A Settlement Geography of Three Ports on the Northern Gulf of Mexico: The Role of Rivers, Railroads, and Hurricanes: 1830-1930

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A SETTLEMENT GEOGRAPHY OF THREE PORTS ON THE NORTHERN GULF OF MEXICO: THE ROLE OF RIVERS, RAILROADS, AND HURRICANES: 1830-1930

by

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ABSTRACT

A SETTLEMENT GEOGRAPHY OF THREE PORTS ON THE NORTHERN GULF OF MEXICO: THE ROLE OF RIVERS, RAILROADS, AND HURRICANES:

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The settlement geography of the Gulf Coast of the United States possesses and shares unique cultural and historical characteristics. The thesis analyzes three selected towns along the coast: Indianola, Texas; Pascagoula, Mississippi; and Apalachicola, Florida. The thesis focuses on describing each town’s historical background and early efforts at permanent settlement, the expansion of the settlement using various modes of transportation such as shipping and railroads, the economic and agricultural base that was used to improve the settlement’s reputation, the characteristics of the settlement's concept of folk housing, and the impact and recovery of the settlement from disasters such as fire and hurricanes. In other words, the thesis examined the settlement histories of three towns, and the importance of geographic site and situation to settlement success or failure.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The history of the modern settlement of the northern Gulf of Mexico has more often focused on larger cities such as Galveston, New Orleans, Mobile, and Tampa. Yet the occupation of the coast was also supported by numerous smaller towns whose influence upon the settlement history of the region was equally important and in most instances unique. This thesis examines three of these towns: Indianola, Texas; Pascagoula, Mississippi; and Apalachicola, Florida (see Figure 1). The time frame for the three towns spans between the years 1830 and 1930.

Figure 1. Study Area along the Northern Gulf Coast. This map shows the location of Indianola, Texas, Pascagoula, Mississippi, and Apalachicola, Florida in a small scale map setting (Kalina 2014).
Each settlement was founded by the relocation of European groups between the late 17th century and the mid-19th century. Eventually, all three settlements established a river-mouth port, which allowed access to open, international waters for trade. Between 1830 and 1860, the settlements invested in economic expansion of the coast and took advantage of their respective waterway system. As the towns grew, a hinterland was established in the process.

Due to the vast amount of trade, products (such as cattle, lumber, cotton, and seafood) and people moved along the coast from port to port. This ongoing system of trade and settlement provided these towns with an economic role for not only the entire region, but for the world.

New settlements along the Gulf Coast were tested for their ability to survive and thrive. Newly laid railroads pulled commerce away from boats and ports. Boom and bust periods of resource extraction had financial gains and losses, and hurricanes made the process of success even more unpredictable.

This topic was chosen for study because very little has been done by geographers to detail the settlement of ‘second-order’ towns along the coast. The concept of settlement geography is defined by the geographer Terry Jordan as, “a part of the geography of population” and “the study of the form of the cultural landscape” (Jordan 1966: 27-28). Jordan also believed that settlement geography has its own field, and shares some relationship with economic and population geography. The study develops an ecological process between the function of cultural aspects (such as buildings and economics) and the physical environment (such as vegetation and climate).
When the settlement geography of the northern Gulf Coast is studied, the purpose of the towns of Indianola, Pascagoula, and Apalachicola is better understood. Indianola was organized thanks to European immigration and was able to support inland settlements along rivers crossing the coastal plain. Pascagoula consisted of saw mills which formed along the Pascagoula River and served as a point of entry to exploit the massive pine trees within the hinterland. Apalachicola with its warehouses to store cotton, became a major center for cotton commerce and export, and used steamboats on the river and the coast to expand their economic presence.

The research methodology for this thesis is grounded in regional and area studies. Research libraries and historical collections were used to gather published and primary documents. These materials were cataloged by region and area. Field trips were made to Apalachicola and Pascagoula, and historical maps were used to reconstruct the town’s past and detail its changes. Interviews with local historians, planners, and long-time residents were also useful sources of data. Photography and repeat photography were used to document the cultural landscape.

The thesis explores a 100-year period of historical and settlement geography in the Gulf Coast Region. The second chapter is a literature review that focuses on the concepts of settlement geography, the historic background of the region, and many factors that can either make or break the success of a settlement. Chapters III through V focus on the three selected towns along the coast and their history, the methods of transportation that connected these ports to
other ports and to the rivers which gave access to the coastal interior, the
hinterlands created from waterways and railroads, and the types of economic
resources that contributed to the town’s reputation. Other factors, such as
hurricanes and fires, are discussed in order to explore the challenges that occurred
within the settlements.

Chapter VI will discuss the probable concept of regionalization along the
northern Gulf Coast. This chapter will discuss how the region is characterized
based on various aspects (such as folk housing). Such aspects can be used to
identify unique characteristics of an overall theme within the region.

One goal is to present an overview of the literature that focuses on the
settlement history of this coastal region. The primary focus however, is to view
how small settlements along the Gulf of Mexico played a role in the permanent
occupation of the coast, helped support the coast’s economic opportunities, how
rivers initially were favored for inland transportation and the subsequent impacts
of roads and railroads, and how hurricanes continually impacted a settlement’s
success or failure.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There is ample research on the history of the major cities situated on the Gulf Coast. However, despite the abundance of historical information, this thesis is considered to be one of the first geographical studies of the region with respect to the settlement geography of smaller or ‘second-order’ port towns. This review of the literature focuses on works relevant to settlement geography, the historical geography of the northern Gulf of Mexico, transportation along the coast, and hurricane activity.

Settlement Geography

Background

The geographer F.S. Hudson (1970) provides one of the broadest studies of settlement geography. The field is generally acknowledged by most human geographers and is considered to be “an integral part of the subject to all except by the narrowest of geographical specialists” (Hudson 1970: 3). Settlement geography includes a description and examination of the natural and cultural landscape. The landscape can consist of a single town and it can be described as an entity, or as a blend of interconnected but different areas. All of the different areas (or in this case towns) shows a different variety of features such as size, function, and morphology (Hudson 1970: 3, 11). Thus, the geographer must become a historian and study and absorb all the available historical resources in order to successfully define the identity of the settlement (Hudson 1970: 12).
Settlement Geography in Relation to Human and Cultural Geography

Maurice E. McGaugh (1970) believes that population is a vital part of settlement geography. He states that “the map of human population is the most important map of all for the human geographer” (McGaugh 1970: 1). He mentions that geographers must study the man-created distributions along the surface of the earth. He also mentions that it is necessary for geographers to focus on the relationships between the places of creative work, and the patterns that create the lines of transportation and communication (McGaugh 1970: 1).

Terry Jordan-Bychkov (1997) writes that settlement geography is a section of cultural geography and it is made up of four different components: culture region, cultural diffusion, cultural ecology, and cultural integration (Jordan-Bychkov 1997: 407). Culture region identifies notable differences between compared areas. Cultural diffusion looks at the development and differences between the internal and regional developments. Cultural ecology looks at the role at how the physical environment affects the structure within the settlement (Jordan-Bychkov 1997: 407). Cultural integration looks at how various factors (such as culture) can cause a group of people to move from one location to another and would influence the area’s characteristics at a visual standpoint (Jordan-Bychkov 1997: 68, 70, 407).

Jordan-Bychkov (1997) goes on to write that if all of the components are combined, we begin to see the development of the townscape. The townscape is the perception that is developed by the activities of different people (Jordan-Bychkov 1997: 407). Although settlements are formed by different groups, they
share similar cultural traits (such as language and religion). Or in other words, settlements are created from either social culture regions or ethnic culture regions. The creation of differences and similarities creates our settlement, and each settlement has a shared value between one group (Jordan-Bychkov 1997: 407-409). For example, Indianola, Texas and its hinterland in the Texas Hill Country were founded and explored by the German population.

The Concept of Settlement

*Background*

In order to understand the concept of settlement geography, we must look at the concept of settlement. Paul L. Knox (2012) defines a settlement as “both the *product of*, and a continuing *framework for* processes of economic, technological, demographic, political, and social change” (Knox 2012: 47). He believes that a settlement develops due to the expansion of emerging ideas and concepts. Development of the land occurred from European colonization during the 18th Century, The land was occupied by groups of people, and the population would establish their own economy in the new world (Knox 2012: 47).

*The Concept of Settlement*

Lynn T. Smith (1969) expands the definition of a settlement as a “distant territory dependent upon a ruling power” (Smith 1969: 93). The process of settling occurs when people intend to occupy the area. The population can range from European immigrants, to trail blazing pioneers who were intent to reach their desired frontiers. Smith (1969) also states that the concept of settlement is a
process, and can only be possible based on organized colonization efforts (Smith 1969: 94).

The geographer Ellen Churchill Semple (1903) discusses how the concepts of settlement have vital connections to the field of geography. Semple (1903) mentions that settlement is established when a certain population has swapped a luxurious lifestyle for the wilderness. The concept of geography is mentioned once the settlement has been established and the interaction of trade occurs. The impact of trade determines the viability of the settlements and the available, fertile soil produces the agriculture to help nourish the residents. The settlements on the coast, however, had little need for an established agricultural base and were blessed with open water access for communication and accessibility. Thus, the ports were seen as the easiest, most extensive lines of communication for trade.

Semple (1903) goes on to say that initial settlements along a coast begin as commercial ports that fulfilled a specific economic purpose (such as trade in agricultural or manufactured products (see Figure 2). The areas eventually develop into industrial entities when the once arable soil has become limited in producing an established agricultural base. Eventually, the coastal settlement evolves into a city and acquires a reputation due to its many locational advantages by being a break-in-bulk point. The coastal settlement has the opportunity to become an effective, open ocean port with connections to inland waterways and railroads, and are seen as a vital link to international trade (Semple 1903: 87-90, 336-339).
According to geographers and experts, there are three main factors that contribute to the evolution of an effective settlement (Semple 1903, Smith 1969, et al.).

The Expansion of Settlements

Hudson (1970) describes that most settlements are “permanent settlements” (Hudson 1970: 7). The permanent settlements include good quality infrastructure buildings (such as a house or a farmstead) and are considered to be towns that have succeeded as villages (Hudson 1970: 8). As a successful town, the population of the town grows due to its concentration of dwellings along with the establishment of a street pattern. Eventually, if the town gains growth over its nearby rival town, the once permanent settlement can be classified as an established city (Hudson 1970: 8-10).

Hudson (1970) goes on to mention that no two populated areas are alike in their townscape and each townscape has a different style, size, and plan when it comes down to various styles of “buildings, street patterns, and people” (Hudson 1970: 106). When the townscape acquires a certain plan, the settlement (or town) becomes marketable in its favorable geographic location, and it continues to grow due to the establishment of transportation routes (such as railways) (Hudson 1970: 167-68).
When the town becomes prominent with its market, it is susceptible to trade with other regions. One of the advantages of trade is acquiring an open-ocean port. The port must be located on a favorable site in terms of location and it must be able to handle large volumes of various cargo. The port must also acquire a favorable situation with its connections to other settlements within the hinterland (Hudson 1970: 175-178). With the influence of a port and an established economy, the hinterland grows as a result. The hinterland is considered to have a lasting significance, and it acquires an acceptable amount of production and access to make its varied size and character thrive (Hudson 1970: 182).

McGaugh (1970) writes that settlements are influenced by the study of “cultural and historical background” (McGaugh 1970: 3). They are identified as a present-day establishment that has a connection to its past. It is also a piece of population that is distributed across a landscape, but it comes across geographic restrictions that would limit its potential area (McGaugh 1970: 3-4). The most favored areas of settlement for people are areas that have a hospitable climate, a vast amount of forestry, and are located along a plain (McGaugh 1970: 34, 38).

The Landscape in Relation to Settlement Geography

Geographers also discuss settlement with respect to landscape. Wilbur Zelinsky (1973) describes the settlement landscape as a combination of culture, tradition, habitat, economy, and technology in map form. With the creation of a map, we begin to see the emergence of settlement patterns (Zelinsky 1973: 100). Jordan-Bychkov (1997) supports Zelinsky (1973) as the distribution creates a
mosaic of settlements, and influences the drawn map. He describes the cultural landscape as a distribution of people in map form (Jordan-Bychkov 1997: 73). They often wrote about the processes needed for cultural development in the United States.

Zelinsky (1973) notes that individuals with shared cultural traits are selected to emigrate and explore a new land. Once a group arrives to its destination, people and product are transferred over a long distance between the two different landmasses of the United States and Europe. As the transfer occurs, we begin to see an acquirement of cultural borrowings from Amerindian groups. This acquisition results in the local evolution of American culture, and a diversification of cultural patterns over a period of time (Zelinsky 1973: 5-8).

Settlement Geography in the United States

Knox (2012) mentions that the process of settlement geography in the United States, went through two historical periods. The process includes the Mercantile Period (which occurred from 1790 to 1840) and the Industrial Period (which occurred from 1840 into the 20th Century). The Mercantile Period resulted from the establishment of merchant trading, and it produced “a more extensive system of central places” (Knox 2012: 47). The mercantile model was necessary in order for profitable, functioning economic trade to occur between newly established American towns and established European ports (Knox 2012: 48, 50).

By 1840, settlements began to expand across North America due to the mechanization of agriculture and immigration. During the next three decades, a
spatial pattern began to emerge across the landscape due to the ongoing expansion of industrialization (Knox 2012: 47-48, 53-55).

The ports that exceeded expectations were identified as entrepôts. Entrepôts are defined as “intermediary centers of trade and transshipment” (Knox 2012: 49). As the entrepôts grew larger, they came to dominate the landscape, and created a hinterland in the process. The hinterland would consist of smaller settlements that would serve as economic entities and they would serve a vital connection to their respective entrepôt (Knox 2012: 49). The relationship of the smaller settlements would be linked by transportation routes (such as waterways and railways), and they would be used as a form of communication throughout the entire landscape. With the combination of trade routes and the need of European labor, the landscape became dominated by the ever-growing market (Knox 2012: 53-55).

Establishment of Hinterlands

Knox (2012) brings attention to James Vance’s idea of a mercantile model. Vance’s model states that external European influences and long-distance trade were vital for the establishment of settlement in North America. The model consists of five major parts, and each part was vital for the establishment and expansion of settlement geography (Knox 2012: 51).

The first part of the model consists of exploration; it was used to pursue a search for knowledge (or economic opportunities) in North America. The information from explorers would be sent back to Europe in order to grasp the concept of possible settlement expansion. The second part of the model deals
with the harvesting of natural resources. It was considered to be the building blocks for the establishment of a populated area. In order to keep up with the demand, labor (or immigration) was brought in from Europe and North America in order to contribute to the production and export of staple products (Knox 2012: 51-52).

The third part of the model deals with the emergence of agricultural production and coastal gateway cities. This was considered to be very important as gateway cities along the coast, or “points of attachment” (Knox 2012: 52), were identified as the focus of an emerging system. The fourth part of the model consists of the establishment of inland gateway cities. This occurs when settlement expands inland due to the demand of more product. It also results in the expansion of population across the uninhabited land (Knox 2012: 51-52). With the establishment of routes for trade, the inland cities would grow as a result. The final part of the model is the establishment of the domestic market and urban system infilling. This is when the market grows large enough in order to sustain and produce economic growth for the hinterland. The market is established at the beginning of the Industrial Period (Knox 2012: 51-52).

Geography of Waterways

*Background*

For a settlement to expand, waterways must be available (see Figure 2). According to Semple (1903), coastal rivers were identified as connections to open water and were used for navigational purposes. They were considered to be the easiest form of accessibility for travel and settlement, and were represented as
“the lines of least resistance to the incoming colonist and afterwards lead themselves to his economic needs” (Semple 1903: 152). She also mentioned that every river system “forms an unbroken whole and therefore serves as a natural bond between those living among its remotest sources and those settled at its mouth” (Semple 1903: 90). This means that the river supports the economic viability for the hinterland in the interior, and the main settlement at the mouth of the river conducts the process of open-water trade.

Settlements and Waterways

Mario Polèse (2009) talks about how settlements form from accessible waterways. The concept of growth originates from three major aspects: chance, geography, and serendipity (Polèse 2009: 69). The waterways were important in establishing the settlements and were established as natural break-in-bulk points. Break-in-bulk points means that the cargo is unloaded from ocean vessels and is successfully transitioned to the next point of the journey whether by steamboat or railroad.

Numerous rivers that flow across the coastal plain of the American South to the Gulf of Mexico have been the sites for gathering and handling incoming and outgoing products. The process goes through three steps: unloading, handling, and reloading (Polèse 2009: 70). Today, transportation on waterways (such as major rivers) is seen as the least expensive mode of bulk transport and is cheaper to operate than railroads. Even with the railroad gaining most of the transport by the mid-19th century, the waterway was still seen as the easiest and least costly way to transport goods (Polèse 2009: 71). Waterways were also
beneficial for agricultural purposes and were seen for their potential for economic development.

Geography of Southern Railroads

**Background**

Once a settlement has been established, some form of inland transportation must be implemented (see Figure 2). According to Semple (1903), railroads are considered to be an effective use of transportation, and are geographically distributed across the country. The amount of railway that is used in the region is based on the area’s size, location, climate, and topography (Semple 1903: 367). These factors determine which areas are most suitable for railroads and which ones could be used for the expansion of their economic potential. The railroads in the South were used for demographic purposes in order to send people to open, undisturbed land for potential settlement. The railroads were also used to distribute material (such as cotton, lumber, and other products) in order to build an established infrastructure.

**Expansion of Railroads**

John F. Stover (1955) mentions the expansion of railroads in the southern United States during the latter half of the 19th Century. He describes how the establishment of new railroad projects began with the construction of longitudinal lines from the interior to large coastal cities such as Mobile and New Orleans. Although New Orleans was more focused on river traffic, it led the way in establishing new railways throughout the South. The transportation link made it possible to travel from New Orleans to New York within a few days. Generally,
railroads in the South lagged behind the North due limiting factors, such as the lack of business and manufacturing (Stover 1955: 1-14).

After the Civil War, the railroad industry collapsed. It took years for the industry to recover, but when it did, railroads became more important than before. Eventually the lines were rebuilt and the majority of them were in complete function by 1870. To finance this recovery, the post-War railroad industry invested in public stocks and other debt. Some state governments, such as Mississippi, lacked funding to construct the railways and had to depend on expensive loans. Most railways were locally owned and operated under financial agencies, or charters responsible for constructing the lines. The cities along the Gulf Coast (such as Mobile) suffered economically when the rail lines, which served as their economic ties to the interior, were severed by the war (Stover 1955: 23-57).

After a trying period of reconstruction in the 1870’s, the railroad industry in the South expanded in the 1880’s. The expansion resulted from the consolidation of railroad industries and the growth of major inland cities (such as Atlanta and Memphis). The massive gains in iron production resulted in the region doubling the total mileage of railroads in the 1880’s. Some coastal settlements, such as Pascagoula, benefited from the expansion (Stover 1955: 186-187, 193, 216).
Background

During the late nineteenth century the northern section of the Gulf of Mexico was seen as an area that welcomed potential settlement by European frontier settlers (such as the Spaniards, French, English and Germans). This region, which was once inhabited by indigenous populations, would be altered by European contact and used for colonial gain. Eventually, the region would be involved in centuries of conflict for control and divided up for settlement (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Model of Settlement Organization. The model goes through a timeline that describes the process that a typical settlement along the Gulf Coast of the United States went through from the 16th Century to the 19th Century. The timeline starts from native inhabitation, and goes to the establishment of land division.

Concept of Frontier Settlement

Knox (2012) writes about the process of frontier settlement. The Gulf Coast was explored by key European groups who established centers of commerce and administration on favorable areas of land. It wasn’t until when the English colonized the region did the economy became more established and eventually evolved into the first successful form of frontier settlement. The coast was made up of a string of gateway cities; cities which would be assembled from a number of control points. Eventually, these points would assemble products for
export and would distribute the manufactured goods towards an open port. The port would serve as a connection with their overseas European powers (Knox 2012: 48-49).

