

SMITH OAKS PLANTATION

by Charles S. Wilburn



Family Plantation Home



Seated: William Russell Saunders Wilburn, Estelle Marie Smith Wilburn; Standing: Tom Wilburn, Saunders Wilburn, Esther Mercer, Charles Wilburn Mary Ann Wilburn

Tom Wilburn, still living in December 2007, has just published a book about his life. Here is a photo of the [cover of the book](#). If interested in purchasing a copy: To order a copy of "Tales of Tom Wilburn," contact Jeannine Smith by writing her at P.O. Box 15, Artesia, MS 39736, call her at (662) 272-5600, or e-mail rockynkelly@hotmail.com.

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Other Links: <http://www.lowndesmsgenealogy.org/Smith/Acknowledgement.html>



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The Lowndes County, Mississippi farm known as "Smith Oaks Plantation", lying some 3 miles east of Artesia, was originally composed of 400 acres purchased in December, 1833, from the United States of America by John Smith, Jr., of near Leighton, Moulton County, Alabama. The United States had acquired it from the Choctaw Indian Tribe by the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek.

John McLaughlin Smith, a son of John Smith, Jr., was a professor at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. He had graduated, then later attained a Master's Degree in Mathematics from that institution. He was one of a total of eight professors and instructors at the University when he resigned in December 1837, and came immediately to the Mississippi site and began purchasing the land from his father; building a home, and starting the first ever clearing and cultivation of the land.

John McLaughlin Smith served as a Representative to the Mississippi General Assembly 1859-1861 and also was at one time a member of the Lowndes County Board of Supervisors.

He married Emily McGee of Alabama in 1841 and twelve children were born of this union, the ten oldest surviving to maturity.

The three oldest, Benjamin Lafayette, Roger Sherman, and William Penn, all that became old enough, served in the Confederate States Army in many campaigns and battles. Most of this service of each of them was with the Forty-Third Infantry Regiment which was organized at Columbus, Mississippi.

All three lived through the War, although Benjamin Lafayette was severely wounded and escaped with General Forest at Fort Donaldson; was wounded and captured at Vicksburg, then paroled; and then severely wounded and captured at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee.

Of the ten surviving children, the seventh born, was Charles Rush Smith. He was too young to serve with the Confederacy, being born June 9, 1855. Eventually he bought out the interests of the other heirs to Smith Oaks, which by the time of the death of his father, John McLaughlin Smith, had increased from the original 400 to about 3,000 acres. Charles Rush Smith expanded it to over 5,000 acres.

Charles Rush Smith married Mary Ann Edwards Fulgham, widow of John Henry Fulgham. There was one child born of this union, Estelle Marie Smith. Eventually she acquired title to the entire property mentioned previously.

Estelle Marie Smith married William Russell Saunders Wilburn, an attorney of Montgomery County, Mississippi. Four children were born of this marriage: Charles Smith Wilburn; William Russell Saunders Wilburn, Jr., Thomas Luther Wilburn, and Mary Ann Wilburn (Later Mrs. Hugh Young).

William Russell Saunders Wilburn, Jr., a Captain in the Infantry, was killed in action in Germany, while serving with the 87th Infantry Division, a part of General Patton's Third Army (WWII). He is buried in Belgium and was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for the action that terminated his life.

The other three children of William Russell Saunders Wilburn, Sr., and Estelle Marie Smith are living at the time of this writing (1980). Two of them, Charles Smith Wilburn and Thomas Luther Wilburn have acquired the interests of the other heirs and they live on the property and actively farm it.

It is believed that this is the only farm in Lowndes County, and one of the few in Mississippi, in which title was patented directly from the United States of America, and has been actively farmed by each succeeding generation, and is now owned and farmed by direct descendants of the original purchaser.

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