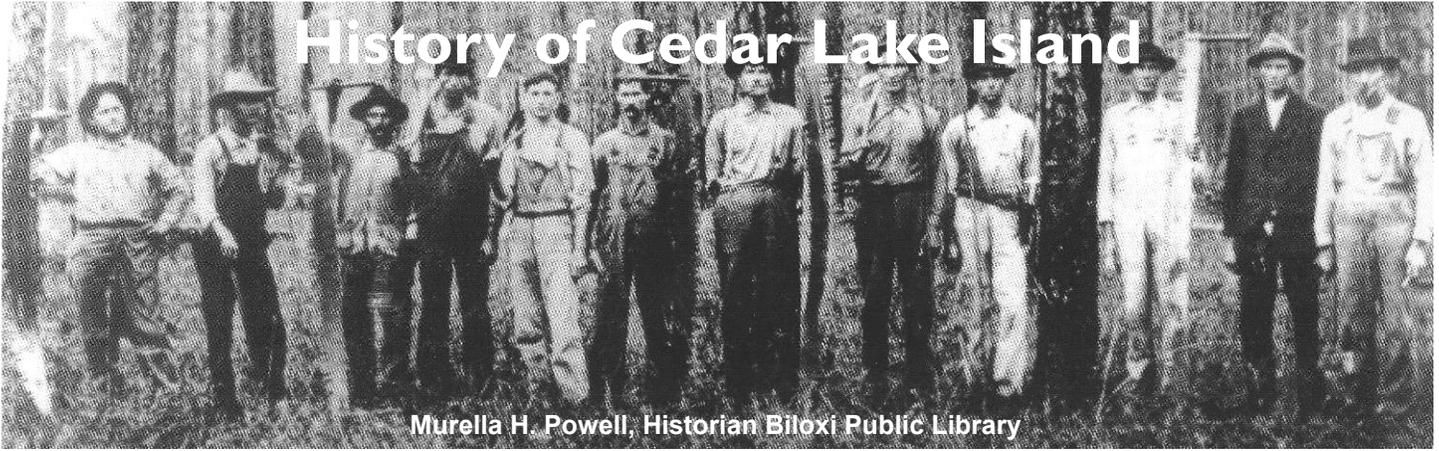


History of Cedar Lake Island

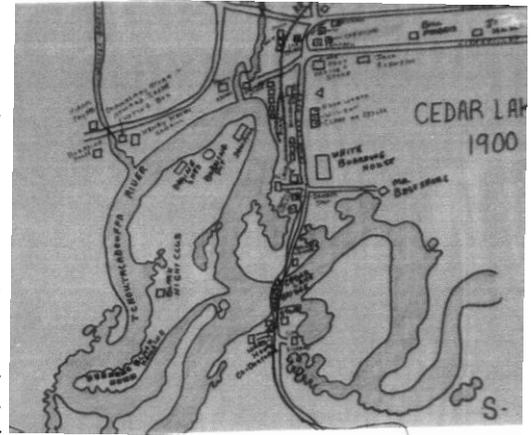


Murella H. Powell, Historian Biloxi Public Library

In 1882, John Henry Krohn purchased 150 acres of land, which included Cedar Lake Island on the west side of Howard Creek on the Tchoutacabouffa River. John Henry was one of the 12 children of Henry A. Krohn, who had settled in the Cedar Lake area directly south of the river in 1842. In 1890, John Henry passed the same 150 acres along to his son, Louis Henry Krohn, for the sum of fifty dollars. While the Krohn families had traditionally farmed their lands, the late nineteenth century harvest of South Mississippi's pine forest enabled Louis Henry to expand his agricultural pursuits to logging. Shortly after the purchase of his land, Louis Henry began operating a small sawmill on the mainland just northwest of Cedar Lake Island.

Sawmills and lumbering activities had been operating in South Mississippi, mainly for local consumption and for shipment to New Orleans, on a small scale since before the Civil War. During the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, big commercial lumbering companies began acquiring vast acreage of pine forest and establishing large mills that used advanced milling technologies. In 1919, the L. N. Dantzler Lumber Company acquired Cedar Lake Island from Lewis Henry Krohn for such an operation.

As the Dantzler Company swung into full operation, the little Cedar Lake community, called "Vennie" at the time, after the wife of John Morris, a large landowner in the area, sprang to life. Housing for mill hands and charcoal and turpentine laborers lined Cedar Lake Road from the river to present day Highway 67. A company commissary store supplied the workers with their worldly needs, bought with the "coupons" that Dantzler paid them in lieu of monetary wages. Even a hotel of sorts existed to accommodate visiting businessmen and lumber officials. The deep artesian well sank on the island by the Dantzler Company to supply the mill's steam boilers also supplied the company buildings and housing on the mainland.



Mrs. Hattie Krohn Broadus, daughter of Louis Henry Krohn lived at Cedar Lake on her father's old homestead until her



death. She often recalled memories of watching the busy Tchoutacabouffa River traffic as large schooners transported the lumber and its by-products from Cedar Lake Island, as well as the dummy railroad line that hauled the logs to the mill. She also spoke of the sound of a piano playing in the night, as mill workers boisterously celebrated their Saturdays off in the island "honky-tonk" until the wee morning hours.

Production of lumber in Mississippi peaked at 3,259,194,000 board feet between 1915 and 1932. As the large mills exhausted the natural resource, they likewise exhausted their own reason for existence. The L. N. Dantzler Lumber Company withdrew from Cedar Lake Island in 1926. Today, the scars of the abandoned sawmill are well hidden by the tall timbers and thick underbrush of the forest that has reclaimed Cedar Lake Island.