*Spanish and French Colonization*

Barbara Carpenter, et al. (1992) presents a good history of the Spanish and French exploration and discovery of the northern Gulf Coast. The authors go into detail about how they built forts along the Mississippi coast and controlled the region for more than two hundred years. The domination would essentially influence the cultural aspects of agriculture, livestock, architecture, law, and religion within the region (Carpenter, et al. 1992).

Robert A. Ricklis (1996) writes about how the Spaniards explored the land along the Gulf of Mexico. After surveying the land, they found it to be suitable for exploration due to its flat topography, favorable climate, and its possession of major rivers that were attached to the bays (Ricklis 1996: 11). Missions were established along the coast in keeping with the Spanish policy of a religious-centered settlement. Eventually, the Spaniards felt more comfortable with inland settlements than with coastal settlements due to more favorable inland environments, sturdier soils for buildings, and a lack of humidity to spread disease (Ricklis 1996: 117-118, 127).

Ricklis (1996) also mentions how the French’s exploration along the Gulf of Mexico was made possible thanks to the ‘miscalculations’ of adventurer Robert Cavelier de La Salle. Ultimately, LaSalle’s ‘greed’ resulted in a century and a half of bloody conflict between Native Americans and Europeans. The
introduction of European diseases, massive conflicts, and other forms of change led to a significant decrease in the native population (Ricklis 1996: 1).

Donald E. Sutter (1982) points out how the French were given proper land control from the government and took advantage of the coast’s fertile hunting grounds (Sutter 1982: 4-11). Julia C. Guice (1976) wrote about how their homeland government provided large grants of land concession which ensured the complete control from the French and spread the land base of their colony. However, due to a lack of materials needed for agriculture, the French colonists relocated to New Orleans. The lack of agriculture was also noted in various reports stating that the coast lacked any fertility in the annual production of available crops. The only viable economic option for the French was fishing and hunting (Guice 1976: 12).

*British Colonization*

Guice (1976) mentions how the British eventually gained control of the Gulf Coast region thanks to the Treaty of Paris after the French and Indian War in 1763. While the British presence on the coast was brief, its dominance was important due to the compromise and concessions of land between the empirical powers of Europe. As a result, the territory of British West Florida was formed, and Pensacola was named the capital (Guice 1976: 12). William L. Ziegler (1966) wrote about the geography of British settlement along the Gulf Coast. It extended to the 31st parallel in the north, the Apalachicola River to the east, the Gulf of Mexico to the south, and the Mississippi River to the west (Ziegler 1966: 27-38). Guice (1976) writes that the Spanish gained control of the British’s last
remaining empire after the British’s defeat in the Revolutionary War in 1781 (Guice 1976: 12).

**German Colonization**

As the major empires were fighting over the control of the coast, other ethnicities were involved in initial settlement. Hanno J. Dieler (1909) briefly details the first mention of German settlement along the Gulf Coast. Hans, a German companion of the explorer La Salle, was the first German to settle in the lower Mississippi valley (Dieler 1909: 3). While the French took over large tracts of land in the Gulf Coast in the late 1690’s, they were disappointed with the infertile, sandy soils and saw that nothing could be grown in the area. However, by going inland towards Louisiana, the French found good places to settle (Dieler 1909: 10, 13).

Eventually, Germans came to settle along the Gulf Coast. The first wave of Germans escaped from conflicts in their homeland, and immigrated to Louisiana during the early 1720’s. Out of 8,000 that arrived to Louisiana, only 2,000 remained in the area along the Mississippi River (Dieler 1909: 16-17). The German settlement along the Mississippi River was established as the “German Coast of Louisiana” (Dieler 1909: 46). The river region (which was located north of New Orleans) connected local settlement in the Des Allemands area (Dieler 1909: 49-50). The Germans would travel along the Mississippi River to New Orleans in order to sell their excellent production of crops (such as indigo and garden vegetables) that were harvested from the French long lot system (see Figure 4) (Dieler 1909: 62).
Figure 4. The German Coast of Louisiana. This map details how the Germans along the Mississippi River lived in adjacent to French Colonization. The region may be a precursor to the settlement region of the three selected geographic sites (Kalina 2014).

The French treated their German counterparts like family. As a result, the Germans began to lose their identity by adopting the French language and its culture. The German heritage, most notably their surnames, became bastardized into French due to mispronunciation and were lost once a person entered the French family based on marital ties (Dieler 1909: 79, 118-119). Ultimately, this led to the creolization of Germans. Few records remain which makes it difficult to trace back these first waves of German ancestry to the Gulf Coast (Dieler 1909: 111-119).

Gilbert G. Benjamin (1910) and the geographer Terry Jordan (1966) examine why a second wave of German emigration left their homeland and immigrated to the United States for successful farming. Jordan (1966) mentions that the Germans left their homeland as they were experiencing overpopulation, crop failure, and dissatisfaction towards their government (Jordan 1966: 38-39).
Benjamin (1910) talks about how *adelsverein* was established. An *adelsverein* (or *verein* for short) was a society that was made up entirely of highly educated and professional people who were qualified in creating a foreign colony. Eventually the first society sailed to New Orleans in 1834, and more societies were formed along coastal Texas in order to cultivate the new land (Benjamin 1910: 6-7). The *verein* is considered to be the first instance of non-empirical influence settlement along the Gulf Coast.

**Geography Related to Settlements along the Gulf Coast**

*The Three Settlements*

A closer look at the settling of the Gulf Coast allows a focus upon the settlement histories of the three ‘second-order’ communities of Indianola, Texas, Pascagoula, Mississippi, and Apalachicola, Florida. Due to their small populations, their potential economic roles were limited. What makes these settlements unique is that all three are located near an open-water bay, are attached to a river that meanders into the inland region, and are connected to and supported hinterlands that consists of inland economic activities such as cattle, timber, and cotton. Indianola was located on Matagorda Bay, and used the Colorado and Lavaca Rivers for inland development. Pascagoula is located along Pascagoula Bay and used the Pascagoula River for inland development. Apalachicola is located at the head of Apalachicola Bay and used the Apalachicola River for inland development.
Land Lots

The three settlements were established thanks to the proper allocations of land division. The geographer John Fraser Hart (1975) explores the concept of land division and its reflection upon the landscape in the South. The concept of land division varies on the grants given by the government to various explorers. The management of the land was determined by the availability of water, and water helped determine the different European concepts of managing the land (Hart 1975: 45-48). The practices, such as the Germans’ concept of managing small blocks of land, and the French’s extensive long lot system, were effective methods of land division in producing agriculture (Hart 1975: 48).

Once European groups settled and developed along the coastal plain, industrialization started to take place. Industrialization of the region resulted in massive coastal plain deforestation, including the long leaf pine forest, and it lead to the establishment of industries (such as naval stores, and their products such as turpentine and rosin) (Hart 1975: 179). With the establishment and expansion of industrialization, the settlements began to develop into major entrepôts, and their respective hinterlands began to grow as a result.

Folk Housing

As mentioned, a settlement is characterized by the traits of the culture. One trait, folk housing, helps determine the identity of the coastal settlements. The concept of folk housing is given attention by the geographer Fred Kniffen (1936) as a house that is built around a central theme, or motif. The motif defines the certain features of the home and would include the: roof, chimney, porch, and
more. Many of the houses that were initially built in the study region, such as the shotgun and I-house, were built along the Mississippi River and across the Louisiana prairie, and eventually diffused across the region (Kniffen 1936). Kniffen (1965) also brought attention to how folk housing patterns diffuse over time and are based on the foundation of settlement geography. The house’s typology evolved over time and the features of the house, such as the number of rooms, a front porch, and layout reflect on the area’s culture, geography, and dialect (Kniffen 1965). The anthropologist Jay Edwards (1994) provides a great study on Caribbean influences and the historian Phillipe Oszuscik (1994) published a similar study of the history of creole house types along the Gulf Coast of Mississippi and Alabama.

Unique Economies

**Background of Three Settlements**

With established houses along the coast, the selected settlements became known for their economic identities. Knox (2012) mentions that the large towns along the coast acquired unique advantages due to industry, tradition, skills, labor, and markets. The Gulf Coast acquired a localized economy that consisted of shipbuilding, seafood, lumber, and other entities in order to expand their economic base, and made them well known across the world (Knox 2012: 55).

Indianola’s economy was examined by Brownson Malsch (1977) and Jessie B. Boozer (1942) especially how Matagorda Bay and the Chihuahua Road were used as valid routes of trade to exchange imported and exported material. The presence of ships in Matagorda Bay, a railroad, and the Chihuahua Road
helped Indianola become a powerful port and established connections with larger cities such as New Orleans with their effective cattle industry, and their distribution of gold and silver (Boozer 1942; Malsch 1977).

Ziegler (1966) and Jay Higginbottom (1967) explore the economic base of Pascagoula during its peak period. At its zenith, Pascagoula was known for its lumber industry. With a rail system in place, Pascagoula became one of the largest producers of lumber in the world. The readings also discuss Pascagoula’s role in the shipbuilding industry. The industry has been embedded within the roots of the town’s culture since natives inhabited the area, and has been used to support other port settlements within the region (Higginbottom 1967; Ziegler 1966).

Lynn Willoughby (1993) and Bob Bass (2008) describe Apalachicola’s early economy of cotton and its connection to the steamboat industry. Willoughby (1993) discusses Apalachicola’s role in the massive cotton industry and mentions how the town was once the third largest exporter of cotton along the Gulf Coast (Willoughby 1993). Bass (2008) examines the role steamboats played in the hinterland of Apalachicola, by traveling along the Apalachicola and Chattahoochee Rivers. The rivers were used to connect the port of Apalachicola and the city of Columbus, Georgia in order to transfer a variety of goods (Bass 2008). Whether its cattle or cotton, the economic base for each settlement contributes to its own identity (see Table 1).
Seafood

Indianola’s cattle industry, Pascagoula’s lumber industry, and Apalachicola’s cotton industry possessed an embodiment of greatness during their hey-days along the coast. All of the settlements, however, were also linked to the seasonal, yet powerful impacts of the early underpinnings of a seafood industry. Higginbottom (1967) mentions that Pascagoula produced over 500,000 pounds of shrimp annually at its peak in the 1890’s (Higginbottom 1967). William W. Rogers (1986) discusses how Apalachicola is known for its oyster industry, and how its shallow bay and freshwater river system made the conditions to produce the oysters ripe for mass-production starting in the 1850’s (Rogers 1986) (see Table 1).
Table 1

*Economic Contributions of Selected Settlements: 1830 to 1930*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SETTLEMENT</th>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>ECONOMY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indianola, Texas</td>
<td>1846-86</td>
<td>Immigration, Railroad Industry, Cattle Raising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pascagoula, Mississippi</td>
<td>1830-90</td>
<td>Port for Trade, Wood Production, Seafood, Shipbuilding, Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apalachicola, Florida</td>
<td>1830-90</td>
<td>Port for Trade, Steamboats, Cotton, Seafood, Tourism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The literature provides us the timeline in which it focuses on the settlement’s most prosperous period. It also describes each of the three settlements and the economic impacts that would shape their identity. Note that Apalachicola and Pascagoula’s period goes the full 100 years, and were founded before their periods of importance. Also note Indianola’s brief forty year period (Bass 2008, Boozer 1942, Daly 2013, Higginbottom 1967, Malsch 1977, Scholtes 1971, Willoughby 1993, Ziegler 1966).

Due to its limited shelf life, the seafood must be preserved in an effective, yet profitable method. At first the seafood industry was localized and was limited for sale in the coastal area. According to Ziegler (1966), eventually seafood was canned in order to preserve and sell the material across long distances. Over the years, canning and ice were used to preserve the harvest and allow it to be taken to Pensacola and New Orleans (Ziegler 1966) (see Table 1).

*Tourism*

The warm climate along the coast has long attracted recreational activity. Settlers and visitors take advantage of the climate, and embrace seeing
subtropical landscapes, and then demand accommodations during the process. While Indianola could not muster tourism during its short time as a major port, the towns of Pascagoula and Apalachicola embraced visitors by promoting their economic qualities. For example, Higginbottom (1967) and Leo J. Scholtes (1971) wrote that Pascagoula was first used for tourism thanks to the influence of wealthy Northerners who used the town as a promotion for spa use to residents of New Orleans and Mobile. Daly (2013) mentions that Apalachicola was used for the promotion of its seafood and artisan industry (Daly 2013; Higginbottom 1967; Scholtes 1971).

**Hurricane Activity**

*Hurricanes*

One of the Gulf of Mexico’s greatest natural hazards are hurricanes. Hurricanes produce high winds that can last for hours, they can trigger a storm surge that has the potential to destroy low lying property or even wipe a town off the map. Hurricanes have hit every part of the northern Gulf Coast, and not a single community has been spared from multiple hurricane strikes between 1830 and 1930. The literature on hurricanes is massive and my review is limited to the towns of interest. Barry D. Keim (2007) looked at segments of the coast and created a model to determine return periods. Return periods are identified as the frequency of tropical storm and hurricane strikes in segments of the coastal United States during the 20th Century.

Apalachicola, Pascagoula and Indianola were all included in Keim’s survey. The Saffir-Simpson scale, which is used to measure the intensity of
hurricanes, was used to determine tiers of return periods based on its intensity. The tiers consisted of the following: tropical cyclones in the inner tier, hurricanes in the middle tier, and major hurricanes (a storm that is above Category Three on the Saffir-Simpson scale) in the outer tier.

The tiers determined the number of years that would create a return period of a storm. While the model determines that any category of a hurricane is likely to strike the location of each settlement once every decade, it is appropriate to only apply the outer tier of major hurricanes when discussing the impact on the coastal settlements. The impact of a major hurricane has always been a process of destruction and rebuilding (Keim, Muller et al. 2007). Not all settlements opt to rebuild due to the amount of destruction, the cost of recovery, the fear of recurring hurricanes, and competition from other settlements who were spared from the storm.

From 1830 to 1930, the three settlements were impacted by a substantial number of major hurricanes. The records of major hurricanes along with pieces of historical literature (such as Boozer (1942), Malsch (1977), and others) cite that Indianola, Texas, was heavily affected by storm activity. The data shows how two major hurricanes occurred within an unusually short time interval. Other literature would eventually detail how these two hurricanes eventually lead to the collapse of the settlement (Boozer 1942; Malsch 1977) (see Table 2).
Table 2

*Major Hurricanes that Impacted the Selected Settlements: 1830 to 1930*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SETTLEMENT</th>
<th>YEARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indianola</td>
<td>1875, 1886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pascagoula</td>
<td>1831, 1852, 1860, 1893, 1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1906, 1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apalachicola</td>
<td>1837, 1842, 1850, 1851, 1852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1873, 1886, 1894</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data above lists the years in which the three settlements were impacted by a major hurricane. A major hurricane is considered to produce “extensive” damage, and can be greater that a Category 3 Hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Scale (Sullivan 2009: 162). Note that Indianola’s recordings are limited due to its’ short period of time as a functioning settlement (Boozer 1942, Malsch 1977).

The Gulf Coast as a Region

*Background*

Jordan-Bychkov (1997) notes that a settlement can be described as both a social region and a culture region. The internal structure of the city can indicate how social and economic activities can spread out over a geographic space over time (Jordan-Bychkov 1997: 448). He notes that cultural geographers are “more interested in how townscapes and landmarks take on symbolic significance and whether these idealizations are based on some sort of reality, or instead, are fabricated from diverse predilections” (Jordan-Bychkov 1997: 440).

V.C. Finch (1934) states that a geographic region is influenced by both the physical and cultural traits of the area. The region’s structure (or geographic identity) consists of a phenomena that displays descriptive, depictive, and
interpretative phrases for informative value. In order for a region to gain its identity, it must share the factors of form, pattern, association, and description (Finch 1934: 113-116).

Form

*Form* is based upon the region’s physical characteristics. Such characteristics focus on landforms, climate, and vegetation. With respect to *form* and the three settlements, we see the Gulf Coast as a physical region. The landform of the region is a coastal plain that is low in elevation. The climate is hot and humid with mild winters, coastal winds, marine influences, and no seasonality to precipitation. The vegetation of the Gulf Coast region is subtropical with coastal wetlands transitioning to stands of forests along the interior high ground.

Pattern and Association

*Pattern* and *association* refer to how the region appears with respect to sequent occupance. *Pattern* refers to occupying the land, while *association* looks at the area’s association within the broader physical environment (Finch 1934: 114-115). The *pattern* of the Northern Gulf Coast is exemplified by a coastal plain that has various ‘complex’ forms of land divisions created by European settlers. For *association*, groups along the Gulf Coast would carve up the land for their own interests. Hart (1975) mentions that the Spanish claimed large holdings of land and gave land to settlers based on the availability of water (such as rivers) for agriculture. He also wrote that the French settled the land by using
the inexpensive, long lot system in order to support the development of their acquired land (Hart 1975: 1-2, 45-49).

Description

Description is perhaps the key factor that weaves together the overall picture for the Northern Gulf Coast region (Finch 1934: 116). Noble (1992) mentions that the region is characterized as creole, and consists of a mixture of different ethnicities. He notes that the offspring would represent a new breed of a dignified culture and would be applied to ethnic groups (such as the English, French Spaniards, and Germans) who were born within the region (Noble et al., 1992: 136). Edwards (1994) mentions that the creole population has influenced the culture of the northern Gulf Coast region due to persistent European empirical change. The warm climate and generations of creole descendants have played together to influence how settlers have adapted to living along the coast, or in the region. Folk house types are also a key part of this area’s regional identity. The area contains remnants of the Louisiana French Creole, Caribbean, and the Carolina Tidewater architectural influences and house types (Edwards 1994: 155-156).

Literature on Other Factors for Regional Identification

As the northern Gulf Coast was occupied, its settlers brought their own culture, as well as began the process of creating a regional culture in place. Finch (1934) stated that the settlers placed importance upon the needs for success, such as regional transportation, development of local manufacturing, and housing (Finch 1934: 117-118). Lutz Holzner (1967) wrote that the settlements that grew
the most in size, were the towns where culture had expanded, and where commerce was the most abundant. The interplay between the local town population and its hinterland is how local culture diffused and regions evolved (Holzner 1967: 704, 706-707).

**Holzner’s Factors**

Holzner (1967) believes that there are three main factors that creates a region: *mutual historical influence*, *mutual economic relationship*, and *mutual population relationship* (Holzner 1967: 707-708). *Mutual historical influence* looks at events which created a new impact on the entire area (Holzner 1967: 707). In this case, we see that the history of the Gulf Coast was impacted from European empirical dominance and influence. *Mutual economic relationship* looks at the significant influence of the region’s productive structure, along with its role in “shaping the entire region” (Holzner 1967: 707). With this role, we see that the Gulf Coast was limited in providing a subsistence agricultural base, yet would use its waterways and railway within the region to conduct trade to larger markets (such as San Antonio and New Orleans).

*Mutual population relationship* looks at the settlement’s population density, movements, and other aspects that influenced the demographics of the region (Holzner 1967: 707). For example, the French influenced the coast with their idea of claiming as much land as possible for their extensive territory, and would establish outposts to claim their limits. Within this massive area, the French came to influence types of folk housing, the region’s culture, and induced a great deal of complexity in the process (Noble, et al. 1992: 139-140). Overall,
Holzner (1967) described that these factors would determine the region’s overall identity, and would reveal what type of region the northern Gulf Coast was in the eyes of a geographer.
CHAPTER III
A SETTLEMENT GEOGRAPHY OF INDIANOLA, TEXAS

Introduction

Along Matagorda Bay sits Indianola, Texas. Indianola was a settlement that was established along the coastal plain of Texas by German settlers in the mid-19th century, and headed two major rivers for inland navigation. From 1844 to 1886, the town exhibited potential as a port-of-entry for people and products (Malsch 1977: 1). Thanks to railroads and steamboats and its meat canning industry, the town exhibited massive growth and became the second largest city in Texas. The times of prosperity came to an end, however, when two hurricanes wiped the town off the map. This chapter discusses how a settlement along the Northern Gulf Coast can be at the right location for long-term growth, but can fall within a short time due to sudden meteorological events, misadministration, and economic competition.

