Pontotoc Historic Tour

The Heart of Northeast Mississippi
Bridging the Heritage of Yesterday
with the Visions of Tomorrow,
Through History, Recreation, Education, Industry, Agriculture and Commerce

HISTORICAL "FIRSTS" FOR PONTOTOC COUNTY

In the winter of 1540-41, Hernando DeSoto set up camp in Pontotoc County, and was responsible for many of the following "FIRSTS."

FIRST taste of barbecued pork
FIRST white woman to set foot on native soil was buried in camp of DeSoto in Pontotoc County - 1541
FIRST U.S. Post Office between Natchez and Nashville
FIRST school for Indians in America - 1799
FIRST religious school for Indians - Monroe Mission
FIRST McDonald's Restaurant with historical meat. See the history of the Chickasaw Indians depicted in chronological order on the walls of McDonald's, in Pontotoc.

Compiled by
PONTOTOC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 841
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1. Battle of Tupelo. (See monument at Hattiesburg)

2. The Natchez Trace Marker on Hwy. 8 at Burns, erected by DAR in 1932 on the original Natchez Trace. The marker has the following inscription: "Along this trail once abode and flowed a restless tide of humanity, heroes and plotters, who blazed the way for civilization. Near this spot are the remains of the Battle of Abas, DeSoto's Battle and the Treaty of Pontotoc Creek in 1832.

3. Bulloch's School was the first school in this part of America and was begun in 1790 by the school of Joseph Bulloch, possibly on the site of the Black Zion Church. The Bulloch school existed until 1820, when it was destroyed by a fire. (The name of the school is a corruption of the Spanish name of the site, the A. M. Hay home. The name Pontotoc was first used in the report of the school's establishment to educate the Chickasaw Nation.

4. The Chickasaw National Council House was located about one half mile southwest of the Mississippi Archaeological and History marker at the intersection of Hwy. 62 and CR 655. The council house was a small building that served as a meeting place for the Chickasaw Nation.

5. Cates Place, just south of Hwy. 43, was a council house or chief's house, sometimes called the Tappan's house. It was a place for council meetings and decision making.

6. Battle of Ogoula Tetchoka, locally known as the Battle of Tappan's Mill, May 22, 1787. Maj. Hiram D. Crutcher, governor of the Illinois Territory, was sent with a large company of French soldiers and their Indian allies from the north and southwest. However, they were defeated by the Chickasaws and D. A. Ophir, along with F. A. Tappan of Tappan's Mill, were burned to death by the victorious Chickasaws.

7. Allen's Tavern. Old Pontotoc was located about five miles southeast of the present town of Pontotoc. Allen's Tavern was the "turning point" of the Chickasaw villages. It was located on the Natchez Trace on Tombigbee Ridge. In Sec. 33, T160, R.3, James Allen, the proprietor and attorney from Nashville, had married the daughter of his friend, Mr. Gen. William Colbert. History tells that Gen. Andrew Jackson, more than once, stopped for a visit and to spend the night with the Allen's.

8. Campground Methodist Church is west of Hwy. 41 and the Archives and History marker is at the intersection of the Canebrake Road. It was started by an Indian in 1836 and was on the Natchez Trace.

9. Tuckahoe or McIntoshville, near Tunica, where Tunica College now stands, was established by John McIntosh, a British agent, before 1770. McIntoshville was Mississippi's second post office and was established in 1801 as a relay station between Nashville and Natchez.

10. Chicasa or DeSoto's Camp in the winter of 1904-1905. The name of the site was DeSoto's camp in "Sec. 1, overtopping south into the N 1/2 of Sec. 28." It was in this camp on Christmas Day, 1904, that the first Christmas mass in America was performed between Juan Ortiz and St. Augustine, a Seminole priest held captive by the Spaniards. A mural in the Pontotoc Post Office in Pontotoc, MS depicts this scene.

11. Williams-Thompson House. A landmark in Southern Pontotoc County, built about 1890 by Senator Thompson, whose family had owned more than 62 acres in the area of Mississippi and served as United States Senator from Mississippi. He was instrumental in the organization of the University of Mississippi.

12. Graves of Unknown Union Soldiers. On a ridge just east of Hwy. 41 are 11 tombstones inscribed, "Unknown Union Soldier." It was during the Civil War.

13. Monroe Mission School was the first religious building erected in North Mississippi. Monroe Mission was established by the Rev. Thomas C. Stuart in 1901. Stuart was commissioned by the Mississippi Institute in 1905 to establish a school for Indian Missions. In 1908, the school was destroyed by the Chickasaw Indians.

