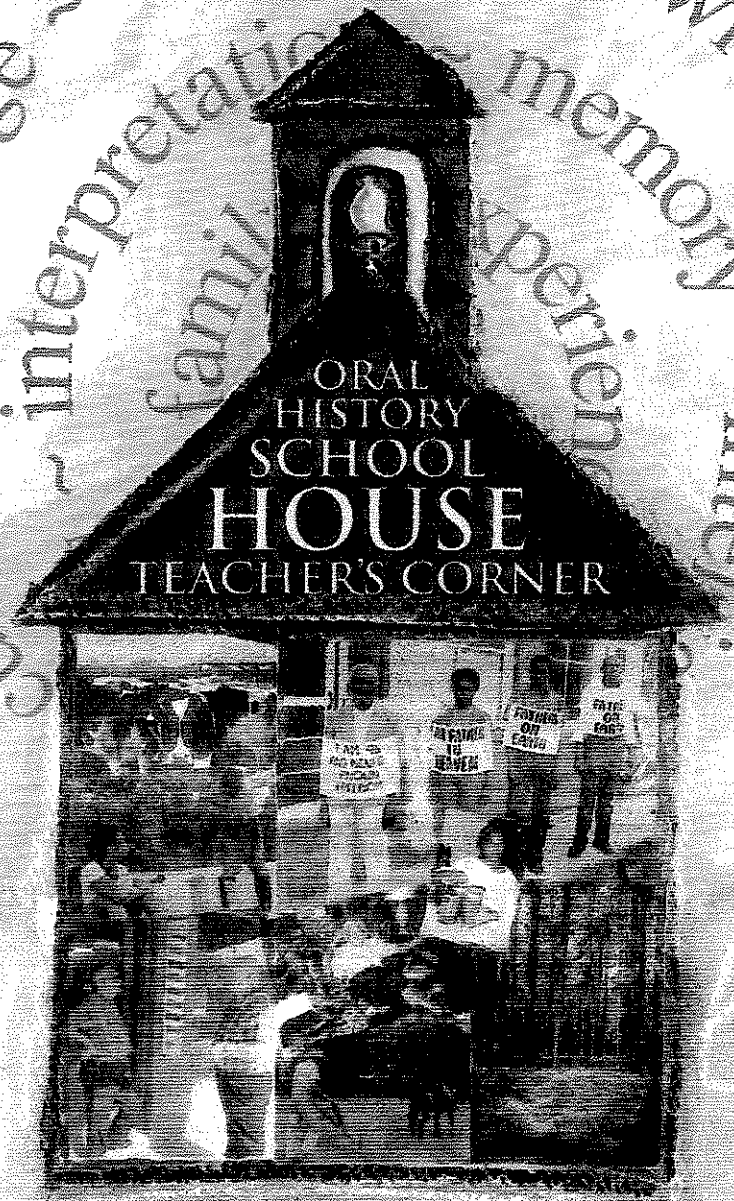


culture ~ heritage ~ custom ~ knowledge
interpretation ~ memory
family ~ experience ~ intel

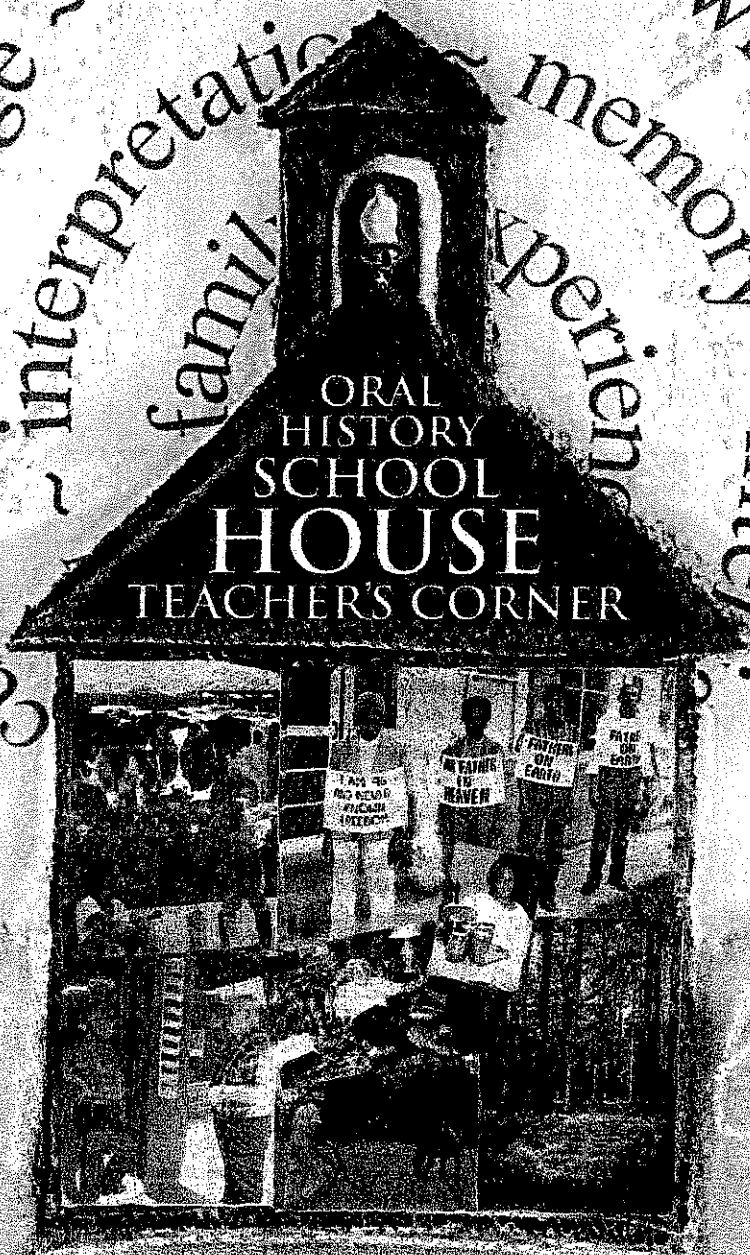


ORAL HISTORY SCHOOL HOUSE

TEACHER'S CORNER

LISTENING TO OUR PAST
TO BUILD OUR FUTURE

culture ~ heritage ~ custom ~ knowledge
~ interpretation ~ memory ~ intel
family ~ experience



ORAL HISTORY
SCHOOL
HOUSE
TEACHER'S CORNER

LISTENING TO OUR PAST
TO BUILD OUR FUTURE

Listening to Our Past, Building Our Future

March 18, 2002

Old Capitol Museum
100 South State Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39201

Schedule of Events

- 8:15 to 8:45 Registration
For CEUs, pay CEU fees and sign roster for morning session credit
- 8:45 to 9:00 Welcome and Introduction by Charles Bolton, Chair, Department of
History and Co-Director, Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage
University of Southern Mississippi
- 9:00 to 10:30 "The Land and the People: Using Oral History in the Classroom"
Kay Krans and Sherrill Wiygul
Starkville High School
- 10:30 to 10:45 *Break*
- 10:45 to 12:00 "North Carolina Voices: Listening for a Change"
Lynn Wright-Kernodle, Director of Special Projects
North Carolina Humanities Council
Helen McLeod, Classroom Teacher, Durham School of the Arts
- 12:00 to 12:15 *Walk to lunch site*
- 12:15 to 1:15 Lunch
Welcome, Barbara Carpenter, Executive Director,
Mississippi Humanities Council
- 1:15 to 1:45 *Walk back to Old Capitol Museum*
For CEUs, sign roster for afternoon session credit
- 1:45 to 2:45 "Folklife in Education"
Donna Onebane, Louisiana Voices Education Coordinator
- 2:45 to 3:00 *Break*
- 3:00 to 3:15 "History Day"
Mary Beth Farrell, University of Southern Mississippi
- 3:15 to 4:30 "Ordinary People Living Extraordinary Lives:
The Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi"
Curtis Austin, University of Southern Mississippi
Karla Smith, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
- 4:30 Evaluation and Dismissal

ORAL HISTORY TEACHING GUIDE

Tips for how to organize an oral history project in your classroom

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY

An opportunity for students to conduct research and compete with others in the region, the state, and nationally

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Lesson plans to teach high school students about the complex and changing relationship people have to land and the environment

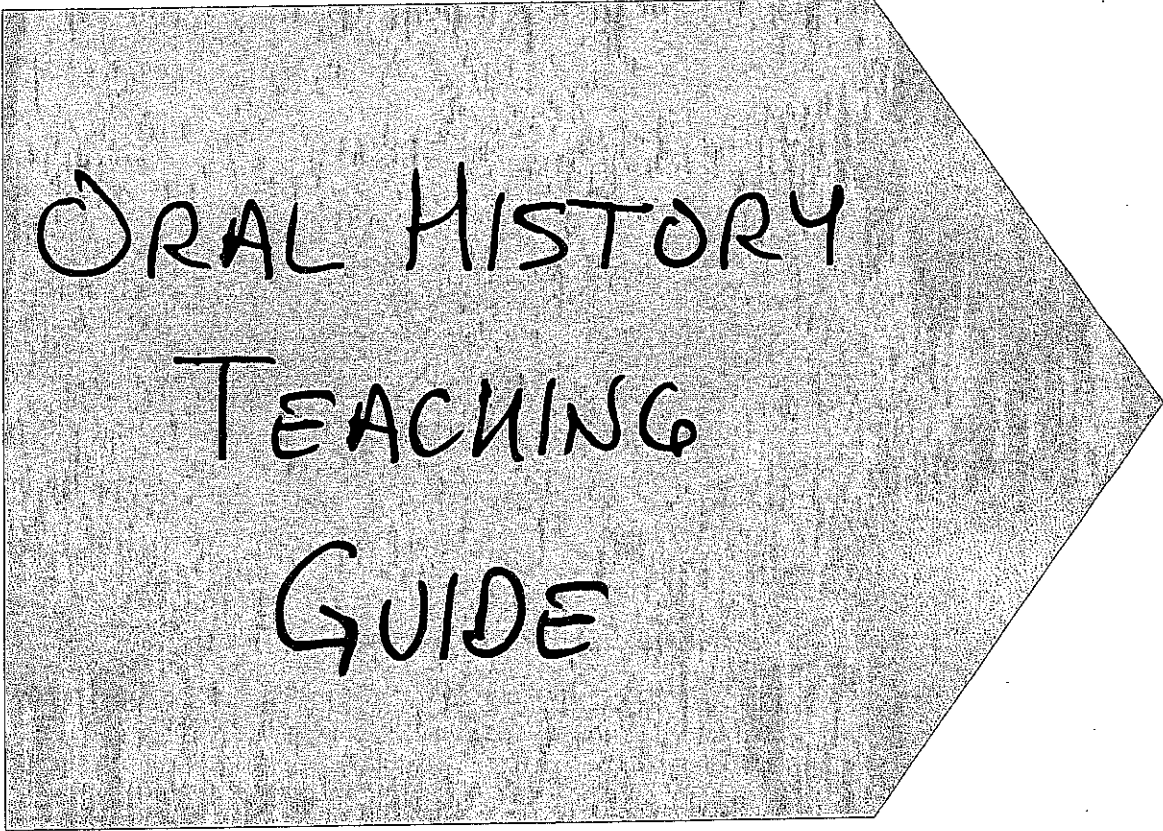
CIVIL RIGHTS

Teacher's guide to accompany "Ordinary People Living Extraordinary Lives: The Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi"

LISTEN TO THIS

CD Rom of "Ordinary People"

CD Rom "Teacher's Corner: The Oral History Schoolhouse"



ORAL HISTORY
TEACHING
GUIDE

Using Oral History in the Classroom: Suggested Activities for a Civil Rights Unit

Students can:

- practice taking oral histories by interviewing each other;
- interview older persons in their family or community about their memories of the civil rights era;
- turn oral history interviews into a biography, complete with drawings or photos borrowed from the person interviewed;
- construct timelines based on their own interviews OR on printed oral history interviews;
- create a play, short story, journal entry, poem, rap, or song based on an oral history interview;
- go on a class trip to the site where an older person lived or worked and have that person give his/her life story during the trip;
- bring family photos from the 1950s, 1960s, and/or 1970s to class and tell about the person(s) in the pictures. Interview family members who knew the person and include what was learned in the presentations;
- write a history of their neighborhood, community, or city during the civil rights era;
- invite local citizens or historians to the school; class members can interview them about their experiences during the civil rights movement.
- take part in a walking tour of a downtown area, neighborhood, or other site of a significant event during the civil rights era. Invite a longtime resident to accompany the class;
- help construct a bulletin board or display based on what they learned from their interviews and/or other outside research.

PREPARING AN ORAL HISTORY: SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Make an appointment in advance with the person you wish to interview; thank them in advance for their willingness to speak with you.
- Allow at least 30 minutes to one hour for the interview.
- Be courteous if should something happen to postpone, delay, or interrupt the interview. You can always reschedule!
- Be sure to show up on time; bring all of the materials that you will need. Have a few extra pencils, more paper than you think you may need, an extra cassette (in case your tape breaks), and a fresh battery for your tape recorder. If you plan to plug in your recorder, bring an extension cord.
- A few days before the interview, prepare the questions you wish to ask and have your teacher review them.
- Before the interview, complete some background reading about topics that might come up in the interview, such as World War II or the civil rights movement, so that you can ask better questions of your subject.
- Dress nicely for the interview to show respect for the person being interviewed.
- Be courteous to your subject and anyone else who may be present during the interview.
- Plan the order of your questions, but don't be afraid to ask new or additional questions that you think of during the interview.
- Ask questions one at a time.
- Carefully write down the questions BEFORE the interview.
- Get permission if you wish to use a tape recorder during the interview. (Get a release form from your teacher and ask your subject to sign it.)
- If your subject refuses to be taped, be prepared to take very good notes!
- If you receive a "yes" or "no" answer, ask for more explanation. ("Could you explain a little more about that, please?")
- Don't correct or argue with the person you are interviewing; remember that you have asked them to tell their story. Remain polite, interested, and neutral!

- Be patient. Remember that many people have never been interviewed before! They may need time to think about their answers. If you act as if you are in a hurry, they may think their answers are not important.
- After you have asked all your questions, ask the person you are interviewing if she or he has anything else to tell you. Carefully note the answers.
- Ask the person if they have a photo, either current or when the person was younger, to use to illustrate your oral history.
- Thank the person when you have finished the interview; write a thank-you note a day or two later.
- When you have finished your interview, save your tape and/or notes. You may be able to use them as reference material for future papers on this topic!
- With your subject's permission, you may wish to donate a copy of your tape and/or notes to your school library, a local historical society, etc.
- Remember that your oral history interview will show one person's perspective on your topic. Try to conduct other interviews and to look at other primary sources on your topic, such as letters, diaries or journals, eyewitness accounts, government records, etc.

