

Swamps of Southeast: A History

Compiled by

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Monopoly Marsh, Mingo NWR

Tonight's Story

- The Land
- The People
- The Next Chapter

Otter Slough





The Land

Settlements Along Ridges

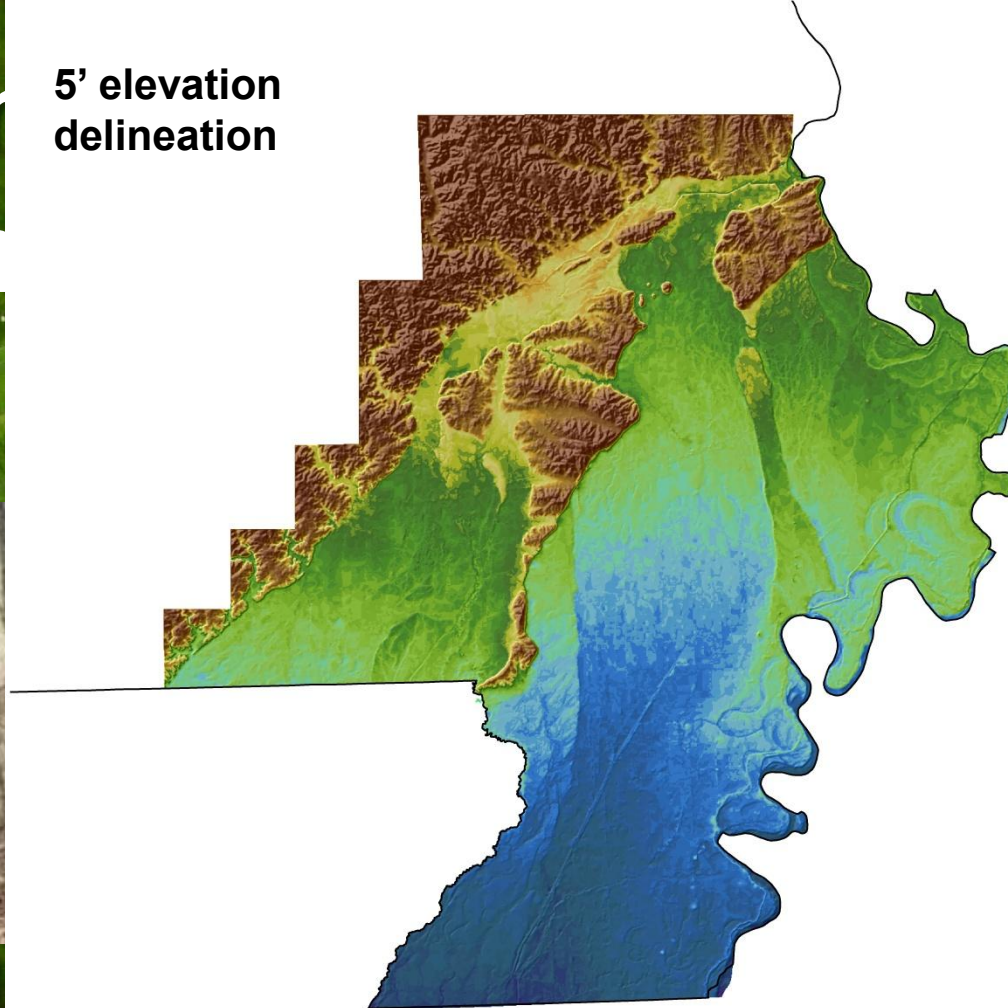
- The only places to settle were along the more elevated ridges
- County seats
- Older towns



Six in all th

5' elevation
delineation

akes world



Bootheel 24K Elevations, 50m resolution

 Missouri Border

ClippedBig_Bootheel_24K_DEM

Elevation (Feet)