History

Early History and the verein

During the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution expanded across Western Europe. This transformative event affected the German rural population and produced a variety of negative consequences, notably overpopulation. As a response to these events, Germans established a societal organization called the Mainser Adelsverein (or verein for short). The main goal of the verein was to protect German policies of overseas immigration, and acquire a potential settlement along the coastal plains of Texas. The settlement would contribute to a
widespread trade which would connect a region that extended from the Gulf of Mexico, across the interior of Texas, and towards the Chihuahua Road and Northern Mexico.

In the 1830’s, a group of educated, professional Germans founded the verein in New Orleans. The individuals were qualified in creating their own colony in the United States. The verein was organized as part of a long-term plan, a plan that consisted of using New Orleans as a base to explore settlement options (Benjamin 1910: 6-8). Stephen F. Austin, an empresario (or an administrator who is in charge of granting land to potential settlers) responded to the Germans’ interests of potential settlement (Biesele 1930: 25). During the 1830’s and 1840’s, Austin offered many groups of the verein land along the coastal plains of eastern Texas (Boozer 1942: 10).

After surveying the land, the verein established a settlement near the Colorado River and Matagorda Bay. The government of Texas assisted the Germans’ goals by acquiring a deep-water port along Lavaca Bay (which was the western sleeve of Matagorda Bay) and wanted to invest in the area for immigration and trade purposes (Malsch 1977: 1-2). After more surveying was conducted, a small strip of land by Lavaca Bay was eventually selected by both parties. The site of the strip was a coastal prairie in the southern section of the land and a coastal beach in the northern section (Malsch 1977: 6).

When the settlers arrived, mosquitoes and other insect pests terrorized them. Regardless, the problems were outweighed by the sudden attraction of the many wild flowers and potential hunting ground in the area (Malsch 1977: 13). In
1844, the Matagorda Bay region was settled with Germans who came from nearby Galveston. Unfortunately, upon arrival the verein suffered from abysmal disorganization and was marred with financial problems. As a result, Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels was named as the head of the verein in order to resolve the dysfunction of the organization (Malsch 1977: 3, 6-8, 13).

With the verein more organized, this made it possible for more Germans and their families to arrive at Matagorda Bay. The most desired occupations for the new settlers included a group of artisans, farmers, and other positions (Malsch 1977: 5). Ultimately, the verein favored a strip of land in Lavaca Bay (the western bank of Matagorda Bay). Lavaca Bay’s location was favored due to it consisting of two bays joining at a point. The coastal opening would be used for the distribution of shipping material and incoming vessels. Prince Braunfels identified a local promontory as “Indian Point” due to the sufficient depths of the bay and the town’s first name became Indian Point (Malsch 1977: 6).

**Establishment of Indian Point**

The German settlers were able to use the nearby Colorado and Guadalupe Rivers for fresh water and timber for their houses (Malsch 1977: 2-3, 7). Nonetheless, only temporary camps were established at Indian Point during the first two years of the settlement. The Germans had to deal with a harsh climate which consisted of heavy precipitation during the first two winters and blazing hot temperatures during the summer months (Malsch 1977: 7-8, 10).

The extreme, fluctuating climate resulted in poor living conditions. The combination of improper housing and poor sanitation led to diseases (such as
meningitis and cholera) that killed an unknown number of people. Nevertheless, most of the families escaped the trauma and left the coastal plain for the interior of Texas by following the Colorado River. Other families became frustrated with the poor roads and lack of linkages to interior settlements (such as New Braunfels) and gave up on their Texas-sized dreams (Malsch 1977: 11-13).

The families who stayed behind at Indian Point saw some improvements during the winter of 1845. Prince Solms-Braunfels bought several hundred acres of land in order to build warehouses and wharves (Boozer 1942: 15, Malsch 1977: 15). The construction of the marvels was made possible thanks to timber supplied from the land between the Comal and Guadalupe Rivers. The deforestation also led to an establishment of new inland settlements, such as New Braunfels (Jordan 1966: 42, Malsch 1977: 20). The settlements were established in order to make connections between the available raw materials and Indian Point.

Unfortunately because of poor management, the verein accumulated a massive debt in the process. As a result, the Prince resigned from the organization in 1845 (Malsch 1977: 9). The houses at Indian Point, however, saw a major improvement from temporary tents to mud and straw structures and eventually to lumber cabins built on concrete slabs. At its peak, the town had over 700 buildings, 82 blocks, and four parallel streets extending from the bay (Malsch 1977: 15).

The lots and wharves along the coast were part of a major construction phase. As a consequence of these improvements, numerous waves of immigration
increased the traffic along the bay (Malsch 1977: 115). In early 1848, the port sent over 90,000 feet of lumber into the hinterland. Indian Point became a town supported by merchants, scholars, mechanics, and families during the early years of development (Malsch 1977: 22-23).

*Establishment of ‘Indianola’ and the Civil War Period*

During its construction stage, the town changed its name to Indianola. The change was necessary in order to improve the community’s first impression to potential settlers whom wanted to reside in the town. The etymology of Indianola, was a portmanteau of the former Indian Point and the word -*ola* meaning ‘wave’ in Spanish (Malsch 1977: 36-37). The ‘wave’ (or a lapping of waves) was described by one resident of the town as “the music of ones ears” (Malsch 1977: 37). In 1853 Indianola was officially incorporated and the county seat was transferred to the town from nearby rival Port Lavaca (Malsch 1977: 81, 83). Indianola’s acquisition of the county seat resulted in a gain in population, administration, and power.

The first boundaries of Indianola were established around 1844 and reached its “ultimate limit in 1868” (Malsch 1977: 43). The area stretched from Powderhorn Bayou to White’s Bayou. The streets were drawn in order, starting from Main Street along the beach and Water Street along the bay. The traffic of the town mostly consisted of a variety of flat cars that were pulled by mules (Malsch 1977: 43). Once Indianola gained administrative power, the addition of lots to its boundaries during the 1850’s and 1860’s resulted in it becoming a booming economic port along the coastal bend of Texas. The port was capable of
supporting coastal traffic across the entire northern Gulf Coast thanks to its protected bay, regional rails, and town streets and warehouses (see Figure 5).

![Map of Indianola, Texas](image)

*Figure 5. Map of Indianola, Texas. This map gives the description of Indianola, Texas during its most prominent period. Note the railways in the southern part of town, and along the wharves (Kalina 2013-14).*

During the Civil War in the 1860’s, Indianola experienced an economic blockade. However, once the war ended, the town was spared from the negative repercussions of Reconstruction due to a lack of a record on slavery, its focus on jobs, and interest in building a high quality town (Malsch 1977: 115, 187).

However, once the war ended, Indianola went through a long drought period. Overall, the lack of potable water in town was a recurring problem. To solve this, the residents of the town invested in collecting accumulated reservoir water and precipitation in a concrete storage unit (Malsch 1977: 25). The marvel helped diminish the demand of water, and prevented droughts from becoming widespread disasters.
The End of Indianola

During the first half of the 1870’s, the economic outlook for Indianola looked bright as carts jammed the streets and schooners occupied the coast (Boozer 1942: 90-91). The optimism, however, would turn into despair as a major hurricane made landfall in Indianola on September 15, 1875. The only warning for the townspeople was the gradual increase in wind speed and the breaking of water over Main Street. At the storm’s peak, the entire town along with its coastal prairie, was flooded under five feet of storm surge and a majority of the houses in Indianola were washed away as a result (Boozer 1942: 103-108).

After the storm dissipated, it took days for searches to be organized and conducted to rescue survivors within the devastated area. Overall, 270 people were either found dead within the ruins of the once bustling town or were considered lost forever in the unforgiving bay (Arnold III, Keyes 2000: 339).

The storm left Indianola in ruins. Its infrastructure was destroyed, people were homeless, disease spread, and the challenge of recovery worried the survivors. Although the state legislature granted tax relief to the troubled town, nearly all of the businesses and industries in the bay town never recovered (Malsch 1977: 259). The railroad industry collapsed due to misfunding the railway between Indianola and San Antonio and the sudden death of the administrator of the project. As a result, the nearby city of Houston was ultimately selected as the town that would connect the different regions of California and New Orleans (Malsch 1977: 260-262). When Indianola lost its railroad infrastructure, the town also lost its chance to rebound economically. The
only sources of income that Indianola could depend upon were the tax welfare from the state legislature and the local seafood industry. By 1886, a long, hot summer drought devastated the downtrodden settlement.

Later that year, another hurricane came into Matagorda Bay and destroyed what Indianola had rebuilt, including the telegraph communication system (Malsch 1977: 262-263). Although the second storm was considered weaker than the hurricane in 1875, all but two buildings in Indianola were either swept away by the storm or were lost to an accidental lamp fire (Malsch 1977: 264-265). The majority of the population in the coastal bend of Texas (whom survived the hurricane in 1875) decided to relocate westward towards the Hill Country to other inland settlements (such as New Braunfels) (Jordan 1966: 190).

During the last few months of Indianola, only die-hard residents remained in the town. In September of 1886, the majority of voters during a special election stripped the dying town of its county seat. The two abandoned buildings that remained, were closed and later demolished (Malsch 1977: 265-266). Indianola, a town that once showed potential and promise, was lost to the unforgiving coastal fringe.

Indianola and the Role of Regional Transportation

Background

A successful entrepôt must establish successful transportation links. In this case, Indianola once served as an important center for coastal traffic, rivers, and railroads. While Indianola’s site was marred with the disadvantage of saltwater intrusion due to its low elevation, the town’s income was assisted
by the establishment of the Chihuahua Road (a trade route that connected Santa Fe and the Northern Gulf of Mexico) (Malsch 1977: 26). The route had a total distance of nearly 500 miles, and served as a vital connection for transportation, military, and economic purposes between the United States and Mexico. Indianola’s location was the eastern terminus of the main line. Because of Indianola’s location near the bay, it took nearly three weeks of intensive travel to cross the interior plains of Texas from Matagorda Bay to the border (Malsch 1977: 34).

*Early Transportation*

Indianola was also used as the starting point for transportation routes which led into the Hill Country of Texas. The routes eventually led to the creation of primitive roads (Malsch 1977: 1, 27). One of the first roads opened in March of 1850 to Victoria and eventually to San Antonio (Malsch 1977: 46-47) (see Figure 6). This route benefited Indianola by establishing trade with inland settlements. Upon the completion of the road, a large influx of wagons filled with opportunistic people and goods journeyed across the German Belt of Texas. Mules (including on the Chihuahua Road) assisted in the distribution of products across the Southwest such as: silver, lead, agriculture, and lumber (Malsch 1977: 48, 186). The acquired income helped construct Indianola’s wharves, warehouses, and its morale, and thanks to the annual revenue that was made from the roads, Indianola became the second largest city in Texas.
Figure 6. Map of Settlements in Texas in Relationship to Rivers. This map represents the location of where established routes would assist the Germans across a distributed piece of land in Texas. Indianola (which is represented as a circle in the figure above) would serve as the gateway city to the interior (Jordan 1966, p. 246).

Unfortunately, the unpredictable conditions of the roads caused problems for the inland settlements of interior Texas. Overall, it took an average of three days to travel from Indianola to Victoria in good weather, and all of the wagons followed a congested trail in order to avoid getting stuck in the wet prairie (Boozer 1942: 29). To address the problems, a lieutenant was sent to Texas by the U.S. Secretary of War in 1855. His orders were to determine the best route for transporting the supplies for military forts in Texas. Upon surveying the land, the lieutenant noted that the town of Indianola held many advantages due to its road running parallel with the Guadalupe River (Boozer 1942: 31) (see Figure 6).
Indianola was becoming a settlement supported by the need for transportation connections.

Steamboats

The first form of water transportation that made it to Indianola was the revolutionary steamboat. With steamboats, it became possible for Indianola’s port to be accessed from across the Gulf. Steamships, from New Orleans to New York, would be able to access the port within a few days of travel, and would also be able to send goods, mail service, and people into the interior of Texas (Boozer 1942: 39-40). The regional ferry service (which was established in 1840) went through the interior bay and connected the coastal bend settlements for over three decades (Malsch 1977: 4-5). The influx of population into Indianola shows that the steamboat was essential in the development of the hinterland.

The steamboat was the most practical transportation for emigration. During the early period of Indianola in the late 1840’s, 36 ships were used to transport Germans from New Orleans to Matagorda Bay. Out of the 8,000 Germans that arrived in the area, nearly 2,500 of them settled within the hinterland. The rest of the population either died of disease, enlisted in the army, or gave up and went home. Nearly 1,000 of the Germans eventually settled in Indianola (Benjamin 1910: 48-49).

Steamboat companies continually needed investors in order for successful growth to take place across the coast. In 1849, businessman and shipping magnate, Charles Morgan, began building warehouses and docks in Indianola. Morgan’s main goal was to attract merchants to the area and to also have them
invest in central and western Texas’ trade industry (Boozer 1942: 51). Morgan’s establishment of the steam lines also contributed to the growing rivalry between the towns of Indianola and Port Lavaca (Boozer 1942: 60-61).

Another shipping magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt, established a steamboat service between New Orleans, Galveston, and Indianola. Vanderbilt called his line the “new inland route” as it passed along inside of the barrier islands (Malsch 1977: 112). Investors as far away as New York City began to invest in passenger services that would extend as far as the western gulf. These investments were also made possible, in a large part, by New Orleans businessmen (Malsch 1977: 58-59). During the Civil War blockade, swift little contraband boats filled with war supplies outran the authorities and helped supply the community of Indianola. Matagorda Bay also benefited from the trade of nearby Mexico (Malsch 1977: 162). Steamboats became the link Indianola needed in order to grow and stay connected.

*Railroads*

Indianola not only drew investors in the steamboat industry, but also on land with its railroad industry. While roads were being built and maintained in the region, the first railroad routes were being awarded to towns in Texas by the legislature. Even with the lack of state funding, the railroad industry exploded within the entire state. While early railroads were being constructed across the state, Indianola formed a commission to determine a railroad route; the route not only eased the maritime traffic at the port, it also determined Indianola’s role as a major entrepôt to the large interior of Texas.
The first railroad near Indianola was chartered as the San Antonio and Mexican Gulf Railway in September of 1850. Although most of the railroad was completed from Port Lavaca to Victoria, much of the line was destroyed during the Civil War (Boozer 1942: 45-47). As a result of the destruction, Indianola established its own railroad charter after the war. Indianola’s charter extended a line to connect with the San Antonio and Mexican Gulf Company; the extension meant that Indianola’s seaport would connect with the developing interior cities of San Antonio and Austin. The railroad link was eventually completed in the summer of 1866 and it provided service between the towns of Port Lavaca and Victoria (Malsch 1977: 189) (see Figure 7).

\[Figure 7.\] Railroads in Texas Before the Civil War. This map shows the notable railroads in Texas that were used before the Civil War. Note that Indianola and Galveston were used as gateways into the interior of Texas. Eventually, after the war, the railroad industry would expand (Barker, et al. 1912).

The Indianola Railroad Company (or the IRC) first met in April of 1860 in order to discuss issues such as borrowing money and bond negotiations for purchasing rail cars. Upon the revival of the IRC after the Civil War, fifteen
miles of rail line were completed by January of 1871 (Malsch 1977: 129, 131, 188). That same year, the IRC was rebranded by the state legislature as the Indianola City Railway Company (ICRC). The main goal of ICRC was to operate and build an effective use of the town’s rail system, and to implement the rails on the wharves in order to improve the efficiency of connecting ships to rails (Boozer 1942: 67). The main purpose for the railroad was to establish an important link to inland settlements located between San Antonio and Indianola. Coincidentally, the link was finished shortly after Indianola was destroyed by a hurricane in 1875 and Galveston became the port of entry (Boozer 1942: 50). Eventually Houston began to expand as well due to railroads (see Figure 8).

![Railroad Lines Across Texas Before and After Indianola](image)

*Figure 8. Railroad Lines Across Texas Before and After Indianola.* The map represents two different periods where the railroad industry occurred. The first period occurred along the coast when Indianola was a settlement (1860, 1861), and the other period occurred after the town perished from hurricane activity (1909) (Reed 1941).

**Hinterland**

Steamboats and railroads laid the framework for a hinterland that extended from the port town of Indianola to Central Texas. The impact of
transportation helped pave the way for inland settlements (such as Victoria and New Braunfels). Dependable transportation helped with creating better housing, insuring that needed goods would arrive, and improvements to schools, hospitals, and other vital services within the hinterland (Jordan 1966: 42-43). With a growing transportation network, the Immigrant Road (which stretched from Indianola to Castell, Texas) continued to stretch towards the fertile Black Prairie of Texas by the 1850s. By the 1880s, the roads helped shape Indianola’s hinterland, and resulted in the addition of 100,000 industrious Germans to Texas (Jordan 1966: 45, 57).

Although the settlement was mostly urban, Indianola and its hinterland was located in the heart of the Texas cattle industry (see Figure 9). The area consisted of a diamond-shaped territory of grazed land and the towns of Indianola, Brownsville, Laredo, and San Antonio. Indianola served as the official port for beef distribution. In 1849, the cattle industry was recorded as Indianola’s first official commercial freight and served as a beneficial area for export (Boozer 1942: 52). The shipments of cattle consisted of an initial price of ten dollars per head. The longhorn cattle were driven from the ranch, across the bayou and lakes to the pens, and were eventually shipped from the coast. The diffusion of the cattle earned them the nickname “coasters” (Boozer 1942: 53). Cattle exports and German settlers headed into the Hill Country would eventually produce an Indianola hinterland that extended from Matagorda Bay to New Braunfels and Fredericksburg and on to administrative centers such as Austin, San Antonio, and Galveston) (see Figure 9).
Figure 9. Map of Indianola Hinterland. This map represents the created hinterland that is shaded in dark gray. The routes helped define this hinterland, and Indianola served as the break-in-bulk point to promote economic distribution. Note that the map includes San Antonio, Austin, and Houston as they each played a geographical role (Kalina 2014).

Unique Economies

Background

Settlements establish unique economies, especially as they grow. The area that stretches out across south central Texas contributed to such diverse economies. The established labor in Indianola supported the expansion of major industries (such as cattle and agriculture) and minor industries (such as cotton and ice). These industries in Indianola thrived during its short life span contributed to the beginning of Texas’ livelihood. Germans were recognized as some of the most industrious workers along the entire gulf coast.
Cattle Industry

Texas is known for its cattle industry and Indianola was a pioneer in beef exports (Boozer 1942: 60). Indianola’s cattle industry benefitted from preserving the cuts of meats by using the Stabler process. The process (which was named after Francis Stabler of Baltimore) proved to be an efficient method in processing and canning beef. Canning was considered necessary in order to prevent spoilage. If the meat spoiled, money would be lost (Malsch 1977: 196-197). Other than canning, beef was also sold in 200 pound barrels (Boozer 1942: 55). Shipments were bound for the east coast.

In July of 1869, mechanical refrigeration was introduced to Indianola from New Orleans. Refrigeration was used to preserve material from spoiling. Refrigeration also promised excellent quality beef upon arrival (Malsch 1977: 203-204). As a result of refrigeration, the cattle industry prospered and likewise ship traffic increased. More ship traffic resulted in more economic activity in the hinterland.

