

# Chapter II

## Political Development

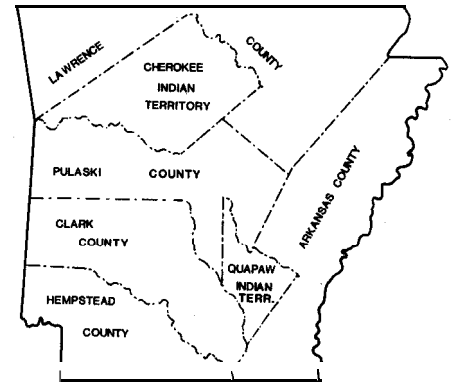
### Establishment of the County<sup>1</sup>

In 1819 the area now encompassed by the state of Arkansas was part of Missouri Territory. That portion of Missouri Territory contained five counties; Lawrence, Pulaski, Arkansas, Clark, and Hempstead; and two Indian Territories; Cherokee and Quapaw. Change was rapid during those years, however, and by 1820, just the next year, Arkansas Territory itself came into existence with a few additional counties and a large portion of what is now Oklahoma. Sixteen years later, in 1836, Arkansas joined the Union, the twenty-fifth state to do so. Many more counties were in existence by 1836 and by the time of the War Between the States, Arkansas had fifty-five counties. It was after the War, during Reconstruction, that Faulkner County finally appeared on the map.

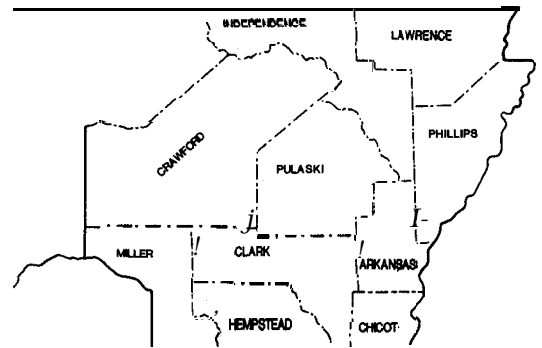
Faulkner County was the sixty-ninth created in the state. It was located in the central part of the state and bounded by White, Lonoke, Van Buren, Cleburne, Yell, Perry, Conway, and Pulaski Counties. The land to create Faulkner County was taken from Conway and Pulaski Counties. The county's original boundary was established when the county was created April 12, 1873, by Act Forty-four of Arkansas' Nineteenth General Assembly. The boundary of the new county was defined in Section I as follows:

That all that portion of the counties of Conway and Puskaski included within the boundaries hereinafter named to wit: Beginning at a point where the township line dividing townships three and four crosses the Arkansas River and running east with the said line to the range dividing ranges ten and eleven west; thence with said range line to the township line dividing townships eight and nine north; thence west with said line to the section line dividing sections three and four, township eight north, range fourteen west; thence south with said line to the north fork of Cadron Creek; thence with the meanderings (following the middle of the channel) of said creek to the middle of the Arkansas River; thence with said river to the point of beginning; be and the same is hereby formed into a separate and distinct county, to be called Faulkner County.

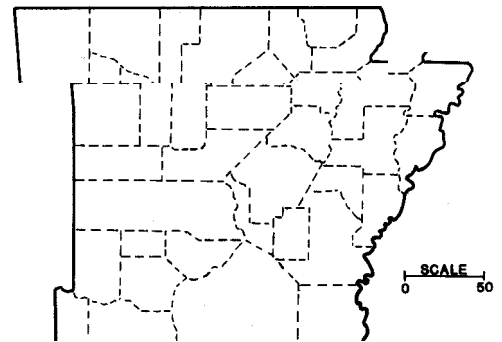
The 1873 boundary was a combination of two types of boundaries, geometric and natural. The southern, eastern, northern, and six miles of the western boundary of the county were geometric because they followed either lines of latitude or longitude which



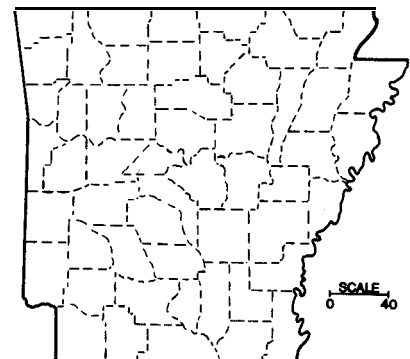
*Counties while part of Missouri Territory*



*Counties as part of Arkansas Territory 1819*



*Arkansas 1838*



*Arkansas 1859*

rigidly adhered to north-south and east-west directions. Most of the western boundary, however, was and remains a natural boundary. Natural boundaries follow existing physical features such as coast lines, mountain crests, lake shores, or stream channels. Faulkner County's natural boundary followed the channels of Cadron Creek and the Arkansas River.

The boundaries created in 1873, however, were short-lived. Just two years later, in 1875, Faulkner County lost a portion of its territory to Pulaski County and at the same time added land taken from Pulaski County. At that juncture in the state's history the power to change county lines was "... inherent in the legislature. . . ." The consent of the voters residing in

an area taken from one county and given to another was only required if a new county was being created from existing counties. Many years later the state legislature changed the method by which county boundaries could be altered in Act 7420f the Seventy-first General Assembly. Act 742 specified that county areas could not be removed and added to adjacent counties without "... the consent of a majority of voters in each part to be taken off." That legislative change, however, obviously did not affect boundary alterations in 1875; therefore, the change occurred without input from voters.

