

Villages Die That Moon Project May Live

Editor's note: Bulldozers and construction crews are busy in a five-mile square area in south Mississippi on a project that will help American astronauts reach the moon. The site, when completed in 1965, will be used for ground test firings of the mighty Saturn-V rocket. An area 20 miles around the project has begun to stir to the \$500 million operation and with hundreds of new jobs and a sharp population increase anticipated - brace for a boom. Inevitably, there are growing pains. The project, its impact and its problems are reported in the following dispatch.

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United Press International
Gainesville, Miss.—(UPI)—This village died to make way for a boom.

Its one general store, two churches and a handful of homes and fishing camps on the banks of the Pearl river that divides Mississippi and Louisiana have vanished.

Two graveyards are about to be moved - tombstone by tombstone, grave by grave.

A railroad - which the thriving Gainesville of the 1880's needed but could not obtain - crept into the area recently. It was 80 years too late to save a little hamlet near which Andrew Jackson camped in 1814 on his way to the Battle of New Orleans. Gainesville was once a trading hub of south Mississippi. Virgin Honey Island forest and swamps along the

river were hiding places for such rogues as Pierre Rameau whose small band of pirates raided gulf coast shipping. In a surge of patriotism, loaned a number of his boats to Jackson's army.

Old Boom Town

Down the river a few miles lies Logtown, another boom town of the past. Its sawmills turned out millions of feet of lumber and sent it away on river barges to build thousands of homes.

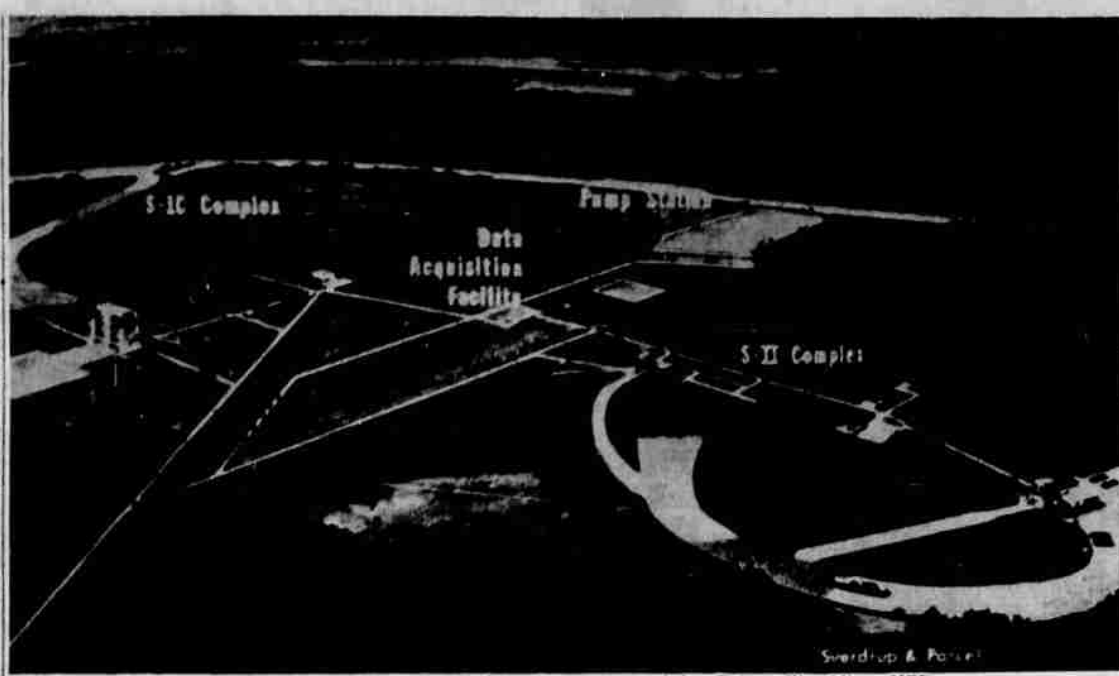
Logtown, Miss., now a sleepy fishing mecca, will die within a year. Its tiny post office, few stores and two schools will disappear.

These two villages - one dead and the other dying - are making way for part of the gigantic American project to put men on the moon in 1968.

Rising in the flat scrub pine land in south Mississippi - 35 miles northeast of New Orleans - is a \$500 million facility that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) will use to static test, or ground fire, the mighty Saturn V rocket that this country is banking on to win the race with the Russians to the moon. After testing here, the 350-foot tall rockets will be moved to Cape Canaveral, Fla., for the actual blastoff into space.

Two Villages Die

The death of two villages, and several hundred homes in a surrounding "buffer" zone is mourned by those who had



SATURN STATION - This is an artist's conception of a physical lay-out of a Saturn testing station of the future, proposed for Gainesville, Miss. (UPI)

to pack their belongings and relocate.

But an area 20 miles around the 141,000 acre site is beginning to stir. A boom is coming. Three cities nearest the Mississippi test facility, as NASA calls it, are bracing for it.

They are Picayune, 10 miles to the north; Bay St. Louis, about the same distance to the east, and Slidell,

La., to the west. Slidell already has landed the computer installation to process data from static firings of the huge rockets which will be assembled at the Michoud plant in New Orleans, then moved by barge up the Pearl river to the test site.