Sample Oral History Questionnaire for Students: The Civil Rights Era

- 1. Where were you born? When? Where were your parents from?
- 2. Where did you grow up? What was the area like when you were a child? How is it different now?
- 3. What are the best memories of your childhood? The worst?
- 4. What stories were told to you about the lives of your parents, grandparents, or other family members? Which meant the most to you?
- 5. Where did you go to school? What did you like best and least about school? Did Jim Crow laws affect where you went to school? How?
- 6. What type of work have you done? Where? For how long?
- 7. Which accomplishments in your life make you the most proud?
- 8. Which historical events had a strong influence on your life? Why?
- 9. What major problems or hardships have you had to overcome? Why? How?
- 10. Have you moved and lived in different places throughout your life? If so, what were these like?
- 11. How has the community in which you live changed over the years?
- 12. What are your most meaningful memories of the civil rights era?
- 13. Who do you think were the most influential figures of the era? Why?
- 14. How did the events of the civil rights era affect you? Your family?
- 15. Are there other memories that you wish to share about these years?

(This questionnaire could be used with someone who was a part of the civil rights movement, someone who was neutral or who opposed it, or someone who was a teenager or child at the time. Add or delete questions as needed.)

USING ORAL HISTORY FOR CLASS PROJECTS

Oral history projects may immeasurably enrich your students' understanding of the past. Interviewing participants in historical events is an experience which they will never forget. The interviews can provide them with unique information and perspectives on vital topics such as the civil rights movement.

Preparing your students to do oral history:

1. *Explain the difference between informal questioning and oral history.*
 - ☉ They may be interviewing strangers as well as relatives and friends.
 - ☉ Their interviews will be focused on specific topics.
 - ☉ Their questions will need to be carefully thought-out and written down before the interview. (This doesn't mean that they can't ask additional questions as the interview progresses. However, the student must enter his or her interview well-prepared with a good list of questions.)
 - ☉ Interviews will be recorded (if the interviewee gives written permission.)
 - ☉ Research needs to be done beforehand, so that students can ask good questions. (See below!)
2. *Explain where oral history fits into their research and what its limitations are.*
 - ☉ Before conducting an oral history interview, students should conduct initial research by using both secondary and primary sources. They will need to be familiar with their chosen topics *before* the interview.
 - ☉ Evidence gathered in an oral history interview should be corroborated. People's memories can be faulty, incomplete, biased, or second-hand.
 - ☉ Students should at all times be polite and positive during the interviews, even if they do not agree with the account given by the interviewee.
 - ☉ Students should use other primary sources, such as newspapers, documents, and photos when researching a topic. Suggest that they ask the interviewee if he or she could contribute or lend such primary sources for a class display or presentation. Interviewees may even agree to be guest speakers in your history class.

3. *Make suggestions about subjects to interview and how to find them.*

- ☉ Students should interview persons who were eyewitnesses to or participants in historical events.
- ☉ Scholars or descendants of the interview subject may provide useful perspectives, information, stories, and insights. Since they did not personally experience the event, they should be viewed as secondary sources. (Other secondary sources include books on the topic, magazine articles, other second-hand accounts of an event.)
- ☉ Teachers can suggest interviews with older family members, neighbors, or family friends who experienced or witnessed relevant historical events.
- ☉ For specialized topics, students can check with special-interest organizations (such as veterans' organizations and labor unions), local historical societies, local chapters of such organizations as the NAACP, museum staffs, and university professors.
- ☉ Students should ask for help from the reference librarian of their public, university, junior college, or school library before beginning their research.
- ☉ Interviewees might be willing to suggest others who are willing to be interviewed.
- ☉ Many universities and colleges have Web sites which list faculty by department along with their special interests; these scholars could prove very helpful to beginning researchers.
- ☉ If the student does not already know the person he or she would like to interview, the first contact should probably be by mail rather than telephone. This puts less pressure on the person and gives him or her time to mull over the request.
- ☉ Remind students that they should type their request, preferably on school stationery, and should proofread their request before sending it. (Teachers are well-advised to read the requests before they are sent to prevent any misunderstandings on the part of the interviewee.)
- ☉ Students should follow up with a phone call to see if the person is interested and to schedule an interview, if appropriate.)

4. *Make sure that your students know how to operate the necessary equipment.*

- ☉ Show the students how to operate a tape recorder if necessary.
- ☉ Use high-quality, brand name tapes; 60-minute tapes are better than 120-minute tapes.

- ☉ Remind them to have extra tapes, batteries for the recorder, and an extension cord (if they are not using batteries.)
- ☉ Interviewers should bring extra pencils or pens and an adequate supply of paper.
- ☉ Students will need to label their tapes; they may need more than one.
- ☉ Students may wish to bring a camera in order to obtain a current photograph of their subject. (They should ask permission for this when making the initial contact.)
- ☉ Remind students to bring the release form and have it signed before the interview begins. A copy should be made for the teacher to file.

Sources: Barry A. Landman and George L. Mehafy, Oral History in the Secondary Classroom. (Oral History Association, 1988)

“The One Minute-Guide to Oral Histories,” Carole Hicke.
The UC Berkeley Library Home Page.
<http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/1minute.html>

“Using Oral History for National History Day,” National History Day Web site.
http://www.thehistorynet.com/NationalHistoryDay/03_educators/2000/oralhist.htm

RELEASE FORM

The sound recording and transcript of my interview with _____ may be used by him/her for such purposes as he or she sees fit, including publication or deposit in a public library or archives. Upon deposit, all copyright and literary rights will transfer to the institution, library, or archive in which the interview is deposited.

(interviewee name)

(interviewee signature)

(interviewee address)

(date)

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY IN MISSISSIPPI

Topics in civil rights history are very appropriate for both state and National History Day Projects; they tend to relate to each year's annual theme very well. Oral history interviews can be a rich source of primary material for these projects; they allow students to "do history" in a fun and meaningful way! Read on for more information about this exciting academic competition and how to involve your students.

The *Mississippi Junior Historical Society* is a statewide organization for students in grades 6-12 who share an interest in history. Organizing a chapter in your school will enable you to involve your students in history through exciting projects that bring history alive. The local chapters are usually sponsored by a history or social studies teacher, but any teacher or administrator with an interest in history may sponsor a chapter. *Each chapter makes its own rules and sets its own agenda for the year. There are no state dues.*

The MJHS sponsors *Mississippi History Day* a state-level competition which is part of the *National History Day* program. Clubs from all over the state are invited to attend as well as any interested student without a club affiliation.

The State History Day competition gives students the chance to explore a historical topic related to an annual theme and to present their research findings in a variety of ways: *essays, exhibits, performances, and documentaries*. Students can also compete in the *Mississippi History Quiz Bowl*. Prizes and certificates are presented to winners in each category.

First and second place winners will represent the state at the National History Day competition in College Park, Maryland in June 2002. (There is no Quiz Bowl at the National contest, so state Quiz Bowl winners will not advance to College Park.)

Students should refer to the *National History Day theme sheet* and the *Contest Guide* while preparing their entries. (Mississippi closely adheres to the National rules and theme.)

To start a chapter of the Mississippi Junior Historical Society in your school, contact *MS Junior Historical Society, USM Box 5047, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5047*. You will be sent a certificate of membership, membership cards, and information about Mississippi/National History Day.

If you can't form a chapter at this time, please identify and support any individual students in grades 6-12 who may be interested in participating in Mississippi History Day. Contact "National History Day in Mississippi" at the above address and you will receive updates on the contest and the appropriate registration forms.

For more information about Mississippi History Day and the Junior Historical Society, as well as copies of the National History Day Contest Guide and registration forms for the State History Day competition, please call Mary Beth Farrell at (601) 266-4335 or email her <Mary.farrell@usm.edu>

PICKING A TOPIC: THE GREAT HISTORY DAY

DILEMMA FOR STUDENTS

Picking a good topic is absolutely essential if you are going to create a successful History Day project AND enjoy yourself in the process.

Here's a simple formula for success in choosing your History Day topic:

THEME + EXPECTATIONS + APPEAL + SOURCES
= GREAT TOPIC

- ❑ Theme: Find out what the theme is. (2002: "Revolution, Reaction, and Reform in History") Check the National History Day Web site for lists of possible topics. Then think about how to suit your interests to that topic.

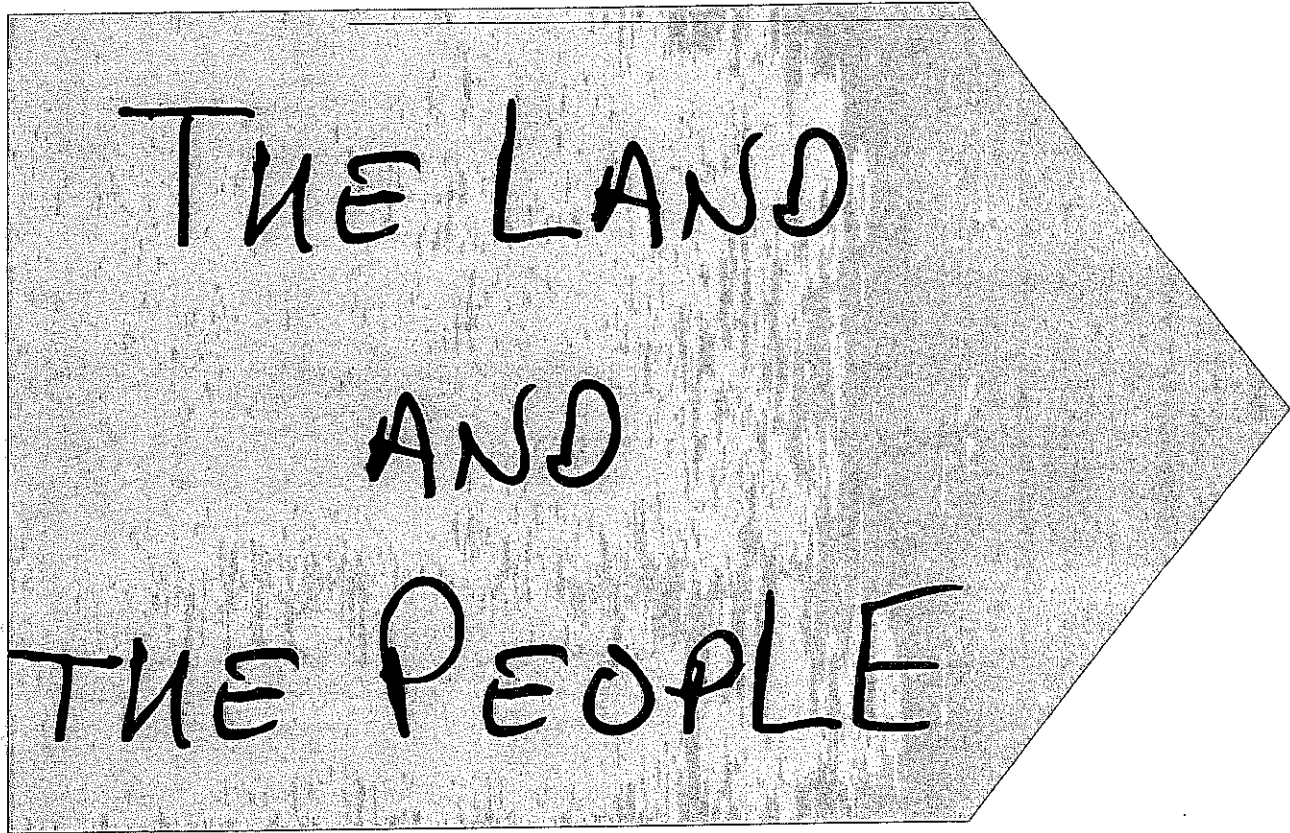
- ❑ Expectations: Make sure you understand what your teacher expects.

- ❑ Appeal: Pick a topic that appeals to you, or your heart won't be in it!
 - ✓ What are your talents, interests, and abilities?
 - ✓ Have you learned anything in your history classes recently that has intrigued you?
 - ✓ What topics relate to your ethnic and/or religious heritage?
 - ✓ Has anything in popular culture (books, movies, etc.) caused you to develop a greater interest in history?
 - ✓ Is there some way you can relate the theme to the history of your family?
 - ✓ Are there any aspects of local or state history that interest you?
 - ✓ Brainstorm with family and friends.

□ **Sources:** Having a great topic won't help you much if you can't find both good secondary AND primary sources. Do a little detective work to make sure your topic will work.

- ✓ School or public library for secondary sources
- ✓ National History Day web site (links to museums, libraries, universities, and historical societies)
- ✓ Check citations and bibliographies of books or encyclopedia articles on your topic and see what primary sources the authors used.
- ✓ University libraries and archives
- ✓ Oral history sources

“Using Oral History for National History Day,” National History Day.
[http://www.thehistorynet.com/NationalHistoryDay/
03_educators/2000/oralhist.htm](http://www.thehistorynet.com/NationalHistoryDay/03_educators/2000/oralhist.htm)



THE LAND
AND
THE PEOPLE

STARKVILLE HIGH CURRICULUM

SUBJECT: Biogeography of Local Resources I & II

Time	Content	Skills	Assessments
August	<p>Field journal style</p> <p>Safety techniques in the field</p> <p>Taxonomy</p> <p>Populations/communities</p> <p>Use of resources (legal, geographic, historical)</p>	<p>Observation, botanical illustration, geographic information (LR 2) (ES 4, ES 9)</p> <p>Use of field equipment (ES 6, ES 7)</p> <p>Develop plant list at either prairie or woodlands site, photograph plants</p> <p>Prepare species diversity index (ES 5) (LR 2), estimating animal numbers</p> <p>Prepare soil maps, read historical accounts of different historical periods. (ES 10, ES 1) (LR 1, LR 2, LR 3, LR 4)</p>	<p>Rubric</p> <p>Observation Compare with field guide Rubric, photo portfolio Compare to accurate index</p> <p>Essays, tests, maps</p>
September	<p>Exploration of land ethic</p> <p>Effect of environmental change on natural resources</p> <p>Effect of technology and people on natural resources</p> <p>Energy cycles, primarily hydrologic, carbon</p> <p>Use of instrumentation to assess position</p>	<p>Reading <i>Education of Little Tree</i> and <i>Sand County Almanac, Choctaws</i> (ES 1) (LR 2)</p> <p>Analyze climate changes through time</p> <p>Trace mechanization in farming and forestry (ES 10) (LR 1, LR 2, LR 4)</p> <p>Analyze water patterns, decomposition rates (ES 2, ES 3, ES 9)</p> <p>Compass use, orienteering, geographic position device (ES 8) (LS 4)</p>	<p>Chapter summaries, illustrated poems, time lines, visual depiction of chapters (rubrics)</p> <p>Annual ring time lines</p> <p>Time lines, soil analysis, field trips (Journals)</p> <p>Field journal, experiments, soil test, water samples</p> <p>Orienteering course</p>
October	<p>Topographic maps/road maps, political maps, relief maps</p> <p>Compare/contrast Southeastern Indian and European land use history</p> <p>Crafts using native materials</p>	<p>Compare types of maps, prepare 3-D topo map</p> <p>Research (primary and websites) speakers, oral presentation</p> <p>Prepare handicrafts from natural materials (Dreamcatchers, gourd baskets, pine straw work, paper using natural dyes)</p>	<p>Written responses to questions, model test, essays, portfolios</p> <p>Rubric</p>



DAIRY
FARMING

**Eight-day Unit on
Dairy Farming in Oktibbeha County**
A story based on oral histories from dairy farmers

Grades: 9-12

Subjects: Science, Social Studies and Agri-Science

Objectives: Students will 1) trace the past land use and practices of a specific farm group in northeastern Mississippi, 2) consider state and national legislation that might have impacted this group, 3) trace the role of diverse ethnic groups in this agriculture pursuit, 4) compare historical photographs, aerial maps and plat maps over time, 5) compare accounts from oral interviews, diary accounts, newspaper articles covering the 1930s to the present, 6) consider factors that have caused changes in the demand for dairy products 7) trace changes in family and educational structure that have affected dairy farms in Mississippi.

