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Decatur County
Georgia



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COURT HOUSE
DECATUR COUNTY. BAINBRIDGE, GEORGIA

Robert Earl Woodham
Bainbridge, Ga., 1920

FOREWORD

THE attention of the entire country has been lately directed towards the marvelous growth of South Georgia within the last few years, and its vast and incalculable resources. Investors and homeseekers are constantly inquiring with a view of obtaining some of the benefits. We believe that Decatur County is one of the richest in resources and will furnish more attractions to all classes of inquirers than any other county in this section.

Therefore we have prepared and will disseminate information about the county in this shape, with apologies for meagre details, but with assurances of its substantial accuracy. We invite all good citizens to cast their lot with us, either as citizens or investors of capital.

The Mayors of the city and towns of the county will cheerfully give further information and assistance, or it may be obtained by applying to Robert G. Hartsfield, Bainbridge, Ga., who is Clerk of this Board and County Attorney, or any member of the Board.

JOHN W. CALLAHAN, Chairman
Bainbridge, Ga.

C. S. HODGES, Cyrene, Ga.

R. E. L. MONROE, Bainbridge, Ga.

S. D. CHERRY, Donalsonville, Ga.

J. A. WELLS, Faceville, Ga.

Commissioners

*Circa
1910*



LAKE DOUGLAS BAINBRIDGE



GOOD ROADS A PLENTY



• SPRING CREEK.

Location.

Decatur County is situated in the southwestern corner of the State of Georgia, bounded on the south by Florida and on the west by Alabama. The Chattahoochee River is the western boundary and the Flint River runs through the middle of the county. Both of these rivers are navigable for the larger river boats, and their outlet is at Apalachicola on the Gulf of Mexico, in close touch with the Panama Canal. The distance in time to Montgomery, Alabama, by rail is six hours, to Savannah and Jacksonville eight hours, to Atlanta twelve hours and to New York thirty-two hours.

Size.

The county is about forty by thirty miles and contains more than three-quarter of a million of acres. There is little of this that is not available for agriculture, and most of it is susceptible of a high state of cultivation, as will be seen by a casual survey of the county. This is brought about by both the nature of the soil, the undulating character of the lands and the many streams and rivers traversing the county that make a perfect system of drainage.

Population.

The population is approximately 35,000, about 60 per cent. whites and 40 per cent. colored.

STREET SCENE
IRON CITY



BRINSON



"TOILING
IN THE
COTTON
AND THE
CAIN"



CORN
CLIMAX

Transportation Facilities.

The main line of the Atlantic Coast Line traverses the county from east to west between Savannah, Jacksonville and Montgomery, with a branch line from Climax to River Junction, Fla., where connection is made with the L. & N. for Mobile and New Orleans, S. A. L. for Jacksonville and A. & N. for Apalachicola and St. Marks on the Gulf, also river boats to the Gulf and Columbus, and branch to Amsterdam, the big tobacco plantation.

The Georgia, Florida & Alabama Railway Company splits the county from north to south, between Carabelle on the Gulf of Mexico and Columbus, its present northern terminus, with a probable extension to Birmingham. Bainbridge, the county site, is the headquarters of this latter system, and here they maintain their general offices and shops, employing a large number of men.

The Callahan Line of steamers, plying the waters of Flint River between Bainbridge and the Gulf of Mexico, navigating without interruption the year round, and at Apalachicola connecting with the Tarpon Line from Mobile, New Orleans and points on the Mississippi and confluent rivers. By this route Bainbridge and Decatur county receive much heavy freights from the west at a lower rate than the all-rail route, giving an immense advantage in this particular.

The Thronateeska Navigation Company, operating steamers on the Flint River north and south of Bainbridge to all river points as far as the Chattahoochee, is doing a thriving local business.

Both these lines of steamers have headquarters at Bainbridge and are owned by local capital. Both connect with the Chattahoochee River steamers for Columbus.

The Georgia Southwestern & Gulf is a new railroad now in process of construction between Cordele, Ga., and St. Andrews-on-the-Gulf. It will pass through Donalsonville and the western part of the county.

The Georgia Northeastern is another new road planned and will be built from Bainbridge to Pelham, and there connect with lines and form a system that will ultimately have Augusta, Ga., for its northern terminus.

GIRLS' DORMITORY
CYRENE
INSTITUTE



ROADS
AND
FOREST

CYRENE
INSTITUTE



WILDER
VIRGINIA



Financial.