 225.9 - 230

 230.1 - 235

 235.1 - 240

 240.1 - 245

 245.1 - 250

 250.1 - 255

 255.1 - 260

 260.1 - 265

 265.1 - 270

 270.1 - 275

 275.1 - 280

 280.1 - 285

 285.1 - 290

 290.1 - 295

 295.1 - 300

 300.1 - 305

 305.1 - 310

 310.1 - 315

 315. - 320

 320.1 - 325

 325.1 - 330

 330.1 - 335

 335.1 - 340

 340.1 - 345

 345.1 - 350

 350.1 - 355

 355.1 - 360

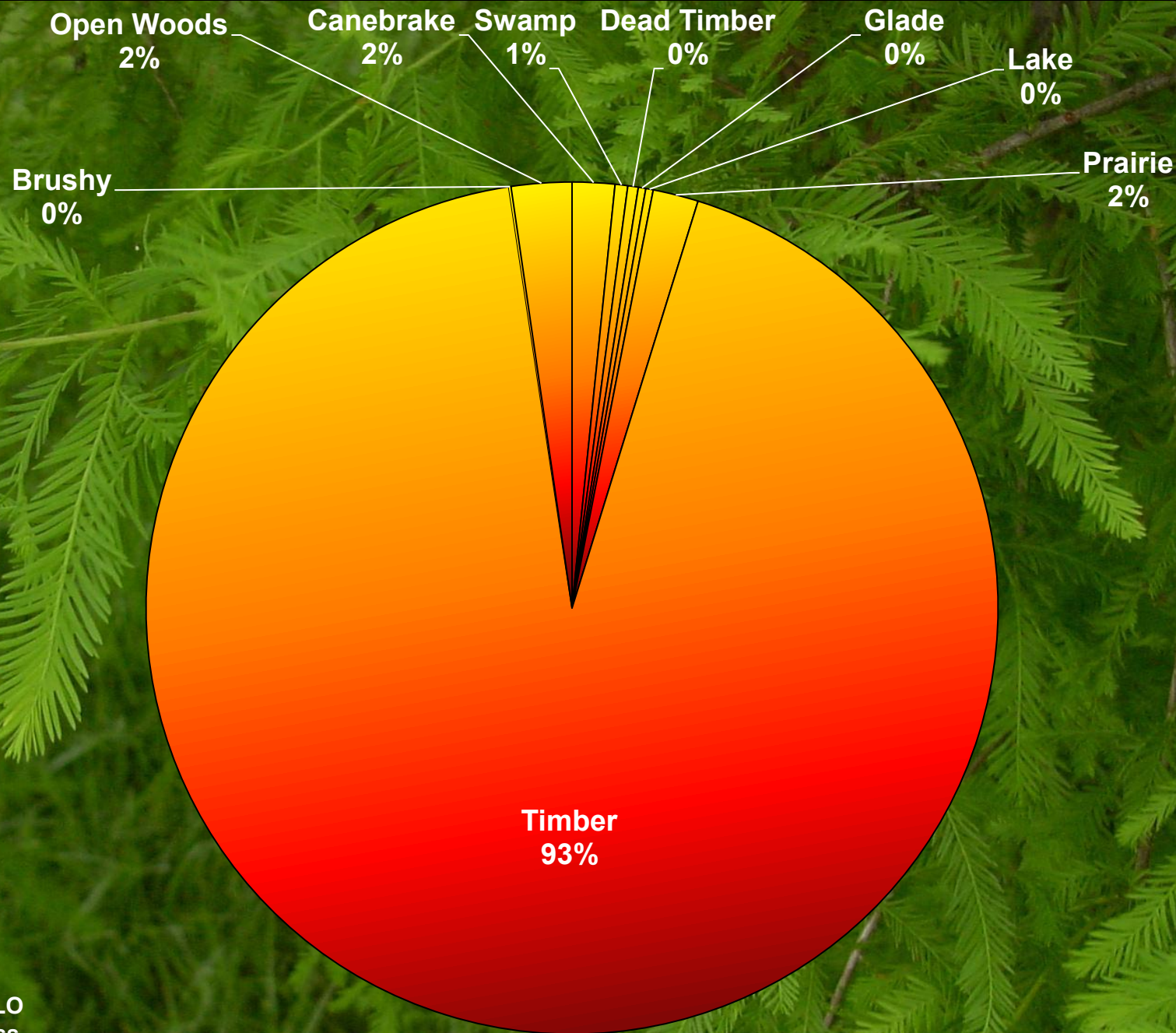
 360.1 - 365

 365.1 - 370

 370.1 - 400

 400.1 - 450.7

 450.7 - 515



Based on GLO
notes for Miss.
Lowlands

Lowland Habitat Types



The People

Water & Transportation

- Dugout/ John boat
- Pole road/ plank road
- Railroads



Dugout on St.
Francis River

Plank Road over St. Francis
River

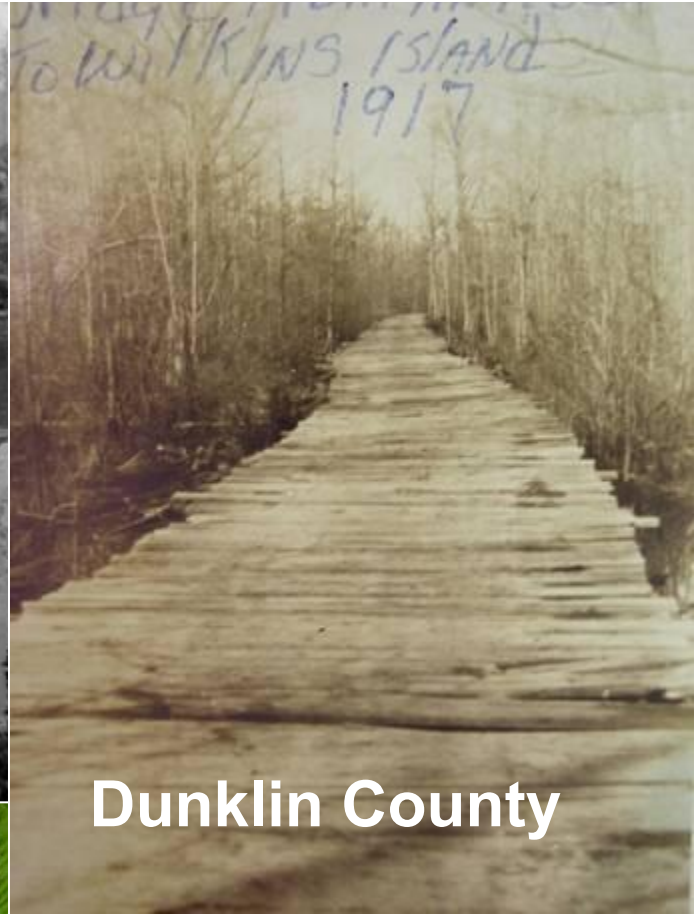


Looking E. St. F. River Bridge

Pole Roads & Plank Roads: “Corduroy Roads”