Other Economies

Other than cattle, the Germans in Indianola (and its hinterland) experimented with agriculture. The potato was seen as the as the most important crop for the Germans (Jordan 1966: 34). The town of New Braunfels was highly invested in the corn crop and acquired a surplus occurred as a result. The numbers were large due to the German’s methods of agriculture. The methods included slash and burn techniques, and plowing the sod. Due to their admiration
and commitment of the soil, the garden was seen as the common trait of identity for the German farmer in Texas (Jordan 1966: 124-127).

Cotton was also a noted within the hinterland due to the incorporation of textile mills that bordered Mexico. Many witnesses described the Western German Belt of Texas as a “Snow White of Cotton” during its peak in the mid-19th century. Eventually, the textile mills across rural Texas grew into the massive, present day cotton industry (Jordan 1966: 131-133). The crops and vegetables grown within the hinterland were sent to larger cities (such as San Antonio) for market.

Indianola’s economy was also infatuated with the luxury of ice. In 1851, mechanically-made ice developed locally. In order for ice to make it to other towns it had to be packed in sawdust or carried on refrigerated ships. The preserved material was then shipped to icehouses along the coast for sale (Malsch 1977: 66-67). Ice also became a popular economic activity after the Civil War, as Indianola supplied it during the warm months of summer to parched patrons (Malsch 1977: 189).

A Settlement Overview

Although Indianola was eventually abandoned due to hurricanes, its settlement history provides insight into what makes a successful settlement on the coast. The site was selected for its protected bay and rivers reaching into the interior. The initial settlers were energetic Germans seeking a new beginning, and put significant investment into the town of Indianola. The town thrived with its: connection to its interior rivers and to roads and railroads that connected the
town with the interior of Texas, and the rise of a booming beef cattle industry. Unfortunately, hurricanes undermined the efforts of Indianola to remain as Texas’ most important port.

Every settlement along the Gulf has experienced hurricanes, and for Indianola storms would swing the economic advantage to its competitors. Today a plaque marks the spot where Indianola stood and a few fishing camps and a boat ramp are the only signs of activity. The plaque also represents a somber reminder that a town along the coast can be located in the right place with regards to settlement geography and still fail. Other towns (such as Pascagoula, Mississippi) managed to survive due to the will to rebuild, the aim to shift its economic focus, and even change its identity within the process.
CHAPTER IV

A SETTLEMENT GEOGRAPHY OF PASCAGOULA, MISSISSIPPI

Introduction

As we saw with Indianola, a thriving settlement can be wiped out by a series of unfortunate events within a short period of time. Pascagoula, Mississippi, on the other hand, managed to survive by making more efforts to rebuild after major hurricanes and would continually shift its economic focus into other ventures. Modern Pascagoula’s history has been focused on its prime shipbuilding culture, which began in the late 1800s. The Pascagoula River became the blueprint for Pascagoula’s growth, and the forests in southern Mississippi created a massive economic hinterland for the settlement. In its history, Pascagoula experienced with major hurricanes that would mess with the economy of the settlement during its prominent years, and would go from economic trends, which ranged from luxury to seafood.

History

Early History

The early history of the town dates to the local Natchez and Choctaw Indians and their interactions with the French. Subsequently, the years following permanent European occupation, the area became the scene for frequent shifts in colonial power and the source of mercantile conflict between the groups (Sutter 1982: 4-11). The town of Pascagoula is one of the Six Sisters of the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. The ‘Sisters’ are a group consisting of the first settlements established along the Mississippi Coast. The Six Sisters included the following
settlements from west to east: Shieldsboro (which is where present-day Waveland is located), Pass Christian, Mississippi City (Gulfport), Biloxi, Ocean Springs, and Pascagoula (Hearn 2004: 42). The ‘Sisters’ were known for their shared history of colonial impact, coastal location, and economic ties. Pascagoula’s etymology comes from the Indian term -paska meaning ‘bread’, and -okla meaning ‘people’ (Ziegler 1966: 7). The nearby Pascagoula River along with the bay split the settlement into two sections (Hearn 2004: 41; Scholtes 1971: 33).

The northwestern section is considered to be one of the earliest settled parts of Pascagoula. The area included a small plantation which was founded in 1718. One of the buildings that were located inside the plantation, the Old Spanish Fort, was situated along the Pascagoula River. The fort was simple in construction and made from a combination of timber, oyster shells, and moss. The fort was to guard the waterway and coast from invading forces, and to protect the local population of nearly 300 French settlers and slaves (Fraiser 2006: 29-30).

Influence of Krebs

The French survived their first year (1699) in Pascagoula with assistance from the Choctaw. The natives helped with farming and growing wheat, while the French exchanged supplies (such as ammunition) with the Choctaw (Fraiser 2006: 30, Unknown 1964: 1). A permanent settlement was established when a German immigrant named Baron Hugo Ernestus Krebs settled on the west bank of the Pascagoula River. From there, Krebs acquired the rights to the land through marriage with a French woman. The many subsequent generations in the
Krebs families became involved with building wooden boats to be used for traveling on the Pascagoula River (Fraiser 2006: 29-30). This appears to be the first evidence of Pascagoula being important as a ship-building port.

During the Krebs era in Pascagoula, the control of coastal Mississippi constantly changed. No matter which flag Pascagoula was under, the town continued to survive. After years of colonial struggle, the United States took control of the coast, and incorporated the town into the territory of Mississippi. Eventually the territory grew in population and achieved statehood in 1817 (Fraiser 2006: 30-31).

The population increase lead to land development along the coast. Eventually, by the 1820’s, Pascagoula began to transform into a settlement with the first postal service and mercantile businesses. As the town continued to grow into the 1840’s, Pascagoula welcomed a saw mill, the town’s first industrial establishment. The mill enabled Pascagoula to process and ship timber from the Pine Belt region (Guice 1976: 13).

Potential of Settlement

In 1839, surveyor John Wheeler sent a report to the United States Congress. The report mentions how the state of Mississippi possessed a shoreline that was over 70 miles long. He wrote that marsh and low-lying coast sheltered and upland with a healthy timbered bluff. Wheeler wrote that with proper development, some of the harbors would also be suitable for coastal vessels travelling the coast. Wheeler recommended that the Bay of Pascagoula be one of
the three bays that had some magnitude for economic development along with Biloxi Bay, and the Bay of St. Louis (Wheeler 1840).

The extensive trade in timber was possible thanks to the two channels that were located between Horn and Dog Island. The channels would provide a deep water entry for the ships, and exchanging economic material. Wheeler also noted that the Pascagoula River consisted of a waterway that possessed many tributaries that extended into the state’s interior (Wheeler 1840). Wheeler’s report was proof that the coast would survive with proper economic development, and the waterways would also be used for viable navigation and transportation.

*Coastal Traffic*

In the early 19th century, regularly scheduled steamboats began to run along the coast for the first time. By 1827, a schedule was put into place from New Orleans to Mobile. Four years later, lighthouses were established along the coast in order to guide the coastal steamboats (Sullivan 2009: 11, 13). After Wheeler’s report to Congress in 1839, more settlement began to appear in Pascagoula.

In response to the increase in ship traffic, a channel was dredged by Captain John Grant. Grant’s Pass went through reefs and shoals located near Dauphin Island in Alabama. The channel produced a viable transportation link for coastal steamboat traffic. Grant’s Pass also provided a connection from the Mississippi Sound to Mobile Bay (Sullivan 2009: 11, 13). Pascagoula (which was located in the middle of the connection) became an established port by
benefitting from the geographical location of the channel, river mouth and barrier island.

Grant’s Pass also assisted businesses and homes along the coast. During the antebellum period of the 1840’s and 1850’s, the channel helped Pascagoula fit into the geography of luxury for affluent residents located in New Orleans and Mobile (Sullivan 2009: 13). As a town of luxury, Pascagoula possessed the following traits: a coastal setting with an established port, a low bluff which embraced warm temperatures, and a gentle sea breeze. The town of luxury exhibited a tourist season that would flourish during the summer months. Unfortunately, the attraction of summer luxury occurred during hurricane season which put the residents in constant danger (Sullivan 2009: 13).

*Antebellum Luxury*

Pascagoula’s early history was focused on service businesses which were supported by a number of locally built schooners along the coast. The notable increase in schooner traffic resulted in the establishment of a military post and a hospital in the 1840’s. The hospital and spas were implemented for the use of soldiers who were wounded during the Mexican-American War. Due to its initial importance as a shipbuilding port, there was talk that Pascagoula might become a military town (Scholtes 1971: 32).

The combination of steam power and a calm period without hurricanes led to an increase in urbanization along the Mississippi Sound during the 1840’s and 1850’s (Sullivan 2009: 13). With the establishment of steam powered vessels, more spas began to pop up along the coast. Boats could now travel quicker and
carry more passengers. The increase in tourism made Pascagoula shift its focus from a small army town to a town of luxury. The concept of luxury resulted in the ideas of northern businessmen who brought their concept of spas, and migrated towards the south (Higginbottom 1967: 33). The ideas also gave Pascagoula its identity as a town of luxury.

Civil War and Reconstruction

The Civil War began in 1861, a year after Mississippi seceded from the Union. With the declaration of war, the town of Pascagoula dealt with blockades and could only receive its economic supplies from Confederate soldiers stationed in Cuba. The port of Pascagoula was invaded by Union forces in April of 1863 and the beach front was captured. In response, the town resisted from Union forces and stopped the invasion from extending further inland. Another invasion was planned in December of 1864 as a section of the Union Army headed down west of the Pascagoula River to destroy the railroad system. The plans, however, were not carried out as the war ended four months later in April of 1865 (Higginbottom 1967: 35-40).

During the reconstruction period from 1865 to 1875, Pascagoula was under control of Union forces. During this time, carpetbagging politicians took advantage of the South and dictated voting laws (Higginbottom 1967: 43-44). Eventually, Pascagoula became frustrated over the implementation of forced law, increased taxes, and other interests for carpetbaggers. In 1875 a meeting was held at the courthouse. At the meeting rebellion ensued and the presiding government was forced out (Higginbottom 1967: 46; Ziegler 1966: 66-69). Upon the official
removal of northern interests in the late 1870’s, Pascagoula entered a new age of prosperity and economic expansion.

*Consolidation at the Turn of the Century*

By 1896, Pascagoula was a small village of 763 residents. At the turn of the century, residents were confused as to which cluster of settlements around the bay was actually Pascagoula. Eventually all of the settlements consolidated and were incorporated into modern-day Pascagoula. Some of the early settlement clusters included: Scranton (a town company that was founded to clear land and build warehouses for industry), Bayou Cassette (a port that was once located upon useless marshland, and eventually became part of a network of road and port access), and Gautier (the western section where the original Pascagoula was located) (Scholtes 1971: 30-31, Unknown 2013).

The coastal town was limited in terms of growth due to the influence and nearby proximity of Gulfport and Biloxi, and Mobile, Alabama. Due to their size and economic girth, Pascagoula was in danger of declining in population. In order to survive, the town expanded on its commercial growth by annexing its surrounding communities in order to avoid being landlocked. After the consolidation of settlements in 1904, the town was reported to have over 3,000 residents (Higginbottom 1967: 68, Unknown 2013).

*Pascagoula and the Role of Regional Transportation*

*Background*

As Pascagoula grew in population between 1830 and 1930, coastal transportation routes grew as well. The roads connecting Pascagoula started out
as primitive shell roads or sandy traces (Doran Jr. 1965: 223). Eventually, the roads became better in quality, and one road in particular, the Old Spanish Trail, was a coastal highway that connected both ends of the country for the potential of commerce and regional travel.

*Primitive Roads*

The settlement of Pascagoula grew thanks to effective transportation routes. Originally, Pascagoula and its neighbor Moss Point, were connected by a shell road. The shell road was a coastal phenomenon that came to influence the entire Gulf Coast region (Doran Jr. 1965: 223, Ziegler 1966: 74). Eventually a road was constructed which would connect Pascagoula Bay with the other settlements along the Gulf Coast. At first, the task proved to be tedious as the coast (between Mobile and New Orleans) was part of an undeveloped land filled with forests that was immersed in bayous, rivers, and marshes. With a lack of infrastructure during this time period, it took nearly two weeks of travel in order to get across this stretch of coast (Scholtes 1971: 2) (see Figure 10).

When Pascagoula became a settlement, there were only a few roads that existed within its hinterland. Most of the transportation routes consisted of small roads that were built by the lumber companies and were connected to waterways in order to benefit the lumber industry. The majority of the roads along the coast consisted of mere sandy traces and were considered poor in quality (Sullivan 2003: 4-6). In 1897, the issue of road quality was addressed by the state legislature in which a law was passed that would reform and improve the establishment of public roads. During the construction of roads in
the early-1900’s, the automobile was introduced to the coast (Sullivan 2003: 11). With an automobile, the demand for better roads increased.

Figure 10. Map of Pascagoula, Mississippi. This map shows Pascagoula’s early history, primitive roads, and how the Old Spanish Trail would distribute across the settlement, and would connect to vital locations of water (such as the coast and the chain of lakes). The lack of infrastructure, however, created an increase in travel time (Kalina 2014).

Coastal Highway (Old Spanish Trail)

Due to the expansion and mass-production of the automobile, road enthusiasts of the Gulf Coast met in Mobile in 1915 to incorporate the Old Spanish Trail Highway Association. The goal of the association was build a coastal highway for travel and economic purposes (Sullivan 2003: 16). The road
(which is present-day U.S. Highway 90) was a tedious task as Pascagoula and other nearby towns were located upon an estuarine delta. For Pascagoula, the delta created a split between two pieces of land (which consisted of the deeper eastern end of Jackson County, and the shallower west end of Jackson County) (Sullivan 2003: 6). Regardless of land problems, Pascagoula and other communities along the Gulf Coast desired the need and completion of a coastal highway as it would connect from coast to coast (see Figure 11).

After discussion with the committee, there was an agreement that the highway should be implemented along the coast. When the construction phase of the highway began in 1921, a budget problem arose in which Mississippi lacked the funding to construct the highway. Due to the width of the delta and bay, the road would need a required 37 miles of bridges and causeways in order to ensure the maintenance of the highway (Sullivan 2003: 23). Despite its many financial challenges, Jackson County was the first county to authorize and complete the road in 1930 after a long and tedious process (Sullivan 2003: 29-31).
Figure 11. A Map of the Old Spanish Trail and a Closeup of Mississippi’s Section. The Old Spanish Trail was a road that connected from California to Florida. The coast of Mississippi and the settlement of Pascagoula was a part of this cultural phenomena, and would serve as a vital connection to its sister settlements (Varner 2013).

Hinterland

Pascagoula is at the southern edge of a large region called the Longleaf Pine Belt. The Longleaf Pine Belt is one of the largest natural regions in the South. It is characterized by similar soil types, precipitation, temperature, and natural vegetation. The region was selected by early European settlers because of its hilly topography, in which the land was shaped by plateaus and streams made accessing and developing the region easier for a potential economic investment.
Most of the pine possessed a high resinous content. The high quality of wood was considered suitable for the construction of ships, and building settlements (Hickman 1962: 1-4).

The forest could be reached from the Pascagoula and Escatawpa Rivers by boat. Both of the rivers created a chain of natural lakes near Moss Point. Due to the lake’s depth, its protection by barrier islands, and being separated from the coast, Moss Point’s location was chosen as an ideal site for the potential lumber industry. The other waterways that were located between the Pascagoula and Pearl Rivers drained into the sound (Hickman 1962: 5-6). With waterways connecting both the inland and coast, the settlements of Moss Point and Pascagoula would head a massive hinterland, and one of the world’s largest lumber industries in the late 19th century would be created thanks to the waterways and open-ocean access (see Figure 12). The entire Pascagoula River watershed would effectively become a hinterland for Pascagoula and its neighbors.
Figure 12. Map of Pascagoula Hinterland. This map represents the created hinterland that is shaded in dark gray. The Long Leaf Pine Region, main rivers, and railroads helped define this hinterland, and Pascagoula served as the break-in-bulk point to promote economic distribution. Note that the map includes Hattiesburg, Gulfport, and New Orleans as they each played a geographical role (Kalina 2014).

In 1841 J.F.H. Claiborne, a newspaper editor from Natchez, wrote about the virgin forestry of the Piney Woods. He recognized the region for its vast amount of yellow pine and how it would be ideal for lumber trade. Claiborne was also impressed about the population within the piney woods and the viability of its culture, even with the lack of proper administration (Napier 1985: 44-45). The population of the hinterland consisted of hunters and those who “desired an open, poor, pine country” (Napier 1985: 45). With the establishment of steam power,
steam mills, a navigable waterway system, and a railroad system, trade became easily accessible within the hinterland.

Unique Economies: Shipbuilding

Background

Pascagoula’s culture is embedded in boatbuilding. The first small boats were built by the natives in the region, and it continued after European contact (Ziegler 1966: 113). Early transportation along the Mississippi coast consisted of wooden boats. Sea breeze navigation was used in order to navigate between entrepôts along the coast. Eventually, larger shipbuilding emerged within Krebs’s operation in northwestern Pascagoula. In order to expand on the demand for ships, the French government began their investment in shipbuilding along the Mississippi coast in 1718 (Unknown 1965: 15-16). The French investment resulted in the establishment of naval stores and a two century long process of massive deforestation.

Early Pascagoula Shipbuilding

The first shipyard was established in Pascagoula by Ebenezer Clark in 1838. Clark (who lived north of Pascagoula in nearby Moss Point) focused upon the construction of the flat bottom schooner (Ziegler 1966: 114). The first steamboat arrived in Pascagoula in 1842 (Higginbottom 1967: 20). The ship made upriver travel possible, and resulted in further development of Pascagoula’s hinterland during the 1850’s.

By the 1870’s, the town went through a major population and job expansion. The arriving masse (which included a group of Italians) went to the
shipyards and railroads in order to find jobs which supported the growth in timber cutting, railroad building, wooden ship construction and lumber exporting (Ziegler 1966: 115, Unknown 2013). The industry consisted of exporting lumber and timber products which necessitated that the ships become larger in size (Unknown 2013). In order to accommodate the massive ships, the channels were deepened from three feet to ten and a half feet. The economic growth spurt and improvements to harbor access earned Pascagoula the title of “Cinderella Port of the South” (Unknown 1964).

**Wartime Expansion**

During the 1910’s, the first World War occurred in Europe. During this time period, the United States government discovered that Pascagoula possessed a history of shipbuilding culture, and also concluded that its port could be used for effective production and export (Ziegler 1966: 116). By 1917, the war in Europe escalated, and the United States became involved; the involvement also increased the government’s investment of the ship industry by Pascagoula building bigger and faster ships for combat. Pascagoula’s population also grew to over 4,000 residents (Higginbottom 1967: 75). In 1917, ten 9,000 ton steel ships were built in the port by a work force of nearly 6,000 people (Higginbottom 1967: 76). The substantive contributions of the community produced massive liberty ships. The special liberty ships were a product built in Mississippi; its wooden frame was made from Mississippi heart pine and oak (Ziegler 1966: 75, 118).
Pascagoula’s emerging shipbuilding industry in the late 1910’s was under the direction of Italian born explorer Henry Piaggio of Gulfport. Piaggio was intrigued with the Gulf Coast due to its proximity to the forests of the hinterland, and for easy shipping access to Europe. Piaggio’s planning resulted in his operations being two years ahead of schedule which were considered faster than a typical shipyard within the United States (Bricker 2000: 1-31).

From 1915 to 1919, five barkentines were planned by the city and were built by the International Shipbuilding Company (ISC). The barkentine (a vessel that possess three masts and a square-rigged foremast) was desired as it possessed the advantage to sail smoothly around the coast at right angles. An average barkentine weighed around 3,600 tons and would carry over two million board feet of lumber (Bricker 2000: 1-31). The success of the shipbuilding industry in the late 1910’s was made possible due to investments from the government, successful mass-production methods, and of course its location of forestry within the hinterland.