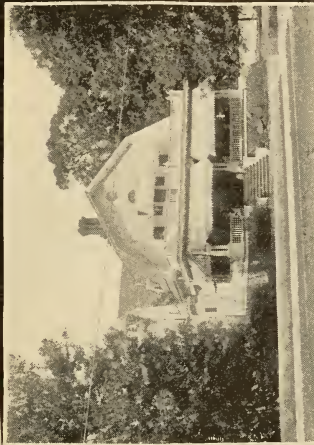
The county tax rate averages from 6 to 7 mills per annum. Property is returned for taxation at about 75 per cent. of its valuation. The county has no bonded indebtedness. A \$45,000 court house was built a few years ago by direct taxation without an increase in rate. The courts and county government are administered on an economical basis. Between \$30,000 and \$40,000 per annum has been and is being spent in building and maintaining a system of good roads throughout the county.

Soils.

The soil is generally of a gray loam, and there is the good Norfolk sandy loam and the Gadsden sand, and much of the phenomenally rich brown pebbly land. The subsoil is of red or yellow clay with sand mixture. Almost all of the soil of this county is susceptible of a high state of cultivation, and readily responds to intelligent effort.

Price of Land.

Good lands near the railways are selling for from \$10 to \$40 per acre. There is plenty of desirable land yet to be had for \$10 per acre, but the tendency of the price is upward and lands will not be as cheap as they are now for a great while longer. There is still a large acreage in the hands of the turpentine and saw mill men, but this is gradually being released for farming purposes.



A RESIDENCE



METHODIST CHURCH BAINBRIDGE



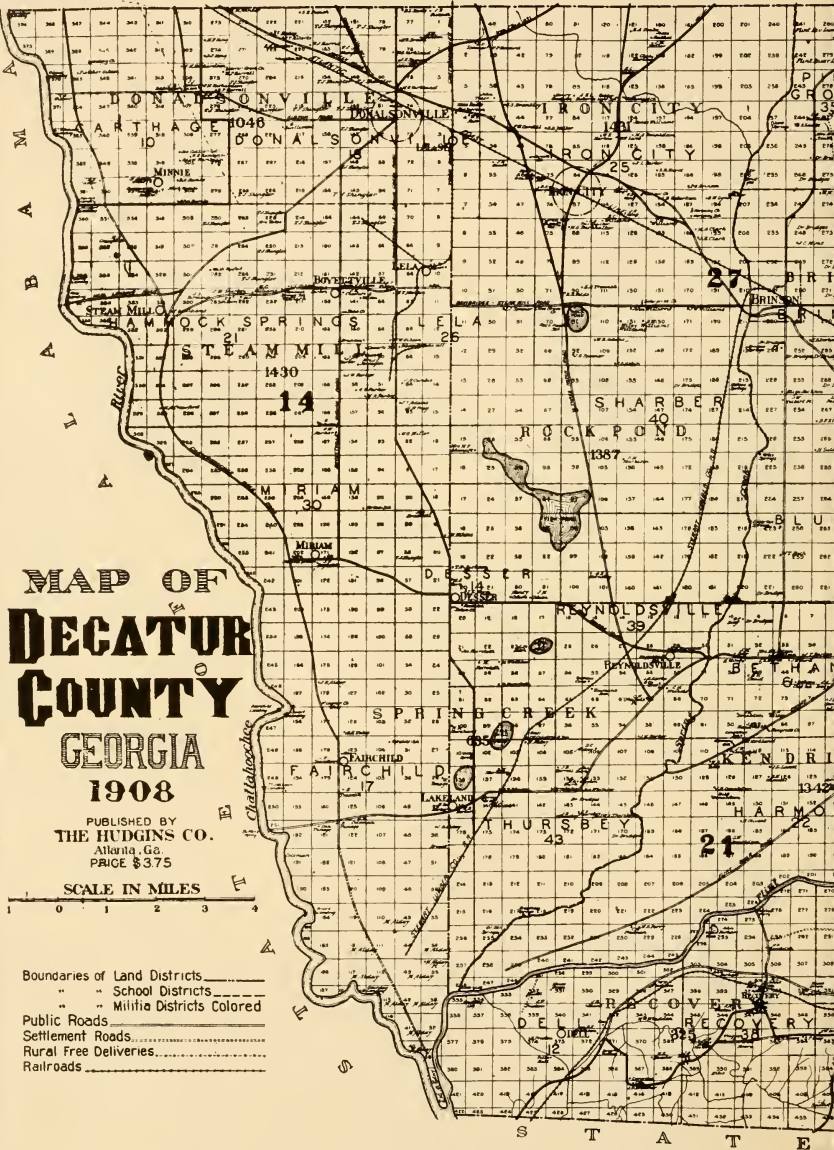
RESIDENCE JNO. W. CALLAHAN.



