



Artesia, population 527, is situated five miles south of Highway 82 on Highway 45A in Lowndes County. Named for its deep wells, it has an interesting history.

Peter Pichylinn held an early land grant which included the future site of Artesia. There was once an Indian village near the site where David Fulsom established a stand in 1830. This first settlement was along the old Robinson Road which connected with the Natchez Trace between Doaks Stand and Brashears Stand. A Revolutionary War soldier is buried nearby.

The original townsite became known as Beulah Grove. It was moved to its present site, becoming Artesia after the railroad came through about 1850. The first post office opened in 1856. The dining room of the old Chidsey Hotel at Artesia became famous from St. Louis to Mobile for serving fresh seafood shipped in daily by train from the coast.

A small Civil War skirmish was fought on the grounds of the Methodist Church and this building served for a time as a hospital. The church building later burned down on three different occasions but was rebuilt each time on the same site.

The Sentinel, a Columbus newspaper, advertised the grand opening of Billups and Perkins, a dry goods store at Artesia on May 1, 1867. Eight years later, Artesia was chartered as a town in 1875. The Artesia Bank opened in 1901 in a building designed by a West Point architect. The National Bank of Commerce serves Artesia today in that building.

Artesia was called the "hay capital of the world" in the 1920s and 30s. Wagons would line up for miles at the railroad to unload hay for shipment all over the country. An annual Hay Festival is held the third Saturday in May to commemorate this event. It features arts, crafts, a cookout, entertainment and homecoming events.

The Roberts and McIlwain families were in business over 100 years in Artesia, just to name a few of the long lasting family names in Artesia.

Artesia operates its own water, gas and sewer systems and a volunteer fire department. 4-County Electric Power Association serves electrical needs, while

Franklin Telephone Company provides telephone service.

The Mississippi and Gulf Railroad has its headquarters, switching yard and shop at Artesia, and United Cement Company has a plant there. There is a branch library in the City Hall Building, and an old railroad building has been converted into a community center. It contains a health children's center and meeting facilities for senior citizens.