

Two Bayou, Arkansas

*By Carolyn Cox with thanks to Gerald Keith, Geraldine Adams Swartz and Bob Tolley
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The old community of Two Bayou got its name from the stream that flows through the west central part of Ouachita County. The town appeared on two maps of the county, the 1855 Colton map and the 1879 Gamble map. According to a book of early Arkansas post offices, the Two Bayou Post Office was established in 1851. The location was given as Section 31 of Township 13S, Range 18W, which places it about eight miles west of Camden on present-day Hwy 278, just past the junction with county roads 11 and 219. The earliest patentees of land in Section 31 were Robert and James Gill, Joseph and Mary A. Gillespie, William Stott and Thomas G. Wright, but the name Two Bayou was applied to much more than that one square-mile section. Among the first settlers in the area were Lucius J. Greening and his brother Orlando A. Greening, who came from Alabama about 1845. A street, a lake and a cemetery still bear their name.

The farmers in the area evidently had a great respect for education. In January 1850, the opening of Two Bayou Male and Female Academy was announced. The school was described as “a large, comfortable and commodious frame building to answer the purpose both of a church and an academy.” As the school hoped to attract students from a widespread area, the trustees represented several neighboring political townships. Those named were Tyra Hill, B.F. Jordan, Henry Cleaver, James B. Lee, William B. Hickman, Henry C. Stockman, John G. Pipkin, William Cleaver, O.A. Greening, Jesse Jenkins, I.D. Bragg and John S. Gill. Teachers were to be Samuel B. Nolly and Mrs. O.A. Greening. The exact location of the school is unknown, but it may have been associated with the Two Bayou Methodist Church. This landmark still stands off Hwy 278W down Ouachita 125. The sign indicates that the church was organized in 1864. The present building was constructed about 1875 by J.T. Mendenhall on the site of an earlier church, or churches, going back to the 1840s. The building was used for services until the 1940s. In 1998 both the church and the cemetery were listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The cemetery records the names of many local families.

The Two Bayou Post Office was closed in 1871, but the name remained for the general area along Hwy 278W. In 1916 a two-acre plot was set aside for a public school. This property was about halfway between Greening Lake and present-day Ouachita 11. Miss Marie Yarbrough taught there in the early 1920s. In her diary she mentioned students with the names Smith, Anderson, Adams, Ellis, Rogers and Wright. She boarded with Ernest and Lena Greening Rogers and Arthur and Bettie Hickman Adams during her tenure there. Miss Effie Warren taught the black students.

During the next few decades, Douglas B. Greening, a grandson of Orlando A. Greening, operated a small neighborhood grocery across the road from his two-story house beside Greening Lake. When the new road was built in the 1940s, the gas pumps were taken out and the store was moved to the back of their house. The Greenings also ran a dairy from which he delivered milk to Camden and the surrounding area. The quaint red dairy barn still draws the attention of travelers.