

Sayre, Arkansas

By Keith & Fulton Graham as presented to the Ouachita/Calhoun Genealogical Society at a meeting, 11 March 2004

Sayre was located in the northwest part of Ouachita County in 1877-1878. A sawmill was built there north of the railroad tracks. A store was also in the community as well as several farms. Artifacts such as horse shoes, nails, and locks have been found at the old site of Sayre.

There were two churches, Methodist and Baptist. There were two schools, one for whites and one for blacks. The schools were enclosed by a high fence that had steps built over them for entry.

The railroad was built in the area in 1884 and a Post Office was established. A Mr. Benton built the second sawmill. The blacksmith was George Rudisill. Thomas Johnson served on the school board.

No one knows where the name Sayre came from. Some people believe it was named after a woman of that name who had camped on Wallace's farm. Lee Reader wanted it named after him, and around 1895 the Post Office name was changed from Sayre to Reader and then back to Sayre. Reader built his sawmill a mile down the tracks from Sayre.

On April 14, 1986, at Sayre, Oscar Rowley had to sell his property. A. c. Webb bought two mules for \$50. Mr. Wage opened a store just west of Sayre where there were several houses. That community was called Wage Town. Some of the families were Bratton, Floyd, William Turner, Douglas, Evans and Hesterly. Sayre had some kind of government and a jail was located west of Wage Town.

The 1900 census showed Sayre had quickly grown into a town of approximately 200 residents. In 1928 people began to move away and by 1936 Sayre had faded. In the 1940s the railroad moved the Sayre Depot to Reader, one mile down the tracks.

In the 1970s the old Sayre Depot was moved to Fair Park in Hope. The building remains in the park, which is a part of the Hope Watermelon Festival each August.

Hawkins Cemetery has two graves, one which is Dr. Hawkins.

Now the railroad is gone and Sayre is just a memory.

Keith passed around pictures of school groups from 1912-1926. Attendees Mable Brothers and B. J. Walthall added to the discussion of Sayre.