On December 7, 1875, the state legislature passed Act 59 entitled, "An Act to Define the Boundaries of Pulaski and other Counties." The Act affected Faulkner County in two places, the southeast corner and the southwestern portion. They were described in Act 59 as follows:

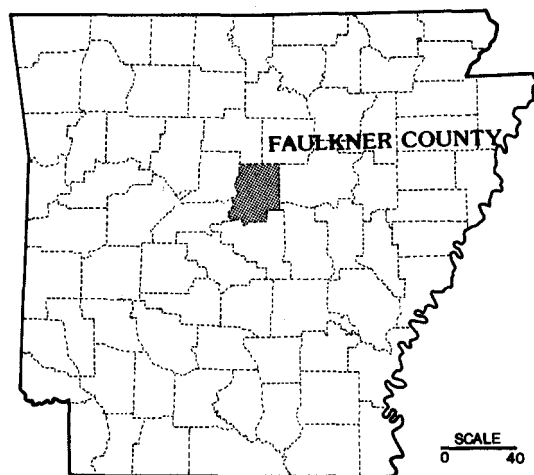
That all of township four north of the baseline, range eleven west of the fifth principal meridian, be detached from Faulkner County and all that portion of township three north of the baseline, ranges thirteen and fourteen west of the fifth principal meridian, included in the following boundary to-wit:

Beginning at a point in the middle of the Arkansas River, where the said river crosses the dividing line between townships three and four north of the baseline, range fourteen west of the fifth principal meridian, running thence down the middle of said river to the mouth of Palarm Bayou thence north to a point where it crosses the line between three and four north, range thirteen west, thence due west, along section lines to the place of beginning, shall be detached from Pulaski County and added to the territory of Faulkner County.

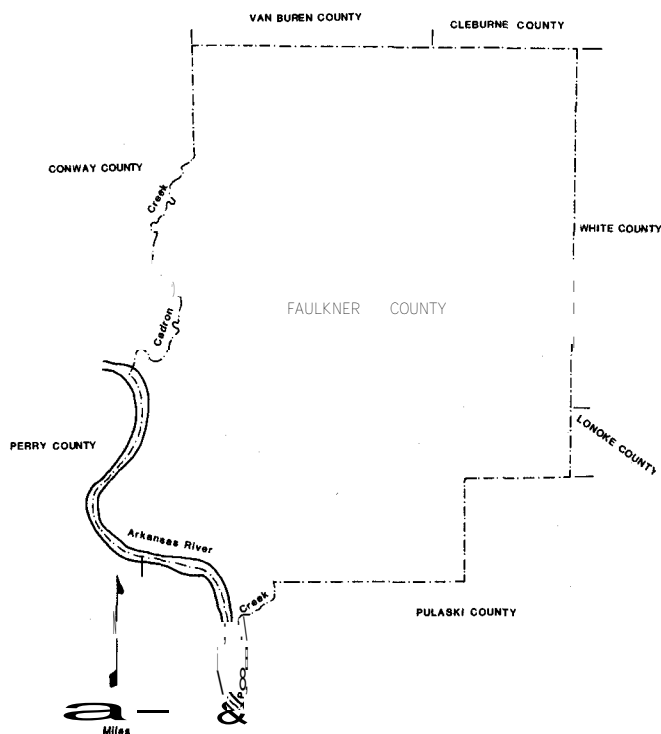
Documentation regarding a justification for the "land swapping" has been elusive. One person has suggested that it was just a matter of trading territory initiated by a desire of residents in southeastern Faulkner County to become part of Pulaski County; therefore, a portion of Pulaski County was given to Faulkner County. No evidence for this hypothesis or for any other has been found, however.

In 1873, when the county was created, Republicans controlled every department of the state's government. Elisha A. Baxter, a Republican, was governor. The House of Representatives was composed of four Republicans and twenty-eight Democrats while the Senate was composed of twenty Republicans and six Democrats.

The Republican legislature had little difficulty passing the bill to create Faulkner County. On March 24, 1873, Turner, the Conway County representative, introduced a bill (House Bill 280) entitled "An Act to Create the County of Stanton and For Other Purposes." By unanimous content, the rules



Arkansas 1985



Faulkner County, 1985.

were suspended, the bill was read a first and second time by title and then referred to the Committee on Counties and County Lines. On April 7, 1873, C.E. Berry, from the Committee on Counties and County Lines, reported on the bill. He recommended a substitute bill entitled "An Act to Create the County of Faulkner and For Other Purposes." The report of the committee was adopted and the substitute was accordingly adopted in lieu of the original bill. On the motion of Benton Turner, the substitute bill was read a third time and a vote on the bill was taken. The bill passed fifty-two to thirteen, with seventeen members not voting.

On the same day that the bill was passed by the House, it was sent to the Senate. Senator A.D. Thomas of the Fifth District, which was made up of Conway, Pope, and Searcy Counties, moved that the rules be suspended and that the bill be read a first and second time by title. The vote was eighteen to seven in favor of the suspension. After the second reading, the bill was referred to the Committee on Counties and County Lines.

Two days later, on April 9, Senator Thomas A. Hanks, chairman of the Committee on Counties and County Lines, reported on the bill and recommended its passage. Dr. Thomas called up the bill, which under a suspension of the rules, was read a third time by title and passed by a vote of twenty-two to four. The bill was signed into law by Governor Baxter on April 12, 1873.

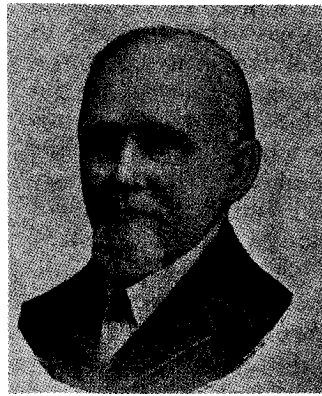
Dr. Thomas later explained the passage of the bill through the House in this manner:

By one of those fortunate fatalities that sometimes arise to assist a meritorious enterprise, the Pope County representative was indisposed and the one from Perry County engaged elsewhere at the time [both of these representatives were opponents of the bill], there being no opposition, the bill passed its final reading. The bill was introduced in the Senate and was passed and signed in due form and time.