Little River



Dunklin County

Tram on a "Pole" Base



ALL TRAM IN ST. FRANCIS SWAMPS WEST OF KENNETT - CIRCA 1900

Attempts to Settle Encouraged

- Federal Government - Swamp Land Act of 1850
- State Government – turned around and gave the land to the counties
- County Government – difficulty finding people to take the land. Pay taxes on swamp land?
- Clearing and draining required but unsuccessful



Swamp Near Cardwell

Living Conditions



Disease

- Malaria, introduced from explorers
“the chills”
- “milk sickness” Infant death due to cattle grazing the swamp snake root (Eupatorium)
- Typhoid was common
- Swamps get a reputation as disease ridden areas

Market Hunting

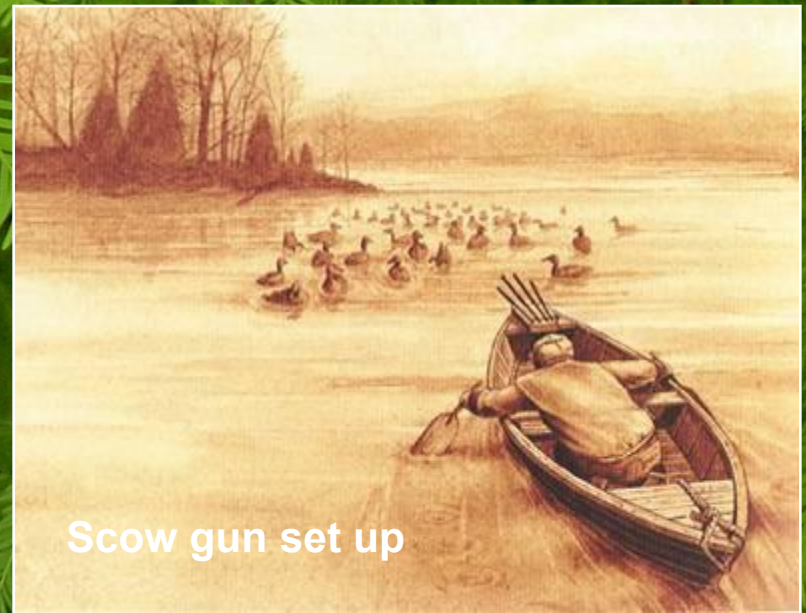
- Feeding the cities
- No regulations on harvest
- Rail roads shipped the animals to market



Punt guns or
“big” guns



*1 ¼ lb of shot
1/4 lb of black powder



Scow gun set up

Market Hunting

J. C. JACKSON
WHOLESALE
POULTRY AND WILDFOWL
BALT. MD. EST. 1786

NAME	SHIPPING PRICES	PRICE/PAIR
Buffall Head	#	30-50
Brant		1.25
Black Duck		1.25
Whistler		30-50
Butterballs		1.00
Broad Bills		30-50
Goose		2.00
Red Heads		2.50
Capeas Back Prime		5.00-7.00