Adaptations: Mississippi has a strong agricultural history so this unit could be adapted to any region of the state. Cotton, soybeans, timber, seafood, and catfish have all been important and would make excellent subjects for this study. The concept is cross-curriculum, and segments of this unit could be adapted to fit into specific courses since several strands are woven through this unit including history, geography, the impact of technology, environmental legislation, economics, changing family structure, pathogens, migration from country to city, changes in education.

Materials: Maps, oral history audiotapes, including archival interviews which can be accessed through the University of Southern Mississippi's Oral History Project website (www.usm.edu/msoralhistory), student-led interviews with Dr. Charles White (head of Food Science Dept. at Mississippi State University), the members of the Oakley family (Oktibbeha Co. dairy farmers), Noel and Diane Hall (the State Milk Standards Lab and MSU cheese processing facility), and videotapes of interviews, photographs, written historical records, internet sources, tape recorder, tapes, book binding supplies, computers, scanner, etc.

Background: Oktibbeha County has a strong history of dairy farming. At one time, it was considered the dairy center of the south. Today, dairy farms are rare in this county. We want the students to learn local history through an exploration of the social, economic, technological, and political forces that have driven this rapid change in their county.

Through this assignment, the students will comprehend that land use is seldom static, and it changes due to forces out of the control of individuals whether they work in agriculture, forestry, or industry.

Procedure: 1) During the initial research, divide the class into groups of 2-4 students. Each group will be responsible for collecting information and/or artifacts for a specific part of this investigation into history

(See Artifact 1.)

2) The whole-group goals are to:

- a) collect historical photographs and maps of the dairy industry in Oktibbeha County from 1930-present,
- b) interview past and present dairy farmers from this county,
- c) interview university dairy specialists for their perspectives,
- d) interview processors of dairy products and others involved in getting milk from farm to market,
- e) collect written historical records that can be used to enhance the oral interviews.

3) Information gathered from the sources will be compiled into a multi-chapter short history of dairy farming in Oktibbeha County. It will include maps, photographs, excerpts from oral interviews, a day in the life of a child raised on a dairy farm (based on oral histories) in the form of a journal, historical changes in the industry over time including changes in farming practices, dairy herd management, and economic and political factors.

Day 1: Students will go to the computer lab and conduct internet research (Artifact 1). They will generate ten questions in their area for the interviewees and for the multi-chapter history (Artifact 2).

Day 2: Students will listen to the oral history interviews from the archives of the USM Oral History Program. They will take notes of the interviews and have a whole-class discussion centering on the information in these interviews.

Days 3-5: Students will conduct oral history interviews with Oktibbeha County dairy farmers, their family members, processors, and university or extension service dairy specialists. Students will take notes and prepare summaries of the interviews (see Artifact 3).

Days 6-8: Students will assemble in their groups to select video and/or audioclips to be transferred to CD format to use in future Mississippi Studies, Biogeography, or Agri-Science classes. They will also select research and interview information to be compiled into the multi-chapter history. Every attempt should be made to use photographs and quotations provided by those interviewed in addition to research information. A hand-drawn cover design will be created, and the booklet will be assembled and bound on day 8.

The multi-chapter history will be assembled using the following pattern:

Cover (title, drawing)

Title page (title, names of students, date)

Dedication (with illustration)

Table of contents page

- I. *The county cows built*-a history of the dairy industry in Oktibbeha Co. (including text and photos, generated by research and interviews). This includes economic, environmental, and legal aspects impacting dairy farmers.
- II. *Why Holsteins?* (changes in technology, favored breeds, feeding, herd management, and consumer demand)
- II. *The role of tenant farmers* in southern dairies
- III. *Journal entries* featuring a day in the life of the farmer and family members (featuring facts and quotation from the Oakley family)

Assessment: A rubric will be used to evaluate this unit (see Artifact 4).

Artifact 1

DAIRY FARMING IN OKTIBBEHA CO.

List websites and give some details about what is in the website

1. Embree Moore, Miranda Morgan and Tim Cook: Find details about the history of Oktibbeha County. Include sites that have photographs if possible.
2. Jason Pearson and Chasity Kendrick: Find out about the technology used in the dairy industry now (hormones, new ways of feeding, etc.)
3. Vicky Phillips, Tim Myers, and Hawken Brackett: Find out about the environmental regulations necessary in dairy farming now (disposal of waste, etc.)
4. Isa Norwood, Justin Leonard, and Steven Goodman: Investigate breeds of dairy cows.
5. Matthew Monroe, Alex Lewis, and Katherine Harvill: Research legislation relating to dairy farming.
6. Kristen Miller, Tanner Mixon and Jenny Pote: Dairy herd management (raised on pasture, kept totally in barns? Artificial insemination vs. natural breeding); feeds.
7. Byron Wilkes, Mark Monroe. and Charlotte Read: Changes in diet over the years that have affected the kinds of dairy cows raised and the use of the milk.

ARTIFACT 4
RUBRIC FOR ASSESSING EIGHT-DAY UNIT
Dairy farming in Oktibbeha County
(185 pts.)

Internet research (Artifact 1):

- a) ≥ 4 sites _____ (10)
- b) Summary of sites _____ (10)
- c) Quality of sites _____ (10)

Constructing interview questions (Artifact 2):

- a) ≥ 10 questions _____ (10)
- b) Relevance of questions _____ (10)

Summaries of interviews (5@5) (Artifact 3):

- @ interview _____ (25)

Critical reading of historical documents (summary)

- @10 pts. _____ (20)

Assembling the material into the multi-chapter book:

Group grade on assigned chapter (I-IV)

- a) use of historical accounts (≥ 3 written sources) _____ (15)
- b) use of quotations from oral histories (≥ 5) _____ (15)
- c) photographs and/or drawings (≥ 3) _____ (15)
- d) accuracy and significance of research _____ (15)
- e) organization and mechanics _____ (15)
- f) overall quality of presentation _____ (15)

One student will be selected to prepare the cover, title page and dedication. Maximum total point value = 90 pts.

Artifact 5

GROWING UP ON A DAIRY FARM ASSIGNMENTS

Journals— (8)

1. Mrs. Warren Oakley (Mary Cowsert)—Based on your notes and those made by your teachers, construct a journal of Mrs. Oakley's life as she told it. If you need to fill in some gaps, you are welcome to call her (323-3632). This will not be a complete life history so use dates and events that she told us about. For each entry, pretend she has gone back into the house and is writing down her day's "doings." Incorporate photographs and some hand drawings at appropriate places. Examples would be when Mr. Oakley called her for a date. Include dates and places.
2. Mr. Warren Oakley—Follow directions under 1) above.
3. William (323-6490) and Robert (324-3449) Oakely, the sons—Follow directions under above
4. Florence Box (see her in library for details), Frances McDavid (324-0365), Mary Sue Hankins (phone no. unavailable)—same as 1) above

How would you like your milk?—dairy processing industry— (2)

5. This would include information from articles, Dr. Charles White, and Noel and Diane Hall, and the Oakleys. Such subjects as grading the milk, uses of the milk, how they picked up the milk, etc.

Why Holsteins?—dairy herd management— (2)

6. This includes feeding, waste management, size of herds, changes in milk production, the change from hand milking and use of milk cans to mechanical milking and milk pipelines and bulk storage tanks, etc. Sources will be articles and the various presenters.

The County Cows Built: history of the dairy industry in Oktibbeha Co.—(4)

7. Articles and speakers. Especially *The county that cows built* and other articles and information from speakers. Remember that at one time "there was a dairy farm on every hill in the county" (quotation from Mary Oakley). Include the A&M Creamery, the Borden plant, changes in breeds, etc.

Photographs and drawings— (2)

8. You will be responsible for selecting and possibly shooting appropriate photographs for groups 5-7. You need to meet with them so you will know what is appropriate. You will also prepare captions for the photographs that will “link” them to the text. In some cases, you may prepare sketches to illustrate the text.

Cover design, table of contents page, dedication, chapter title pages— (4)

9. You will be responsible for producing:
- a) a cover with (1)
 - i) the title
Dairy farming in Oktibbeha County, featuring the Oak-Ayr family
 - ii) written and published by
Spring 2002 Biogeography class of Starkville High School
 - iii) appropriate photo/illustration
 - b) table of contents page, listing the chapters above (journal, etc.) with appropriate photo or hand-drawn illustrations (1 person does b, c, and d)
 - c) Dedication page with illustrations
 - d) Illustrated poem about the Oakley family
 - e) Chapter title pages with appropriate photo/illustration and appropriate quotation hand-written by the journal keeper (we will arrange for that; just pick out the quotation). (2)

**Two-day Unit on
Dairy Farming in Oktibbeha County
A lesson based on oral interviews with dairy farmers**

**Two-day Unit on
Dairy Farming in Oktibbeha County**
A lesson based on oral interviews with dairy farmers

Grades: 9-12

Subjects: Mississippi Studies, Agri-Science

Objectives: Students will 1) trace the land use and practices of a specific agricultural group, 2) analyze the role of diverse ethnic groups in this agricultural pursuit 3) compare accounts from oral interviews, diary accounts, and historical documents.

Materials: primary research materials, archival oral interviews (USM Oral History website (www.usm.edu/msoralhistory)).

Background: Oktibbeha County, once the dairy center of the south, has experienced a rapid loss of dairy farms. This loss of dairy farms has been repeated throughout the state and nation. We want the students to investigate the forces behind these sudden changes.

Through this assignment, the students will comprehend that land use is seldom static and changes due to forces often out of the control of individuals.

Procedure: Day 1: The teacher will provide written primary source materials (i.e., newspapers, journals, magazines, and internet) as well as transcribed and audio interviews available through the USM Oral History website. The teacher divide the class into three groups and will supply sets of research questions for each of the groups to guide their reading. Each group will focus on one of the three objectives (see above). They will discuss their answers in a small group so that they may respond in the next day's whole-class discussion.

Day 2: A whole-discussion will involve all three of the objectives listed. The group's will present their findings and will be questioned by the rest of the class. Student will take notes on the unit and produce one of the following as an out-of-class assignment:

- a) "a day in the life" journal entry of a dairy farmer**
- b) a poem describing the bond between a dairy farmer and his land/livestock. This poem must include facts.**
- c) a drawing or watercolor depicting a past or present dairy farm or a scene representative of life on a dairy farm**
- d) a timeline of the dairy industry in Mississippi or of a particular dairy farm**
- e) a collage of historical photographs with captions and quotations from the oral interviews**

RUBRIC FOR ASSESSING TWO-DAY UNIT
Dairy Farming in Oktibbeha County
100 pts.

Research questions completed (\geq 10 questions)
_____ (20)

Small-group brainstorming for large-group presentation
(rough draft of presentation)
_____ (20)

Participation in whole-class discussion
_____ (10)

Individual project grade (50 pts.):

a) use of factual material
_____ (20)

b) originality and creativity
_____ (20)

c) quality of presentation
_____ (10)



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II. *How would you like your milk?*-- dairy processing industry

III. *Why Holsteins?*-- dairy herd management

IV. *The County Cows Built:* history of the dairy industry in Oktibbeha Co.

The Life of a Dairy Farmer

1998

Early in the morning,
I head for the barn,
my coffee cup in hand.

The milking machines steady rhythm comforts me.
The sound I've heard for so many days of my life
soon to come to an end.

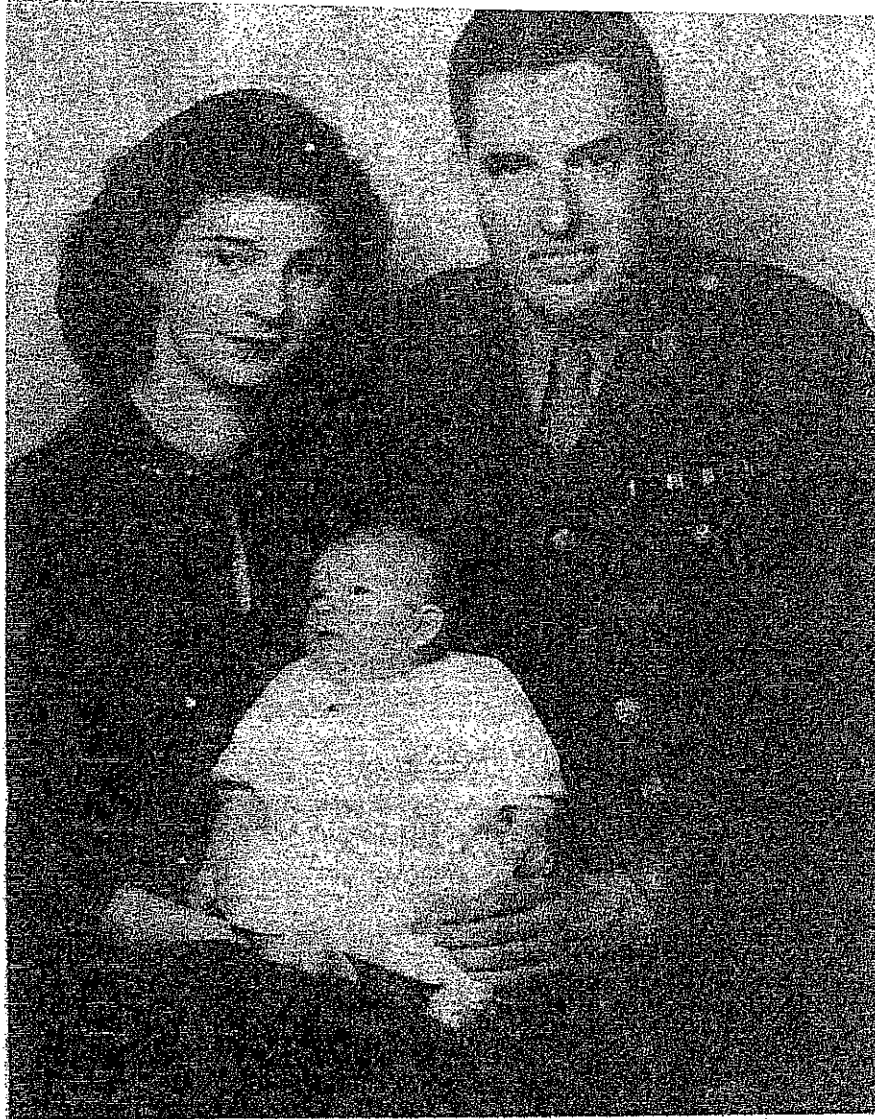
1999

I pass by the barn on my way in and still look for the
lights no longer there.
The sounds of cows linger in my memory,
their histories part of mine.

*Dedicated to the Oakley Family for
supplying us with great family stories and
important information. Our greatest
gratitude goes out to Warren and Mary
Oakley, The Oakley sons (William and
Robert), and the Oakley daughters
(Florence Oakley Box, Mary Sue Oakley
Hankins, and Frances Oakley McDavid.*



Mary Cowser Oakley



Mary, Warren, and baby Florence
February or March 1945

Mary Florence Cowsert Oakley
(May 25, 1925-)

This diary was created from oral interviews and the dates are approximate.