Shortly after, one of the aforesaid representatives called on me to know when the County Walker [sic] Bill was coming in, as he was waiting to kill it. I remarked that he go read the Bill for the Creation of Faulkner County and Other Purposes, and he wouldn't need to waste time on Walker [sic]. Where he wanted me and my associates to go I don't remember.

In further explanation of the passage of the bill and the naming of the county, Dr. Thomas said that he:

... was passing the Metropolitan Hotel on the corner of Main and Markham Street one night. Upon looking in I saw Colonel Sandy Faulkner at the desk in capacity of clerk. He was an affable Southern gentleman of the old school, and the noted tune of which he is said to be the father has made so many hearts glad and so many feet dance, that it occurred to me that I would suggest



Sanford C. "Sandy" Faulkner. **Early Arkansas planter who was well known to Arkansas politicians. When Faulkner County was formed in 1873, this popular figure was honored by the members of the legislature by naming the new county for him. Said to be the horseman depicted in the painting "The Arkansas Traveler".**

we name the new county after him. I went in and asked permission of him at once, and he said he would be delighted at the compliment. It occurred to me his name would be popular in the House and further, that by starting it there under another name at the proper time it would meet with little opposition.

The desire of the Republicans to extend political patronage was very influential in the formation of new counties at this time. An article appeared in the *Arkansas Gazette*, a paper of Democrat rather than Republican sympathies, three days after the creation of Faulkner County. It stated that the legislature had been in session approximately three and one half months at a cost of \$175,000 to the taxpayers. The article then asked the question, "What has the Republican Party done in that period of time?" Answering its own question, it went on to say that the Republicans created seven new counties, six of which were to be supplied with officers appointed by the governor, thirty in number. Also they had made places for 216 other county supervisors.

At the time the county courts in Arkansas were composed of a board of supervisors for each county. Section Seven of the act which created Faulkner County authorized the governor to appoint the officers of the county who would serve until the next general election was held. To the board of supervisors, Governor Baxter appointed E.L. Allen, M.R. Sevier, and A.J. Horton.

The board of supervisors met in Conway in May and elected Allen to serve as president of the board. C.H. Lander was appointed clerk and Benton Turner, sheriff. Turner was the Conway County representative who had been influential in the creation of the county. Other officials appointed by Governor Baxter were J.W. Duncan, judge; M.E. Moore, treasurer; G.W. Johnson, surveyor; A.B. Henry, assessor and R.T. Harrison, coroner.

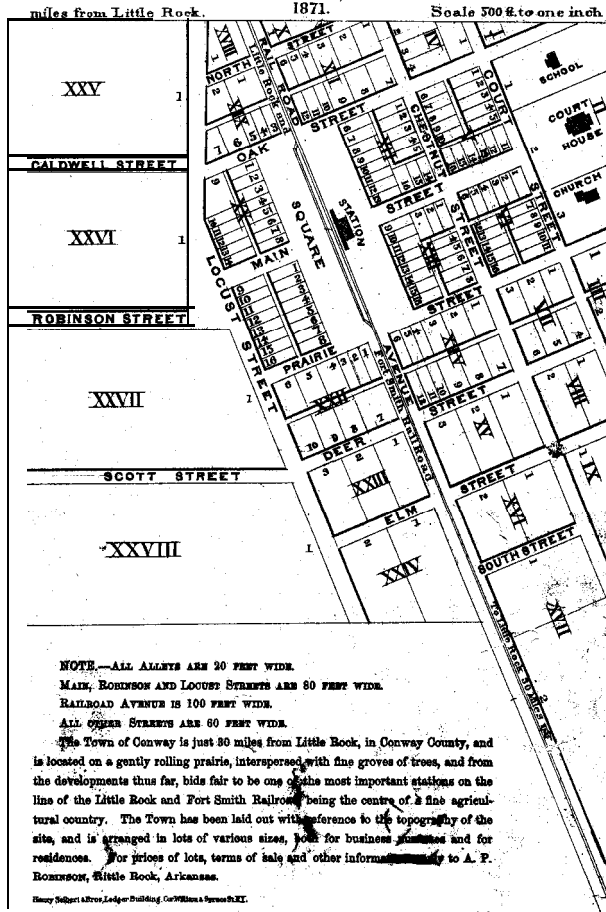
Section Two of the act creating Faulkner County states:

That A.D. Thomas, A.F. Livingston, and J.F. Comstock be and they are constituted a board of