Market store front



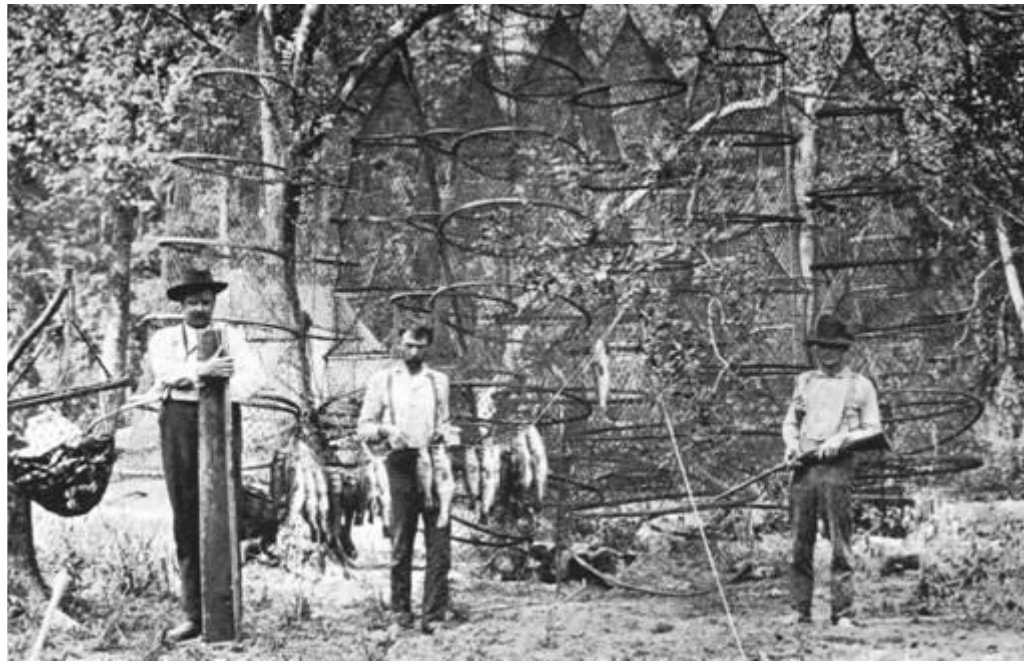
Hunting Clubs

- Rail roads connected them to the big cities
- These were some of the first people to push for conservation and had club rules
- However, don't tell them what to do!



Hunting Clubs

- Fishing too . . .

