

CAN NEGROES RULE THEMSELVES? MOUND BAYOU REPLIES YES!

Mississippi's All-Negro Town Is One of the Dramatic and Unique Features of the United States. It Was Established 42 Years Ago and Has Developed into a Town of Growing Power and Achievement.

When a handful of enterprising Negroes with vision and determination, founded the all-Negro town of Mound Bayou, in Mississippi, everybody expected its early downfall. Such remarks as these were constantly encountered by the young pioneers: "Negroes can't rule themselves!" "They won't 'pull' together"; "The town will fail in five years." Well, Mound Bayou is still alive and kicking—kicking high at that.

The Founders.

The first plans for establishing Mound Bayou as a real town were laid by Isaiah T. Montgomery, a former slave, and his cousin, Benjamin T. Green, July 12, 1887. These two hardy and farsighted Negroes purchased one thousand acres of land from the L.N.O. and T. Railroad Company, and with their heroic families, pitched their tents upon their new acquisition. At that time this part of Mississippi was a vast wilderness—not even a shack was in sight.

Two Intrepid Hunters.

For companionship, the Montgomerys and Greens were forced to content themselves with forest-bears, panthers, deer, wolves, wildcats and raccoons. Of course the animals were loathe to part with the sovereignty of this wilderness, hence the battle between man and beast was bitterly waged.

It is unnecessary to point out the victors. Moreover it is conceded that Green and Montgomery were two of the most intrepid hunters who ever entered the Mississippi Valley; and that their skill with the rifle was unequalled.

First Huts Built

The battle with the Mississippi animals having been won, it was not long before giant oaks and trees of gum and cypress began to fall before the swing of the axe-men. In their stead were soon erected sturdy dwelling places of strong timber. Wells were driven to supply fresh water in the place of spring water which was during those times the only available water supply.

The Origin of the Name Mound Bayou

The original two families had now grown into a colony of respectable size. One day, some one popped the question: "What shall we call our new settlement?" The answer was obvious. These early settlers had undergone much hardship in overcoming the difficulties resulting from the numerous mounds and bayous that abounded near the site of the embryonic community. So with a unanimous gusto, the name "Mound Bayou" was adopted.

Pioneers Are Organized Into Home Owning Community

Montgomery and Green then began to organize the pioneers into a home-owning community. A portion of the original thousand acres purchased by the founders was divided into town lots and sold to the settlers on long terms; while other settlers were able to secure from the railroad company, farmland upon long leases.

The Little Community Receives Its First Sorrow

Amidst the progress and happiness that crowned the efforts of these people, fell the first sorrow. Benjamin Green, one of the co-founders, was killed by a worthless tramp over a trivial matter. This sudden blow saddened these hardy folk, for they realized fully the loss of their great leader.



MAYOR B. A. GREEN

Mound Bayou has all the conveniences of a modern city. It is the only town in the United States where the jail became a useless appendage and was abolished. It has a black mayor, a black board of aldermen, chief of police and all Negro officials.

Three Barber Shops.
One Electric Shoe Repair Shop.
One Job Printing plant.
One Weekly Newspaper.
Ten Mercantile Establishments.
Two Service Stations.
One Auto Repair Shop.
One Federal Farm Loan Association.

Two Undertakers.
Mound Bayou has its share of churches, there being six. Perhaps it was the religious influence exerted by these churches that caused the abolition of the Mound Bayou jail.

Their School System

The following schools are effectively handling the educational situation in this bright town.

The Mound Bayou Consolidated School District, in which is located Bolivar County Training School. This school owns real estate worth \$150,000 and has a student enrollment of 1,000. The Baptist Normal, a high school, has an enrollment of 150 students.

Has Effective Municipal Government

Mound Bayou is governed in an orderly manner, by a mayor and a board of aldermen: B. A. Green, mayor; R. W. Jones, S. L. Cohn, Joe W. Covington and H. H. Powell are aldermen; chief of police, John Thomas; fire chief, Jim Miller; treas-

American cities and towns. Its total indebtedness is but \$8,500.

The town is also well lighted by electricity; the climate is healthful and the winters pleasantly mild.

In the professional field, it contains one lawyer, one medical doctor, and one dentist.

Have Arranged Million-Dollar Project

The people of Mound Bayou have an old-fashioned community spirit, also. They have recently organized a Mound Bayou Foundation to raise one million dollars for the development of their town.

