

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Submitted by

Melvin H. Terry

November 16, 2006

WHAT'S IN A NAME

SUBMITTED BY MELVIN H. TERRY ----- THE FORUM ---- LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT --- INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH PROJECT --- NOVEMBER 16, 2006

THE INFLUENCE OF A NAME

In this titled project, we will note that the area of designation was given a name prior to its present one. Is this significant in the development and pattern of growth that Starkville has enjoyed? We will explore whether the name of a city is instrumental in industry and services on which cities thrive.

One of the oldest texts that deal with the structuring of names is the Bible. Note the significance that a name had on people, places, or things. Biblically, we see that names were even given prior to the birth of a child, and that child would fulfill, within his character, the meaning of his name. For instance, the name Jacob meant supplanter or trickster, and it was he that stole his brother's birthright through trickery. Later, when he spiritually matured, God changed his name to Israel, which meant, a prince of God or who prevails with God. From that time forth his deceiving days were over. Hence, names and events seemed to partner to sustain certain outcomes.

Can this rule be applied in a secularly as well a spiritually? When a city is named, what are the criteria for its development?

BOARDTOWN

As we explore this name, we find that in 1831 a small settlement was formed on land that was sold to Elijah Hogan for \$10,000.00. This area covered from Lampkin to Lafayette, to Main and to Skaggs streets. The population of the county was of rural make-up so the settlement was very small. Surprisingly, in 1835, it became the county seat. The

first courthouse was built on Main Street. Also, in that year, the real estate & banking company were opened with Robert Lampkin as its first president. Lampkin, as a banker, also held a county office as the first sheriff. Things in the community were developing well until 1837, a period known as THE GREAT PANIC. But in spite of a community downturn, the Mississippi State Legislature granted a town charter to the newly named city of Starkville. The effort to rename Boardtown was motivated to honor a revolutionary war hero, General John Stark. The city struggled through about ten years of bank failure, population decreases, and vitality depletion before signs of recovery from the panic began to emerge. Starkville enjoyed increasing prosperity with farming providing the strong economic base. Both the city and county saw schools and churches develop with merchants and medical practitioners arriving. In 1850, the first telegraph line was reportedly built along Robinson Road.

The county census in 1860 was listed at 12,977. Of that total 5,171 were white, 7,631 were slaves, 18 were freed blacks, and 157 were Indians. The low period in its history was the war between the states when the population served in the confederate army. When the war was over, Starkville picked up the pieces of the shattered society, but economic disaster threatened merchants and farmers alike. Many were forced into bankruptcy because military rule had suppressed the development of a social system.

Northerners migrated to the area to enjoy the spoils of war, gaining in numbers and power. This was a time of 10 years of Negro supremacy in the state, county and city. In 1870, the census reported a total population in the county of almost 15,000, but the city of Starkville recorded 3,160 residents, 2,201 of whom were black.

In the year of 1874, another increase of population and business endeavors was sparked as a result of a branch of the Mobile & Ohio railroad which was built from Artesia to Starkville

One year later in 1875, fire swept through the central business district and destroyed scores of stores and offices. This tragedy was blamed on the fact that the city's streets were so narrow, causing easy transfer of the flames. To avoid another such tragedy, in the rebuilding effort, wider streets were built.

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT

A number of events shaped the economic and social development of Starkville and Oktibbeha County.

- 1877 – The democrats' regained control of most county offices as the reconstruction period ended.
- 1878 – James O. Gunn built a telegraph line from Starkville to Artesia where it connected with Western Union telegraph lines which operated until 1883 when a direct local line was established.
- 1878 – A land grant college was established called Mississippi A & M. The first session was held in 1880 with about 100 students attending. General Stephen D. Lee was it first president.
- 1883 – The CA & M Illinois Central Railroad line from Aberdeen to Durant was established coming directly through Starkville,
- 1889 – The greatest economic mistake was made when voters refused a bond issue to finance construction of the Georgia Pacific Railroad from Columbus to Greenville with the intended route through Starkville.
- 1889 – The Peoples Savings Bank, the forerunner of the National Bank of Commerce, was established.
- 1897 – R. K. Wier built the first telephone service in the city.
- 1927 – Dr. F. B. Long operated the first hospital.

- 1983 – Starkville encompassed 22 square miles and had a population of 16,000 with U.S. highways 82, 12, 25, 389 and close by 45 added to the economic fiber.

Mississippi A & M, renamed Mississippi State University in 1958, is the main employer of the area and shadows the city as a prestigious backdrop. Starkville also, thru the years, has been known as the Dairy Center of the South and is a Mississippi Key City.

AN ECONOMIC SUCCESS STORY

Can the economic success story of this city be tied to the changing of the name from Boardtown to Starkville? Would it have prospered as well to outdistance the other county cities had that event not happened? Many communities, throughout the country, are named Atlanta, Chicago, and Dallas – should they be at par because of their name?

There are many factors that influence the growth of an area. Its location, accessibility, its land mass, if it can produce a needed commodity, its sense of timing, but there is an element that transcends them all and we will discuss its value.

Throughout this report there has appeared names, such as, Stark, Lampkin, Long, Gunn, Lee, Wier etc. These all add to the name of Starkville. It is not what you call a place that makes it prosper, but it is the names that support the name. The fiber of great thinkers, hard workers, innovators that work together or stand in a historical line for their turn to affect forward and upward mobility. People that look for a brighter economic future for our city, people who will not rest until a higher quality of life is enjoyed by its citizens. People that project lofty ideas, high energy, tenacity, ability, and dignity – these are the things that make Starkville, MS or any city great.

What's in a name? The character of the people of the name – try this one on for size! [The Forum]

REFERENCES

Mrs. Harold F. Kaufman – Thesis

Starkville Daily News Clipping

Starkville Area Chamber of Commerce Publication – Starkville Oktibbeha County – MSU

Starkville Mississippi Fact Book – Oktibbeha County Economic Development Foundation

History and Government Sesquicentennial Edition – From Boardtown to Thriving City Edition, Page 18

Boardtown – Premier Issue Community Magazine Feature Mississippi U.S. Starkville “Glimpses of the Past”

Published Articles about Starkville, Oktibbeha County and Neighboring