Clinton recalls colorful past as parish seat

These photographs of the town of Clinton, parish seat of East Feliciana Parish, were taken between 1900 and the snow of 1928. We're indebted to Al O'Brien of Ethel who copied these photos from the collection of Suzanne Peay of Zachary.

The two top pictures show the courthouse with a revolving gate (before mid-1930s) and in the snow of 1928.

The center photo at right is a postcard from 1900. Looking east, we see courthouse square, horses and wagons. Traditionally, Saturday was the day farm families came to Clinton to shop.

The first Saturday of each month, Clinton holds market day featuring crafts, food, a band, plant sale, jewelry, handmade furniture and an open-air garage sale.

The photo at lower right shows an ox train loaded with sections of trees crossing "Factory Green."

The photo below, taken in 1900, shows a building erected in 1855 called "The Old Factory Building." Over the years, the structure was home to the Masons, a thread factory and the Clinton Military Academy. The building was torn down around 1930.

In the photo at bottom left, we're looking south on Plank Road during the 1928 snow. The Norwood and Record houses are visible in the photo.

Clinton, 30 miles north of Baton Rouge, was named for DeWitt Clinton, governor of New York who's credited with completion of the Erie Canal. He was defeated by James Madison in the presidential election of 1812.

About 1824, East and West Feliciana parishes were created from one large parish whose seat of government had been Jackson. The Legislature established the two parishes with seats of government in Clinton (East) and St. Francisville (West) "impelled by complaints that the floods and quick sand of Thompson Creek established a barrier to the speedy and cheap course of justice."

Thompson Creek is the boundary between East and West Feliciana parishes.

"The commissioners selected the site for the parish seat on which Clinton now stands because it was well watered by perennial springs and by Pretty Creek and wooded by dense forests of pine and hard woods all around it."

Source: "Louisiana Places" by Clare D'Artois Leeper

Got a picture for "Remember when"? Take photos to the offices of the Foundation for Historical Louisiana in the Old Governor's Mansion, 502 North Blvd. Please call 387-2464 before dropping off pictures. Park in front of the mansion.

You can mail photos to P.O. Box 908, ZIP code 70821, along with a brief description or story concerning the picture and identifications of any people in the picture. It's a good idea to send us copies of your photos but no photo copies or newspaper clippings, please. Computer scanned photos are usually publishable.

Postcard from 1900 shows Clinton's courthouse square, possibly on market day.
'The Old Factory Building' was home to Masons, a thread factory and a military school.

The viewer looks south on Plank Road from Clinton during the snow of 1928.

An ox train crosses Clinton's 'Factory Green' laden with sections of large trees.

Photos from the collection of Suzanne Peay