MONUMENT SQUARE

BAINBRIDGE

EARLY CO MILLER CO



MAP OF DECATUR COUNTY GEORGIA 1908

PUBLISHED BY
THE HUDGINS CO.
Atlanta, Ga.
PRICE \$3.75

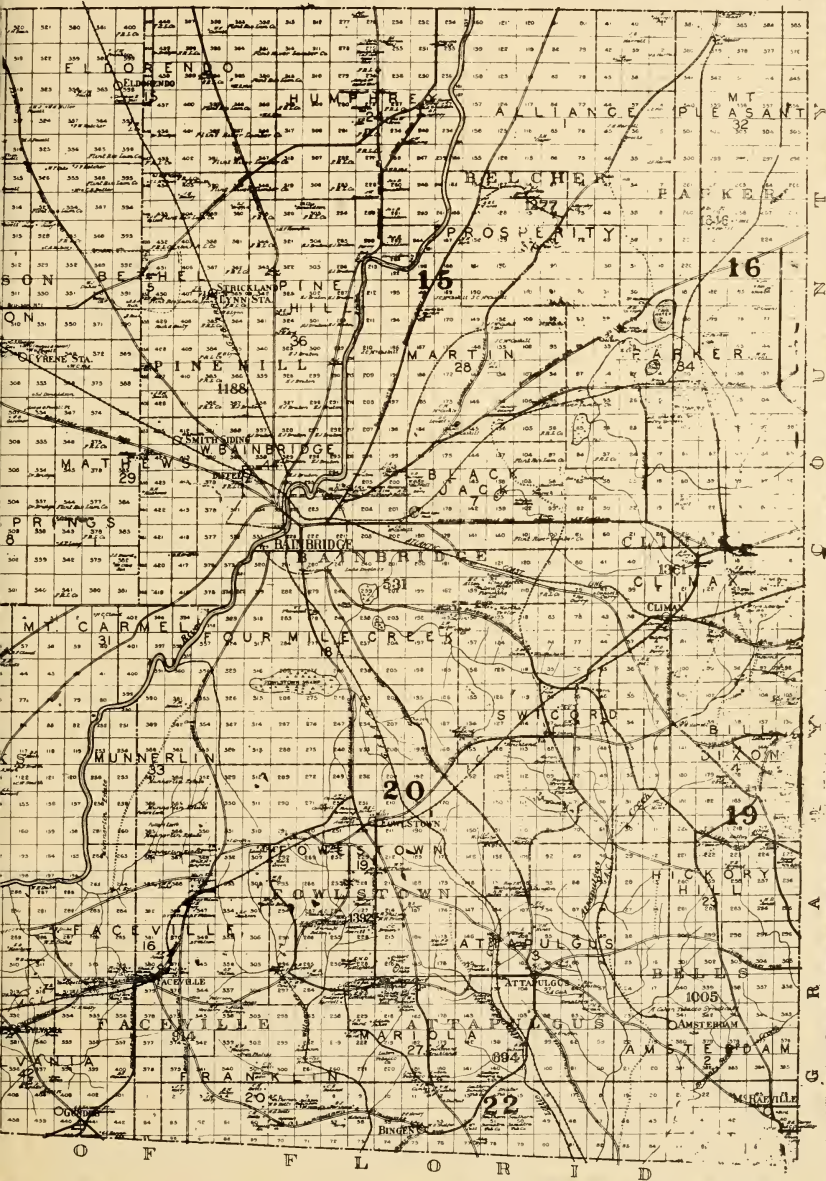
SCALE IN MILES

1 0 1 2 3 4

Boundaries of Land Districts
" " School Districts
" " Militia Districts Colored
Public Roads
Settlement Roads
Rural Free Deliveries
Railroads

S T A T E

U N T Y BAKER CO MITCHELL CO



Agriculture.

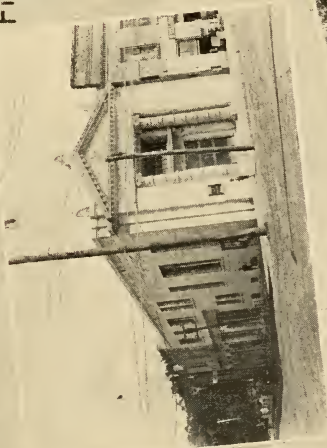
Agriculture is becoming to be the chief industry, for with the passing of the timber interests, for which the land was at one time supposed to be mainly valuable, the lands are being and have been put into cultivation with marvelous results. They will produce from one-half to a bale and one-half to the acre. Mr. E. A. J. Rich, a reliable farmer, gathered and ginned from 20 acres of ordinary land 20 bales of cotton by the first of October, and estimated that there were 5 bales more in the field. And this, too, was when cotton was hovering around thirteen cents. Corn will make from 15 to 40 bushels per acre, oats 20 to 30, sweet potatoes from 200 to 400 bushels, tobacco (leaf) from 1,000 to 1,500, hay and all forage crops in the greatest abundance, rice, peanuts, pumpkins, velvet beans, peas,—in fact all the fruits and vegetables and almost anything that can be grown in any climate.

