and Moses and James Simmons settling where Talmo is now located.

The area was hit heavily by the War Between the States, and the loss of life was relatively high. The small developing community was left with no fewer than 15 widows after the gunfire stopped.

After the Civil War, in 1866, the Rev. W. H. Bridges, Sr. moved into this area. It has been said that this man probably did more to develop and open up the area in those early days than any other person. One of the first things he did was to have the people build a log schoolhouse. Around 1872, when Mountain Creek Church was organized, services were held in this building.

SCHOOLS

The first school in the Talmo area was located in the Johnnies Hill Mason Lodge in 1882. Members of the Lodge built a two-story building, and the lower part of the structure was used as a schoolroom. It was located two miles west of Talmo where Ted Cook now lives.

The officials of the Johnnies Hill School sought out good teachers for this work. Two of the first teachers were Miss Irene Bailey and F. T. McGee. Eddie Dickson (Mrs. Clifford Storey) graduated from Brenau in 1903 and some of her early teaching experience was at Johnnies Hill. Miss Dickson's home was :

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Jefferson, so she rode the Gainesville-Midland Railroad to Talmo on Sunday, then on to Jefferson for the week-end. While in Talmo she stayed with the Simmons family.

Talmo's first school was built in 1906 on four beautiful acres adjoining the church lot. J. H. A. Simmons and W. H. Bridges were the leading men in building the \$2500 school. The school was furnished with single patent desks, good blackboards, good maps in sets, good charts, small globes, framed pictures, a library of 75 volumes, an organ, teacher's desk, a well in good condition, a covered water cooler, and individual drinking cups.

There were three teachers--Luther Elrod, assuming the principal's position, with F. K. McGee and Miss Irene Bailey as teachers. There were 99 pupils, a Boys Corn Club, History Club, and a 32 weeks school year in two terms of 24 and 8 weeks.

Luther Elrod boarded with the J. H. A. Simmons family. He was very fond of the youngest daughter, Lunette, then a toddler. He often took her to school with him, where she played with the school books all day.

Our last school in Talmo was built about 1925. It was a beautiful school built on the same lot as the previous one which had burned. It consisted of five classrooms with cloakrooms and a large auditorium with a stage and red velvet drapes. Later a lunch room was added. Pupils attended grades 1-9 and later graduated from Jefferson and other schools.

HOMES

In the early days of Talmo, every man owned his own home. Some of the beautiful homes belonged to: L. C. Fowler, J. H. A. Simmons, John William Whitmire, J. H. Simpson, J. D. Bridges, W. H. Bridges, Sr., Henry Simmons and Clarence Wood.

LATER HISTORY OF TALMO

Talmo had only one store and a railroad line in 1896. By 1905, the little town had grown to include two large stores, a post office, a blacksmith and repair shop, a large ginning plant, railroad depot, two large warehouses, a rock quarry, guano company, and the new schoolhouse mentioned earlier.

During the reign of "King Cotton" Talmo prospered and continued to grow producing a very fine short staple cotton known far and wide. As a matter of

(9/15/66 NOTE BY CAROLDENE MCEVER DIV)

FRARY
Long staple (Elrod's Historical Notes)
Short staple - Wilson's Early History of Jackson Co. Georgia