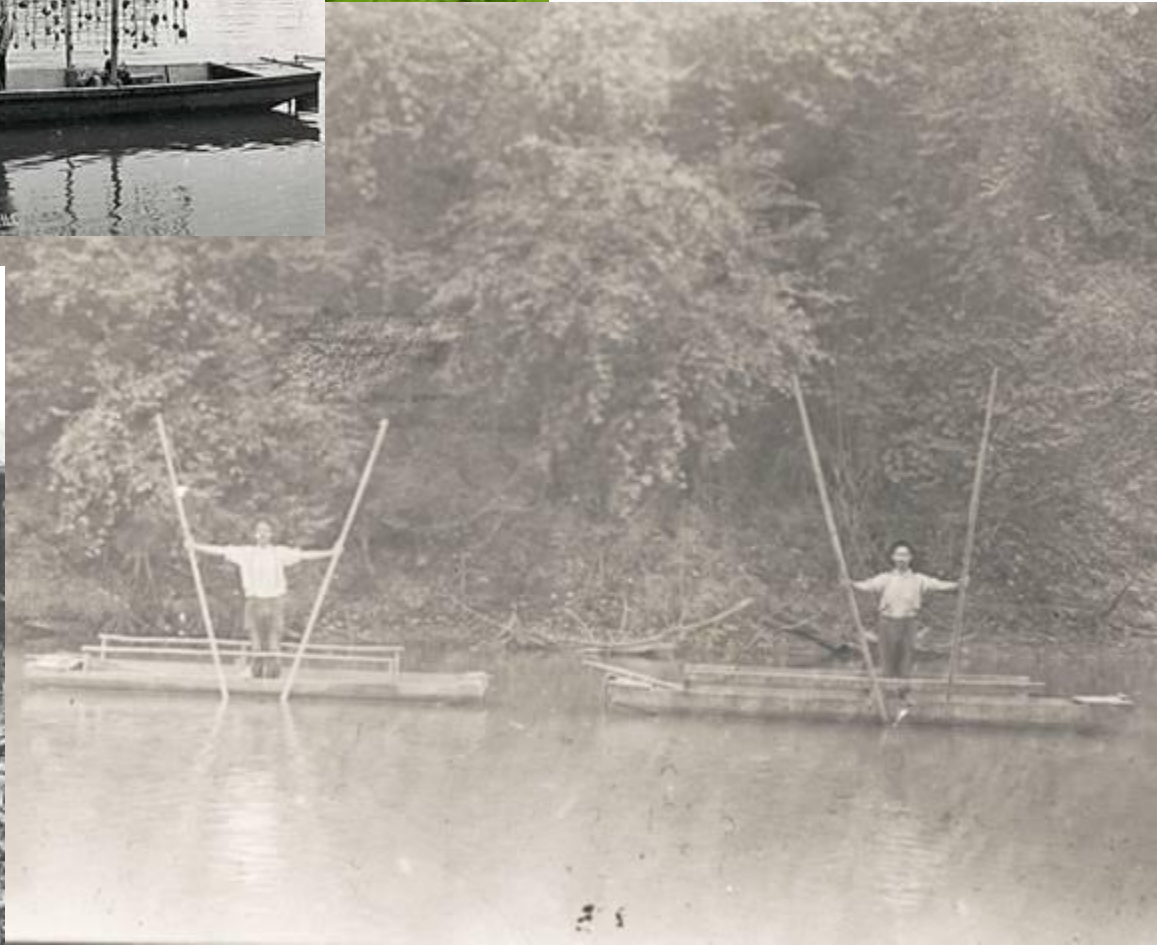


A Few Facts

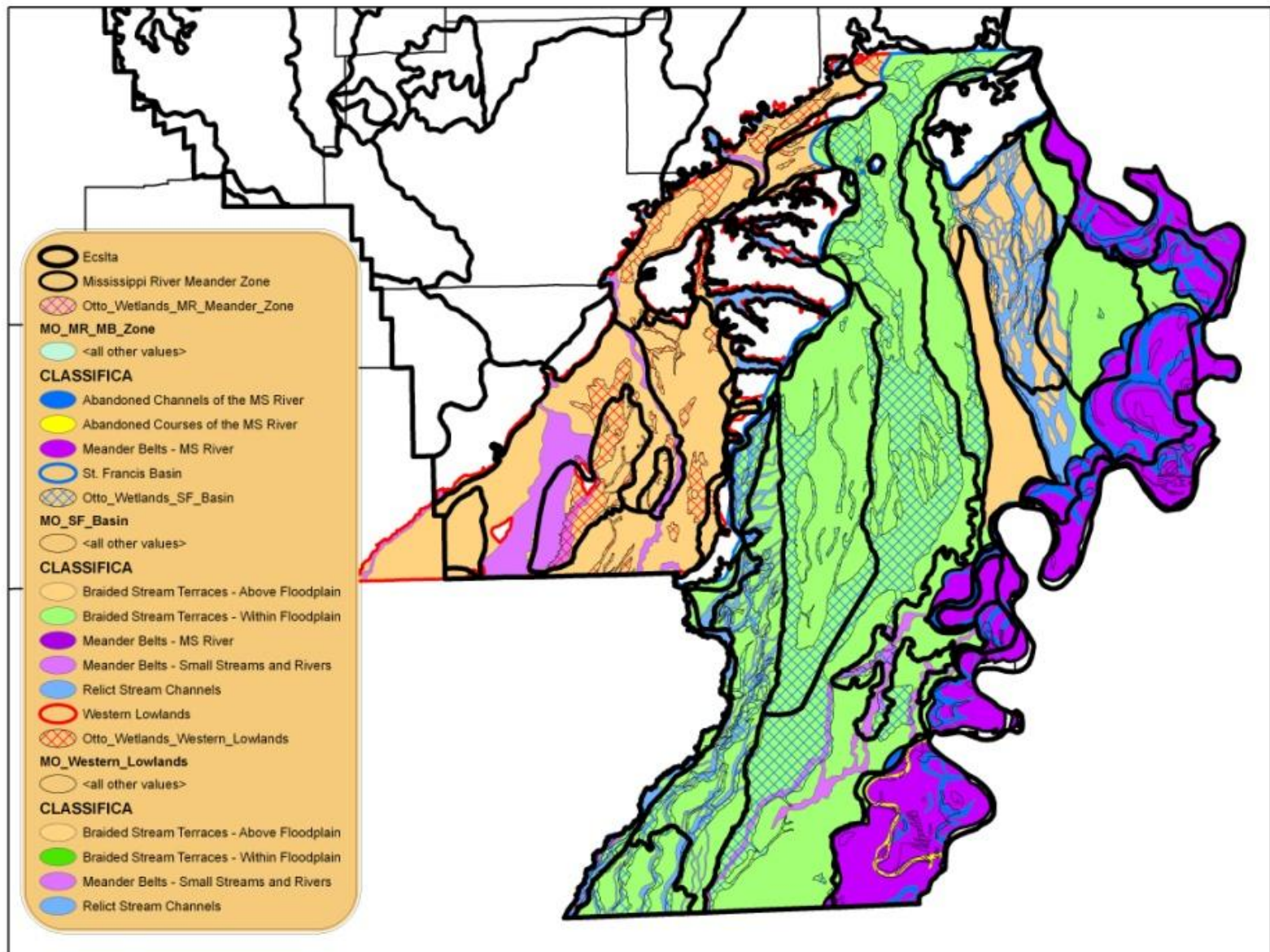
- SE was the last site for Bison, Elk, Mt. lions, Wolves to still be recorded before extirpation
- SE was the last area to still have resources to exploit
- SE human population was on the increase until 1950
- Mississippi County had 5x more people in 1934 than 1994