Mary Cowsert (right) and her sister

1937

Today, Queen and I went and played on the Mississippi A&M campus which is real close to our College Drive house. Queen barked at all the students. Her barking did not bother me that much because I was just happy to be running and playing with her. We walked over to the JROTC building and met daddy at the dairy department. He was so excited because he finally finished the feed chart that he wanted to publish. It looked very complicated. As we walked home he tried to explain it to me.



Prof. Cowsert, Mary's father

That night we sat around the table and talked about how our day went. Daddy is really pleased with how well the feed chart turned out. He thinks it will help the dairy farmers produce more milk.



Mary and Princess

1941

Today was a really interesting day. School went along as usual until I got to Latin class. I met a boy named Warren who is a senior. He seems really nice and I think he might have a crush on me. Not too long after I got home, I received a surprising phone call. It was Warren and he asked if he could take me on a date. My mother overheard my call and told me, "You be nice to that boy because he is a nice young man and has a nice family." I told him I already had a date and to call back another time.



1942

Today was a wonderful day because I just graduated from Starkville High School. Warren and I are planning on getting married and he reminded me about the first time he called. He said if I hadn't told him to call back another time he would never have called again. I am so glad my mom told me to be nice to him. My wedding day will be here before I know it. He will report to Fort McClellan for basic training. I know that I will miss him terribly.

1943

Oh, it's just a wonderful day I am a newly married woman to Mr. Francis Warren Oakley. I think married life is great but I just didn't realize what I was getting myself into by marrying a man who owns a dairy farm. From the way this all looks, I don't think that we will be taking any vacations. I think I'll just have to get used to this. I woke up at

5:20 this morning to make sure everything was in order then at 6:00 I got breakfast ready. I wanted to get an early start on my day, so I hurried off to do my errands. I needed some more seeds for my garden and I had no time to get them because I was busy running errands. After I ran my errands I came back and sat at the back door with my first aid kit and waited for any sick tenant farmers that needed my help. I could hear the tractors on the road and I could tell which tractor belonged to which farmer. After I helped a couple farmers, I began to work in my garden. Even though I was short of some seeds I could still straighten up a little. I took out all the weeds and picked fresh vegetables for dinner. At 3:30 the cows came out of the pasture, at 6:30 I prepared dinner. It had been a long day so we all retired to bed.

Late 1944

Warren left to go to Europe to fight World War II today. I'm worried about him. I hope and pray that he comes back and is OK. I started writing him a letter today with my short pencil. Everyone always asks me why I use such short pencils. I tell them a short pencil is better than a long memory. I use that short pencil to keep records on the cows- their vaccinations, milk production, breeding dates. I am very proud to have contributed my record-keeping system. On a lighter note, today has gone fairly well. I've been just relaxing and trying to stay calm for the baby's sake and I'm really thinking about Warren. I will go and finish cleaning. Bye.



William, Florence, Mary Sue (from left to right)

January 1945

I am so excited, Warren just came back from the war! We finally get to spend time together. I wonder what new things he will have to tell me about the war? He came back wounded on his back and his arm. It happened at the Battle of the Bulge in Germany. I'm pregnant, but I am willing to help take care of him too.

January 1945

Today was one of the most memorable days in my life. I finally finished college at Mississippi State University. Now I can devote my time to my husband and the dairy, also my upcoming baby, which is bound to be here in about one month. I am really excited to know that Warren and I will be bringing a child into this world. I hope this will be a joyful time for us.

February 11, 1945

Today has been a very happy, but exhausting day. I made it through the birth of our beautiful baby girl, Florence Oakley. Warren is still a little sore from his war wounds, but he's helping me with her. Well, I would write more, but I'm very tired. Goodnight.



Prissy on the well at
the end of the old
Oakley home - 1947

1966

What a day! Today was a very eventful day, maybe not productive like always, but very interesting. Robert and Frances set the hayfield on fire! Can you imagine how they could do such a thing? I think they have been watching too much TV. They saw on one show where this man jumps over fire on his bike. So I guess that the kids decided that if he did it, they could. Well, thank God, they made it over the ramp. I gave the kids their spankings before their father came home. Warren was still very upset that some of his hayfield was burnt.

The day went on. I fixed everybody dinner and some dessert for Warren. The kids knew they had done something wrong and they got punished for it. Well, it's been a long day; I'm off to bed, Goodnight!



Cranking ice cream

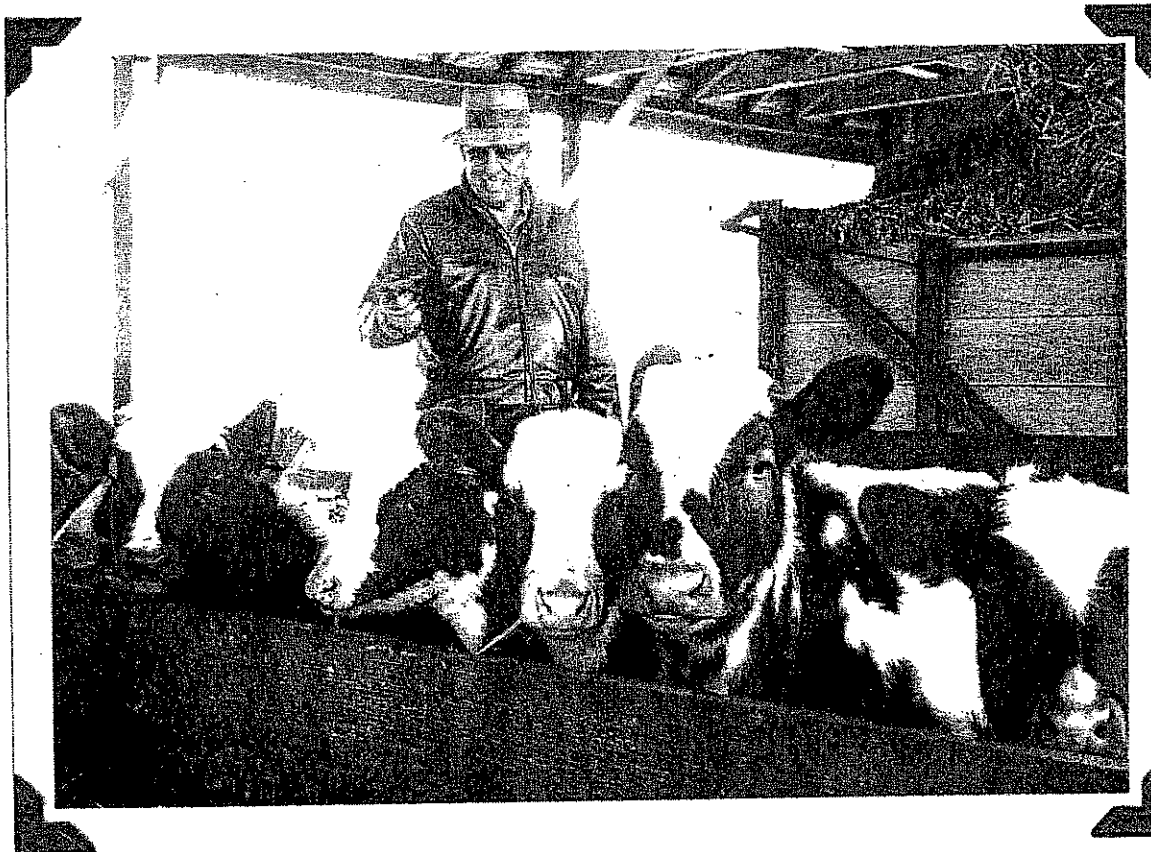
1998

Today is the last day that I will see our beautiful farm full of cattle grazing on it. It was wonderful and good experience to have and raise all my children on the farm. I will miss all those warm days that when would go out and have picnics and cut watermelons and eat them together.

2002

You know I find myself at the age of 78 still waking up at 5:20 in the morning fixing and doing things around the house. I miss those good old days when I would get up and fix those hot biscuits and those wonderful grits. I miss hearing the milking machines the cows mooing, and listening to Frances and Mary Sue arguing about who would wear what. I also miss working in the kitchen and waiting to hear those tractors come through. But I am older now and all those things are just a memory.

Mr. Warren Oakley



Mr. Oakley checks his calves

Warren Oakley: The Life of Dairyman (1923-)

Mr. Francis Warren Oakley was born in 1923. He is one of the five generations of Oakleys that has been raised on the Oak-Ayr farm. He has been a dairy farmer for fifty-five years of his life. The following journal entries have been recreated from interviews with Mr. Oakley and the dates are approximate. Many thanks to Mr. Oakley for letting us interview him and occasionally calling him at home.

1935

Today is the first day I have gotten to work on the farm. My father has been showing me what all is involved with the dairy business, seeing as how I will probably take over the farm next since I am an only child. Father has taught me how to drive even though I am only twelve years of age. My responsibility is to drive the milk that is taken from the cows and take it to be weighed at the weighing station.



Warren Oakley and Bingo

1942

I have been attending Mississippi College of Agricultural and Mechanical Science. My major is dairy science and I previously had a girlfriend but she broke up with me because she didn't want to marry a dairyman or something of that sort. However I phoned the apple of my eye Mary Cowsert and she and I are now together. I have plans to ask her to marry me before I am shipped to Germany.

Oh yes, I forgot to mention that I finished ROTC and have plans to volunteer to be in the U.S. forces in World War II. My parents aren't exactly for me, and the drafting agency man even told my dad he could pull some strings so that I wouldn't be on the frontlines, thankfully my father declined. Not too long ago, Pearl Harbor was bombed by that Japanese, this also has strengthened my decision to join the army.



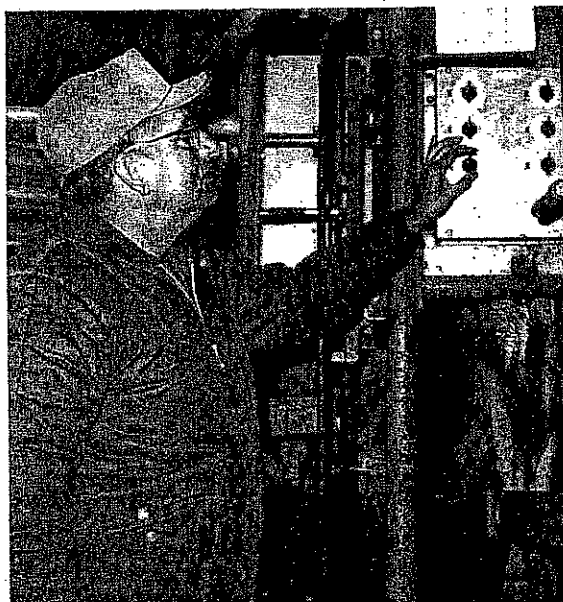
1945

I came back to Oktibbeha County for many reasons: my wife, my education (which was interrupted by the war), but mostly because I was injured twice from a shrapnel wound at the Battle of the Bulge. I won't elaborate on the war; it is something I would just rather forget. They did, however, give me the Purple Heart and the Oak Cluster for being injured twice, I suppose that amounts to something. I would like to put the war behind me and continue with life and it appears that I will have to very hastily for not long after I returned to the county my father passed away. This meant I had to cease my education at A & M and run the farm. I have forgotten two very important events that have happened since I returned to the Oak-Ayr farm which have changed things drastically. The first being my marriage to Mary, I am overjoyed that she is now my wife and I love her very much. She is also helping me run the farm, acting as the farm's secretary and keeping records on all the cows. She has never done this before and has no idea what she is getting into, but this shows that she truly loves me. However, she has been burdened since the second event that has occurred since my return from overseas: the birth of our first daughter on the eleventh of February, Florence Oakley. I hope that all goes well and that I will run the farm as it should be run. I supervise the workers during the milking at 5'o'clock in the morning, but wake up at 4 to make sure that all the

Ayrshires are fed and the workers are on their way to the farm. It is hard these first few months being a dairy farmer, but I am sure that I will get the hang of it before too long.

1948

I am happy to announce many happenings that have enhanced productions on the farm that include the arrival of our new milking machines that have eased much work on our part and the tenant's. Also, the previous year we had another bundle of joy. She is another girl and we have decided to name her Mary Sue Oakley. This adds to the work of Mary but she deals with it excellently. It has not hindered her record keeping I am proud to say and she is still efficient as ever. She is the only one in our family with a college education but I simply have no time to go back and finish mine. The farm is a 14 day a week job and you simply have to have perseverance to work this job. Since we are a Grade A dairy farm we usually have county inspectors to check on our farm. They will usually cut us slack and visit us once a month. The time we are pressed for sanitation is when the federal inspector comes by the make sure our operation fulfills all the dairy regulations. They come by once a year and the other dairy farmers usually warn us when they are coming so we can clean as much as we can and in return we warn them if we know of any upcoming inspections: county or federal. I still wake at 4 and the workers are done milking and at home eating breakfast by 6:30 or so. After breakfast we will go and work in the fields until lunch when they go back home and eat again. Mary acts as our finder and first aid station during the day and the second milking usually takes place in the neighborhood of 3:45 in the P.M. At 6:30 we'll have dinner and go to bed shortly after. Milking is a tough job and the only way to get it done is early to bed and early to rise. Thank goodness, I've been waking up at 4 in the morning for as long as I can remember or this dairy business would never get done.



Mr. Oakley sets the automatic feeder

1957

It has been awhile since I last wrote an entry in my journal and many things have happened since then. We have had three more children, and Mary and I love them very much. The most recent of them is Robert Oakley, born this very year. He is the youngest and after him comes Frances who was born in 1954. She has been growing up and learning how to walk now. The oldest of three newborns is William who was born way back in 1950. He is 7 years old now and seems to be very interested in the dairy business. I sometimes let him help me feed the cows as my father did with me so many years ago.

Another thing that has we have decided to do to modernize our production by switching to artificial insemination. This will let us get rid of the bulls that sometimes scare the children and are dangerous to keep around as well. They waste our food and sometimes give us unworthy dairy cows. Now, however, we can actually pick the type of cow we want for us. All I have to do now is inseminate the female cow with the sperm I can get from anywhere in the country. I remember when one of the neighbor girls came on her tricycle and saw me preparing to inseminate one of our dairy cows. She asked what I was doing and I simply told her that I was making a baby calf. Well she took it the wrong way and came back about fifteen minutes later and asked me where the calf was. Even so, modern technology is truly a marvel, and helps us make the perfect dairy cow.