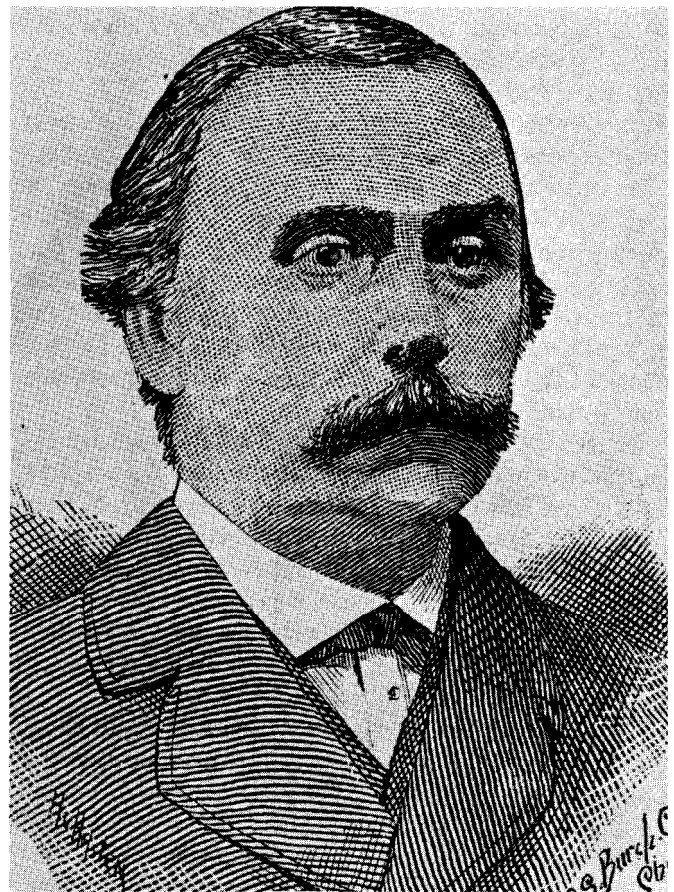
commissioners whose duty it shall be to locate a seat of justice. They shall have the authority to receive donations of land whereon to locate the seat of justice, taking conveyance therefore to the county and to lay out the land so purchased into township lots; to sell the lots after thirty days notice, and make deeds to convey to the purchasers the interest of the said county in such town lots. Proceeds of sales shall go to the erection of public buildings for said county.

This section further provided that the commissioners each be paid the sum of three dollars per day out of the county treasury and it designated Conway Station as the temporary seat of justice, allowing the commissioners six months to select a permanent seat of justice.

The commissioners decided on Conway as the permanent seat of justice and on September 19, 1873, Colonel Asa P. Robinson, a Republican, donated to the city the site of the present Faulkner County Court House.



Robinson's Plan of Conway, 1871.

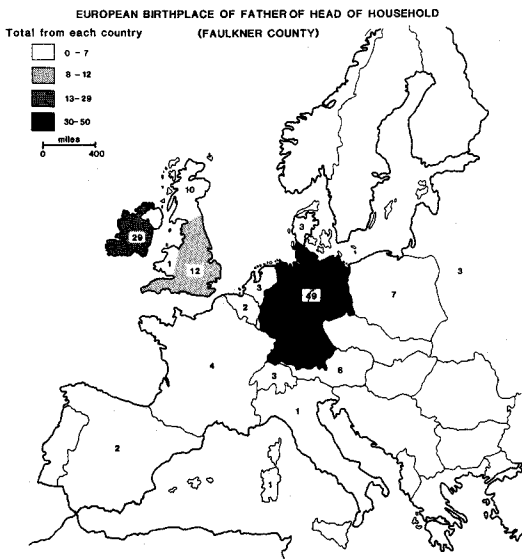


Col. Asa P. Robinson  
 Father of Conway

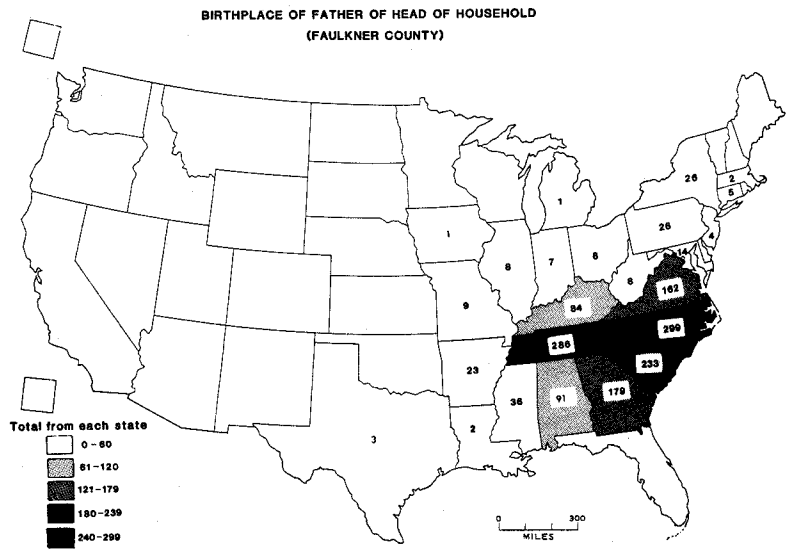


Courtesy Arkansas Gazette.

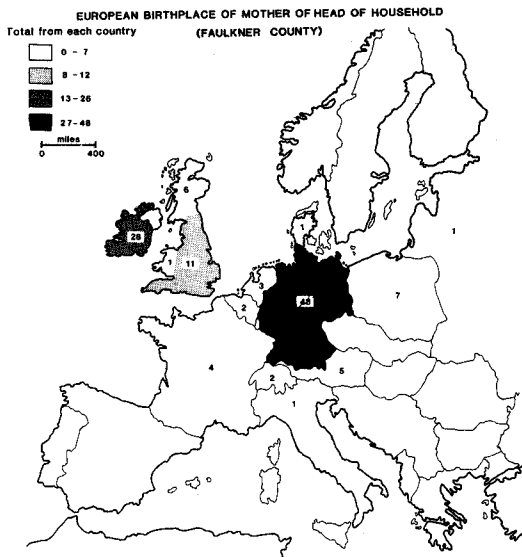
Minnie Merriman Heiligers and Mason Edward Mitchell  
 — First white girl and first white boy born in Conway.



