

Interview with  
Dorothy  
Mattocks  
VonCannon

**Interview with Dorothy Mattocks VonCannon**  
(Dorothy is the daughter of Bacchus Mattocks and Lena Ward Mattocks.)

Bacchus's grandfather, John Mattocks, was one of the early settlers along the White Oak River. John married Aples Frazar and they had several children. Their son James was born about 1845. He married Elizabeth Hatzell of Carteret County.

James graduated from Trinity College as a mathematician and surveyor. He was very good in his field and invented the first cotton planter. He turned down the money he was offered for his invention and his patent was stolen. His wife graduated from Salem College. It is interesting to note that although both of them had a college education none of their children went to college. Dorothy says that her grandfather always had many scientists and mathematicians come and discuss things with her grandfather but that he was so intelligent that he had difficulty communicating with others.

James and Elizabeth had nine children one of whom was Bacchus, who married Lena Ward. They had three children: Philip, Theodore and Dorothy.

Dorothy remembers as a child that their farm was about 75-80 acres of which 5 acres were of old pine timber which her father would never touch because he was saving that to sell in his old age. (The Base bought the land before that time came). They had 30 acres of river front. Their property had many magnolias and live oaks. They also had an oyster garden in the river.

Her family first lived in the old Mattock's home by the water but later built a home by the road.

She and her brothers walked everyday to the two room school which was 3 miles away. When she was in the sixth grade, they added a third room. In 1927 or 1928, when the schools were consolidated she had to go to Dixon. The bus would pick them up and they would have to put it on the ferry to get across the river. She said that the ferry was just big enough for the bus. She finished at Dixon in 1931. Her older brother boarded in Jacksonville and graduated from there and went onto Carolina. She went away to school and became a teacher. Her other brother went to college too. Hers was the only family in this area whose children were able to go to college and that was because her uncle helped them.

As a child, even though she was a girl, she had chores to do and she also had to help in the fields during the busy times of the year. Her mother taught her to sew.

She remembers fishing in the river with her brothers and had quite the reputation as an excellent fisher woman. She spoke about how crystal clear the river was. She said she could look down from the rowboat and see the fish swimming below.

She played with the Taylor children often. They would go over to their house and swim off Captain Matt's rafts. Of course, she went swimming completely clothed. Some days she would go down to the creek with her brothers and swing over it on grape vines. Her mother never found out about these escapades.

The people in this area including her family were mostly small scale farmers and fishermen. She spoke of how Ed Smith in Marines helped these families by extending them credit.

People helped each other. She remembers a woman who they called "Miss

Molly" If anyone was having a baby, she would arrive to help. Dorothy said that she didn't even think you had to send for her. She just arrived and stayed to help.

Medical care was mostly taken care of by the family. However, if you needed Dr. Bryan, someone had to ride the ferry or row across the river and then walk to his house. Once at his house which was not far down the road you had to hope he would be home. If he was not you could sit and wait or leave a note.