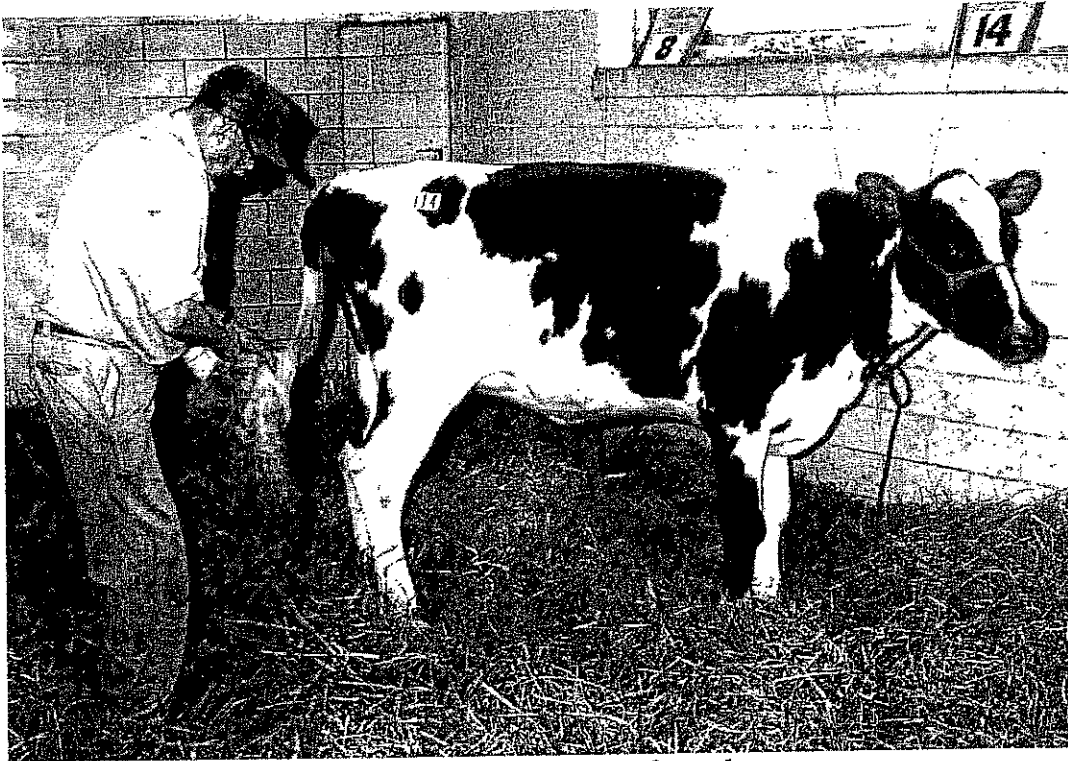
Dairy seems to be the way Oktibbeha County is heading, and it the outlook is bright. There are about 800 to 900 dairies here in Oktibbeha and even though most of them produce Grade C milk, there are still a good amount of Grade A producers. I am also proud to say that our farm is still a Grade A farm and the workers are still as productive and efficient as ever before.

The local feed salesman came around again, pestering me to buy some of his feed for my cows. I told him I'll stick to the silage and when he asked my why I told him about the professor at the college who advises me on my feed. The salesman chuckled at me and asked me who this professor was and how come I believed in him so faithfully. It was my turn to chuckle now as I told him that it was my father-in-law. I don't recall ever seeing that man again afterwards, and I'm glad of it.

Everything is still the same as it has been, times are good. People still take the milk truck to town when it comes by to pick up the milk. It still amazes me how science today has improved technology since my father ran the farm so many years ago. It seems like only yesterday when I was driving to the weighing station to weigh the milk. However, I've still got to get to sleep now so that I can wake up early for another day on the farm.



Warren Oakley (left bottom) at a Farm Bureau Meeting



Mr. Oakley grooms a cow for a show

1976

I remember when I thought the dairy industry would do nothing but continuous success. It seems now that as much as it was improving, it seems to start slowly going downhill. I don't know what will happen in future years, but for now we must keep producing milk to get by. We are still a Grade A farm but we have switched to Holstein cows rather than Ayrshires. The American people no longer want the whole milk, which Ayrshires are so well known for, and Holsteins have been proven to produce more milk than the Ayrshires. I'm still partial to the Ayrshires but we must move on to keep up with the times. It is ironic that now we are a Holstein farm and our farm name is Oak-Ayr, but I have no intentions of changing the name. It has simply been around too long.



The kids are growing up fast. It seems as if it were only yesterday when Robert, Frances, and they're cousins were riding bicycles through the dead grass they lit on fire. Florence is now 31 years old, Mary Sue is 29, William is now 26 and a great asset to the farm, Frances is 22 years of age, and Robert, the youngest, has now reached the age of 19.

William is still a big help on the farm, and although Robert isn't as interested in the dairy part of the farm he still is a great asset in the fields. I hope they will continue to carry on the family heritage and the way things look it might be quite a fight to keep up with the dairy industry. The city has become bigger and bigger and more of a metropolis these days as well.



1981

This past March the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service interviewed me. I told them about the outlook of farming for this year and what had been affecting farming in past years. "The outlook of farming this year is pretty fair," I told them "but last year's farming wasn't as good in the past because the drought and unusually high temperature that caused less production in beef, milk, forage, and less reproduction of the cattle; dairy and beef both."

We talked about dairy farming, the drought, and high heat for a pretty good while until we started conversing about the co-op whom take the cows and slaughter them when they get old. Most farmers were encouraged to sell their older cows before the 31st of March to get a better price. Most of the meat wasn't being used for choice cuts; it was being used more for ground beef than anything else. We talked about how farmers are farmers, but they can relate to the consumers since they are consumers themselves.

Economy has all but shut down the average farmer, times are tough now and the competition is ruthless. There are hardly any other dairy farms, and the big corporations own most (if not all) of the dairy industry nowadays. Sometimes I wonder when the farm will shut down and now that William is mostly in charge of the farm, it's on his shoulders. I know he'll make the right decision though, for I raised him the best I knew how.

1998:

William has made the choice to shut down the farm. We have about 116 cows left over and we'll probably sell them. I remember when we could get around 500 dollars for such an animal, but now they go for about 200 or 300 dollars. I'm not disappointed in William at all, because frankly I've grown weary of the dairy industry. I can still reminisce about how things used to be, it was such a good time. I've been married to my wife Mary now for 55 years now and our marriage is happy as ever before. This will be my last journal entry for a long time. All I can say is that my life has been wonderful and if I could choose to do it all over again, I would say "Yes" without a doubt. Even though that cow manure smells bad to you, it still smells like money to me today.

19

The Ayrshire Breeders' Association

Miss Sale
19

HERD REGISTER

REGISTRY NO. 367821

THE FEMALE NAMED Starr's Eva Lena

BORN February 21, 1948

SIRE Evs's Tom 85476

DAM Solar's Blue Bell 268041

BRED BY Ralph Starr, Poneto, Indiana R. D. 1

FIRST OWNER Ralph Starr, Poneto, Indiana R. D. 1

TYPE CLASSIFICATION RATING	
DATE	INSP. AGE RATING

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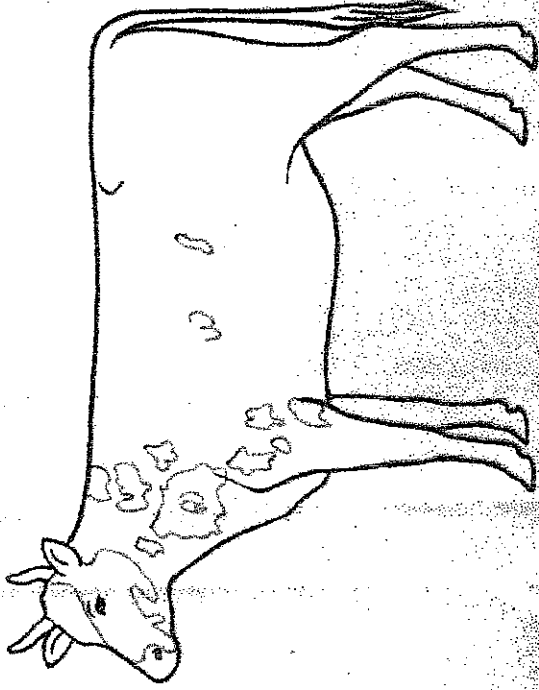
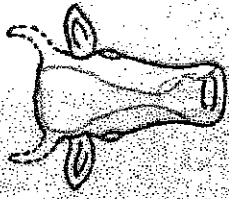
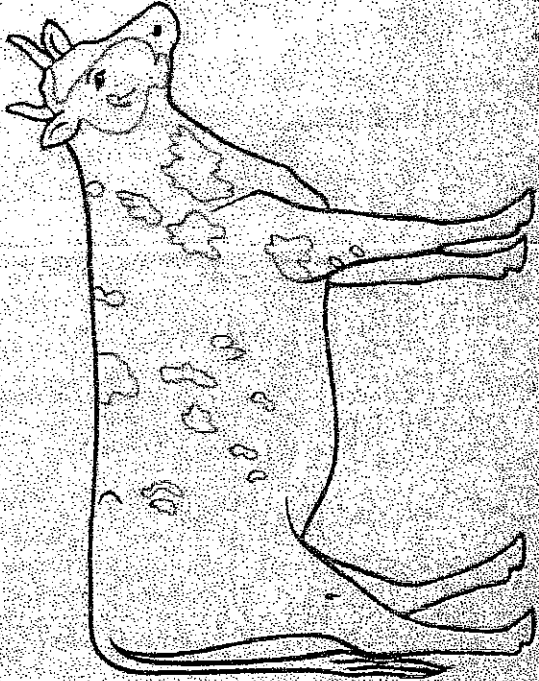
THIS ANIMAL HAS BEEN DULY TRANSFERRED IN THE HERD REGISTER OF THE AYRSHIRE BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION AS FOLLOWS:

DATE	TO	ADDRESS	DATE OF SERVICE	SERVICE SIRE
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9-26-55 F. W. Oakley, Starkville, Miss., R. 1.

Not Bred

R



William Oakley



William and Daniel Glover, county agent

William Sanders Oakley
(June 28, 1950 -)

William was named after both of his grandfathers and is the third child born out of five children in the Oakley family. Presently, William works for Rackley Oil as a truck driver and part time on a dairy farm. The following journal entries are made up from interviews with William Oakley and all dates are approximate.

1957

Today my little brother was born. Now I have two younger siblings, Frances and the newborn Robert. I turned seven this year and my father gives me a little more responsibility. He said in a couple of years, I might even get to drive around and work in the cornfields. Right now though, mother is serving dinner and afterwards we'll be going to bed.

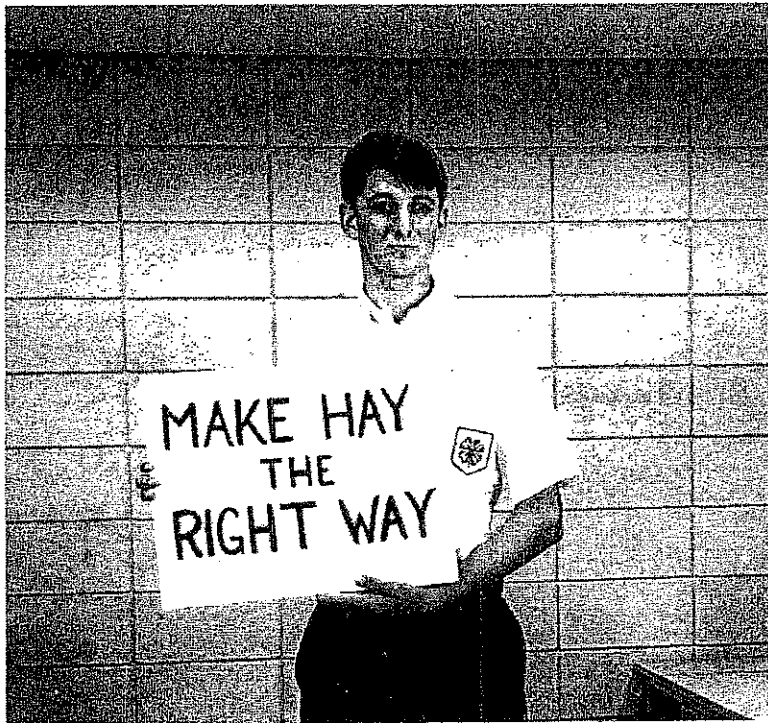
1960

I've finally reached the double digits of age. I am ten years old and just as my father hinted I've learned how to drive not only the truck, but also the tractor to work in the cornfields. Sometimes my father lets me help him birth the cows. The new calves are very precious, their legs are so wobbly in the first few days of their life but their mothers help them and love them very much. It reminds me of my own mother, who loves all of her children....



1962

Today the most painful thing happened to me today as I was milking a cow. I was bent over placing the bucket under the cow and it kicked me. I didn't realize how bad it hurt until I saw myself in a mirror. The skin of my nose had been ripped off and I was bleeding horribly. Unfortunately, mother and father took care of it and I had to go to school anyway. I'll never forget it though, it still hurts my nose to think of it.



1968

I am now a freshman in college majoring in Dairy Science. The class is pretty demanding, but I think the life of a dairy farmer is the life for me. I love dairy farming, and so does the rest of my family. Robert doesn't like it as much, I think this is because it was sort of forced on him but he shows an interest in the agriculture part of dairy. Not everyone is cut out for being a dairy farmer though. My father tells me it is a 14-day a week job and I know from experience he's not exaggerating. In this class we've learned all kinds of things, like different kinds of tags for cows and which vaccinations cows are required to have by state and federal laws. I already know most of this stuff so I have an edge. A lot of other students in here grew up on dairy farms as well but nonetheless the class is very challenging. I am learning more about dairy than I could have ever hoped to know, but the roots of all my success will constantly be my mother and father who have been supporting me the entire time.



William Oakley (right)

1972

This is a joyous year in which I have graduated from college with a degree in Dairy Science. I can now help my father like never before with the knowledge I've learned from MSU. I've forgotten to tell you that the college here has changed its name, but it's still the same college. Robert is now a freshman in high school.

1976

This year we switched to Holsteins to improve production. Dad and I had been talking about it for a long time. Also when most of the neighbors have switched to Holsteins we decided that it was time to give up the Ayrshires that our farm has partly been named after and dad is partial to. The times are changing and the American public wants less butterfat in their milk which the Ayrshires are so well known for producing and our farm must modernize to meet the times.