Cane is one of the most important and remunerative crops in this county. It is easy to raise. From one acre enough cane can be grown to make 450 gallons of syrup, which put in barrels, is staple and will readily sell to the buyers or to the refinery at Bainbridge at from 28 to 35 cents per gallon. If made with care and put in cans or bottles it brings 75 cents or more. These estimates are conservative. Individual farmers are making more per acre on all crops than the estimates set out above. It pays to farm in Decatur County. This is evident from the fact that our farmers are reaching out and improving lands and getting more independent every year.

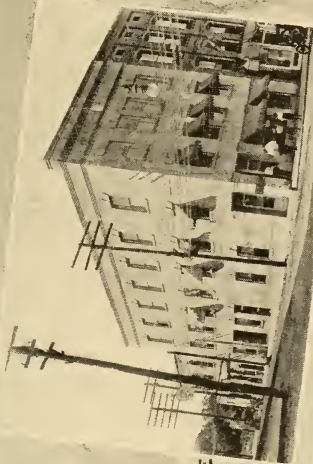
Labor conditions here are good. It can be had at reasonable prices.

The rainfall is regular. There are no undue wet or dry seasons. The temperature in winter is that of a semi-tropical climate. Snow fall is unknown and freezes occur but few times during the winter. The heat of the summer is tempered by the constant breezes in circulation, occasioned by the proximity to the gulf. Neither the heat nor the cold interferes with out-door work here—it can go all the year round.

FIRST
NATIONAL
BANK
BAINBRIDGE



BAINBRIDGE
STATE
BANK



GALAHAN
LINE
STEAMER



PUBLIC
SCHOOL
BUILDING
BAINBRIDGE



Water and Health.

The ease with which artesian water can be obtained has revolutionized the health of this county. These wells can be sunk at a small cost and absolutely pure water obtained within 150 to 200 feet of the surface, and that in the greatest abundance. Consequently fevers have been reduced to the minimum in occurrence, and their type is said to be not as severe as those of the higher latitudes.

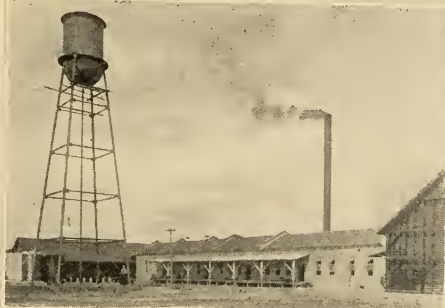
Live Stock.

For years the people of this section have utilized the ranges for raising the common breeds of cattle, sheep and hogs, and some of them have become comfortably rich. Anyone purchasing a large tract of land from which the timber has been cut is in a position, with improved breeds, to reap a fortune as the result of one's efforts. Native cattle are being improved, with marvelous results, by breeding with the beef varieties, likewise is the razor-back hog being improved and makes the best bacon in the world.

Poultry has become quite an item in this section, and eggs bring in the local market from twenty to thirty cents, with chickens from twenty-five to sixty cents according to age.

Truck Gardening.

The people of this section know little of trucking, though the lands and climate make this locality especially adapted to gardening. This section is located so that the truck grower gets his products into market just behind the Florida producer, thereby receiving a stable price for his produce. The staple crops can be raised here in profusion and with little effort. There is a great field here for the truck farmer.



OIL MILLS
DONALSONVILLE

SAW MILL
BRINSON



BAINBRIDGE
OIL
MILL



FLINT RIVER
BAINBRIDGE



Bainbridge.

Bainbridge, the county site, is a little city of 5,000 inhabitants, beautifully located on the banks of the Flint River. Its water and rail transportation facilities, already referred to, are very advantageous. Its freight rate on shipments from the west are lower than other towns of its class in South Georgia, except Albany, with which it is on a parity. The rate on eastern shipments is the same as Atlanta, Columbus and other Georgia cities.

Its industries are railroad shops, foundry and iron works, oil mill, merchant mills, cooperage factory, bottling works, ice plant, syrup refinery, saw and planing mills, variety works, brick yards, cigar factories, tobacco packing houses, and other smaller industries. A fertilizer factory and cotton mills are the new industries that are practically assured.