14. September 14, 1838, Thomas McAllister gave the land for the site of the Female Seminary. The school was incorporated as Pontotoc Female Academy; then Chickasaw College, owned and operated by the Presbyterian Church. The site is located just behind the present Pontotoc Hospital.

15. Pontotoc's Oldest House is just across the street and south of the United Methodist Church. It was built in the 1830's for the founder of Pontotoc, Thomas McAllister.

16. Federal Land Office. Located on the corner of what is now Oxford and North Brooks St., the land office was built to handle the sale of Chickasaw lands following the signing of the Treaty of Pontotoc Creek. Appointees of President Andrew Jackson were sent from Nashville down the Natchez Trace, to handle the transactions. Among those appointed were Patrick Henry Foutz, John Red and D. B. Anderson.

17. The Pontotoc City Cemetery was given to the City of Pontotoc by the Chickasaws and the United States Government on June 22, 1852, because: "many Chickasaws and their white friends were buried there." Maj. Gen. William Colbert was buried there in 1852. The Rev. Thomas C. Story, missionary to the Chickasaws, is also buried in the City Cemetery.

18. The Stephens House. This two-story pioneer home is located on the west side of Old Cherry Creek Road and was built in the early 1840's. It was the first meeting place of the Cherry Creek Baptist Church, which was organized there in 1844.

19. Old Cherry Creek School. The old school is standing near where Cherry Grove Normal was started by B. R. Webb, before the Civil War.

20. Indian Mound. This mound is the largest prehistoric structure in this area. Excavation by the Smithsonian Institution in 1905 revealed that the mound had been built after European contact as it contained a framed temple of green glass and another surface with a Spanish coat of arms. It was believed by the historians that DeSoto's camp was located in the spring of 1541, before proceeding toward the Mississippi River.

21. Battle of Mud Creek, June 20, 1863. Confederate forces under Gen. Daniel Ruggles routed Union forces under the command of Col. Jesse J. Phillips in a running fight at Mud Creek. Union losses were: 60 killed, 90 wounded; Confederate losses were 2 killed and 17 wounded.

22. Buttermilk Springs. The family that operated the Stagecoach Stop kept cold buttermilk in the spring and sold it to the thirsty passengers. Presently called Thaxton for Dr. M. C. Thaxton.

24. Betty Love Allen. Historical marker on Old Toco-Capitol School grounds marks the grave of Betty Allen, wife of Maj. John Allen and the daughter of Thomas Love, a Chickasaw. Litigation over a slave given to her by her father and claimed by her husband's creditors in 1822, resulted in the establishment of the rights of women to own property not liable for the debts of husbands. Mississippi Legislature enacted in 1889 that the Chickasaw tribal code law to become the first government in the world to give women the right to own property outright. Another historical marker is at the intersection of Hwy. 6 and C.R. 943.

25. Davy Crockett's horse corral. Defeated for re-election to Congress in his home state of Tennessee, he gathered a drove of horses and brought them down the Natchez Trace to Tennessee. He joined Henley already here and built a horse corral in the middle of what is now Mississippi State Park and ran a thriving business. When Davy Crockett learned of the Texas revolt and the troubles of his friend, Sam Houston, he closed his horse trading business in order to join Gen. Sam Houston. He was later killed at the Battle of the Alamo on March 6, 1836.

26. Battle of Brice's Crossroads. Five miles west of Baldwyn, just past the crossroads, and some nine miles down the road to old Pleasant Hill Church. Confederate losses: 39 killed, 6 wounded, 344 missing; Union losses: 394 wounded, 1,623 missing. Skirmishes in fighting by a 15,000-man army, reached the northwestern corner of what was known Pontotoc County.

27. Route of the Invaders. Union Army came to pillows, loo and burn beginning in late 1863. Pontotoc Countians lived with these tactics almost to the war's end. The last great fire was the 15,000-man army of Gen. A. J. Smith that ended in the Battle of Tupelo. (Hattiesburg.)

28. Old Natchez Trace Route. America's most historic path stretches from Natchez, Mississippi to Nashville, Tennessee. These markers show the actual route of the original Natchez Trace as it ran through Pontotoc County.

29. DeSoto's Camp and Red Lant. Local tradition places DeSoto's Winter Camp to the south of the Old Natchez Trace Route. The early town of Redland, which thrived from 1840-1860, extended from the present cemetery south.