Heavy construction began this month on the facility, soon after the railroad spur reached Gainesville. An estimated 3,000 construction workers will be on hand by the end of 1963. Thus comes the first wave in the boom with its usual problems in housing and schools. By the time the first rockets lashed to huge stands anchored deep in the sandy coastal soil are fired in 1965, the construction crews will be gone. An estimated 1,700 fulltime employees will man the facility.

Rough Estimates

What does this mean to the merchant considering enlarging his store or a city contemplating new schools?

Some rough estimates: population increase - 9,630, new students - 2,425, additional automobiles - 2,400, new retail stores - 51, and increased income - \$18.9 million annually. Enough for a good-sized town if it could all be planked down in one spot. Mr. and Mrs. L. R. York,

formerly of Denver, Colo., operate two motels in Picayune. They've renamed them Saturn Inn and Apollo Inn. They are jammed most nights now. Once they lured a few tourists too tired to drive all the way to New Orleans.

A bay St. Louis motel advertises, "This is the center of the space world." Prices Up

New subdivisions are sprouting in Picayune, Slidell and Bay St. Louis. Land that sold for \$100 an acre a few years ago is bringing \$1,000 now. One property owner collected \$50,000 for a 200-foot wide strip of right of way for the railroad spur to Gainesville.

The pains that accompany the birth of a boom are sometimes acute. "We'll be ready," he says. "We want to have an orderly growth, to insure for the future, both for those to come and those who have worked to build the city during the past."

These were the words of Picayune's youthful mayor Granville Williams. He is one of many optimists in the city of 10,000. His city has a 20-year growth plan already drawn, covering schools, streets and other city services. Williams makes one point about the city school system, segregated like all others in Mississippi. The council does not intend to accept federal "impacted area" aid that would be available because of the influx of students.

Plan Bond Issues

Instead, the city would resort to bond issues and try to avoid any federal intervention in its schools, such as occurred in Biloxi, Miss., hub of a vast military facility, or Huntsville, Ala., home of the government's George C. Marshall space flight center.

He pledged that his group intends to keep the government's "feet to the fire" until satisfactory settlements are made.

One of those who must move is Roy Baxter, who has a large marina at Logtown with space for dozens of fishing and pleasure craft. He had begun operation only a few days when he heard a television news report that the area had been selected for the rocket test facility - and several hundred people would have to move. Included in the area are 13 churches, 18 to 20 small stores, Logtown's two schools and Baxter's marina.

He will relocate a few miles further down Pearl river. Mrs. Roy Baxter Sr., his mother, is among the resigned. She knew Logtown in its lumber boom days.

"It's not so bad for those of us who are older. We've lived our lives," she says. "But it is the younger people who have been hurt. They have to start all over again. It seems a high price to pay."

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NEWBERRYS DOWNTOWN

Medical Facility at VA Domiciliary Is Discussed

The campaign to get medical and surgical facilities installed at the White City Domiciliary to care for emergency illnesses which arise among southern Oregon veterans was carried to Washington, D. C., again recently by Pat Graham, adjutant and service officer, and past state commander of the Disabled American Veterans.

Returning to Medford, Graham reported that he had conferences with Sen. Wayne L. Morse and Maurice Neuberger and Congressman Robert B. Duncan. He found them sympathetic and cognizant of the veterans' situation here.

Considerable work in this area has already been done by Senator Morse and Congressman Robert B. Duncan, Graham said. There is a Committee on Veterans Affairs in the House, but the Allied Veterans Council, for which Graham is secretary, has been working for the establishment of a similar committee in the Senate.

Would Support Legislation

Senator Neuberger said she would joint Senator Morse in supporting legislation for establishment of such a committee, Graham reported.

Senator Morse, Graham explained, has supported every resolution which has been presented for establishment of the committee and has introduced two such measures himself. While with the Oregon delegation, Graham also met and conferred with Vice President Lyndon Johnson and Sen. Hubert Humphrey, who introduced the most recent resolution for establishment of the committee.

While in Washington, D. C., the Grahams also visited their son, Daniel, who was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel during their stay. He has been reassigned to Army headquarters in the Pentagon, where he will complete his first three-year assignment July 9. Graham accompanied his son to Annapolis where Colonel Graham participated in a debate at the Naval Academy on appropriations for the military branches.

The Grahams stopped in Texas for a visit with their son, M-Sgt. James Graham, who returned to his Ft. Hood headquarters from Washington, where he was an umpire in the Coulee Crest maneuver near Yakima.

Bids Called by BLM For Lithographing

Portland - The Portland office of the bureau of land management, department of the interior, has announced a call for bids to perform lithographing services for reproduction of approximately 2,280 maps in single and multiple colors of various areas in western Oregon.

The areas involved are known as the Douglas-South Umpqua Master Unit and the South Coast Master Unit.

Lithographing service must be of the highest quality possible under standard commercial methods.

The work is set aside for Small Business Concerns only. Bids will be opened at 2 p.m., June 26 in the BLM's field administrative office, Room 720, 1002 NE Holladay st., Portland.

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