The mercantile interests of Bainbridge are in a flourishing condition. Especially is this true in the wholesale grocery line. Four houses are supplying river points and a large territory in the three States contiguous to Bainbridge. The Standard Oil and the Gulf Refining Co., use Bainbridge as a distributing point for this territory. There is now a splendid opening for jobbing in other lines.

All the leading churches have congregations and handsome places of worship here. The city schools keep pace with the most progressive cities of this class, affording excellent educational advantages. Its three banking institutions are financially strong and accommodating. The spirit of progress dominates the town.



HARVESTING TOBACCO

County Towns.

Donalsonville is a growing town, 21 miles west of Bainbridge on the Atlantic Coast Line, having a population of about 1,000. It has a flourishing public school, a bank and the leading churches. It has two large ginneries, and a new oil mill and fertilizer works. The mercantile business thrives here. The lands around Donalsonville and Iron City are some of the best in the county, and farming is being developed on the latest and most improved methods.

Iron City lies five miles east of Donalsonville on the same line of railway. It has about 500 inhabitants and a good banking house. Here is one of the best public schools in the county. The merchants are live and progressive. The farming lands around Iron City are equal to those of Donalsonville in fertility and are being intelligently improved.

Brinson is on the A. C. L. railway 10 miles west of Bainbridge, on Spring Creek, the most beautiful little stream of clear water to be found anywhere. It has a population of about 500. It has the largest saw mill in the county. A number of mercantile houses cater to the trade of the good farming territory surrounding it. The public schools here are exceedingly good.

Climax is 10 miles east of Bainbridge at the highest point on the A. C. L. railroad between Savannah and Montgomery—hence its name. Also the branch line of railroad runs from here to River Junction, Fla. The population is about 250. The merchants are progressive and are doing much to aid the farmers in developing the fine agricultural section contiguous to it.

Fowlstown, Faceville and Recovery are smaller towns on the branch line between Climax and River Junction, in the southern section of the county. They are each wide-awake little towns, having good schools and an intelligent citizenship. They are in what is known as the tobacco growing section of the county, and rate their lands as of the best, and they are.

Attapulgus is located on the G. F. & A. railroad 12 miles south of Bainbridge, near the Florida line, and has a population of about 200. It is in the center of the tobacco growing section. The lands are high and rolling and productive of all crops. This is one of the prettiest towns in the county.

Eldorado and Strickland are small towns on the G. F. & A. north of Bainbridge. This is also a good section and these are desirable towns in which to live.

Besides the railroad towns which have been named there are numerous populous communities in the county, provided with stores, postoffice and schools, rural delivery and physicians, where life is pleasant and profitable to the agriculturist. Among them are Vada, McReaville, Bingen, Fairchilds, Miriam, Reynoldsville, Boyettville Steam Mill, Lela and Amsterdam.

Educational.

The public school system of the county is skillfully managed, an dis effective and growing more so every year. There are 85 or 90 schools and about 150 teachers, with an enrollment of about 6,000 pupils in the public schools, outside of Bainbridge schools. Bainbridge schools have an enrollment of 1,100.

The appropriation from the State maintains the common schools for six months. In 25 or 30 districts they are supplemented locally to nine months. The opportunity for good common and high school education in this county, and the accessibility of pupils to the schools, is equal to that of any county in the State.

Cyrene Institute.

This new school, under the dominion of the Bowen Missionary Baptist Association and kindred association of this section in Georgia, Florida and Alabama, has just been established at Cyrene, Ga., eight miles west of Bainbridge on the A. C. L. railroad, and is attached to the Mercer system of schools. In effect it is destined to be far reaching, affording to this section, as it will, educational advantages hitherto not within the reach of a vast majority of pupils. All branches, from the industrial to the classical, will be embraced in its curriculum—\$30,000 having already been spent in buildings and equipment. More money will be spent to carry out the purposes of the institution until it is perfected.

Good Roads.

The Commissioners of this county have been building good roads for six years. When they began the roads were little better than rugged trails through the woods—and there were close on to 1,000 miles of them. Now about half of them have been built with sand-clay 30 feet wide, presenting a smooth, durable surface, and are the pride of the people of the county and the envy of other counties. All main roads about 400 miles, have been built by this method, and at the same time most of the other roads have been improved.

The county is spending from \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year on its roads, using convicts and improved road machinery. The convict force varies from 60 to 90. The county owns a farm of 1,100 acres on which enough is produced to feed all its men and mules.

Experts who have seen the roads of this county and those of other counties of the State say that there are only two other counties that are building as good roads as Decatur, but none can equal this county in the mileage built and maintained.

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