

houses in Mobile and New Orleans, but his home was in Pascagoula. He lived on Grant's Lake, the tidal basin that still bears his name and beside which he is buried. His son married a Krebs, and his daughter married a Delmas, uniting his family with two of the most prominent families in town.

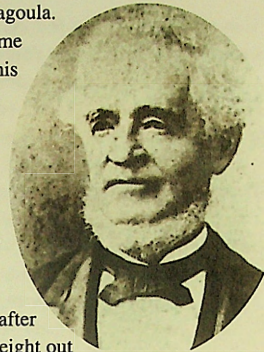
In 1827, Grant used his famous Baltimore Dredge to cut a channel from Dauphine Island to a point only five miles from the Mobile docks, ending a costly and time-consuming lighterage problem, and greatly enhancing Mobile's value as a port. In 1831 he completed a railroad from downtown New Orleans to the docks at Milneburg, located five miles north of New Orleans on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain. Thereafter a locomotive, dubbed "Smoky Mary," jolted passengers and freight out to Milneburg for departure to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. In 1839, Grant dredged a six-foot-deep channel through the reefs between Dauphine Island and the Alabama mainland, thus allowing steamboats to remain sheltered behind the barrier islands rather than to exit into the Gulf at Ship Island Pass for the dangerous run to Mobile. Grant's Pass halved the freight rates between New Orleans and Mobile, cut insurance costs by two-thirds, saved countless lives, and made the port of Pascagoula possible.

With Grant's improvements, steamboats became the primary mode of transportation and travel in the New Orleans to Mobile region. Steamboats leaving Milneburg chugged through the Rigolets into Lake Borgne-Mississippi Sound, stopping at each of the Six Sisters enroute to Mobile. At Mobile the steamboats turned and retraced the route back to Milneburg.

The few roads leading northward from the Six Sisters were mere forest tracks into the piney woods. The streets in Coastal towns were sandy traces. No road lay along the beach, but an east-west road one mile inland traversed the 25 miles from Pass Christian to Biloxi. The earliest official road of Harrison County, this thoroughfare bore the appellations "Back Road" or "Handsboro Road" but most often "Pass Road." Pass Road still exists by that name and a variety of others in its course through the cities of the modern Coast.

In 1852, University of Mississippi Assistant Professor of Geology Benjamin L. C. Wailes made an overland journey to the south Mississippi region for the purpose of conducting a geological survey of the state. Traveling in a horse-drawn carriage fitted out for the collection of specimens, he followed the dirt road along the Pearl River to Pearlinton and reported stretches of ten miles and more with no human habitation. According to Wailes, the great virgin pines were widely spaced affording ease of travel on the pine needle-covered road. The canopies of the huge trees shaded out the undergrowth. Only at creek crossings did he encounter canebrakes.

From Pearlinton, Wailes traveled east to Shieldsboro (Bay St. Louis). There, to avoid a



*Captain John Grant, "the Father of Gulf Coast Transportation," died in 1887 about ten years after this photo was taken. Photo courtesy of Jackson County Archives.*