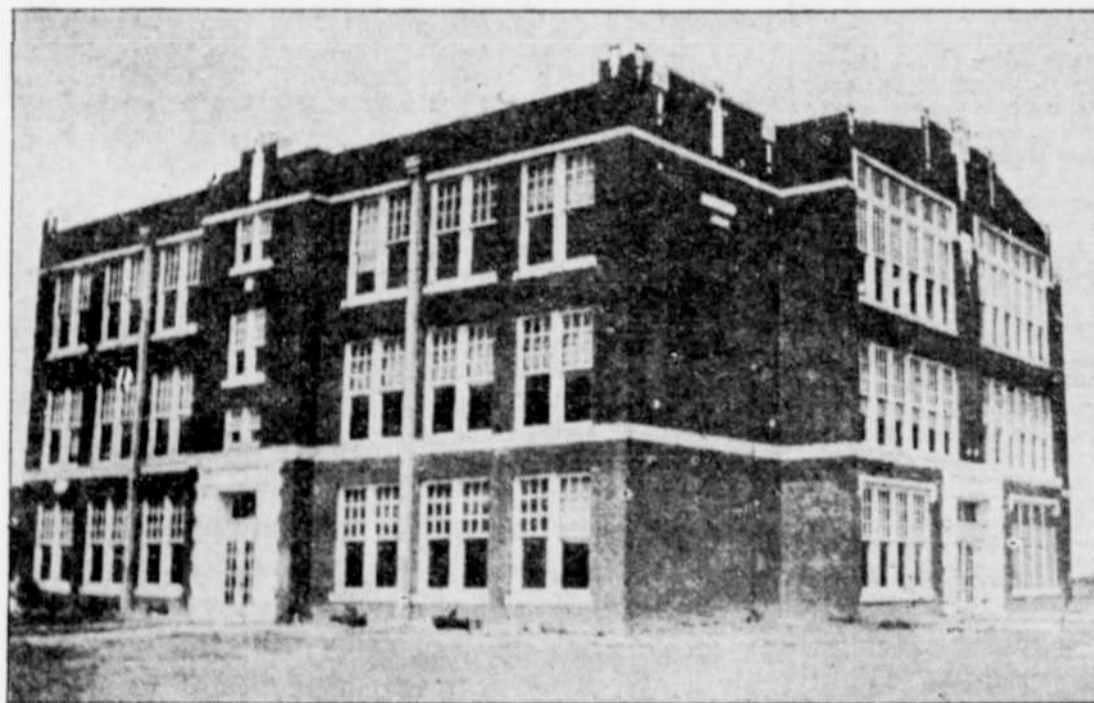
Recently there was a celebration of Home Coming Week and Founder's Day (July 7-13, 1929).

The very permanency and stability of this pioneering community has attracted the interest of the entire country; particularly when one of its distinguished citizens, Mrs. Mary C. Booze, attracted widespread attention as national Republican Committeewoman for the State of Mississippi.

Will There Be an All-Negro State?

Mound Bayou has often been discussed as the possible nucleus of an all-Negro state. It is not entirely improbable that this may be brought to pass. Many authorities, both white and black, have predicted the establishment of an all-Negro state in America, and have indicated that Mound Bayou will be the base of such a project.

The Mound Bayou invitation to the Negro men and women of the world is "Come to Mound Bayou and run for Judge and Chief of Police and not from them!"



The Bolivar County Training School, at Mound Bayou.

er. However, this state of mind did not remain long. Mound Bayou had become an object of general attention throughout America. Beginning as

it did under the well-known circumstances surrounding life in Mississippi, the entire experiment was viewed with some trepidation.

Mound Bayou is Incorporated

The situation became, however, an entirely favorable one, consequently in 1898 the town was incorporated. I. T. Montgomery, the surviving co-founder, was elected its first mayor.

There are now between 1,000 and 1,500 people in the incorporated town. In what is called the Mound Bayou Community, there are around 3,000 Negro men and women.

Mound Bayou Has Numerous Business Organizations

The progress of these people is exemplified in the extent of their business organizations. The following are some of the enterprises of the town:

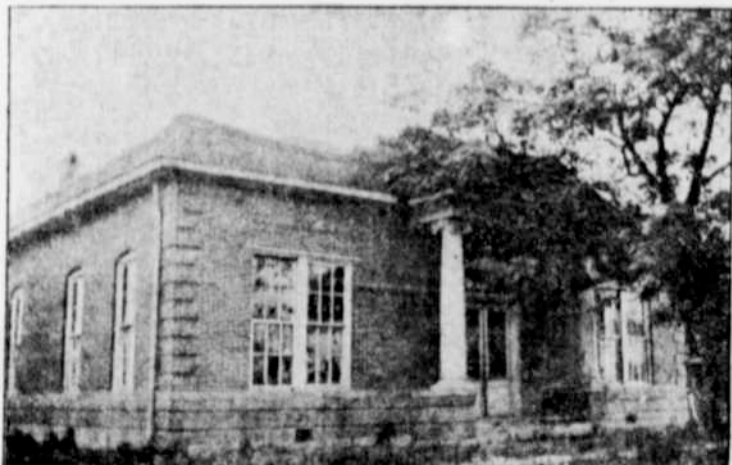
The Mound Bayou Bottling Works, manufacturing soda water, ginger ale, gay oia and other soft drinks.

A Burial Association.
Two Steam Gins.
One Electric Gin.
Two Drug Stores.
One Hotel.

Is Not Heavily Weighted With Debt
Mound Bayou is not heavily weighted with debt as are most



Imposing home of Isaiah T. Montgomery, founder of the city.



The Carnegie Library

Our Joyous and
Vigorous

First Lady

By DON CHARLES

Washington Correspondent and
Special Writer

This article shows why it is that Mrs. Hoover could be expected to do no different in the Mrs. DePriest Tea Party.

Learn the Truth
About This
Affair

In The
Illustrated Feature
Section

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