Musselling



Southeast Missouri Lowlands



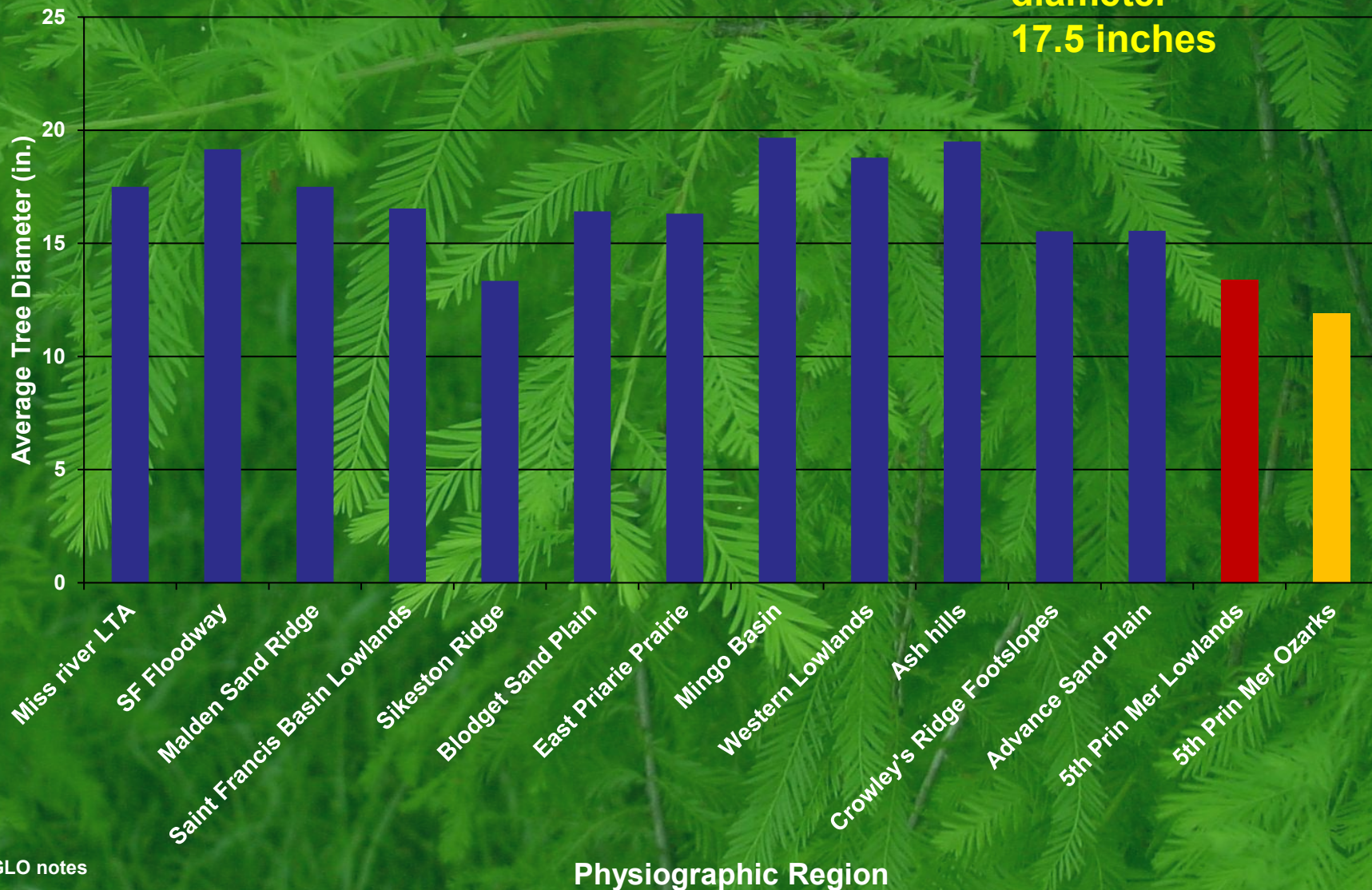
Trees Were HUGE

Gideon Area 1910's

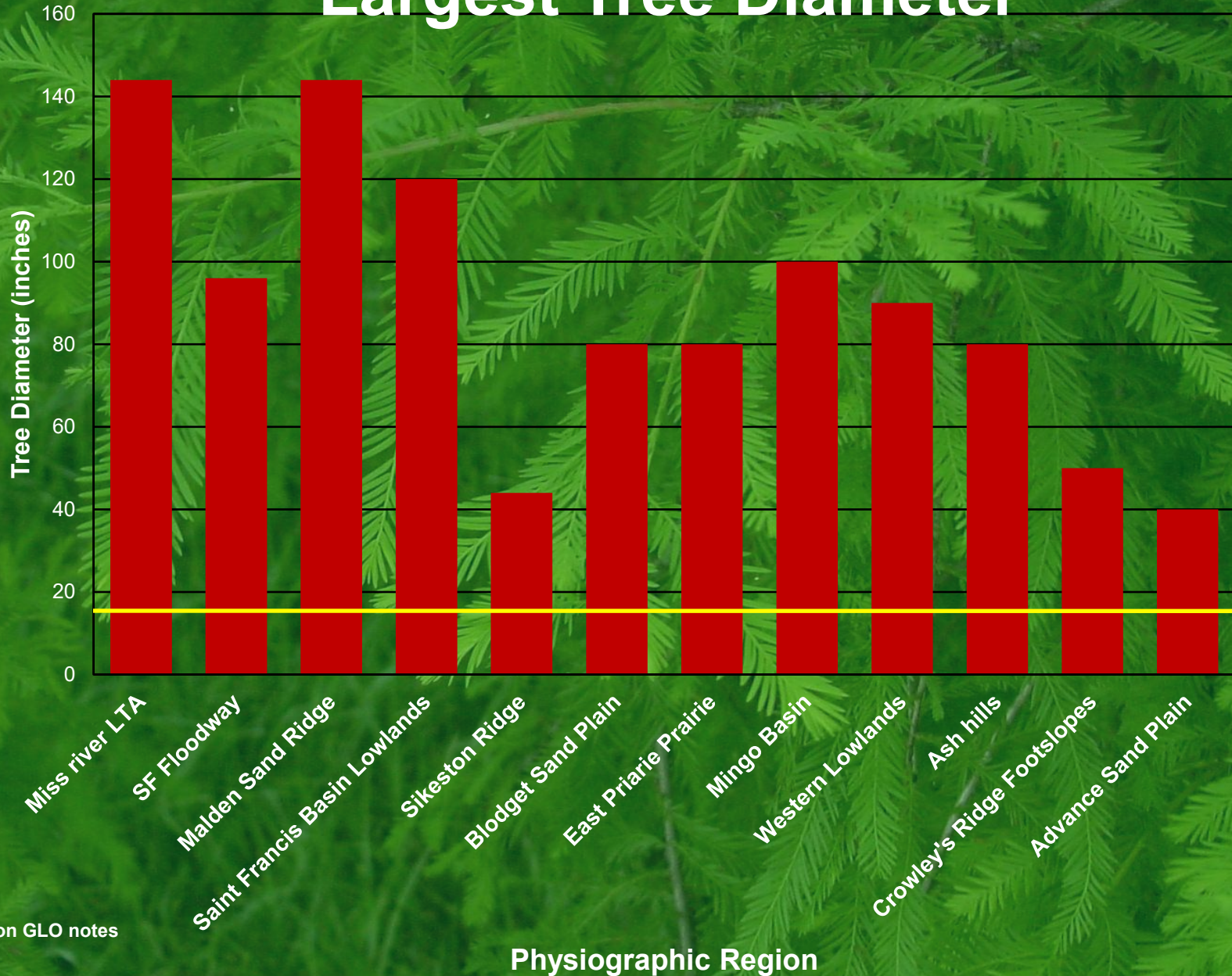