1985

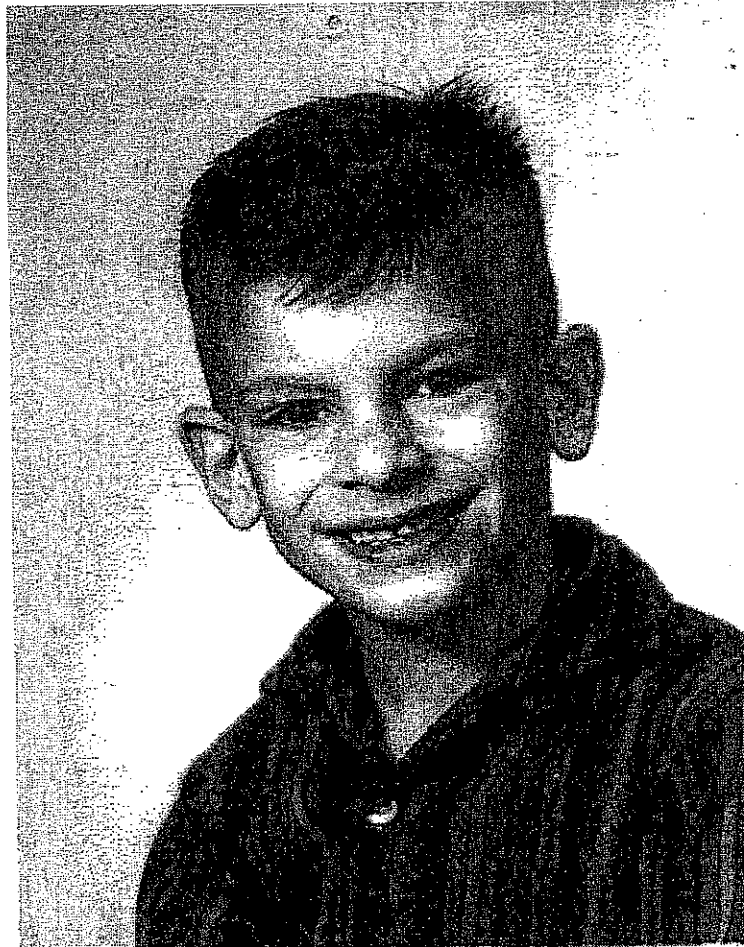
The dairy industry grows harder and harder each year, but our farm is keeping up as best as it can. We still produce the Grade A milk which my father was producing when he was still running the farm. He still runs the farm but I provide all the knowledge and help I can when times call for it. Robert's degree in Agronomy is great help when it comes to the actual feed of the cows. We have decided to feed the cows whole cottonseed on his advice because store feed has become too expensive and silage, too, has become

harder to manage. The Holsteins are putting out well, but the big dairy corporations are putting the small dairy farmers slowly out of business. The thought of having to shut down the farm has never escaped my mind, and I can only hope it does not come too soon but at this rate shutting the farm down may become our only option.

1998

Sadly, I've been forced to shut down the dairy farm this year. There are simply no other solutions, the corporations have shut down the small farmer and we were one of the last dairy farms standing. The family agrees that the dairy cow industry in Oktibbeha is failing, although while we were operating, we didn't do badly at all. It is a shame that after 88 years of dairy farming I have been the one who had to make the choice. My father told me once of when his grandmother started the farm way back in 1813 with about 12 to 15 cows. Compared to the one hundred sixteen cows we have now it seems miniscule. The cows fetch about 200-300 dollars these days and we've sold most of them in a sale we had in one our fields under a big tent. It hurts to know that the lights of the barn have been permanently turned off. I still look for those lights when I drive on Oktoc road.

Robert Oakley



SCHOOL DAYS 1963-64
SUDDUTH

Robert Oakley
(February 9, 1957-)

Robert Oakley was born in Starkville Mississippi and was raised on his family's dairy farm, Oak-Ayr farm. The following entries have been created from interviews and the dates are approximate.



July 1965

Today there was a party at one of our ponds for the Fourth of July. There were many people there and we all swam and then ate watermelon. It was a lot of fun. I hope we can do this every year.

July 1967

Today during the circus act Mary Sue and I were doing, we accidentally lit the pasture on fire. We were just doing some tricks when we decided a really cool trick would be to light the grass on fire and ride our bikes through it. It was a really good trick up until we lit the pasture on fire. We were doing everything that we could to get that fire out but it just wouldn't work. So we told our cousin to go and call the fire department. He ran the 1/4-mile to the neighbor's house there to find out someone was on the telephone. So our cousin ran back and told us this. We told him to tell whoever was on the phone to get off so he could call the fire department. All of the neighbors were there and the fire department. Fortunately, our mother took care of the punishment before our father came home.

October 1967

I entered my first 4-H contest today. It is so much fun being in the 4-H club. It was hard work I had to train the cow and then wash it and groom it. I had to make it look all nice for the competition. Yesterday I got to drive the truck in the hay fields during harvest. It was a lot of fun. Mom brought some watermelon down there for us to eat for lunch.



Robert trains a calf

November 1998

A lot has happened since I was a kid growing up on the dairy farm. We have decided to close down our dairy operations. It is a sad misfortune but business is cold. You have to get something out of all of your work, time, and money spent. That is what separates business from pleasure. I graduated from Mississippi State with a degree in agriculture and crop management. After that I went from less of the dairy side of life to row crops and beef cattle. My brother William loves dairy though. I don't think he will ever give it up even though Oak-Ayr no longer has dairy cows, William still works one day a week at another dairy farm. I will still keep beef cattle though.



November 1999

It has been one year since we sold the farm. I was always jealous in high school about my city friends. I always thought they were having a lot more fun than I was. You never miss something until you don't have it. I still have a patch of land from the old farm. I raise Brangus cattle on the land. Brangus is a cross-bred cow between Angus and Brahma. The difference between a dairy cow and a beef cow is beef cows have more meat on them whereas dairy cows are bred for milk production. The dairy farm was good work experience. In addition to beef cows, we raise some row crops, especially corn, using no-till farming to prevent erosion. Sometimes I really miss the dairy cows.

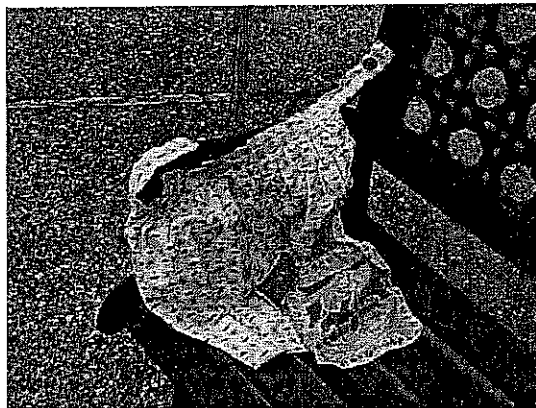
Florence Oakley Box



Dairy Princess Outfit



4H Project



**Florence Oakley Box
(February 11, 1945)**

Florence Oakley Box was born on February 11, 1945 in Starkville, Mississippi. She was raised on her family's dairy farm called the Oak-Ayr farm. The following entries have been created from interviews and the dates are approximate.

Late Summer, 1950

Today is May 1st so we got to go outside barefooted. I got into some trouble. Mary Sue and I took William down to the "big ditch" in a wagon. He is only 6 months old. We played down there for a while and came back home. Today we wanted to build castles with the mud. The wagon got stuck in the muddy ditch. It was too hard to pull William out of the ditch so we left him down there. Luckily, one of the tenant farmers saw us take him down there and brought him back. Mama wasn't too happy to find out we left him down there. She told us to go out side and get a privet branch to make a switch. She punished us, then we ate dinner and went to bed.



Florence (right) and Mary Sue (left) and Laddie

1954

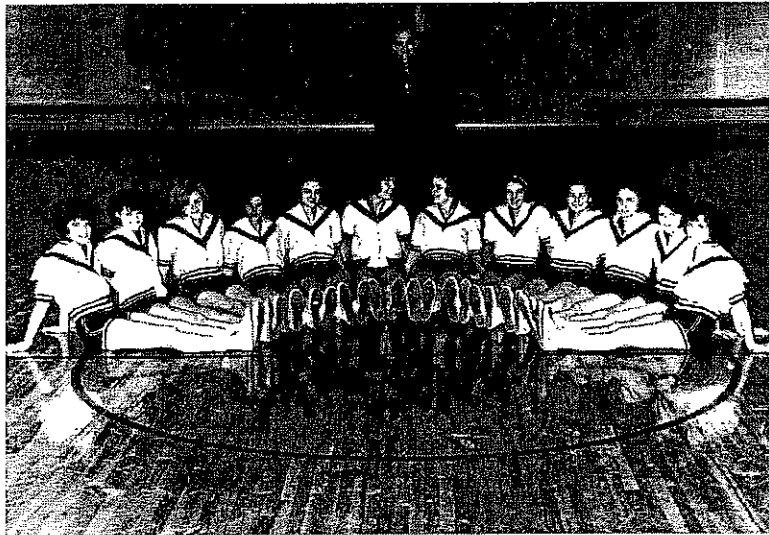
Today they were harvesting cotton on the lower farm. The hay wagon they brought in was full of cotton bolls. We played in the cotton and daddy warned us make sure we didn't have any money or anything metal in our pockets. He said if the metal got in the cotton gin at Artesia, it might start the gin on fire. We all played and came home. When I got home I drank my milk. I put red food coloring in my milk today. Later, we ate dinner and went to bed.



Florence Oakley with Irene

1955

Today, I woke up at 6:00 so I could get on the bus at 6:30. Our bus goes through Blackjack, Sheeley Hills, and on to Overstreet. We are the first or second stop. After school I went to a 4H meeting and started learning how to sew. There is going to be a contest at the fair in a few months. I'm going to enter a pincushion and an apron. When I got home from school I started on my sewing. I have to finish my pincushion by Thursday night. I have been practicing making my cookies for the fair. It is really hard to make them all uniform, but I love it when they all look perfectly shaped. I had to baby sit William and cook dinner, too. After eating dinner and drinking our glass of milk, we all went to bed. Today was an OK day.



Florence on the SHS basketball team

1955

Today was the day of the fair. I had all my stuff ready to enter in the contest. I went to the fair right after eating breakfast. We had eggs, and bacon. I don't like milk, so I put lots of vanilla in my milk and drank my glass for today. When I got to the fair we did some 4H square dancing with John R. Arnold calling out what to do. After square dancing, I set my stuff up for the contest. I won a blue ribbon. William won a red ribbon

for his cow. After the fair we came home. I helped mother cook dinner and we all went to bed.



Florence and "Unk" Walter Oakley

1959

After breakfast, today, my brothers, sisters, and I all went down to Unk's house. We like going there because it's fun and it give us something to do besides being on the farm all day. When we got there he was rolling up one of his cigarette. He's always rolling up his cigarettes up to smoke. He saves his Prince Albert Tins and William loves to build castles out of them. When we left Mary Sue and I went down to the pasture and tried smoking some cigarettes. It wasn't as good as people make it out to be. This is the third thing we've tried to smoke besides Catalpa beans and corn silk. When we came back inside, ate supper, drank our milk, and went to bed.

1962

Today Frances, Robert, and some of our cousins got into some trouble. They thought they could light some dead grass, in the pasture, on fire and ride their bikes through it. Well, when they caught the pasture on fire, it got out of control. William went to call the fire department. But since we have a party line, he couldn't get the phone. He came all the way back to us and told our cousins and Frances that he couldn't get the phone because one of the neighbors was using the party line. Frances told him to pick it up and say he had to call the fire department. He picked up the phone and told the neighbor about the fire and soon everybody on the party line found out about it. Mama gave them a switching before daddy got home. Everybody started calling them the Gas House Gang. Today was pretty exciting.

1963

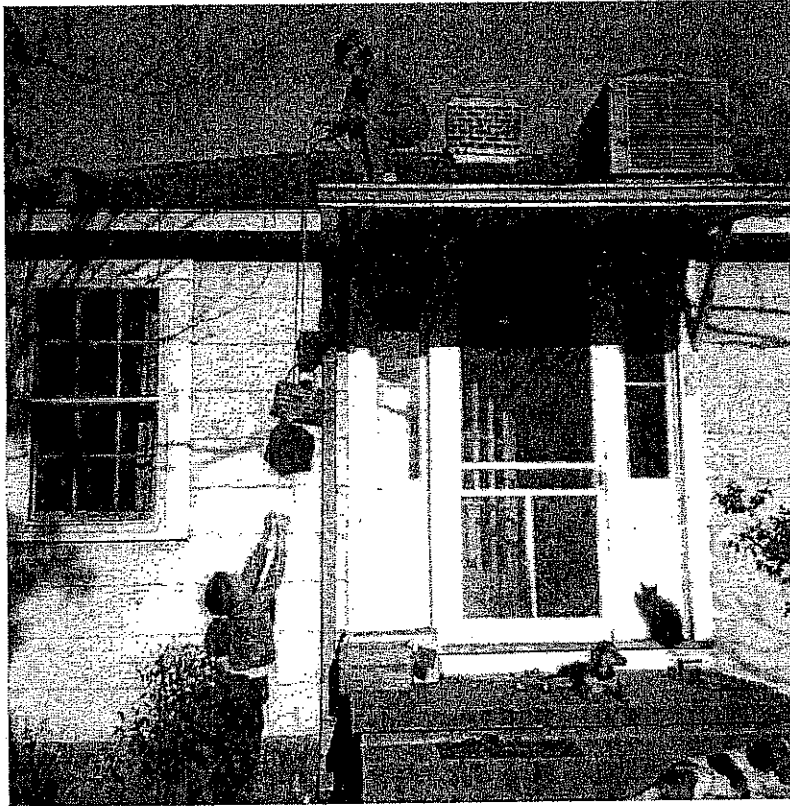
Today I woke up and got ready for school. We had our first basketball game of the year today. We won the game and I scored 4 of the points. It was exciting. Mary Sue and I got into a fight and said some bad words. Mama got on to us for that. After the

went straight to bed.

1963

I had such a great slumber party last night. We called in a dedication to WSSO. We asked the station to play "Love Me Tender" by Elvis Presley for all the girls at Florence's house. This was a tip to our boyfriends to tell them where we were. About thirty minutes after the song played the boys showed up at my front door. We all had a nice visit.

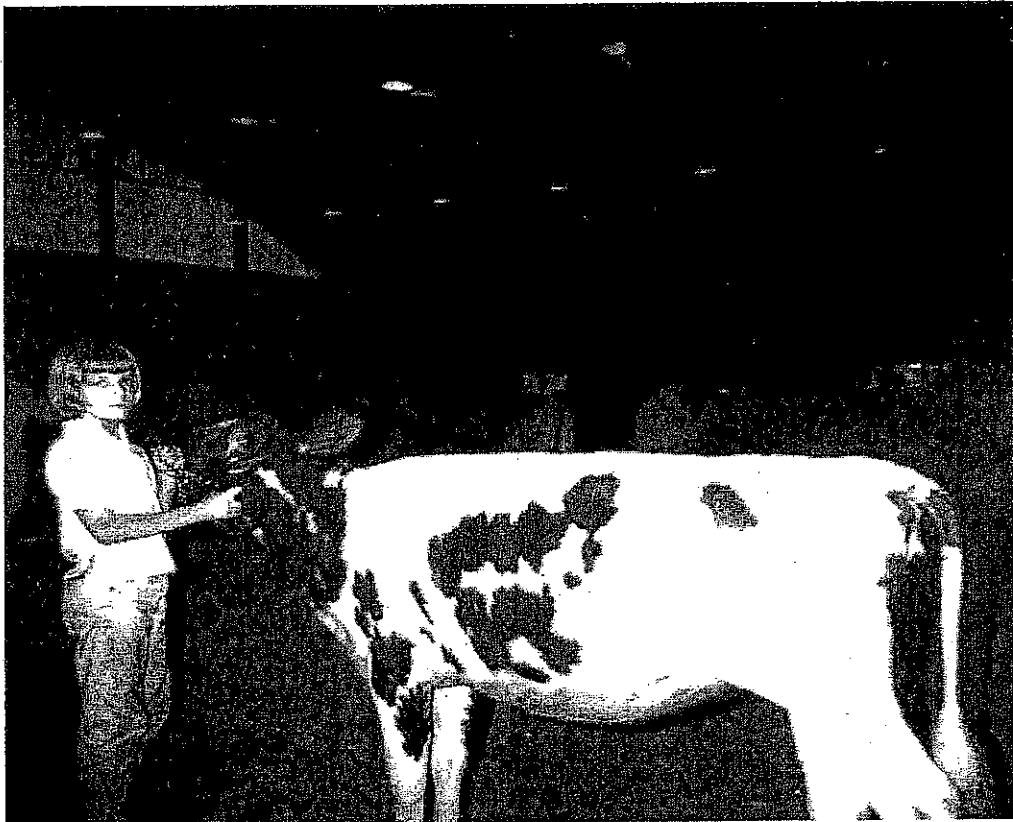
Frances Oakley McDavid



Frances hands down the kitten to her brother Robert

Frances Oakley McDavid
(November 27, 1954-)

Francis O. McDavid was born in Starkville, Mississippi on the family farm. This journal was created from an oral interview and the dates are approximate.