The ISC also built three steel hulled vessels which were named after towns in Italy such as the Trento, the Trieste, and the Torino. Unfortunately two of the three ships that were built for wartime in Pascagoula had faulty engines that destroyed the ships. Schooners were also produced in great numbers and were considered inexpensive in construction due to their size. Another common ship that was built during the wartime period was the standard, wooden Ferris design steamship (Bricker 2000: 1-31).
Most of the wood came from the hinterland and towns (such as Piave) were organized for the purpose of economic deforestation. Piave (a town that was located north of Pascagoula, and six miles north of Bothwell) was once home to one of the largest mills in the south) (see Figure 12). With the available lumber, the product went downstream towards the operations of the ISC, and was collected with the use of electric cranes. Housing was also available to the workers and their families. The company had a fifty room hotel, ten bungalows, and a plan to complete ninety other units (Bricker 2000: 1-31).

Decline and Renewal

Ultimately, massive deforestation and the end of World War I in 1918 resulted in the decline of Piaggio’s business. This led to the abandonment of housing within the hinterland, and downsizing of the industrial ship industry. ISC ceased operations in the summer of 1920 (Bricker 2000: 1-31; Unknown 2013). During the Prohibition Era, the town continued to invest in their shipbuilding culture and used fast boats to run rum across the coast (Higginbottom 1967: 77). A few years later in 1938, Ingalls Shipbuilding Company was founded (Ziegler 1966: 120, 122; Unknown 1965: 16). The establishment of Ingalls led to a new mass-industrial era in Pascagoula, and was also the end of Pascagoula’s era of regional dominance.

Unique Economies: Lumber Industry

Background

Pascagoula obtained massive amounts of pine from one of the heaviest wooded areas in terms of density in the United States. During the height of the
logging boom of the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century, trees from the South Long Leaf Pine region were sent down the Pascagoula River drainage basin, which became a transit system in order to haul the material to the coast. Some reports stated that as much as 100 million feet of yellow pine heart lumber were processed for export during the lumber boom period (see Figure 13).

\textit{Figure 13.} A Lake near the Pascagoula River Basin. The chain of lakes in Pascagoula were used as the terminal point at where lumber was converted into products for the naval industry (Kalina 2013).

\textit{Origination of Industry}

The longleaf and slash pine were considered to be the two most important timber species of pines in southern Mississippi. The slash pine was seen as the more important of the two as it possessed a higher yield of fluid gum and was found within the low coastal plain (Hickman 1962: 3-5). The amount of gum is based on the growth of sapwood and overall size of the tree. A good acre of trees would produce up to 30,000 board feet for the market. The warm climate and steady rainfall also led to larger tree growth and more resin production (Shirley 1947: 3-7).
Moss Point became the leader of the South’s overall production of lumber. During the zenith of the lumber era, nearly six million feet were produced in the area on a daily basis (Ziegler 1966: 85-90). Most of the lumber was transported to nearly 500 schooners and the majority of the product was sent to areas in South America. Other products, such as paper and charcoal, were created from the vast amounts of timber (Unknown 2013).

The increased use in steam engines along the sound and the growth of sawmills in the region contributed to a new economic era within the hinterland. The residents of the region managed to only remove a few acres for subsistence farmland, and the necessary homes for shelter. During the antebellum period, the pioneer woodsmen cut down most of the pine trees near the streams (Hickman 1962: 14-15). The antebellum lumber industry would market the lumber into three sizes: large sized logs would float down to mills to produce lumber, medium sized logs would be “boxed and chipped” to produce turpentine products for naval stores, and small sized logs would be burned to produce charcoal products (Napier 1985: 56).

The first steam mill was established in Pascagoula in 1835 and in Moss Point in 1836 (Hickman 1962: 17, 21). Both settlements were chosen because they were located near the river and lumber was being sent down the river towards the coast. The majority of the mills along the Mississippi coast were erected at the mouths of the river which were easily accessible and this accessibility caused the industry to expand (Hickman 1962: 17).
of the circular saw resulted in a gradual increase of lumbering and mills within the hinterland during the 1850’s (Hickman 1962: 24).

The towns of Moss Point and Pascagoula housed the Dantzler Lumber Company. By the 1880’s, the towns produced over 40,000,000 board feet of lumber thanks to well-funded investments, improvements in technology, and improved performance at the mills. The company benefited from owning their own tracts of timber (which produced 75% of the company’s overall lumber) (Hickman 1962: 119-120). Dantzler continued to expand during the 1890’s thanks to the implementation of railroads. The expansion resulted in an export of 90,000,000 board feet per year during the company’s peak (Hickman 1962: 169-171).

Notable Labor

The size of Pascagoula’s hinterland was shaped by the available labor of the lumber industry. Originally, the lumber culture of the region was influenced by French colonialists. The French were the first to use the pines to produce masts, spars, and other parts of their vessels. The saw mills were established in the region in order to meet their demand for naval stores (Hickman 1962: 15). Originally, a simple saw would cut 3,000 to 5,000 board feet of pine on a daily basis for a crew in the region and took a week in order for the first mills to produce a thousand feet of freshly cut lumber between 1830 and 1850 (Hickman 1962: 16-17).

The demographics of the region were made up of simple pine woods people. The population consisted of migrant workers from Georgia, the
Carolinas, and New England. Population also consisted of a variety of foreign workers, such as Italians, Irish, Swedes, Norwegians, and Germans. The majority of the population were reliable workers (Hickman 1962: 9, 245). Known as the Piney Woods people, they lacked agricultural experience and preferred more of the open, poor pine country for hunting (Hickman 1962: 10-13). Eventually, African slaves were brought in to extract the timber in the wilderness and raft it to the new mills in Pascagoula (Hickman 1962: 42). In 1850, the Pine Leaf Belt (which was located within Pascagoula’s hinterland) possessed over six million acres of vacant land for occupying and use (Hickman 1962: 68). The amount of effort and material that was produced within the resource region would turn Pascagoula into a major economic port.

Post-War Period

After the Civil War, the industry grew at a slow, but steady pace thanks to the improvements in mechanization, manufacturing, and labor (Hickman 1962: 45). When the post-war economy recovered by 1870, Pascagoula’s eight mills produced up to 35,000,000 board feet on an annual basis (Hickman 1962: 47). During the rest of the decade, lumber was being sent to markets between Texas and Boston. By 1877, the number of mills had grown to 25 that produced up to nearly 60 million board feet thanks to improvements in the gang and circular saw, and the rapid expansion of the railroad industry (Hickman 1962: 48-49).

The lumber industry was brought to its breaking point in the late 1870’s due to two factors. The first factor was the negative repercussions of Reconstruction occurred between 1877 to 1879, and it brought economic and
social devastation in the region, such as food riots. The second factor was a yellow fever epidemic in 1878. The disease put Mississippi’s economic status in jeopardy and resulted in coastal towns relocating their mills into the hinterland (Napier 1985: 80).

After years of uncertainty, a lumber boom reoccurred in southern Mississippi. The lumber boom spanned a 30 year period between 1880 and 1910 (see Table 3). The boom began during the 1880’s when timber became scarce in the Carolinas and Georgia. During the boom, the railroad industry expanded at a massive rate and new areas within the hinterland (which were once impassable) were accessed with a better transportation system (Hickman 1962: 130).

The first decade of the boom also saw more money from investors lead to improvements in technology and storage in Pascagoula. The investments also lead to larger extractions within the hinterland and shifted the focus of railroads, markets, and industry, away from the coast (Hickman 1962: 56, 130). Regardless of events, Pascagoula survived as its river was connected to a number of waterways and possessed better accessibility when it came to transportation.

Table 3

An Estimate of the Amount of Annual Board Feet of Lumber Produced in Pascagoula, Mississippi: 1880-1892

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>BOARD FEET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881-1884</td>
<td>60-67*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 3 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>BOARD FEET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>68-70*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>70-107*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart explains the annual report of lumber that were produced by Pascagoula’s mills during the first years of the lumber boom. Note that the asterisks represent the estimate of missing data in the literature. Also note that a unit in BOARD FEET is represented as a million (Hickman 1962).

*Industry Shift from Coast to Inland*

By the 1890’s, the lumber that went downstream increased thanks to the evolving techniques of timber distribution (such as rafting, mills, and mechanization). During the 1900’s, the pioneer phase of the industry was gone and large-scale lumber production became the norm in the hinterland. The coast became an access point for pine consumers in the Northeast and overseas (Hickman 1962: 153-154). Due to increasing investment and capital, the state of Mississippi became a powerhouse for the national lumber industry and ranked in the top 10 among states in lumber production from 1900 to 1915 (Hickman 1962: 155-156).
The lumber industry peaked around 1910 as fewer mills were being established. The few small mills that were established were located between a railroad link and the remaining stands of pine. The majority of the mills failed due to timber tracts that were considered uneconomical for exploitation. By 1910, the few successful mills in the hinterland were considered large in production and area. Each mill within the hinterland supplied an annual average capacity of 25 million board feet during this decade (Hickman 1962: 156-162) (see Table 4).

### Table 4

*An Estimate of the Amount of Annual Board Feet of Lumber Produced in the State of Mississippi: 1900-1915*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>BOARD FEET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-1904</td>
<td>1,202-1,299*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>1,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>1,840</td>
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<tr>
<td>1907</td>
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<td>1908</td>
<td>1,861</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>2,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>2,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>2,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>2,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>2,611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>2,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>2,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued).

This chart explains the annual report of lumber that was produced by the entire state of Mississippi during the waning years of the lumber boom, and its transition to the First World War. The increase represents the creation of Pascagoula’s hinterland with the access of railroads and other lines of communication. Note that the asterisks represent the estimate for some of the years as the data was missing from the literature. Also note that a unit in BOARD FEET is represented as a million units. (i.e.) 1 = One Million) (Hickman 1962).

Decline of the Timber Industry

While the annual production of lumber increased, the lumber industry in Pascagoula started its decline during the 1900’s due to several reasons. The first factor was a major hurricane in September of 1906. The hurricane blew down a good amount of timber in the pine belt and it was lost to infestation by either worms or weather (Hickman 1962: 171). The second factor was a decline in capital and resources needed for large scale lumber manufacturing. Due to these factors, a majority of the mills (such as Dantzler) relocated to other large timber areas in Florida and Latin America by the mid-1910’s (Hickman 1962: 172-173).

The rise of Gulfport coincided with the fall of Pascagoula as a lumber powerhouse along the coast during this time period. The fall began as a new link, the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad (a railroad link which connected Hattiesburg and Gulfport) was completed by the late 1900’s. The completion of the railroad caused the lumber industry to shift its focus away from Pascagoula to Gulfport and gave Gulfport an economic and locational advantage during the process (Hickman 1962: 186, 213). By 1913, the young town of Gulfport joined Pensacola, Mobile, and New Orleans by becoming one of the largest lumber exporting ports in the world. Pascagoula tried to keep up by deepening the harbor
in 1907, but was unsuccessful in saving its role as a major exporter (Hickman 1962: 185-187, 192).

Pascagoula’s role as a major exporter of lumber became weaker in 1910 as the supply became scarcer. With a declining product, exporting became less common and mills deeper into the pine belt were outpacing the coast. When the First World War began in 1914, the demand for lumber dissipated worldwide. The records show that Pascagoula exported 62,000,000 board feet in 1914 and fell to 49,000,000 board feet in 1915 (Hickman 1962: 167, 174, 193-195). As a result, Pascagoula (along with the coastal settlements) shifted its focus from lumber to mass-shipbuilding.

Ultimately, the lumber boom had resulted in massive deforestation within the hinterland. Deforestation was first mentioned in a report in 1908 that stated that half of the longleaf in Mississippi vanished due to the timber and ship building boom. As a response, conservation movements and a national forest were established in order to protect remaining stands of pines, replace lost tracts, and prevent the massive industry from reviving. Bitter towards the new movement, the lumber industry sold their land to northern investors during the first half of 1910’s, which ended any possibility of reviving the industry (Hickman 1962: 261-265).

*Naval Store Industry*

The naval store industry is one of the oldest industries spanning across the South, and was another important economic resource in Pascagoula and its hinterland. The naval stores were founded for the sole purpose of using
substances, such as turpentine and rosin, to repair damage on ships (Hickman 1962: 121). The first small-scale naval stores were established along the Mississippi Gulf Coast in the 1850’s and they would transport the material by using roads that would connect to nearby waterways (Hickman 1962: 128-129).

The two major products of turpentine and rosin made the industry a vital success in the hinterland. The industry is considered to be a classic industry due to its unchanged growth from 1834 to 1915. Cutting lumber from a large tree would produce as much as four boxes of gum that would be hauled off and processed (Hickman 1962: 121-122). Most of the area’s rosin and turpentine was produced between early spring and late fall. A selected area of pine trees would produce up to four or five years of sap production. When the tree ran out of sap, it became useless to the worker (Hickman 1962: 123-125).

The containers of sap would then be stored and sent to distillery operations. The operations (which were first established along the coast in the 1840’s) were usually located near transportation lines (Hickman 1962: 126-127). Turpentine could be easily siphoned from a tank, and rosin was driven from a vat and placed into barrels. Due to the low wages and number of workers, the competition was high between competing naval stores operations during the turn of the century, and Pascagoula’s role as a major port would decrease as a result (Hickman 1962: 123-128, 138-141).

In the 1840’s, Pascagoula’s hinterland produced an average of over 2,200 barrels a year. As the industry expanded, organized labor and more effective administration were established in order to deal with the demand of the product.
By the 1850’s, the economy expanded thanks to navigable waterways (Hickman 1962: 127-128). After the Civil War, the industry expanded at a slower pace due to a limited supply of capital, labor, and transportation. During the 1870’s, more distilleries were established with the help of the railroads. The busy Pascagoula River exported nearly 50,000 barrels of resin and 15,000 gallons of turpentine (Hickman 1962: 129-130).

Most of the expansion of the industry occurred between the hinterland and the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Railroad during the late 19th century. The towns within the hinterland (such as Lucedale) produced nearly 40,000 barrels of rosin and over 236,000 barrels of turpentine at its peak in 1895 (Hickman 1962: 130). By the 1890’s, the establishment of inland railroad lines (such as the New Orleans and Northeastern Railroad) resulted in the boom of the naval store industry in Mississippi. The significance of the boom showed that a typical distillery could be found on every five miles of an average rail line (Hickman 1962: 131).

Unique Economies: Seafood and Railroads

Seafood Background

Pascagoula’s economy not only benefited from the land, but from the sea as well. Due to its location along the Gulf of Mexico, Pascagoula had access to a massive fishing area. The area housed a variety of seafood from red snapper to oysters. Its location made Pascagoula’s seafood available for local consumption all year round (Ziegler 1966: 100-101). The seafood industry along the Mississippi coast took off during the 1870’s thanks to investments in better
canning and technology and eventually made its way into Pascagoula (Scholtes 1971: 51).

*Seafood Economy*

Canning, and other forms of preservation, led to selling the product across greater distances. The earlier methods of canning were considered a problem as the product turned black. Eventually, cotton bags were placed inside the can in order to avoid spoilage, and improve its storage life. The product would then be shipped to ports, such as New Orleans (Higginbottom 1967: 56; Scholtes 1971: 51). With these improvements, more canneries and companies were established in the area due to the massive demand of the delicacy. During its’ peak in the 1890’s, nearly 300 barrels of fish, 2,000 pounds of crabmeat, and 5,000 pounds of shrimp were shipped every week (Ziegler 1966: 102).

The canneries in Pascagoula were gaining income due to its large quantity of product and the abundance of cheap labor. By the 1890’s, Pascagoula began feeling a labor shortage as the industry grew. Fortunately, European immigration from Baltimore came in to fill the void. The massive employment rush lead to overfishing in the region, and regulations were implemented upon the shrimp and oyster industry (Scholtes 1971: 51, 54-55). The mark of the seafood industry upon Pascagoula could not only be seen by the growing revenue, but also by the building of seafood warehouses along the dock front, ice houses, and docks busy with boats and repairs (see Figure 14).
Figure 14. A Dock along the Mississippi Sound in Pascagoula, Mississippi. The dock along the Mississippi coast is where the seafood would have been distributed for trade in Pascagoula (Kalina 2013).

Railroads

As mentioned, during the last half of the 19th Century, Pascagoula benefited from the railroad. The original railroads in the Antebellum Period followed the path of two trunk lines within the interior. The railroad lines, which were located between New Orleans and Mobile, were competing for potential commerce (Hickman 1962: 212). The railroads also expanded the lumber industry from the coast into the interior. The expansion led to an increase of lumbering in the hinterland’s mills by the 1870’s (Hickman 1962: 58-59).

Railroads Expansion

After the war ended, railroads and bridges were built across the bay. By 1870, the first railroad began its service along the Mississippi coast and its admission cost was about half of steamboats. The railroad also brought in a new era along the coast as industries (such as the foodstuffs industry) expanded during the 1870’s and 1880’s (Sullivan 2009: 27-28). Towards the end of the decade, the
Gulf and Ship Island Railroad connected Hattiesburg and the coast. This railroad penetrated the pine hinterland and established new towns (such as Perkinston and Wiggins) and helped make even bigger the coastal town of Gulfport (Sullivan 2009: 36) (see Figure 15).

Due to the railroad, the inland settlements gained more of an economic advantage than the antebellum settlements near waterways. The inland railroad industry boomed in 1879 when Mississippi laid down twice as much railroad as before. By the 1880’s, the railroad industry expanded across the state and the steamboat industry suffered as a result due to the shift in focus on transportation (Napier 1985: 74).

*Figure 15. Gulf and Ship Island Railroad. This is a map that represents the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad. The railroad served as a connection to major settlements such as Hattiesburg and Gulfport. The link also represented the end of Pascagoula’s as a dominant port along the sound by the beginning of the 20th Century (Hamilton 1903).*
Notable Railroads

Some of the railroads within the hinterland had the advantage of going through massive stands of long leaf pine. One of the railroads, the New Orleans and Northeastern Railroad (a railroad which connected the cities of Meridian and New Orleans) contributed to an annual production of nearly 300,000,000 board feet at its peak in 1901 (Hickman 1962: 157-158). Another railroad, the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Railroad (which connected Mobile, Alabama and St. Louis, Missouri), carried about 1,500,000,000 board feet for domestic and export use during its peak in 1903 (Hickman 1962: 158).

The entrepôt of Pascagoula had two railroads within its city limits, the Louisville Nashville Railroad, and the Mississippi Export Railroad (Ziegler 1966: 2). The Louisville Nashville Railroad was established in 1870 and is part of an extension of a railroad between New Orleans and Mobile. With an established railroad, Pascagoula had a connection between both major ports and the entire Mississippi coast. The railroad also made Pascagoula a major access point as its port connected with the massive pine region (Higginbottom 1967: 54). The railroad also established operations (such as mills and creosote plants) in order to produce and distribute naval store products across the hinterland (see Figure 16).

To meet the ongoing demand for railroad traffic, the Moss Point, Scranton, East Pascagoula Railroad Company was established in 1884. Eventually the company implemented the Moss Point Northern Railroad (a short line railroad which connected Pascagoula and Moss Point) by the turn of
the century. In 1921, the railroad was renamed the Mississippi Export Railroad and it could fit up to three locomotives at one time. Although it was short in distance, the service of the railway was reported to be excellent by witnesses, and also served as a connection to inland settlements (such as Lucedale) (Ziegler 1966: 72) (see Figure 17).