Mississippi Lowlands Average Tree Diameter

***Average
diameter
17.5 inches**

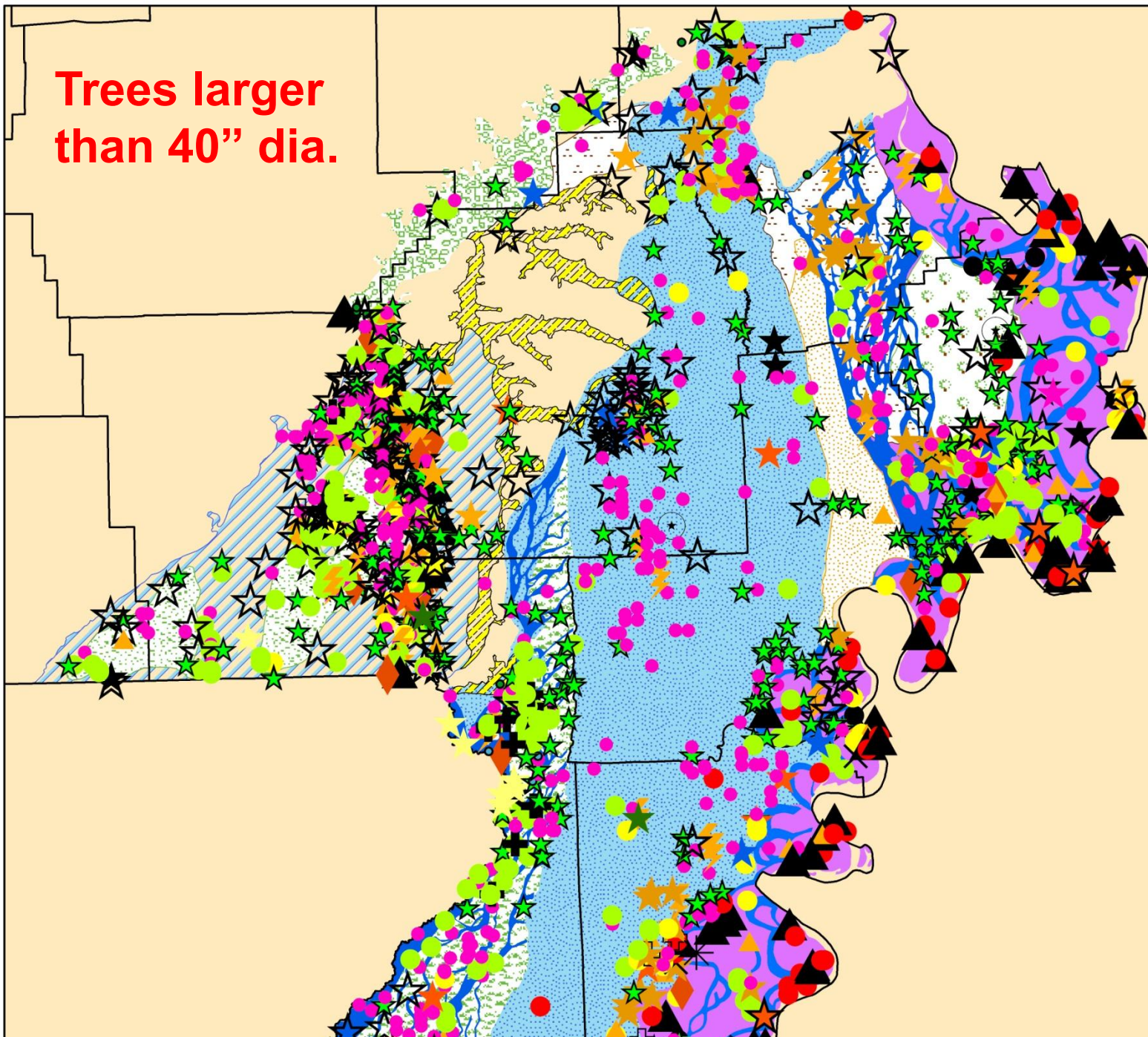


Mississippi Lowlands Largest Tree Diameter



Average
lowland
tree diam.
17.5 in.