Frances training her cow

1959

Today my cousins came over. William and all of us wanted to start a circus act. We were going to set a fire in the dead grass and ride our bikes through it. We tried it yesterday and everything went OK. Today, when we set the fire, it got out of control. Our cousin Lincoln went to call the fire department but since we have a party line, he couldn't get through. When he came back he told us he couldn't get the phone. We told him to go back, pick up the phone, and say he had to call the fire department. Everybody on the party line quickly found out about the fire. I got in the shower to clean the soot off me and I thought Mama might forget about me. Mama gave us a switching before dad got home because she was afraid daddy was going to be too mad. We ate dinner, and went to bed.

1962

We got a television today. It was different from anything in our house. Robert and I were sharing a Coke and I had a bright idea. I poured it into two

glasses and added hot sauce to his. I was laughing so hard, but then he started really screaming. Mama found out and said it wasn't funny. I don't think I'll do that again.

1963

I went over my cousin's house early this morning. We played hide and go seek, and chase. While we were playing chase, I tripped over her pet poodle. They took me to the hospital and it turned out I had broken my collarbone. When I got home I was so exhausted I just went strait to bed.

May 1, 1965

Today we got to play outside barefoot. When I woke up, I ate breakfast and I drank a glass of milk. I put vanilla in it this time. After breakfast, Mary Sue and I went outside to play. William came to play with us after lunch. We built dirt houses and played in some hay tunnels. It was a lot of fun. When we got back inside, I took a bath, and took a nap. When I woke up we ate dinner. Then we went to bed.

I know the older girls never had to do chores, but I guess times have changed. Today the men had to work out in the hay fields, so I had to feed the cows. I really don't mind because I love working with the animals. Earlier in the day, I had to go to Macon to pick up a part for the tractor that broke down. My cheek still hurts from the dart Robert was throwing that landed in my face. I know he didn't mean it, but it sure does hurt. Needless to say, we won't play darts anymore.

I still remember the goats and sheep, I wish we still could have them. Yesterday morning mother warned one of our hens, "If you don't lay an egg by morning, you're dead." This morning the chicken lost its head and it still was running around in the barnyard. Mother made that chicken into a great chicken and dumpling dinner. After supper I looked in the photo album and I didn't find many pictures of me. "I guess I look enough like Florence that they don't need any of me."

Today we went to Gentry's Store. Robert and I charged one soft drink and a popsicle. Robert watched the Shetland pony and the cart while I got the snacks. I'm sure glad that we didn't use that stubborn untrained pony. Yesterday, we tried to tie him to the cart, and he ran us straight through the fence. Today we collected five-cent deposit bottles that people threw out on the road. At this rate we're gonna get rich. When I went in the store Mr. Gentry said, "there's one of the Gas House Gang."

Mary Sue Oakley Hankins



SCHOOL DAYS 1953-54
STARKVILLE

Mary Sue Oakley Hankins
(1947-)

Mary Sue O. Hankins was born on January 20, 1947 in Starkville, Mississippi on the family dairy farm, the Oak-Ayer farm. The following journals have been recreated from interviews and the dates are approximate.

December, 1950

Today, Florence and I took William to the ditch in a red wagon. We played for a long time. William is only six months old and soon it got boring. Someone called for us, so we left William in the ditch. Later, when mom found out William wasn't around, she asked a deaf tenant if he had seen us. Soon, Mom and a neighbor found William. This is one of the times we had to select a switch from the privet hedge for our switching. We were never allowed to go to the ditch again.

December, 1951

The first recollection I have of the dairy was when the new concrete barn was being built. Florence, who always seemed to get me into trouble, talked me in to helping move concrete blocks so we could help Daddy. I was very young, probably about 4 or 5. Florence was to carry one end of the concrete block and I would carry the other, as to keep it balanced. She let go of her end and I naturally dropped my end, and it landed on my toe. I howled in pain for a long time. That was the end of helping Daddy.

Summer, 1952

As far as having any responsibilities around the dairy, I had none. I don't even know how to milk a cow. I know it isn't as easy as it looks. Today, I had to go help Mom in the garden. Along with feeding the dogs and cats, garden work is one of my main duties. Sometimes when my parents are busy I have to help baby sit Robert and William. I also help churn the butter. I also had to drink a glass of raw milk. I don't like milk so I put some food coloring and some chocolate powder in it to make it taste better. I wish milk tasted more like butter, because butter is my favorite dairy product. I also like cheese.

June, 1955

This morning when we woke up, we found that the water tank had busted, and was pouring water all over the place. I had always wanted to climb the ladder, but I didn't get to climb it. Daddy climbed up the ladder with his swimming suit on and patched the tank so it wouldn't leak. It was kind of funny to watch him up there patching a tank with his swimming suit on. Later Florence and I went to 4-H. We really liked the club, so we decided we were going to join the club. We learned how to sew, which was both fun and useful at the same time. I think I might start learning how to show cattle.



July, 1955

I learned to drive when I was about 8. I drove tractors from time to time, mostly for fun. When I did get my license I would run errands for Daddy, like pick up parts in town or pick up hired help.

August, 1963

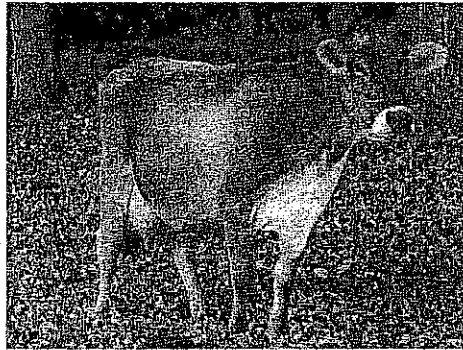
Today was a really bad day. This morning I argued with Florence and said some bad words. We also fought about clothes and the way Florence is always cutting my hair. Mom found out and punished me. That afternoon I went to a field and smoked some rabbit tobacco. I have been experimenting with different herbal substances such as corn silk, rabbit tobacco, catalpa beans, and real cigarettes. This has been fun and exciting for a small town girl. The real trouble is trying not to let my parents find out. That night I went into town with some friends. I lost track of time and was late for my 10:30 p.m. curfew by thirty minutes. My parents grounded me for the rest of the week.



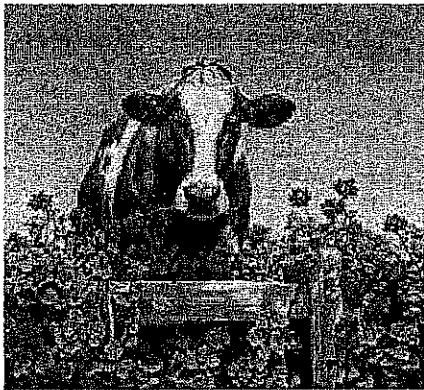
June, 1960

How would you like your milk?

fresh



fresh



fresh



COWS!

How would you like your milk?

The dairy processing industry



Grading the milk

In the 1960's the number of Grade A milk plants produced fluid milk. Grade A milk is regulated by the health department in the state of Mississippi. They have standard procedures to check the amount of bacteria in the milk. Fluid milk must meet stricter health standards than Grade C milk, which is used for butter, cheese, and ice cream. In 1965 there were eighty Grades A dairies in Oktibbeha County; now there are only five.

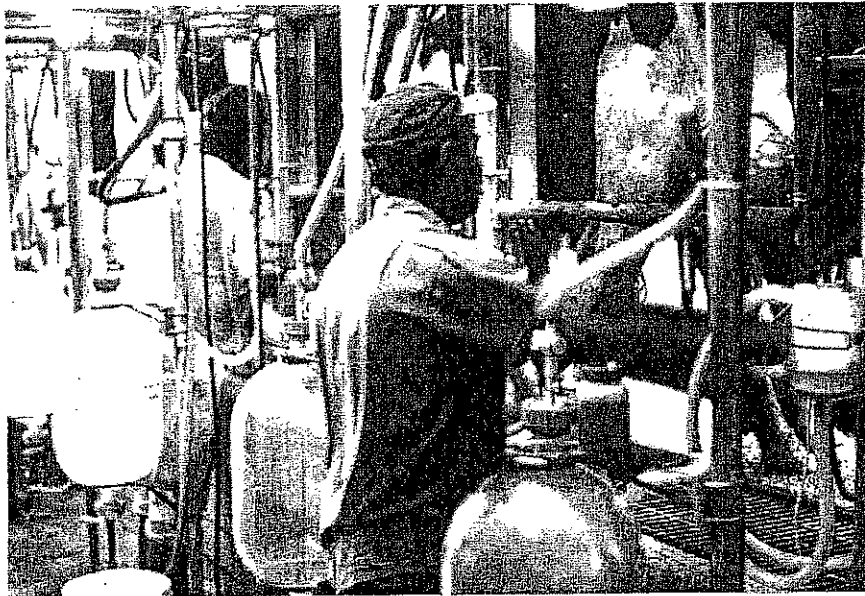
Mr. Warren Oakley first sold Grade C milk, which was collected in cans. He used this money to help pay his college expenses. The milk went to the local A&M Creamery for processing into cream and butter. The A&M Creamery closed in the 1960's and now all milk, Grade A or C, must be shipped longer distances for processing. Later he sold milk that met the Grade A standards. There were at least 300 Grade C dairies in 1965; now there are none in Oktibbeha Co. There were also 19 buttermilk plants, 4 butter plants, 2 powder milk plants, and 7 ice cream plants in the state.

Processing the milk

Milk is taken out of the cow and put into a bulk, stainless steel tank. The cows are milked twice a day for best results. Milk must be cooled quickly from 100^oF to

45 °F within two hours to prevent bacterial contamination. Large tank trucks come to the farm, back up to the farm tank and pump the fresh milk into the truck and transport it to the dairy processing plant. The milk is taken to dairy processing plants where it is pumped into large cooling tanks, which can hold anywhere from 10,000 to 200,000, gallons of milk. They use stainless steel to transport and store milk because it can be sanitized and cleaned easily. The milk is pasteurized to kill any bacteria that might be in the milk. It is pasteurized at about 175 °F for thirty seconds. Milk is homogenized, a process in which milk runs through a line where pistons break fat globules into small particles. Milk goes through a separator, which manages the fat content by regulating the amount of fat left in the product of milk.

Back in the 1960's the standard for whole milk was about 3.5% butterfat. Milk is purchased by the amount of butterfat in the milk on a 3.5% scale, the average butterfat content in milk coming to dairy processing plants. Today, the national standards set for whole milk at 3.25% butterfat content. Mississippi standards for whole milk are 3.25% but may be higher. Reduced fat milk contains 2% butterfat. Milk has to be within 1% of the butterfat % listed. Nonfat milk has to be less then .5% butterfat. You can make butter out of bitter milk because the bitter taste doesn't attach to the butterfat. Milk is priced by the hundredweight. Converted to gallons, the farmer would receive \$17.00 for twelve gallons of milk and \$1.25 for one gallon. They usually got 25,000 gallons of milk from a single cow in a year.



How did the milk get from the cow to the store

Mr. Oakley remembers as a small boy on the farm that his father had to take the milk by wagon to Artesia, Mississippi to be loaded on trains to transport for processing.

At that time they only took the cream and fed the skim to the pigs on the farm. In 1912, nineteen farmers in Oktibbeha county got together and organized a cooperative creamery which was the first in the state. The creamery became an important place for the farmers to market their butter and more and more people began to dairy farm. Back in the 1920's, dairy farmers had to put the milk in the concrete well to keep it cool and the cans were loaded onto the trucks every morning. During these times the men would lift up a 10-gallon can of milk in one hand from the back of the pickup truck. These cans weighed about 100 pounds. The cans were delivered to the creamery where they were emptied and washed and taken back to the farm. In 1926, the Borden Company built its first southern milk condensery in Starkville, MS. This was another market for milk so the dairy farms continued to grow. In 1928, the creamery was making nearly a million pounds of butter a year with 1500 farmers selling to the creamery. A modern creamery was built for \$90,000 at this time.

How do we know our milk is safe

A sample is taken from every tank load of milk loaded onto the truck for analysis. You cannot have any water added to the milk to make more money. Any milk found with any antibiotics in it must be discarded as well. Humans may be allergic to antibiotics. It can't be used for human consumption or for animals in a food chain, and just can't be dumped anywhere. The workers don't unload the truck until all the procedures are checked. Today they check for the somatic counts (white blood cells) on the truck. A high count could mean the cow has an infection.

An important service for dairy farmers is the Standards Milk Laboratory. Today the lab performs bacteria counts, coliform counts, freezing point, and butterfat tests. Grade A milk, as regulated by the health department, has to have a bacteria count less than 100,000 bacteria per milliliter of milk. Good milk should have less than 20,000 bacteria per mL of milk. Today the Standards Milk Laboratory performs the same tests but for fewer and fewer dairy farmers.

Why HOLsteins?



Why Holsteins?



Dairy cattle come in many different breeds and are used according to their milk production habits. A major milk-producing breed is the Holstein, which is well famed for their top quality milk and their large production rates. Also, the Holstein naturally produces low butterfat percentage milk, which works well with the high demand for low fat dairy products. Because of this, the Holstein breed is the most commonly used dairy breed in the U.S.

The Oakleys, who were a dairy farming family in Oktibbeha County, started using Jersey cattle with a few Ayrshires. The Jersey cow was very desirable because it produced very high fat content milk, which was desirable in the early 1900's. The Jersey cow's milk fat content is usually around 5% butter fat. Skim milk was usually given to the hogs at this time. Later with more people drinking skim milk, a different breed of cow was needed. The Holstein was the cow for the job because it produced a lower butterfat content, about 3.4%, and a much larger milk quantity compared to the other breeds of dairy cows. Next, the Oakleys introduced Ayrshires into the herd in 1955, and soon found themselves being quite partial to the Oakley family. The Ayrshires were good to use because of their lower butterfat percentage, 3.97%, than the Jersey. The last breed to come in, the Holsteins, produced the most milk and the fewest amount of butterfat, 3.4%, which is now greatly desired by most people in the U.S.

The Oakley family preferred a mixture of cottonseed, oats, hay, corn, and linseed for cattle feed. Since the herd did not get enough salt from their regular diet dairy farmers put salt blocks in the pen, where the cattle licked salt off the block. The cows were fed a certain amount of food per day, according to their milk production on average, which was recorded by Mrs. Oakley on a chart. Later the family started using computer

feeders that gave each cow the amount of food they needed based on their milk production.

A typical Holstein produces 14 pounds of manure a day. If this is not cared for it can cause a huge environmental problem. There are many ways that the manure was cared for. The Oakley family had a lagoon that was 15 feet deep. In the lagoon there was anaerobic bacteria that lived in the lower levels. The government developed a pipe system that pumps the manure to the field where it works as a natural fertilizer.