*Figure 16. Other Railroads in Southern Mississippi Hinterland. Railroads, such as the Mobile and Ohio, New Orleans and Northeastern (NO & NE between Meridian and Hattiesburg) and Louisville and Nashville (L & N along the Coast) establish the settlements within the Southern Mississippi Hinterland (Hawkins 1948).*
Pascagoula’s location on the coast makes it prone to hurricane activity. Between 1830 and 1930, the town was impacted by seven major hurricanes. The damage from the storms would not only affect the town’s economic base, it would also destroy any longevity to historic Gulf Coast cottages and other types of picturesque antebellum housing. With the many reports of widespread damage, hurricanes can be considered as a contributing factor in changing the culture of Pascagoula.

Notable Hurricanes

After a calm period in the 1820’s, the Great Barbados Hurricane of 1831 (a storm that killed thousands of people in the Caribbean) was the first major storm to strike Pascagoula during the early part of its prosperous period. The storm lasted for three days and its surge damaged nearly all the settlements along the Mississippi Sound. Pascagoula’s only wharf was one of the many casualties that was destroyed by the disaster. Following this storm, no other major hurricane hit the town for the next two decades (Sullivan 2009: 12).
The storm free period resulted in further development along the Mississippi Sound. Every home and business located along the coast had their own pier in order to attract a gain in business and luxury. The period of calm and growth ended in August 1852 when the Great Mobile Hurricane affected Pascagoula. The damage from the storm included the destruction of the entire system of piers, resident houses, trees, and small boats (Sullivan 2009: 14-17). While most of the towns along the Mississippi coast received some damage, Pascagoula bore the brunt of it (three years later, however, a hurricane spared Pascagoula, and brought its wrath on the rest of the Gulf Coast) (Sullivan 2009: 17).

In September of 1860, the entire Mississippi coast was devastated by another strong hurricane. During this storm, the water rose seven feet in Pascagoula within a period of twenty minutes. Similar to the event in 1852, the remaining and newly constructed resident houses were torn apart or the roofs had been blown off and the pier system was again destroyed. The beach was reported to be in a “mass of ruins”. One resident called the massive disaster God’s wrath against drinking and gambling (Sullivan 2009: 22-24).

The October Storm of 1893 was notorious for its mass flooding along the coast. The storm began with two direct lightning strikes and wind speeds increasing to over 100 miles per hour. Upon impact, the lighthouses, the four churches in town, wharves, bathhouses, boats, and the entire railroad line were completely destroyed (Sullivan 2009: 28-32). The storm was so powerful that nearly 50 to 200 feet of the coast was washed away. The hurricane also knocked
down telegraph poles, which hampered the potential rescue efforts. As a result, nearly 100 people died along the Mississippi coast due to the lack of warning from the Weather Bureau (Sullivan 2009: 32-34).

The disaster in 1893 resulted in the outcry for better building codes. There was also an effort to establish a proper planning system, rescue efforts, and post-disaster aid in order to prevent the same devastation from happening again. Unfortunately the storm of 1893 was a reminder that the entire coast would be at the mercy of hurricane impacts regardless of preparation. Fortunately within a year of the disaster, reconstruction was well underway along the coast, and the region continued its massive economic industry (Sullivan 2009: 36).

Eight years later in 1901, another hurricane struck Pascagoula. Although the winds were reported at 90 miles per hour upon impact, the storm managed to destroy the bathhouses and wharves along the coast. The railroad system was washed out and naval stores and lumber industries within the hinterland were damaged in the storm (Sullivan 2009: 39-41). The 1901 hurricane was considered significant, but the hurricane in September of 1906 was devastating to the entire lumber industry. The storm damaged the pine sap industry. All of the lumber mills in Moss Point reported massive damage (Napier 1985: 81; Sullivan 2009: 41-44).

In order to prevent massive damage along the coast, a seawall was recommended to be built along the Mississippi coast to prevent the continuation of storm surge impacts. The idea was modeled after Galveston’s infamous storm in 1900. It wasn’t until The July Storm in 1916, in which this storm produced
about 30 inches of rainfall that ravaged the coast’s turpentine industry and railway system (Napier 1985: 81; Sullivan 2009: 57-60). During the next twelve years a seawall was erected along the entire Mississippi sound in order to avoid constant rebuilding following storm surges. By 1928, after nearly two and a half decades of planning and building, a seawall was completed in Pascagoula. The seawall was a demarcation that would end an era of consistent damage from storm impacts (Sullivan 2009: 61).

A Settlement Overview

Like many other successful ports along the nineteenth century Gulf coast, Pascagoula was situated at the mouth of a deep water river system and was protected from the Gulf by a series of barrier islands. The Pascagoula River system provided ease of access into the Long Leaf Pine Belt. Eventually, this area became the transportation focus for the evolution of a resource and economic hinterland for Pascagoula. Steamboats and sailing ships called upon the town regularly. Coastal transportation kept the town connected to other ports along the Gulf Coast and to trade from the eastern U.S. coast and the Caribbean.

The town’s early importance in the late 19th century placed Pascagoula as one of the most important timber exporting ports in the United States and one of the most important towns on the Mississippi coast. Eventually roads and railroads replaced ships and competition from Mobile and Gulfport pulled at the importance of Pascagoula. With time, Pascagoula shifted its economic focus towards seafood processing, shipbuilding, and tourism. The town’s site and
situation are clearly at play – geographically – in driving Pascagoula’s settlement history.

Furthermore, the recurrence of hurricanes eventually led to building a town and seawall that could withstand most storms. However, major storms have destroyed much of Pascagoula’s early settlement footprint. Homes dating beyond 1965 (Hurricane Camille) are few in number and the port had to be rebuilt several times between 1830 and 1930. Despite being hit by hurricanes in the late 19th century, Pascagoula survived while Indianola succumbed.

As we will see, Apalachicola shares a similar geographic advantage of site and situation – being at the mouth of a deep river system and protected by barrier islands. It too has seen boom and bust times of economic change and the evolution of an economic hinterland placing it as a major port in the eastern North Gulf Coast. Yet it shares a different place in today’s coastal economy than that of Pascagoula. In fact Apalachicola anchors Florida’s Forgotten Coast and in some ways is a backwater to the high volume tourism, crowded sandy beaches of Florida’s Emerald Coast western panhandle.
CHAPTER V
A SETTLEMENT GEOGRAPHY OF APALACHICOLA, FLORIDA

Introduction

Apalachicola is also situated at the mouth of a navigable river (Apalachicola River), it too has a fore bay and is protected from the Gulf by a series of barrier islands. Its geographic site made it an ideal choice for early European settlers focused on establishing a settlement with economic ties around the Gulf Coast. Apalachicola became a town dependent on water traffic, cotton bales, and a local seafood industry. Eventually, the town became isolated due to its procrastination on building a railway link. This chapter discusses the history of Apalachicola, and how its isolation gives the coastal settlement a unique flair for its period of history, and unlike Indianola and Pascagoula manages to survive economically from minimal hurricane activity.

History

Origins

Apalachicola was founded as part of the Forbes Purchase in the 1800’s (Currenton 2013). The town was established more inland in an area infested with insects that carried malaria. Due to its unhealthy site, the town was forced to be relocated at the mouth of the Apalachicola River where sea breezes could reduce the impact of insect pests. The rapid improvement of the settlement occurred during the 1820’s as a customs district was established (Rogers 1986: 3-4). Originally, Apalachicola was known as West Point until the name “Apalachicola” was substituted in its incorporation in 1829. The town eventually
focused upon the high ground west and north from the river mouth (Rogers 1986: 4-5).

The town is modeled after the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania which included a grid town street pattern, a wharf and warehouse district, and a number of market squares. With a Spanish land grant, the Apalachicola Land Company was established in order to incorporate a model for the settlement. The company, which consisted of northern businessmen settled on including a commercial waterfront and warehouses that were typically three story brick buildings. Thus Apalachicola was initially founded and occupied by northerners and foreign immigrants (Daly 2013; Grove 2013) (see Figure 18).

Figure 18. Map of Apalachicola, Florida. This map gives details on the street pattern of Apalachicola, and how it is formed directly from the river and its bay. Although small in size, the town was a major contributor in heading one of the South’s largest cotton empires (Kalina 2014).
The settlement of Apalachicola grew from two notable events. The first being the implementation of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. This event resulted in the removal of Native American populations (such as the Apalachees and Seminoles) from the Florida Territory (Grove 2013, Rogers 1986: 7). The second event, the establishment of the Apalachicola Land Company, led to the availability of lot sales for the public. By the mid-19th Century, the town grew to over 1,000 residents bolstered by the immigration of Europeans (such as the English and Irish) and the relocation of northerners from the mid-Atlantic east coast (who came for luxury living during the colder months of the year) (Rogers 1986: 17).

Apalachicola began to gain its early identity as a result of investments from affluent northern businessmen who saw the town as a warm climate destination for wealthy northerners. Apalachicola grew in population, and quickly became one of the largest towns in coastal Florida (Grove 2013).

While Apalachicola built itself as a major coastal settlement, the nearby town of St. Joseph made strides to surpass Apalachicola for economic and locational advantages. St. Joseph lobbied for being a terminal point for a potential railroad. During the process, the town’s officials tried to undermine the importance of Apalachicola. As history of the Gulf Coast has shown, unfortunately, St. Joseph was devastated by a hurricane which was followed by a yellow fever epidemic. The neighboring competition was gone and Apalachicola acted alone for potential growth (Bass 2008: 114-115; Rogers 1986: 12-13). Today, St. Joseph exists as a small, yet as a busy timber port and service center
as Port St. Joe. Although not as popular a destination as Apalachicola, St. Joe and Apalachicola still demonstrate the rivalry.

*Cotton and Antebellum Period*

Cotton was in high demand during Apalachicola’s early decades. The fiber was addictive for many foreign markets, and was considered extremely valuable for the production of fabric. Apalachicola initially developed into a cotton port due to Georgia and Alabama cotton farming and strategically being located along the mouth of the Apalachicola River system (which was the Southeast’s longest river system) (Willoughby 1993: 11-12). By the 1830’s, more than 50,000 bales were being exported annually, and the increase of river traffic from steamboats resulted in the establishment of warehouses. The average warehouse in town was 30 feet wide, and three stories tall (Willoughby 1993: 12). The best months for cotton production were in the winter, as the season had a lower humidity, a diminished mosquito population, and rivers were higher which meant easier transportation. By 1840, nearly 55,000 bales of cotton were exported from Apalachicola, and increased to over 140,000 bales ten years later (Willoughby 1993: 13-14) (see Table 5). Most of the cotton that was produced in the hinterland was exported to England, New York, and Boston in order to be processed for their growing textile industry (Currenton 2013).

The role of cotton continued to influence the hinterland into the 1850’s. By then, over 150,000 bales of cotton made its way into Apalachicola for export. Due to its price, it became a highly profitable crop and was Apalachicola’s leading export during the antebellum period (Grove 2013; Ware 1990). Cotton
was involved in a rigorous system filled with merchants, planters, and bankers known as Cotton Men. The Cotton Men were seen as the area’s labor, transportation, and overall industry leaders for the region’s most prized crop (Willoughby 1993: 100-115). Unfortunately, Apalachicola’s economy slowed when inland cities in the South (such as Montgomery) gained a railroad link during the 1850’s (Willoughby 1993: 127, 131-133). Ultimately, poor harvesting and the expansion of the railroad industry lead to the downfall of Apalachicola’s cotton industry. Galveston, Texas would replace Apalachicola as the third largest cotton port by the end of the 1850’s (Grove 2013; Ware 1990) (see Table 5).

Table 5

_Bales of Cotton exported from Apalachicola, Florida in the Antebellum Era: 1840-1861_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>BALES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>52,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>61,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>86,850</td>
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<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>125,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>105,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>151,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>110,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>109,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>119,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>143,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>130,250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>BALES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>135,150</td>
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<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>139,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>139,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>83,800-139,600*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>83,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>96,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>80,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>62,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>108,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>133,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>&gt;133,000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart shows the number of bales exported from the port town during Apalachicola’s cotton period. Note that the asterisks represents the estimate for some of the years as the data was missing from the literature. Also note that a unit in BALES is represented as one unit. (i.e.) 1 = 1) (Willoughby 1993).

Civil War and Reconstruction

Similar to its coastal counterparts, Apalachicola was impacted by the Civil War. When fighting broke out in 1861, Florida joined with other southern states to secede from the United States. During wartime, Apalachicola worried about the risks of seeing their town destroyed by fire, or losing its economic grip on the southern cotton trade. The residents of Apalachicola were poorly armed to fend off Union soldiers. Apalachicola’s businessmen sought military support by writing letters to the Confederate Secretary of War noting they were unarmed and
unable to defend themselves. The governor of Florida, John Milton, was also concerned about the town’s poor defenses and worried about Union forces occupying Apalachicola (along with other coastal towns) which was seen as an important defense site for the Confederacy (Daly, et al. 2011: 3, 6, Grove 2013).

During the first year of war, the Union forces enforced a blockade at the port. Immediately this constrained the town’s economic activities. A year later in August of 1862 the town was invaded by Union forces. In response, Governor Milton sent troops to defend the town. However it wasn’t enough and by the end of 1862, the fort near Apalachicola was abandoned and the blockade remained. Although the town was cut off economically it continued to supply the Confederate troops with rations and supplies (such as meat, pans, and blankets) (Daly, et al. 2011: 4-5).

After the war ended, the cotton empire of the South was ruined and never returned to its pre-war levels. The regional establishment of railroads in northern Florida made Apalachicola’s opportunity for potential growth a lot harder during this period. Railroads diminished the need for a coastal fleet of trade vessels and in many cases continued the process of shutting down smaller port towns. Faced with these setbacks, Apalachicola turned to the abundance of the Gulf fishery. The seafood industry required a local population which was made possible by post-war European immigration. Europeans considered the town’s comfortable climate to be Mediterranean-like and attractive (Grove 2013). The post-war economic activities gave Apalachicola its modern day identity.
Apalachicola was not only known for its seafood industry, but also for its lumber industry. The early stages of the lumber industry (which was established at the end of the war) were seen as unsuccessful due to a lack of supply. The Apalachicola River watershed reached into the eastern extent of the Gulf South pine belt and also into wetlands rich in cypress and oak. The lumber industry planted its roots and began to expand between the years 1880 and 1917. The sudden timber boom would supply lumber for international export and for the northern U.S. market (Daly 2013).

**Prosperous Period**

The income that was made in seafood and lumbering contributed to be an economic boom between 1880 and 1930. Houses of affluence (such as the Key House) were built from quality lumber (such as heart pine and black cypress). Some of the hotels and inns (such as the Coombs House Inn) were built out of exotic lumber from overseas (Daly, et al. 2011: 1-3). Regardless of the lumber, the fixtures that represented the essence of southern charm, also represented a time of prominence for the history of Apalachicola (see Figures 19 and 20).
Figures 19 and 20. Key House and Coombs House. Key House (above) and Coombs House (below) represented the historic fixtures of Pascagoula during its prosperous period, and also represented the culture of luxury and promoted tourism (Daly 2009-2013).

The town invested in paved streets and public utilities in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} Century. With the expansion of pavement, automobiles were being introduced into the area at the turn of the century. The streets (which were made of white sand in the 1850’s) were replaced by pavement between October 1926 and January 1928. A bridge across the mouth of the Apalachicola River was also built.
in the 1920’s, and was open for traffic by the early 1930’s (Daly, et al. 2011: 3-8). The establishment of roads that would connect to larger towns (such as Pensacola to Tallahassee) resulted in a new (yet isolated) era for Apalachicola.

Apalachicola and the Role of Regional Transportation

Background

Long before pavement was introduced to Apalachicola, the town was noted as a stagecoach destination (which connected Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Columbus, Georgia). By the 1820’s the route connected Columbus to the Apalachicola River, and the trip to Apalachicola could be completed with a boat trip down the river (Grove 2013). Apalachicola’s river-mouth location made it an ideal location for early nineteenth century steamers to connect the area’s stage routes, and thus link the area with major cities such as Pensacola, Mobile, and New Orleans.

Steamboats

_Fannie_ was the first steamboat to arrive in Columbus, Georgia in 1828. The influence of _Fannie_ would lead to more steamboats along the Apalachicola River valley during the next three decades. The first steamboat arrived in Apalachicola a year later in 1829, and would make its way up the Apalachicola River to Columbus (Bass 2008: 1, 79). Columbus became the head of navigation with numerous towns supported along the way. The Civil War brought a brief halt to the river steamboat business, but it resumed at a smaller scale after the war (Bass 2008: 10). During the most prominent era of activity, the Apalachicola River became one of the most traveled rivers in the state of Florida and
contributed to the progressive cotton boom within the region (Willoughby 1993: 19).

Originally, cotton was carried by flatboats during the 1820’s. Steamboats made it possible to move products more easily up and down the river. A typical early steamboat in Florida carried up to 700 bales of cotton (over twice the load that the best flatboat was capable of carrying) and moved across 285 miles of waterway from Apalachicola to Columbus (Bass 2008: 9, 107-108). It also assisted in dredging at the bottom of the river in order to improve navigation routes, while carrying nearly 500 bales of cotton. Eventually steamboats would carry up to 2,000 bales (Bass 2008: 115-119) (see Figure 21).

*Figure 21. A Model of S.S. Crescent City. Steamboats, such as the S.S. Crescent City, were used to carry material (such as mail and cotton) for trade or travel (Kalina 2013).*

*Cotton and Steamboats*

In 1845, over 150,000 bales of cotton were carried by eight boats that regularly ran the Columbus to Apalachicola route. By the 1850’s, improvements in technology made steamboats draw less water while carrying more bales (Bass 2008: 117). Eventually, a railroad link was established between the cities of
Columbus and Savannah in 1853. The railroad link impacted Apalachicola’s economy because the trip between the two cities could be made in 13 hours (a trip faster than steamboats between Columbus and Apalachicola were capable of at the time) (Bass 2008: 118-119). Building a railroad to Apalachicola, however, was out of the question as deepening the bay mouth channel was the town’s main priority (Rogers 1986: 101-102).

The 1860 the Union blockade of Apalachicola Bay clearly impacted the town’s economy. After the war ended in 1865, Columbus was taken over by Union forces and destroyed. When Columbus rebuilt and with the blockade ceased, Apalachicola’s steamboat industry rebounded (Bass 2008: 120-122). By 1867, Apalachicola (with a population of 2,500) saw over 114,000 cotton bales leaving the port. When Savannah suffered a yellow fever epidemic during the late 1870’s, Columbus bounced back and began exporting cotton at a massive rate (Bass 2008: 123, 126). The combination of Columbus’ economic rebound, and of Savannah’s outbreak resulted in a massive increase of steamboat traffic on the waterways.

*Decline of River Steamboats*

By the 1880’s, the cotton industry was in rapid decline and river steamers were carrying less cotton and more commercial products (such as oysters, ice, and timber). The railroad was also considered safer than using the river as some boats had a history of sinking due to snags and fire (Bass 2008: 127). Although the river was continually dredged and steamboats improved in technology, the
beginning of the 20th Century saw the end of the steamboat era, as automobiles became the main mode of transportation in the South (Bass 2008: 128-130).

Coastal Traffic

Most of Apalachicola’s coastal traffic consisted of fleets of steamers and schooners. Apalachicola was part of a coastal network of regularly scheduled passenger and cargo vessels sailing from Pensacola and New Orleans during the late 1840’s and eventually to Apalachicola. Apalachicola has a shallow bay that required larger ships to load and unload their products in the bay. This was seen as a problem as larger vessels could not reach the docks (Daly 2013; Grove 2013).

Some of the towns near Apalachicola (such as Eastpoint) also benefited from the coastal traffic. Before the current bay bridge was completed in the 1930’s, the only way to get between Apalachicola and the coastal communities was by ferry. Nearby St. Joe’s poultry and egg business created a larger agricultural base for Apalachicola which was serviced by smaller coastal boats. Carabelle (a post-Civil War community) developed due to timber marketing and steamboat connections with Apalachicola (Daly 2013). Coastal traffic would expand the hinterland from the waterways out towards the Gulf of Mexico.