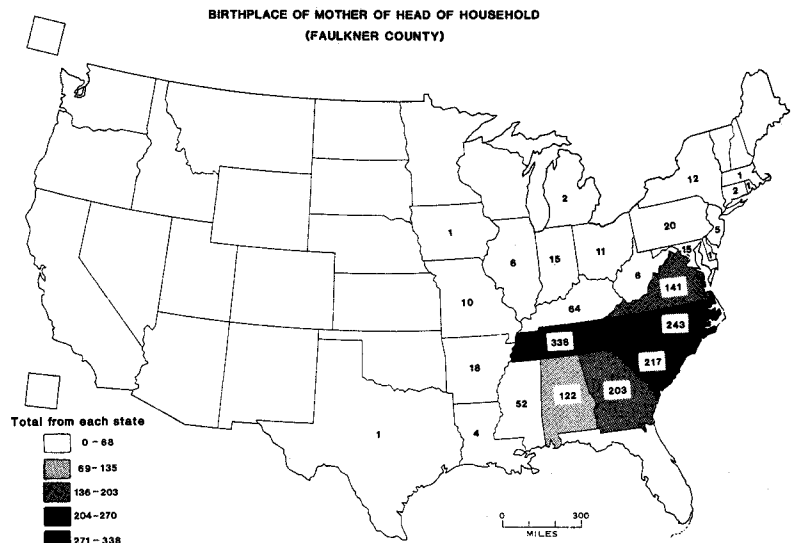
Based on 1880 census



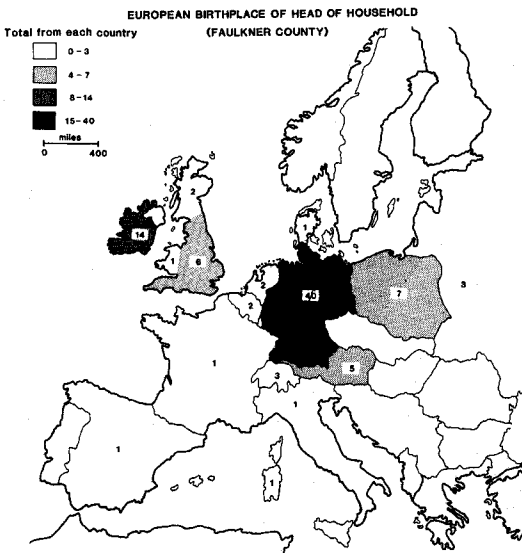
Based on 1880 Census data



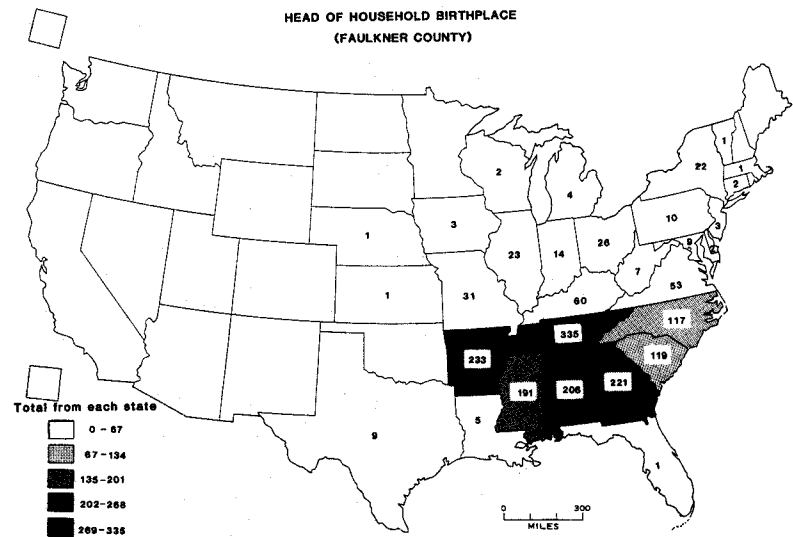
Based on 1880 census data



Based on 1880 Census data



Based on 1880 census data



Based on 1880 Census data

# Themes in Political History1

This essay on Faulkner County political history makes no attempt to provide an exhaustive treatment of all local elections since the 1870s, for to do so would require a discussion of far too many candidates, campaigns, and results. Instead we shall examine some of the general characteristics of Faulkner politics over the past century.

Faulkner County politics has been characterized by (1) the ascendancy of the Democratic Party; (2) the basing of campaigns on the character and ability of candidates rather than on issues; and (3) the tendency in most elections to focus attention on such matters as taxes, schools, and roads, rather than on political philosophies or class antagonisms.

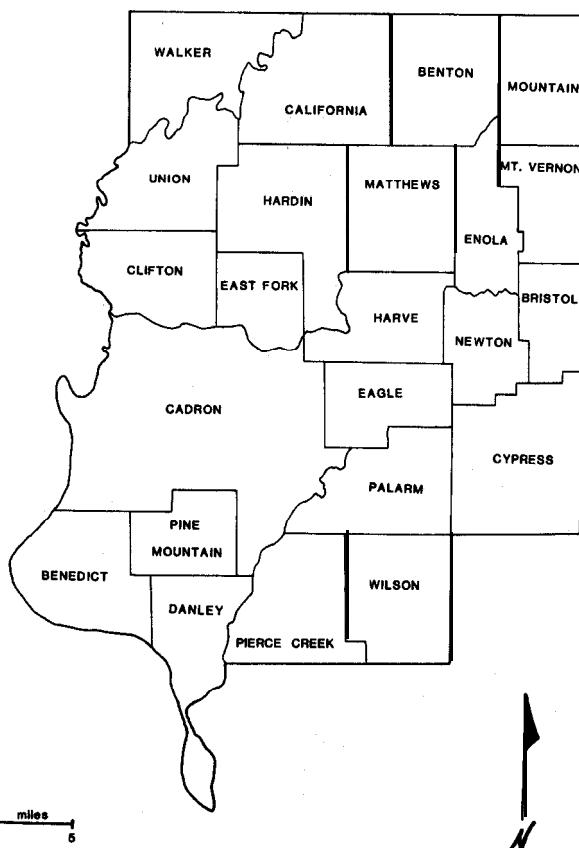
V.O. Key, in his study of Southern politics, described Arkansas as having perhaps "... the one-party system in its most undefiled and undiluted form." This observation has been generally accurate for Faulkner County as well as for the state as a whole. When the county was formed in 1873, Arkansas' experience with "Radical Reconstruction" was drawing to a close, and the Democratic Party was returning to power following a period of Republican control. In Arkansas, as in other former Confederate states, there was much resentment of the "carpet-baggers" — Republicans from northern states — and a strong determination to prevent their return to power. The great proportion of political officials in the early years of Faulkner County clearly did not qualify as carpetbaggers, the principal exceptions being A.F. Livingston of New York (mayor of Conway, 1879) and Asa P. Robinson of Connecticut (Conway alderman, 1876; mayor, 1887). However, it is interesting to note that a large number of county and city officials were born in other states — mostly in the Southeast.