Vaccinations were an important part on the farm. If a cow needed any form of vaccination the cow had to be in quarantine, where the milk can not be used for at least 72 hours after receiving. The reason the cow was put in quarantine was because the cows were given antibiotics, which is a type of penicillin. Some of the diseases that effected the dairy were Mastitis, which is a bacteria infection of the utter and Tuberculosis, which is a venereal disease that the cow had to be sent off to be killed.

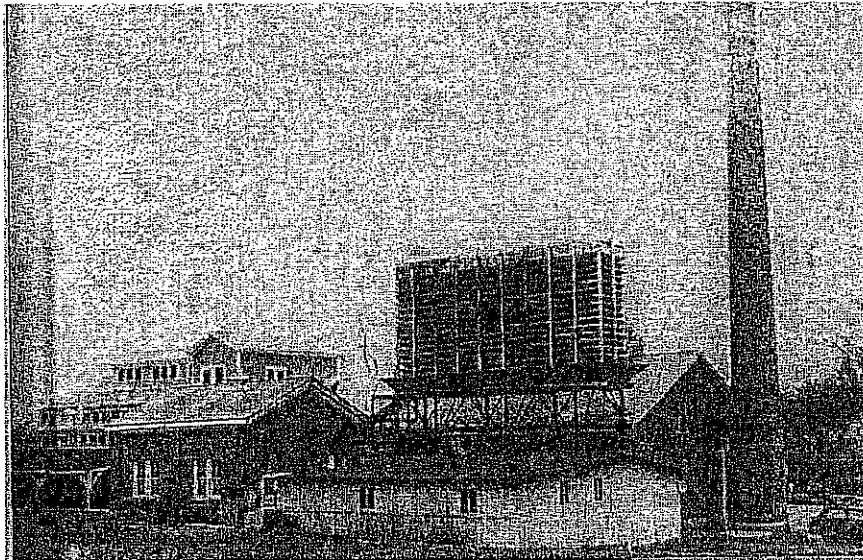
Milking used to be done by hand twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening. The labor involving hand milking was a long and hard task, hated by the milkers. The job was hard on the bodies of the milkers. According to Mr. Oakley "It was a 14 day a week job". In 1948 or 1949 the Oakley family changed the way they produced milk by installing mechanical milking machines into the barn. With this technology the Oakleys were able to produce much more milk on a day-to-day basis compared to the hand way.

As you can see, the dairy business has changed the way of life in Oktibbeha County. The dairy today is not as well known across Mississippi today than it used to be, but it did leave its mark. Oktibbeha was once called the "Dairy county of the South." Indeed, this once dairy region will eventually fade out with time, but the memories of all the dairy farmers in this area will never be forgotten.

The County That Cows Built



The Dairy Parade



In 1926, the Borden Plant opened in Oktibbeha County

The County that Cows Built

By Morgan Miranda & Hawken Brackett

Mississippi once had many dairy farms and its small county, Oktibbeha, was the dairy center of the south. Oktibbeha County was also the location of the first southern condensery. Today the south is a milk-deficit area, which means milk, has to be brought to the south from other parts of the country. So many farmers have quit the business because of the costs involved.

In the years following the Civil War, cotton was in a decline. Slavery was abolished so cotton farmers no longer had free labor and needed an alternative way to use the land. Also, the cotton boll weevil was destroying cotton crops and the land's high lime content caused grass to grow heavily in crop fields. Colonel W.B. Montgomery saw the grass as a way out of the poverty left by the civil war. Colonel Montgomery began to preach wide diversification of crops and about dairy farming. Colonel Montgomery became the owner and editor of *The Southern Livestock Journal*. Riding over his own plantation and the surrounding countryside Colonel Montgomery would always carry a variety of good pasture grass seeds in his saddlebags. As the Colonel Montgomery spread his ideas of a well-balanced farm he also spread grass seed almost like a Johnny Appleseed. He spread grass seeds such as alfalfa, Johnson grass, sweet clover, and lespedeza in fencerows, along roadways, and through meadows. Colonel Montgomery imported sires and dams from the Isle of Jersey, hence the name Jersey cow came. In the north at about this time Gail Borden's factory to preserve milk in Borrrville, Connecticut was receiving great recognition. In 1926 when the Borden Company had been searching for two years in the south for a town to open a new plant they chose Starkville as the best place to build the first Southern milk condensery. In 1927 when the plant had completed its first successful year, two other similar plants sprang up in Tupelo and in Macon.

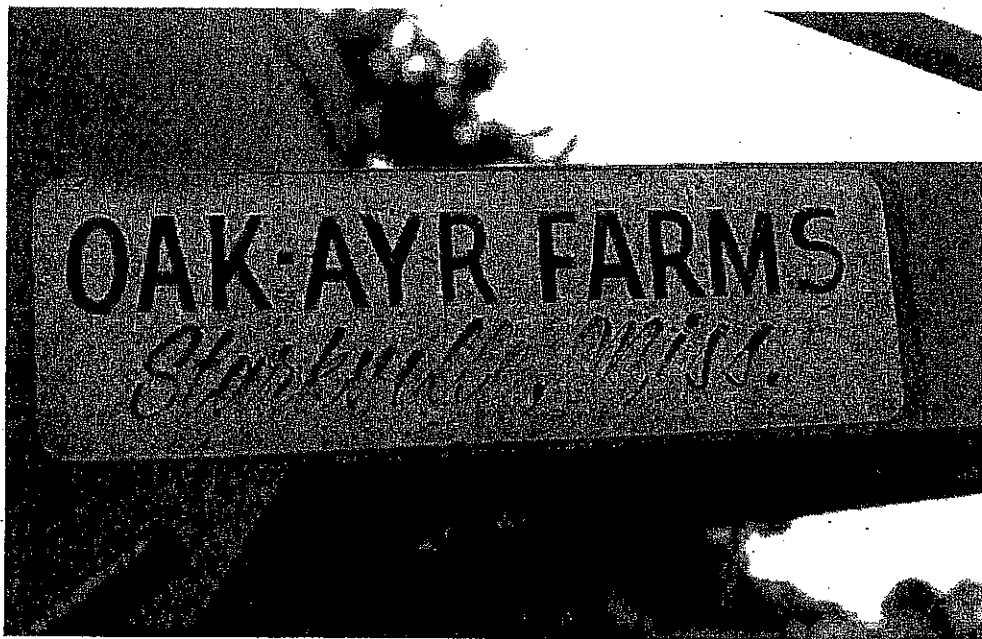
To add to the prestige of Colonel W.B. Montgomery's dream, Oktibbeha county Jersey milk went to market daily, bringing in riches. In 1927 Oktibbeha dairy farmers received around \$150,000 per month for the milk from their Jerseys. Many profited from his dream including farmers, bankers, and factory workers. The farmers obviously gained money from their milk, the bankers got business with the farmers, and people were put into jobs at the condensery. Finally they realized what Colonel Montgomery had fifty years before: North Mississippi was perfect for dairy farming. Oktibbeha county's annual receipts for dairying were about six times the value of its cotton crop.



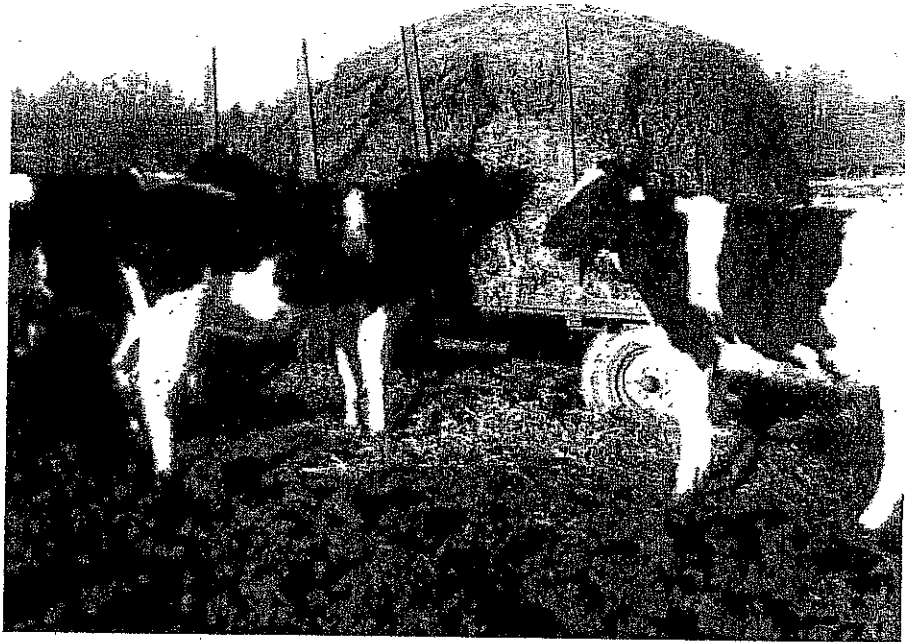
Colonel Montgomery was one of the leading figures in the setting up of a state agricultural college in 1878. Later, in 1900 the college dairy department was established. The college cattle herd, at that time, consisted only of 65 grade cows, 35 of which were sold, and replaced by one registered Jersey bull and two purebred heifers. This herd was able to pay its own way without financial assistance. Colonel Montgomery was influential in arranging the location of the college and was the first member on the board of trustees until 1904 when he passed away. In 1912, eight years after the death of Colonel Montgomery, Mississippi's first cooperative creamery was opened in Oktibbeha County. It was started with 19 patrons who owned 240 cows and was immensely successful.

Just about everyone used to be involved in the dairy business, directly and indirectly. First there were the farmers who took care of the cows. Those farmers depended on veterinarians, who kept their herds healthy, and stores to buy food and equipment. Also, there were the "tin catchers" who picked up the milk cans. These "tin catchers" gave rides to people on their way to town. The A&M creamery, and Mississippi State University Dairy Science Department gave many jobs to the people of Oktibbeha County.

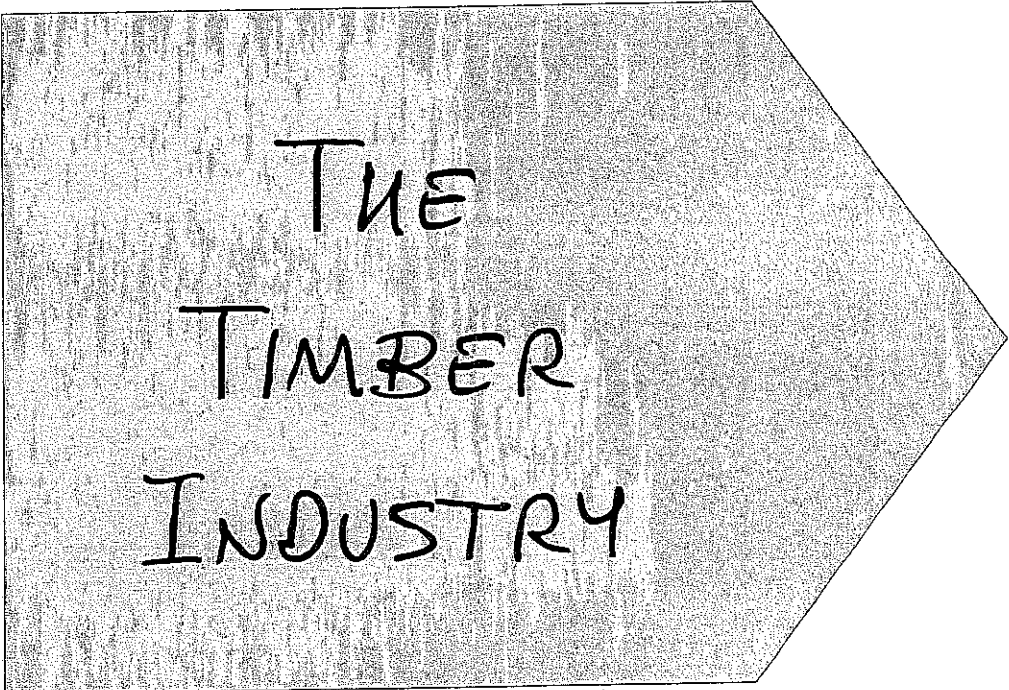
Mr. Warren Oakley, a former dairy farmer, has always lived in Starkville. He owned and ran a dairy farm for 55 years and watched as Oktibbeha County changed. In 1948 to 1949 Mr. Oakley's dairy farm switched from hand milking to mechanical milkers. He watched skim milk, the milk minus the cream, go from hog slop to the popular drinking milk of people, and watched as dairy farmers all around him sold off their farms.



The first cows in Oktibbeha were prominently Jerseys, with some Ayrshires, and then changed to Holsteins. The change was all because of people's preference of butterfat. In the early 1900's, butterfat was more desirable and Jerseys give higher butterfat content in their milk. However, in the second half of the century, people began to worry about their health and butterfat became less desirable. Holsteins, having lower butterfat content, replaced the Jerseys.



Today Oktibbeha County is still primarily agriculturally based with emphasis on timber, beef cattle, dairy products, hay, and soybeans. However, the dairy industry has declined in the past years. All over the county farmers have been forced to close their doors and sell their cattle. Now in an area that "had a dairy farm on every hill," there only exist five grade "A" farms. The reasons for this include the competition, costs, and pay. The pay for dairy products is too small and the costs are too high. Besides, against the big, industrial competitors, small farmers can not do much. In place of these abandoned land marks there are empty spaces or housing complexes. Today, we need to preserve the history of *The County that Cows Built*.



THE
TIMBER
INDUSTRY

**Five-day Unit on
The Timber Industry**

A Five-Day Unit on the Timber Industry

Grades: 9-12

Subjects: Mississippi Studies, Botany, Local Resources, Biogeography, and Environmental Science

Objectives: Students will investigate the impact of the timber industry on lives from the nineteenth century through the 1960s. This entails a study of many factors, including soils, economic trends, technology, supply and demand, commercial uses of cut timber and standing trees. See Procedures below for specific topics.

Materials: archival interviews, transcriptions of interviews, history texts and internet, photographs, paper supplies

Background: The timber industry helped shape the lives of many Mississippians. A study of this industry through time will help students comprehend the impact of historical events and changes in technology on individual lives. It is important for students to understand that the survival of a family has historically depended on the work and cooperation of family members, neighbors, and communities as a whole.

Procedures: Students will listen to the following archival interviews (www.usm.edu/msoralhistory): Charles Barge, Paul Bell, Charles Barrett, Louis Sowell, James Kittrell. Most of these men were born in the first two decades of the century and their stories may reach back before the turn of the century.

1. While listening to these interviews and/or reading transcriptions of the interviews, students will make notes about the following topics:
 - a. family migrations
 - b. changes in use of the land (timber, sometimes virgin timber, secondary timber, cotton, etc.)
 - c. homesteading
 - d. soil factors, including erosion and depletion of the soil
 - e. the effect of world events on the timber industry (WWI, Great Depression, WWII), including economics
 - f. taxation and its effect on harvesting practices (stumpage and standing taxes)
 - g. family life during different decades
 - h. transportation of cut timber to sawmill and markets (mule, oxen, river, railroad, truck)