Railroads

By the 1880’s, the majority of northern Florida was connected and accessed by rail. The rail boom attempted to make its way into Apalachicola, yet the town assured its procrastination and economic disadvantage by focusing on
deepening the shallow bay (Daly 2013). In 1907 Apalachicola established its first railroad connection. The link connected Apalachicola with the capital city of Tallahassee and resulted in diversifying economic opportunities. Tourism was now part of the economy as visitors could come from Tallahassee by train and spend the day in Apalachicola (Daly 2013).

Sadly, St. Joe’s Company (a timber and land company who owned the railway) had little use and investment for the new rail. As a result, the bay continued to influence the town, yet due to its shallow depth, Apalachicola was only viable for its hit-and-miss seafood industry and its limited amount of tourism (Daly 2013). Due to its focus on waterway and coastal traffic, Apalachicola procrastinated on establishing a vital railroad link for further potential development (see Figure 22). With limited transportation routes, Apalachicola is considered to be part of the isolated “forgotten coast” (Daly 2013).
Figure 22. Railway Map of the Southern States in 1865 and a Closeup of Apalachicola. The map represents the state of Apalachicola after the Civil War period. Without a viable railway, the settlement was isolated from the expansion of the railroad industry (Unknown 1865).

Hinterland

Apalachicola grew due to its geographical advantages of being situated at the mouth of the Apalachicola River. The town was also located behind a barrier bay as well as having a transportation artery that reached into prosperous cotton and timber lands to the north. The Apalachicola River system connects with the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers, which feed into eastern Alabama and central Georgia (Grove 2013). Apalachicola quickly developed and benefitted from a hinterland focused upon this system of rivers and the coast. It also includes
numerous small towns along the waterways between Columbus and Apalachicola.

The hinterland was established by a down river trade system using steamboats to connect farmers and producers with Apalachicola; imported products could be moved upriver and into the interior; and coastal ship trade made possible a wider national and international market for the settlement. While products and trade were boom and bust for Apalachicola, the one steady deterrent to growth had always been the annual summer exodus of northerners that led to seasonal closings of businesses. As a result, the town’s temporary warm weather desertion led to seasonal labor shortages and decreasing economic opportunities (Rogers 1986: 39-42).

The growth of the hinterland was anchored by the cotton boom of the 1830’s. The boom swelled due to cheap land costs and rising cotton prices. Apalachicola became the cotton port of the eastern Gulf Coast, and Albany, Eufaula, and Marianna were notable inland settlements in the region. Steamboat traffic was the main form of transportation for the hinterland. By 1850, the area had perhaps as many as 185,000 residents (Ware 1990: 215-221) (see Figure 23).
Unique Economies

Seafood Background

Apalachicola’s economy survived on steamboats, cotton, and luxury tourism. However, it was seafood that gave Apalachicola its identity. Unfortunately, due to a lack of preservation methods, Apalachicola was forced to localize their seafood market exclusively on the coast (Rogers 1986: 43). The town’s economy flourished due to the local fishing and oyster industry. The
industry was massive and prospered through the blockade of the Civil War due to its importance (Rogers 1986: 69-70).

**Oysters**

The mixing of saline and freshwater in the shallows of Apalachicola Bay provides a perfect habitat for oyster bed growth. Other fisheries also benefited from the abundance of freshwater inlets and open gulf waters, but it was oysters that put the town on the seafood map. The local oyster industry was modeled off of the Northeast’s model (Rogers 1986: 116-119). Commercial beds were established and tonging from flatboats was the means of harvest. Over extraction, disease, water temperature and seasonal changes in salinity due to spring floods descending the Apalachicola River were always a problem. Overfishing resulted in regulation, but also resulted in more investment in the local industry (Rogers 1986: 117-119, 126).

The marketing of seafood (especially oysters) in Apalachicola began as early as 1836. Large scale operations of oysters were put into place by the 1850s. During the antebellum period, oysters were sold in barrels and were usually shipped to Georgia and Alabama. On a bumper day, nearly 20 barrels were shipped via sailing vessel (Daly, et al. 2012: 2; Rogers 1986: 120). Oysters would make a comeback after the Reconstruction period in 1878. The comeback would result in the mass-production of oyster products. The industry would always be susceptible to problems such as over fishing and hurricanes (Daly, et al. 2012: 2).

The profits depended upon the quantity and the quality of the oyster. Eventually, the industry became commercially profitable due to notable investments. By the 1910’s,
nearly 400 men were employed in the industry and Apalachicola would lead the state of Florida in oyster production (Rogers 1986: 121-123). A unique resource for the town of Apalachicola was discarded oyster shells (see Figure 24). Canning companies turned the shells into a natural product for road construction. The use of discarded oyster shells was considered cheaper than gravel, and provided better traction for driving. As a result, the use of the automobile expanded, and thanks to the roads, the number of factories expanded within the town (Doran Jr. 1965: 240; Rogers 1986: 201-202). The history and the many uses of the oyster gives Apalachicola its historical image.

![Figure 24. Oyster Shells in Apalachicola.](image)

*Figure 24. Oyster Shells in Apalachicola. The oyster represents itself as a cultural artifact for the settlement of Apalachicola. Even after it was consumed, the oyster shells were used for either decoration around the town, or pavement for streets (Kalina 2013).*

**Shrimping**  
Shrimp (which was once called fisherman waste) became more available due to deep sea extraction techniques introduced by European immigrants at the turn of the century. By the beginning of the twentieth century, stable marketing and regulation began to expand the seafood market (Rodgers 1986: 127-128). The methods also resulted in the relocation of shrimping industries to other nearby Gulf Coast states (such as Texas and Mississippi) and were even
outsourced to Mexico. Regardless, shrimping was on par with oysters in marketability by the 1910’s (Rogers 1986: 126-128). The shrimp is another reminder that the town’s seafood industry was blessed with the close proximity to deep gulf waters.

*Seafood Preservation*

Eventually, the seafood industry outpaced the cotton and lumber industries. Preserving the product continued to be a major issue. Salting oysters for preservation was ruled out as it affected the quality and taste. Tinning (an early form of canning) would turn the product black. However, thanks to the Roge Brothers in the 1880’s, they became the first people along the coast to successfully can oysters (Daly 2013).

The economic impact of proper canning was great, and seafood would eclipse cotton by the mid-1880s. At the same time, ice plants were built to preserve the product and extend its shelf life. By the 1890’s, the United States Fishery Service was established in response to the expansion of the market on the coast. The charge was to regulate oyster production and shipping (Daly 2013).

Apalachicola would use ice for preserving their seafood products. Most of the seafood would pass through the Apalachicola Ice and Canning Company. The company (which was formed in December of 1885) manufactured ice and canneries for the products along the Florida panhandle (Currenton 2013). Apalachicola’s waterfront was lined with ice houses, and production was estimated to be nearly 100 bushels of oysters distributed within two days work. The finished product is then shipped to the nearby cities in canned form, such as
Columbus and Jacksonville, and in shucked form to further away cities such as Chicago and Louisville (Daly, et al. 2012: 2-6). The preservation methods made it possible for Apalachicola’s economic impact to extend to the Midwest and its resource hinterland would extend out to gulf waters.

Lumber and Apalachicola

Although Apalachicola was more known for seafood, it also had a minor lumber industry. During the 1870s and 1880s, timber extraction expanded across the Florida panhandle. The most desirable woods of cypress, oak, and pine, were seen as durable and efficient for buildings and ships. The residents of North Florida, however, scrutinized the lumber industry, and warned that the area was off limits to interstate commerce. Nevertheless, people in the lumber industry eventually came in thousands, and invested in the area regardless of protest (Grove 2013).

A small, yet growing lumber industry was noted in Apalachicola. Cypress was the most common wood locally available and was primarily used in home construction and windows. The advancements in mill technology and river boat steam engines improved the profit margin for Apalachicola’s timber industry and opened operations to the pine forests. As in the Pascagoula region, the trees were harvested upriver from Apalachicola, they were drained of their sap in order to float down the waterway, and were eventually cut into lumber at mills located near or in Apalachicola (Currenton 2013; Grove 2013). Although lumber became important for Apalachicola, the industry never grew to the importance of that of Pascagoula.
Hurricanes and Fire Activity

_Hurricanes Background_

Although hurricanes threaten Apalachicola on a regular basis, some of the townsfolk believe that a natural meteorological phenomenon drives hurricanes to the west, and away from the town. Apalachicola is situated on relatively high ground and is protected by the barrier islands. Nonetheless, Apalachicola has been spared devastating storm surges and hurricane impacts in the modern era (Grove 2013). However, the early history of Apalachicola (from 1837 to 1856) was embattled by constant, merciful major hurricane activity.

_Notable Hurricanes_

Apalachicola’s first records of a major hurricane dates back to 1837. The storm would destroy the entire town. Following the hurricane, the town was devastated by yellow fever, and would result in a massive population loss (Barnes 1998: 56-57). In October of 1842, another hurricane struck the town and was considered to be more damaging than the first. The businesses and homes within town lost their roofs to the high winds, and the roads were blocked from all directions due to a twenty foot storm surge (Barnes 1998: 58). In August of 1850, Apalachicola was devastated by another storm in which a storm surge flooded the warehouses and streets in the town (Barnes 1998: 63).

Two other major hurricanes struck the region in 1851 and 1852. Both destroyed homes, cotton fields, and timber resources. A few years later, the Gulf Hurricane of 1856 again brought flooding waters to the streets of Apalachicola (Barnes 1998: 63-65). The early years of Apalachicola were brutal in terms of
rebuilding after six major hurricanes struck the settlement in a period of nearly two decades.

After the hurricane period of the 1850’s, Apalachicola experienced a calm period throughout the 1860’s into the early 1870’s. The period of calm ended when the Great Hurricane of 1873 destroyed fifteen three story brick buildings, a number of mills, sunk numerous vessels, and destroyed the Dog Island Lighthouse. A few years later, in 1886, two hurricanes in a period of nine days again flooded the town, destroyed crops in the hinterland, and killed several people in Apalachicola. The last major storm to strike historic Apalachicola occurred in October of 1894 as high winds ravaged the region and destroyed the crops (Barnes 1998: 72-76). Unlike its coastal counterpart Indianola, the town managed to rebuild due to pure will and determination.

*Fire Hazards*

Similar to Pascagoula, major hurricanes have caused the settlement of Apalachicola to rethink its economic outlook. The hurricanes have also altered the town’s image as well. However, unlike Pascagoula, Apalachicola not only dealt with massive storms, they also had to deal with the occurrence of fire hazards. As a result, the fires have destroyed most of the historic waterfront of Apalachicola, and only two buildings remain in the present day.

The town of Apalachicola witnessed several devastating fires between 1830 and 1930. Every widespread fire in the downtown area has led to the loss of Apalachicola’s historical image and charm. For instance, one fire in 1833 destroyed a third of the buildings in town. During the 1840’s, three different fires
destroyed nearly forty buildings in the town. A fire in May of 1857 destroyed a large section of town along with warehouses filled with cotton. The fire of 1857 might have also shifted Apalachicola’s economy from cotton to seafood and lumber (Daly, et al. 2010: 1-2).

During the last half of the 19th Century, Apalachicola witnessed two more fires. While a small one occurred in 1860, another fire in October of 1890 destroyed 850,000 feet of lumber along the waterfront. An even bigger fire occurred in 1900, in which the massive fire (a fire that was considered to be the worst in the history of the town) burned through six blocks in the downtown area, and destroyed 71 buildings. The two blocks that were spared by the 1900 fire, were ultimately destroyed by another fire in 1906 (Daly, et al. 2010: 2-3) Evidently, one of the only two historic brick structures (including one located on Water Street and Avenue E) survived, and are considered to be the remnants of historic Apalachicola (see Figures 25 and 26).

*Figure 25. City of Apalachicola: Center for Historic Culture & Art. This is a historic building in Apalachicola and is considered to be one of the few surviving buildings from the town’s most prosperous period. It is reported to have survived hurricanes and fires (Kalina 2013).*
Figure 26. Building on Water Street and Avenue E in Apalachicola, Florida. This building in Apalachicola is one of the last two surviving buildings that represent the historic period of Apalachicola. A plaque on the building is the description, “Historic Apalachicola City Hall: I Avenue E. Site of one of the two remaining 1838 Cotton Warehouses.” The description is proof that some sort of antebellum, historic charm remains in Apalachicola (Kalina 2013).

A Settlement Overview

Similar to Pascagoula, Apalachicola is a town that went through various highs and lows from its prosperous period between the years 1830 and 1930. The town succeeded due to its geographical location along the bay, and headed a major river into the southeast. Apalachicola thrived as a port town that connected with a major river. The Apalachicola River became home to what was once known for its massive cotton industry. The river boats along the river, and the coastal traffic along the bay contributed to the distribution of materials.

The geographical connection of the river resulted in the distribution of materials, and created a hinterland that would stretch across three states. The similarity of Apalachicola’s Hinterland mirrors that of Indianola and Pascagoula as it had a vital river connection, established vital transportation routes, and its
town was located along an open protected bay. The geographic site and situation of Apalachicola contributed to its success as a settlement.

Apalachicola also shares the aspects in providing great qualities of seafood along the coast, and also benefits from its small tourism industry. The potential, however, is limited by a small coastal highway that goes in and out of town. While hurricanes managed to wipe out Indianola, Texas, settlements (such as Apalachicola) survived due to being protected by barrier islands, and to the will of their inhabitants to rebuild after devastating storms. While the economy has been limited due to the lack of a railroad system, Apalachicola remains optimistic as an isolated fixture as part of Florida’s *Forgotten Coast*, and shares the historical significance of the town that should not be forgotten any time soon.
CHAPTER VI
THE NORTHERN GULF COAST AS A CULTURAL REGION

Introduction

One intent of this thesis has been to describe the northern Gulf Coast as a cultural region based upon settlement and culture history. The view to seeing the evolution of this cultural region is aided by studying the settlement geography of the three settlements. The author’s views come from previous research on the regionalization of the coast and from the insights provided by the three settlements in this study. The author will be using the combined literature of geographers (such as Terry Jordan), anthropologists (such as Jay Edwards), and historians (such as Jessie Beryl Boozer and others) to identify what type of region the northern Gulf Coast was between 1830 and 1840. Finally, the author will apply the factor of folk houses to provide one view to the region’s cultural identity.

Regional Factors

Background

As noted in the literature review, Jordan-Bychkov (1997) wrote that a settlement can be described as a type of region. He writes that certain symbols can shape the region in one way or another (Jordan-Bychkov 1997: 440, 448). With the combined literature of Finch (1934), Holzner (1967), and the history of the three coastal settlements, we begin to see the establishment of a regional identity for the northern Gulf Coast region.
Application of Finch’s Factors

Earlier in Chapter II, Finch (1934) wrote that a region displays its identity by using its cultural traits. He also wrote that the overall structure was based on the factors of form, pattern, association, and description (Finch 1934: 113-116). After studying all three settlements and their hinterlands, we can expand on the structure of the region by applying those four factors.

For form, we see that the entire physical Gulf Coast region, was shaped by open access ports and waterways. The ports were important as they provided interconnected links for international trade from Texas to Florida. The inland waterways were important as they were used as a guide for settlement by people (such as the Germans in Texas and the Piney Woods people of Southern Mississippi).

For pattern, we see that the population of the Gulf Coast region used the waterways (such as the Pascagoula and Apalachicola River) in order to expand their unique industries in the hinterlands during the latter half of the 19th Century. The populations established transportation routes (such as railroads) in order to provide a proper function of carrying materials from point A (inland settlements) to point B (one of the three settlements).

With association, we see that industry along with populations contributed to the deforestation of the Pine Belt region in the inland South. When all of the regional factors are combined, we see the Gulf Coast region as an area that was altered by human and physical activity. Human activity includes Indianola’s revolutionary cattle industry, Pascagoula’s massive lumber industry, and
Apalachicola’s historic cotton industry. All three settlements ventured in different economic activities, yet their established hinterlands created a regional identity in the process. Physical activity, such as hurricanes threatened to wipe out industry along with coastal settlements in the process. In this case, many settlements (such as Pascagoula and Apalachicola) recovered and changed their identity as a result. Other settlements (such as Indianola) fell apart, and became a piece of history for the wrong reasons.

Application of Holzner’s Factors

Holzner (1967) wrote about four other factors that create a region: mutual historical influence, mutual economic relationship, and mutual population relationship, (Holzner 1967: 707-708). The mutual historical influence of the region consisted of entrepôts that were established by European counterparts, and their established hinterlands were shaped by steamship activity. The mutual economic relationship of the region consisted of exporting material (such as canned seafood) to the international market for trade. Finally, the coast shares a mutual population relationship due to the creole characteristics of European descendants and their influence of folk houses.

The Creole Coast

Background

One of the most noted descriptions of the Gulf Coast region is Terry Jordan’s description of the Creole Coast. The Creole Coast consists of a region that stretches from the bend of Texas to the Virginia Coast (see Figure 27). He identified the Creole Coast as a region that celebrated a mixture of Caribbean and
European culture. Eventually, he sees that the region is limited to the coast (mainly the Gulf Coast) due to external cultural processes which occurred during the 19th Century (Jordan-Bychkov 2001).

Figure 27. The Creole Coast. The “Creole Coast” is Jordan-Bychkov’s idea of an agglomeration of cultural delineations that would represent a vernacular region. This region combines a number of aspects, such as similar architecture. Key to symbols: 1 = northern border of Edwin Hammond’s type A-Ia landform (table flat, low) (Hammond 1964); 2 = border of Jay Edward’s “Creole Coast Culture Zone” (Edwards 1989); 3 = “Creole Coast,” as used in this article; 4 = noteworthy, selected historical implantments of Caribbean creole culture, achieved by Cubans, Hispaniolans, Jamaicans, Barbadians, and others. Courtesy of John V. Cotter (Jordan-Bychkov 2001).

Cultural Factors

The warm climate of the Creole Coast has made the region more related to the Caribbean than it is to the continental United States. The region consists of a wide variety of diverse ethnicities (such as the French, Spanish, English, German, and American Indian groups). Due to the interaction and influences from each group, this identified the group of people as creole. Terry Jordan mentions that the Spanish and French settlements (primarily between the
Apalachicola and the Mississippi Rivers) have boasted the most interaction between dominant empirical powers (Jordan-Bychkov 2001).

The interactions also reflected upon the region’s culture, economy, and dialect. The reflections resulted in the creation of a maritime lingua franca. It was considered to be a simple, yet compatible language that was spoken between the various cultures for communication and trade (Jordan-Bychkov 2001). For example, the Mississippi coast, was a region that was influenced by numerous empirical powers during the 18th and 19th centuries. Due to its location within the Creole Coast, there is a great chance that it may have been influenced by the characteristics created from creole culture.

The Creole Coast also acquired many cultural impacts when it came to building houses. For example, the Carolina Tidewater House diffused from the Carolinas into West Florida. Eventually, the house made its way into Apalachicola when the British ruled the area during the late 18th century (Edwards 1994: 183-188). The houses within the Creole Coast were part of a long-term diffusion and adaption process, which lasted nearly two centuries (Jordan-Bychkov 2001).

Regionalization and Folk Houses

Background

The strongest indicator in the possible concept of regions, lies within the concept of folk houses. A geographer named Fred Kniffen wrote that the common, historical characteristics of the folk house, lies in several observable themes. When thinking spatially, a region emerges based on the patterns of each
house type, and it utilizes upon certain features (such as the roof, chimney, porch, and ventilation) (Kniffen 1936, 1965). Some of the built structures in the three settlements were also influential in shaping the town’s cultural identity and its origins traces back to the Caribbean and Europe.