During the 1880s and 1890s the emergence of third-party efforts, supported largely by discontented farmers, seemed to threaten Democratic solidarity in Arkansas and other southern states. Many farmers were disaffected with both major parties and lent their support to such organizations as the Greenback Party, the Agricultural Wheel, and the Populist Party. The latter party gained sufficient strength in Faulkner and White Counties to send John Parker Harvey Russ to the State Senate in the 1890s, and another Populist, Silas Asbury Stewart, represented Faulkner County in the House of Representatives in the 1893 legislative session. However, by the mid-1890s the Democrats had re-established their ascendancy in Faulkner County and throughout the state.

One-party domination has continued even in peri-

\*Source: Foy Lisenby

TOWNSHIPS OF FAULKNER COUNTY



ods when the Republicans enjoyed national sway, as in the 1920s; the Conway Log Cabin Democrat reported an overwhelming Democratic victory in the 1922 elections, noting that even Enola township, "the Republican stronghold of the county," was carried by every Democratic nominee. Many years later, when Republican Winthrop Rockefeller scored a "smashing victory" in his race for Governor, his Democratic opponent, Jim Johnson, carried Faulkner County by over 1,600 votes. Although Johnson's Faulkner County residence was a factor here, along with traditional Democratic solidarity, it should be noted that the Democrats outpolled the rival party in other contests — including the race for Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Circuit Judge, and 14th District Representative. Of course, state and national political battles frequently do have an impact on local elections. A retired Faulkner County politician, asked if his connections with Governor Faubus in the 1950s were an asset, offered this understated reply: "Wouldn't hurt."

Several men who have spent years as both observers and practitioners of the political arts agree

that personalities, rather than campaign issues, have been of paramount importance in elections. Reflecting on their extensive experience in the political arena, Guy Jones, Faber Watson, Jake Sims, and Ralph Harrell pointed out that success most likely comes to the candidate who "goes to see the people" and "deals with the people and their problems." Politicians benefit enormously from establishing a "first name" acquaintance with large numbers of constituents. According to Harrell, "When the people start calling you 'Mister,' then you're finished" as a political leader.

Mud-slinging has seldom been a major factor in Faulkner elections, according to Guy Jones. While the people are entertained by such tactics, "they don't vote that way." By and large political adversaries have not allowed their rivalry to prevent them from being civil toward each other; indeed, in some cases they are close friends before, during, and after the campaign. Perhaps the extreme example of such cordiality between political foes is the contest between John D. Dunaway, Sr. and Silas Stewart (in the 1890s), in which they campaigned together, traveling from place to place in the same buggy.

On occasion an issue has appeared in addition to the usual concerns over taxes, schools, and roads. One such issue was over the sale of alcoholic beverages. Beginning in the 1870s the Arkansas legislature enacted a series of liquor control laws, the most important of which was the Three-Mile Law. This measure provided for the prohibition of the sale of alcoholic beverages within a three-mile radius of a church or public school, if a majority of the area inhabitants signed a petition favoring such a ban. In 1884 the Three-Mile Law was used to eliminate the sale of liquor in Mount Vernon, and a few years later was used by anti-liquor forces in Conway who achieved a similar victory. The "dry" cause in Conway was led by Reverend Edward A. Tabor and a prohibitionist politician, Captain William W. Martin. The city saloons were closed at midnight, December 31, 1888, initiating a "dry" period which lasted for forty years.

During the last fourteen years of that period the entire nation was legally "dry" under the 18th Amendment to the Constitution. In 1933 that amendment was repealed, despite the resistance of prohibitionist forces. In the Faulkner County election to name a representative to the state convention on repeal, the "dry" candidate, Reverend William Mordecai Harper, overwhelmed his "wet" opponent, 1257 to 465. However, this victory was overshadowed by the fact that enough pro-repeal delegates were elected to place the Arkansas convention in the anti-prohibition camp and help put an end to the "noble experiment." A special session of the Arkansas legislature in 1933 completed the process of making the

state "wet" again, although provision was made for communities to prohibit liquor by means of a local option petition. In 1943 this device was used successfully by prohibitionist forces in Faulkner County led by Dr. Henry Baxton Hardy and George Owen. In an election held on December 29, Faulkner County residents voted 1753 to 488 for local option prohibition, thus terminating the "wet" interlude of 1933-1943.

Of course emotional issues like prohibition were not the only source of exciting politics in Faulkner County. Voter interest has often resulted from a clash of two especially strong candidates — such as a race for county judge in the 1950s which was decided by one vote. Another stimulus for a good voter turnout is a heated contest for Governor, Congress, or Senator. Also, a particularly controversial tax proposal can also generate a high level of voter interest.