Trees larger
than 40" dia.



Legend

Trees_Greater_than_40_InchesExport_Output

<all other values>

SPECIES

- ash
- black gum
- black oak
- bur oak
- cherrybark oak
- cottonwood
- cypress
- elm
- hickory
- locust
- maple
- oak
- overcup oak
- pecan
- pin oak
- post oak
- red oak
- sassafras
- swamp chestnut oak
- sweet gum
- sycamore
- walnut
- water oak
- water tupelo
- white oak

Tree Cutting

- Considerations
 - Water
 - Buttress
- Tools
 - Ax
 - Saw
 - Wedges
 - Dynamite



Cutting



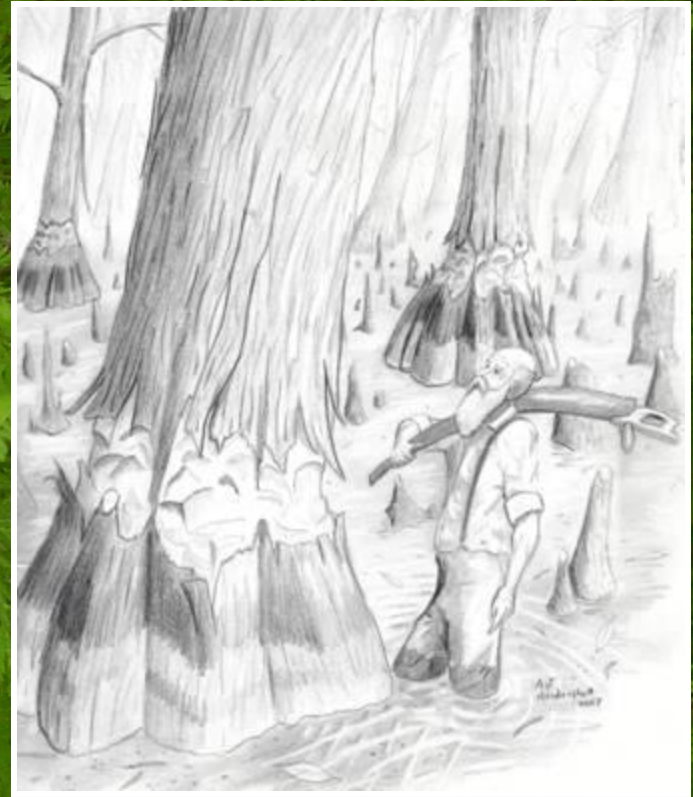
Scaffold



Standing on Canoes



Girdling



Skidding the Logs

- By mule or oxen
- Or sometimes by water





Hauling the Logs

Log Yard in Dunklin County



Saw Mills

- Eight to twelve mile spacing



Drainage



Canal Digging



Cutting
Stump Pulling



What We Have/Had

- Missouri formerly had 2.5 Million acres of wetland
- Of that almost half was in SEMO
- SEMO only makes up 5% of our landmass
- Today we have roughly 10% of our wetlands or 450,000 acres

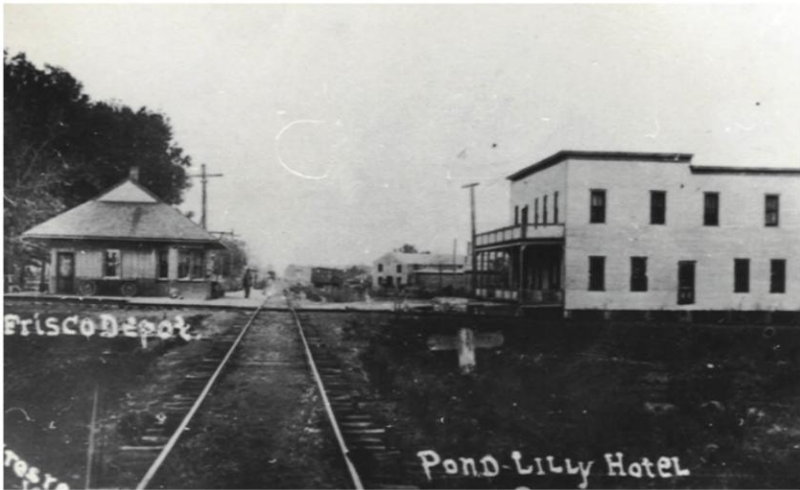




The Next Chapter

Social Implications

- Most sawmill towns are gone or dwindled
- Socio-economic strata is distinctive
- Ecology and society are linked



Brownwood early 1900's



Brownwood 2008 same view

Today: Wetland Management Challenges

- Water management
- Loss of connectivity
- Keeping species
- Satisfying public demand
- Public sentiment toward wetlands



What Can We Do?

- Learn all you can
- Visit a wetland
- Purchase a waterfowl stamp
- Grow Native!™ rain gardens
- Teach others and let your enthusiasm show!
- Tell the story of wetland decline without vilifying what happened



The Swamp Has a History as Rich as Its Soil

- People are a part of that story



Corkwood