**History of Creole Architecture**

The geometric features of Spanish and Creole architecture dates back to a simple design with a rectangular floorplan that was expanded by a gallery. A gallery is a long room that is found in architecture, and compliments a supported roof (or portico) that acts as a porch for the building. Most of the houses (in this style of architecture) were covered by a flat, hipped, or pitched roof. The original base plan of the folk houses used a three room model. Over a period of time, the house style expanded by adding an extension to the center space of the house, corner rooms, and other essentials (such as a kitchen) (Edwards 1994: 166-169; Oszuscik 1994: 2).

In the 17th and 18th Century, the cottages within the region became more adaptive to the landscape. Some of the features included elevating the house and roof to enhance ventilation in response to the warm climate. The patterns of creole architecture are represented across the entire coast of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida Although the roots of these vernacular structures date back to as early as 1750, finding these type of houses are hard to locate (Edwards 1994: 158, 169). Nearly all of the folk houses along the coast were lost due to decades of hurricane activity. A great example of an existing
piece of creole architecture would be the Krebs Plantation, a Creole Cottage that is located in Pascagoula, Mississippi (see Figure 28).

Figure 28. The Krebs Plantation. The Krebs Plantation (also known as the “Old Spanish Fort” is one of the oldest houses along the Northern Gulf Coast. It is identified as a Creole Cottage, and represents the combination of motifs from various ethnicities (Unknown 2011).

During the 19th Century, the coast was introduced the Greek Revival style for housing. The houses (such as the townhouse) were known for their two story structures, central hall, and consisted of Victorian styles that would represent regality. The coast would also embrace Anglicized houses such as the Georgian cottage (a type of tidewater cottage plan that was incorporated by the British during the 18th century in West Florida). When the Spanish assumed control over West Florida in the early 19th Century, creole characteristics were added to the Anglicized houses (Oszuscik 1994: 18-19, 22-23). With time, the Spanish lost control of the region to the United States in the 1820’s and Americans moved in during the 19th Century. The creolized Georgian Cottage, and other houses were replaced by the Gulf Coast Creole Cottage during the mid-19th century (Oszuscik
Apalachicola and Pascagoula were both points of adoption and diffusion of these house building styles.

However, due to the increasing influence of American styles in the 19th and 20th centuries, the Gulf Coast Creole Cottage and the Creole Coast became dissipated by acculturation, and the adoption of American characteristics. The houses (most notably the cottages) along the Gulf Coast became anglicized and began to lose their distinct identity. Anglicized houses (such as the I-House and the London house) were part of this Cultural Revolution as residents from the Atlantic Coast brought their ideas to the Gulf Coast in order to make a folk housing style unique to their own personal tastes (Oszuscik 1994: 5, 15-17). The alterations resulted in the loss of the Creole Coast’s identity, and it became a far cry from its Caribbean origins.

*The Creole Cottage*

The Creole Cottage (which originated in Louisiana) and the Shotgun House (which originated in the Caribbean) are part of creole architecture. The architecture consists of the Gulf Coast’s culmination of diffusions from the Old World style of architecture, and the creole New World style of architecture. The houses along the Gulf Coast were also influenced by French architects. The vernacular houses were noted for their lack of stairways and hallways, but they were praised regardless of alteration. Creole architecture also held a structural advantage in ventilation as their external galleries were built in the response of the warm, humid climate in the region (Edwards 1994: 157-158, 180). The
structural advantages for the Creole Cottage and other types of creole architecture, would dominate the entire Gulf Coast region.

The Creole Cottage is a tidewater raised cottage that originated from the Caribbean. The house is known for its unique attributes: a pitched roof, porch, an internal gallery, elevated on stilts, and large ventilation. The galleries were first implemented in the early coastal settlements (such as Biloxi) and were applied in a fortification setting. The house is also a likely descendant of the raised courthouses that were found along the coastal plain (Jordan-Bychkov 2001).

Oszuscik (1994) provides great insight into the origins of the Creole Cottage. He wrote how the French creole cottage, was once found in a rural setting had become popular for its internal galleries. The galleries were also found in an urban setting with many differences in its plan. After numerous modifications, the cottage began to fit the urban lifestyle, and went out of its way to assimilate towards the influence of Anglo-American traits during the 19th Century (Oszuscik 1994: 1-5).

During the 19th Century, the houses along the coast became a far cry from their origins in Haiti. Houses in the larger cities along the coast (such as Mobile) represented the creolization of the coast by phasing out most of its internal galleries. While the houses were smaller than their rural counterparts, they were lauded for protecting the population from the elements (Oszuscik 1994: 5-6, 11).

The Creole Cottage also shared a relationship with the London house during the 19th Century. Originally, the London House was detested as it failed to regulate the humid temperatures (especially in West Florida). Eventually, the
London house, the I-House, and other alterations of folks houses, began to 
*anglicize* the Creole Cottage. By the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century, house plans such as Greek 
revival and the common townhouse became urban fixtures to the region. These 
types of houses showed signs of wealth and local success in economic ventures 
(Oszuscik 1994: 15-19).

The coast also embraced the Georgian cottage. The cottage was a folk 
house that was introduced by the British in West Florida during the mid-18\textsuperscript{th} 
century (Oszuscik 1994: 22-23). When the Spanish reclaimed the region, creole 
characteristics were added to the houses. Eventually, the creolized Georgian 
Cottage became popularized by the early 1800’s as Americans began to settle 
into the area. This became the Gulf Coast Creole Cottage, a denser cottage with 
few, yet deeper galleries, and consisted of a pitched umbrella roof (Oszuscik 
1994: 23-25, 28). The adjustments to climate and culture characteristics shows 
that the creole cottage diffused across the Creole Coast region over a period of 
two decades.

*Application to Settlements*

The towns of Pascagoula and Apalachicola share distinct characteristics in 
their vernacular types of folk houses (Indianola is no longer in existence, yet can 
still apply the historical context of certain house types that once thrived in the 
area). Most of the houses date back to the early twentieth century, and they share 
the common use of the front porch. Some of the houses were raised off the 
ground to avoid coastal flooding. The houses also possessed Georgian
woodwork, a common reflection in Caribbean culture, and a steep roof that was used to fend off heavy rain (Noble, et al. 1992: 145, 149-150, 155).

Eventually, smaller cottages and German log cabins evolved into the common functional creole cottage (see Figure 29). Generations upon generations brought perceptible changes to the folk houses, but despite the impact of trends, the functional roots of the Caribbean and Carolina coasts remained intact. Another type of folk house, the Caribbean-Creole shotgun house (or the workers cottage) used three narrow rooms to reflect upon its limited income status (Noble, et al. 1992: 145; Unknown 2006: 9).

Figure 29. A Newly Designed Creole Cottage in Apalachicola, Florida. This house in Apalachicola represents a good example of the Creole Cottage. Note the high pitched roof that is found on top of the large, ventilated center of the house (Kalina 2013).

The Coast and Folk House Types

Background

Historically, the Gulf Coast region is reflected by four distinct types of houses (folk, vernacular, popular and polite). The house types determined the cultural background of the Northern Gulf Coast region. The houses began as mere ideas for the
owner’s interest or cultural background. Eventually, the ideas of the owner become intertwined with other visions from outside, national trends. The collaborations resulted in unique houses that pop up in the region within a 100-year period (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Types of Folk Houses along the Gulf Coast*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folk</td>
<td>Construction of the owner’s interest and cultural background</td>
<td>Creole Cottage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernacular</td>
<td>Collaboration between the ideas of the owner and builder</td>
<td>Shotgun House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>Reflection of national trends and mass-production</td>
<td>Bungalow House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polite</td>
<td>Combination of class, designs and national trends</td>
<td>Greek Revival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart identifies the different types of folk houses that were established between the years of 1830 and 1930. Note that the description entails how the houses evolved based on varying interests of how they were built (Guice 1976).

**Folk Housing**

*Folk housing*, are houses that were constructed by the people who lived in them. These are the type of houses that were built by the owner to reflect that person’s cultural heritage. Folk housing also represented the beginning of the most prominent era for the Gulf Coast region in the 1830’s. For example, the creole cottage in Pascagoula (which may have originated in the 1830’s) consisted of a two room plan that included ventilation which kept the structure circulated and cool (Guice 1976: 21-24). The vegetation of the region also reflects upon folk housing types. In this case, the Germans of Texas were blessed with abundant mature trees in order to construct the lumber framing for their cottages.
With the addition of shutters, this protected the interior from the harsh, warm, and unpredictable climate (Malsch 1977: 26-30).

**Vernacular Housing**

The second type of housing, *vernacular housing*, reflects upon the collaboration between the ideas of the owner and the builder. Most of these types of houses emerged along the Gulf Coast during the mid-19th century (Guice 1976). Most of these ideas made their way by diffusion after the expansion of the railroad across the South. The shotgun house was first constructed in Haiti and its concept eventually made it to New Orleans. The house became popular during the Civil War in Apalachicola because it was small, affordable, and acquired hipped roofing. Vernacular housing was considered popular for small offices and stores in the South during the antebellum period due to their favorable size (Unknown 2006: 18).

**Popular Housing**

With the expansion of the national railroad, more housing concepts began to diffuse across the entire country. The mixing of regional ideas resulted in *popular housing*, a type of folk housing that reflected more upon national trends than on regional trends. The bungalow house is seen as the best example of this method as it focused on houses that were small in scale, and often drew on Swiss and Japanese styles. The house (which originated from Southern California) was popular along the Gulf Coast due to its inexpensive framework and was also promoted consistently due to the mass production of printed material. By 1900,
the California Bungalow house became a popular style of folk house in Apalachicola and Pascagoula (Fraiser 2006: 33-34; Guice 1976) (see Figure 30).

![California Bungalow House in Pascagoula, Mississippi](image)

Figure 30. California Bungalow House in Pascagoula, Mississippi. This house is identified as a Popular House within the Gulf Coast Region, and was considered to be a collaboration between national trends and mass production. The California Bungalow House was a widely used type of house along the Northern Gulf Coast, and was a popular style for residents along the coast (Kalina 2013).

**Polite Housing**

The final type of housing, polite housing, reflects on just the architect or professional designer’s mindset, combined with national styles of housing. This type of housing is considered the final concept of Folk Housing as it weans itself from the folk style of housing, and goes more towards popular trends (Guice 1976: 33-34). Greek revival was a popular type of polite housing on the coast due to its ionic columns and its reflection on the regal Victorian era (Fraiser 2006: 33). High-income people (such as owners of canneries) would primarily occupy these types of homes (Guice 1976: 33-34, 39). The Colonial Revival Style was a popular trend of housing as it had more than one floor of structure, and it was
made of stucco walls and tile roofs, a tribute to Spanish colonization (Unknown 2006: 7) (see Figure 31).

![The Gibson Inn in Apalachicola, Florida](image)

*Figure 31. The Gibson Inn in Apalachicola, Florida. The historic Gibson Inn is a type of Polite Housing. The house is represented as a building of quality and luxury, and consists of a variety of galleries (Kalina 2013).*

*Other Factors*

The settlement history and the physical geography of the coast also reflects upon the type of houses in the Gulf Coast region. For instance, the settlements along the coast were prone to pestilence during the summer. The shoo-fly appeared around the 1890’s, and was used by residents who resided near the coast. The shoo-fly was constructed about ten feet above the ground, octagonal in shape, and surrounded large trees. The structure provided shade, a fresh breeze, and was located above the mosquito and deer fly line (Guice 1976: 58, 80) (see Figure 32).
Figure 32. Shoo-Fly in Apalachicola, Florida. The features of this house in Apalachicola represents how the geography of the coast influenced key additions to houses within the region. The shoo-fly (which is at the base of the tree) was one of these features, and was used to ward off inspect pests (a normal geographical feature of the Gulf Coast) (Kalina 2013).

The greatest housing density was located primarily in the downtown areas of settlements during the mid-19th century. The homes (which were located in or around the downtown area) were sold on smaller lots due to its’ high population density. For example, some of the most notable residents along the Mississippi sound were merchants (people that were temporary or permanent settlers in the coastal towns). The majority of merchants lived in homes near their respective businesses. The homes reflected a combination of both residential and commercial concepts, and would be located near their essential services (Guice 1976: 58, 80).

The town of Apalachicola reflects the culture of folk houses in the best way possible. The cotton warehouses (which were located along the waterfront) consisted of three story buildings which had granite post entrances (see Figure 33). Most of the warehouses followed the industrial, vernacular style of metal
side housing and gable roofs. Eventually, they were replaced by the commercialized brick buildings. One of Apalachicola’s physical features, The Hill (which is located in the northern part of Apalachicola) was known for its semi-high elevation (a contrast from the warehouses along the river). Most of the areas’ larger homes were situated on The Hill, and affluent people would occupy the luxurious Gulf Coast and Victorian cottages in the area (Unknown 2006: 7-8).

Figure 33. Discarded Granite Post in Apalachicola, Florida. Granite posts were used in the construction of houses along the coast during the mid-19th Century (Kalina 2013).

House Types in Overview

The concept of regionalization is based on numerous geographic factors that shape the entire Gulf Coast region. From landforms to history, these factors would help shape the region’s background into what it would eventually become. Unfortunately, hurricanes have constantly changed the coast and its settlements, yet it has also maintained its historical charm due to the region’s will to rebuild.

The concept of folk houses is very important not only in identifying the history of the Creole Coast, but also the Creole Coast as a region. The addition, alteration, diffusion, and origin of the folk house (especially the Creole Cottage) is vital in identifying what type of region the Gulf Coast region is. The folk
houses in the three settlements are also important as they represent a diffusion of houses across the coast and the patterns of architectural change with.

The four types of folk housing are important in establishing how houses have evolved in the region between 1830 and 1930. The types show that the region evolved from simple folk creole cottages, to reflecting upon national trends. Other aspects of the Coast have also contributed into the construction and addition to the houses. Whether it be a shoo-fly or granite columns, each addition to the house establishes another link to the region based off of its geographical identity.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The major urban ports of the Gulf Coast region tend to dominate the academic, media, and economic attention given to settling and populating the area. Cities such as Tampa, Mobile, New Orleans, and Galveston have an image that overshadows the many smaller towns that bring ‘character’ to the coast. This thesis has focused upon three of those smaller towns. The towns in this thesis demonstrate the importance of outposts on the Gulf; they reflect upon how local geography influences site selection; and they provide insight into the geographic process of settlement along a coast.

The locations for these settlements share that they are situated at the mouth of shallow draft navigable rivers that flow across the coastal plain. They shared the natural advantage of barrier islands protecting them from the open Gulf. They were well suited to serve as break-in-bulk points for Europeans and their economic activities. The rivers served as transportation arteries into the interior uplands and as conduits of culture to reach the coast. The three settlements of Indianola, Texas, Pascagoula, Mississippi, and Apalachicola, Florida were founded based on curious exploration.

The three towns of this study show that river access was an important factor in site selection for all of the Gulf coast. Coastal towns quickly developed hinterlands that served to support regional economic activities while giving ports unique individual identities. The hinterlands produced the economic core within the region and stimulated transportation links, such as coastal roads and
eventually railroads to support trade and travel in the process. Settlements along the coast share in the colonization attempts from the milieu of French, Germanic, Spanish, and Anglo cultures. While they may be considered second-order and third-order cities, or even capitals of the Forgotten Coast, many of these smaller coastal ports were the entrepôt for the spread of culture to the coast. The local populations contributed to their own historical impacts and created their own unique economic base in their respective hinterlands. All three of the settlements explored various economic options such as seafood, lumber, cotton, and cattle. Settlement security and economic success along the coast were always challenged by hurricanes. The massive storms would alter the timeline of many settlements, while others perished due to their inability to cope with constant rebuilding.

Indianola, Texas can be best described as a settlement that was founded for the right circumstances, but was in the wrong location. Indianola was founded by well-organized and well-funded German settlers. Their intent was to select a strip of land along the Texas coast for what they viewed as a proper settlement. Indianola benefited in the short-term due to being located near the inlet of Matagorda Bay and took advantage of the nearby rivers for transportation routes in order to distribute people and products (such as cattle). Eventually, Indianola was swept away by a major hurricane and would ultimately be replaced by Galveston and Houston when it came to establishing a stable railroad link to the hinterland. What we can learn from Indianola is that they represented the typical town along the coast that would be a point of entry for Germans reaching the hill
country beyond the coast and a port for coastal steamers connecting the eastern U.S. to San Antonio and on to the Pacific coast. Indianola provided a home for settlers and became a cultural outpost. The cultural imprint remains. But Indianola also represents the tragic consequences when hurricanes cause a setback which undermines a port’s advantage thus allowing competing settlements the opportunity to establish their prominence.

Pascagoula, Mississippi can be characterized as a settlement that has achieved an enduring success. Pascagoula was founded by the French as a locational advantage for the French Empire and would eventually become the head of what was once a global lumber industry. Similar to Indianola, Pascagoula held the advantage of being located at the mouth of a river system and would use its location in order to head an economic empire to transport products (such as timber and seafood) across waterways and railways towards valued markets. Although Pascagoula and its hinterland were challenged by constant hurricanes and economic backlash, it managed to recover during its most prosperous periods and would eventually focus on other ventures. Once economic expansion ends, a successful coastal settlement must survive off of a changing economic base, and Pascagoula did so thanks to its ability to transition from timber to wooden shipbuilding to seafood and eventually to modern ship building; they remain a culture that has been evolving, yet rooted in a continuous settlement for over three centuries.

Apalachicola, Florida exemplifies a settlement of isolation. Between the years of 1830 and 1930, Apalachicola went through a number of highs and lows
in its economic standing from cotton, seafood, and other products. Unlike its second-order counterparts, Indianola was not awarded the advantage of access from an early railroad link and would be forced to depend only on its coastal and river traffic for potential economic growth. The town was also impacted by major hurricanes during its early history and would lose nearly all of its early structures (such as warehouses) due to either hurricanes or fire. Regardless of negative events, Apalachicola continued to thrive in its later years due to being spared direct hurricane hits and the economic rise of the Gulf seafood industry.

The diversity of cultural backgrounds that made up the settlers of the northern Gulf Coast gave rise to the culturally unique region of today. These towns, and others, situated on the Gulf Coast were initially linked by coastal steamers; and later sailing ships would link them to the Caribbean. The area developed a personality referred to as The Creole Coast and is now considered a cultural region of North America.

Not only did the settlements’ economies shape the Gulf Coast into a region, so did the types of houses of the Creole Coast. With the mixing of ideas from various owners, national trends, and the establishment of the railroad system in the South, we began to see the expansion of cultural diffusion reflected in vernacular housing. Cultural expansion was reflected upon the trends of occupation and wealth, and the region’s cultural values (from French to German) set the tone for the different ways to build a house along the coast (such as the Creole Cottage and the Bungalow). The region’s climate strongly influenced adaptation and house design.
An outcome of the geographic study of settlement along the Gulf Coast is that we see unique cultures seeking economic success, we see ports linking transportation along the Gulf and the role of rivers in developing hinterlands. We see the impacts of hurricanes and the resilience of towns. We understand what happens when railroads penetrate the region and provide economic and recreational access. We see adaptation to changing economic opportunities, most of which are strongly tied to the region’s geography.

Thanks to the larger cities of Tampa, New Orleans, and Mobile, the smaller settlements had vital connections in order to create strong economic hinterlands. In the era between 1830 and 1930, the region ventured into massive economic opportunities from seafood to lumber. Today, the coast continues to flourish as new economic opportunities have arisen. While large cities such as New Orleans and Mobile continue to be the region’s biggest boulders in terms of economic growth, we must not forget the specks of gold that brought value to the coast and made the region unique.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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**MISCELLANEOUS**