Quite a number of elections have produced very little voter enthusiasm, however. In November 1922, for example, it was difficult to gather a sufficient number of officials to supervise the polls, and fewer than one-fifth of the qualified voters exercised their franchise. According to the *Log Cabin Democrat*, "Old General Apathy" was in full control.

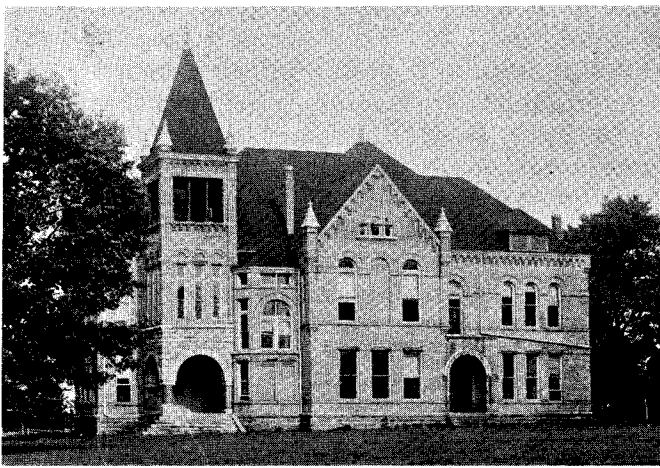
#### **List of Petitioners to Incorporate the City of Conway**

G.W. Bruce	W. Ingram
J.H. Calfee	B.F. Jones
G.T. Clifton	L.C. Lincoln
T.B. Dalton	P.P. Loetscher
J.H. Duncan	H.B. Pace
E.C. Dunlap	L.D. Pearle
J.W. Firestone	J.V. Mitchell
Max Frauenthal	A.T. Reedy
John J. Frazier	P.K. Rodgers
E.J. Hamilton	J.R. Sanders
Henry Hamilton	H.T. Shore
James Harkrider	L.B. Smith
L.D. Harrison	B.B. Stell
R.T. Harrison	W.E. Thompson
J.H. Hartje	J.J. Yancy
A.J. Harton	

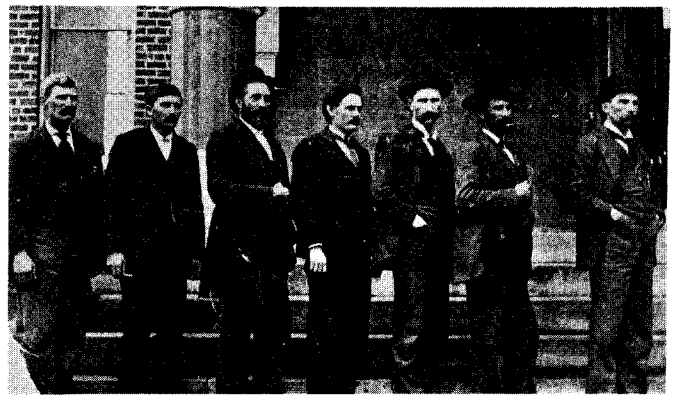


*Faulkner County's First Courthouse, 1873.* 4





*Faulkner County's Second Courthouse, 1893.*



*Political Leaders, circa 1894-98.  
Left to right: W.B. Wilson, R.S. Maddox, "Judge" Rice, Ike Campbell, J.N. Cornell, Edward Erbacher, H.B. Ingram.*



*Grand Jury, July, 1895*

*Front row, left to right: J.M. Roberts, J.S. Latimer, L.E. Pearson, W.H. Shannon, D.M. Chivers, E.E. Jones, J.M. Gentry. Back row: J.B. Ball, S.S. Wilson, James McLuer, A. Shoulders, Thomas Farris, J.L. George, D.O. Harton, J.A. Madden.*

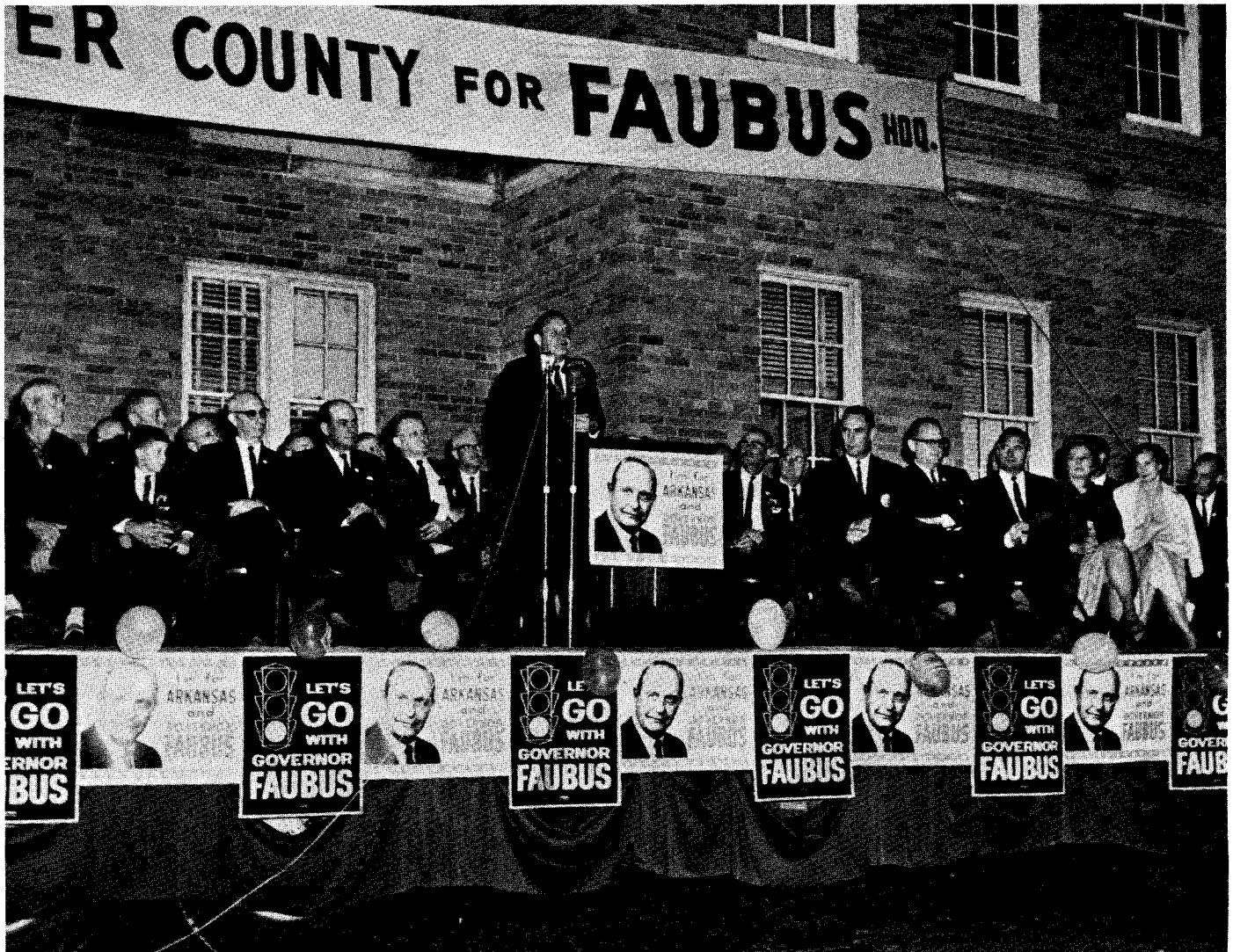




Sheriff James S. Johnson's home, across the street from Southern Cleaners. Mrs. Maude Nations, daughter of Johnson, lives in the house which was built around the original L-shaped house. Pictured here are Johnson and wife Minnie Carmichael Johnson, Anna Belle Erbacher with her doll, Mildred Groom (smallest child), and Maude Nation. Baby Carlos Johnson is in the buggy. The Johnsons moved to Conway from Enola in 1902.



Children of Rufus Haydon Sr. and Etta Thompson Haydon.



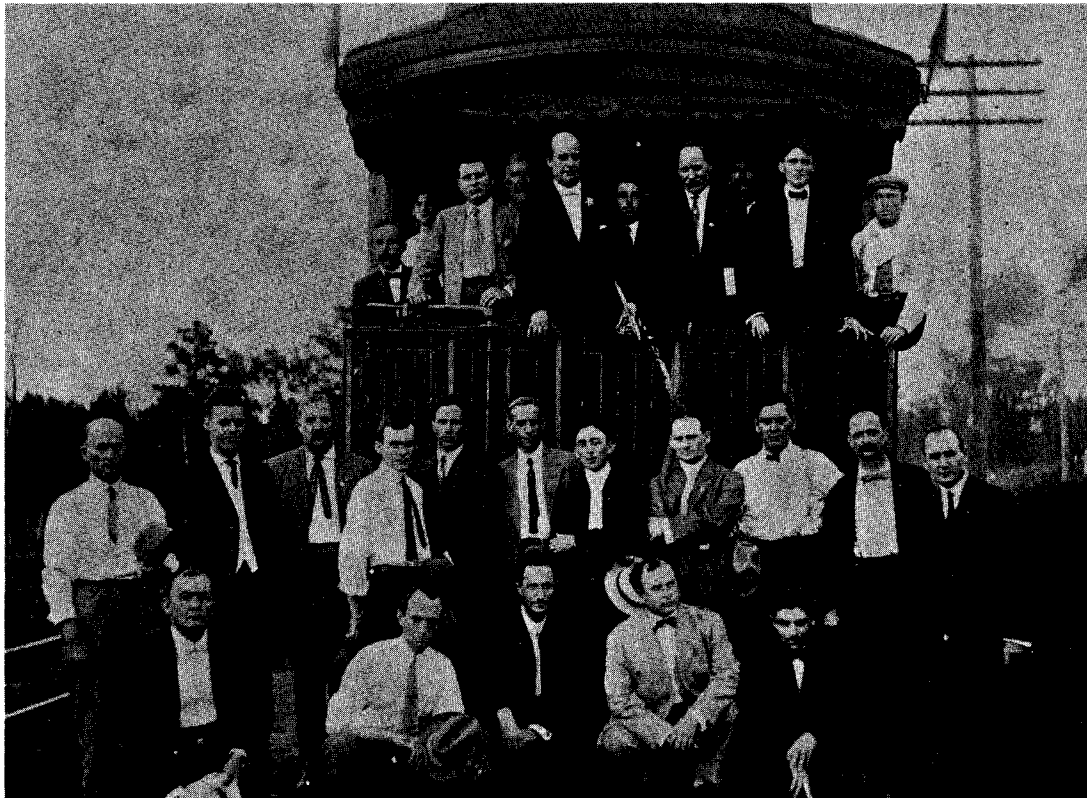
Political rally on steps of Faulkner County Courthouse, 1958. Among political leaders recognized are Joe Castleberry, Bill Sanson, Guy H. "Mutt" Jones, Charles Acuff, Archie Ford, and George Hartje, Jr.



*"Old Guard Rest Home" (1985)*

*Left to right: Sheriff Marlin Hawkins, Senator Guy "Mutt" Jones, Former Gov. Orval E. Faubus, Justice Jim Johnson.*

*Guy "Mutt" Jones plays host to President Harry S. Truman.*



*Campaign Train near Malvern, September, 1910. William Jennings Bryan, George W. Donaghey, and R. W. Robins and others.*