

The Allen Carr Saga

by Timothy Dean Hudson

Allen Carr and his younger brother, Dr. William Cleaton Carr, arrived in what is now Union Parish with the first wave of Alabama settlers who followed Dr. Carr's father-in-law, Col. Matthew Wood, to the Piney Hills in January 1837. After the creation of Union Parish, both Carr brothers actively worked to establish the parish government. William C. Carr built the first house in Farmerville, served as the first sheriff, and represented Union Parish in the Louisiana House of Representatives during the 1840s. Allen Carr built a substantial farming operation two miles north of Farmerville and worked with building many of the earliest roads in the new parish.

Allen Carr's life involves double tragedies, two violent and bloody episodes that occurred seventeen years apart. Born in 1796 in eastern Georgia, when he was a boy of ten or eleven years, Carr moved west with his parents into Laurens County, Georgia, where his brother, Dr. William Cleaton Carr, was born in 1809. Allen Carr, married, acquired taxable property, and became active in local legal affairs by the mere age of twenty, before legally becoming an adult. By 1820, Carr and his wife had two daughters.

After Gen. Andrew Jackson soundly defeated the "*Red Sticks*," the hostile faction of the Creek Nation, at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814, the United States gave him free reign to negotiate an end to the conflict. His strong-armed tactics betrayed the alliance of the faction of Creeks that helped the Americans defeat the Red Sticks, and they resulted in the United States obtaining vast swaths of the Creek's pristine land in Georgia and what is now southern Alabama. Jackson's tactics aroused increased bitterness among the defeated faction of the Creeks.

Refusing to accept their defeat, many of those who had adhered to the anti-American Red Stick policy moved south into Florida, where Spanish agents still supported them. They gradually merged with their cousins further south, the Seminoles, and actively continued to oppose American expansion into Indian lands. After obtaining that region from Spain, the United States created Florida Territory on 30 March 1822.

Although the defeated Red Sticks, the Seminoles, and their allies among smaller local Indian nations still presented threats of violence, white settlers began moving from Georgia into the Florida panhandle. By the mid-1820s, Allen Carr had joined the white influx into Florida Territory, settling on a farm located on the Aucilla River near the Georgia line. He lived only a short distance east of Tallahassee in what would become Jefferson County in 1827, on or very near the road leading from Tallahassee to St. Augustine. Carr's sister and her husband, Mary Carr and John

Truluck, had joined Allen and his family in Florida, apparently living either with them or on an adjoining farm.

By 1826, Allen Carr and his wife had four daughters. On November 26th of that year, their son Allen Carr, Jr. was born on their Aucilla River farm. Less than two weeks after giving birth, Mrs. Carr left with her husband on a trip. She took her infant son, and it appears that Mary Carr Truluck accompanied them on the journey. The Carrs left their four daughters at their farm in the care of the girls' uncle, John Truluck, and a slave. On the morning of December 6th, a party of Indians attacked the Carr farm, butchering the four young girls, Truluck, and the slave. The Indians threw the bodies into the Carr dwelling and burned it, and then destroyed everything they could at the farm before moving on to commit similar depredations on other white settlers in northern Florida and southern Georgia. The attacks caused the governors of Florida Territory and Georgia to order out their militias in December to protect the frontier.

In addition to the Georgia and Florida militias, the 4th Infantry Regiment, United States Army under the command of Captain Dade scoured the region, becoming “...actively engaged in arresting and disarming the Indians, many of whom are painted for war, and display hostility.” Panic ensued across the Florida panhandle and southern Georgia, where the Indians committed additional murders in Thomas County, on the Florida border. Initial reports claimed that Dade's forces encountered

...a number of Indians, painted and prepared for hostilities...from whom it was learned that two hundred of their brethren had been embodied and were in a state of readiness for making a formidable attack upon the Georgia settlers.

The media blamed the attacks on the Seminoles and Lower Creeks and urged preparations for a general Indian invasion. In reality, a group of only seven disaffected Indians without any general tribal support committed the depredations. Thirty Appalachian Indian warriors came to assist Dade in searching for the renegade Indians, who then made an attack on the Adams family, during which three of the seven were killed. Dade's forces soon captured the remaining four and sent them across the border to Thomas County Georgia for trial. Despite the capture, the region remained in a state of fear through the summer, lamenting the July departure of Dade's command, when they moved west to Pensacola.

The four Indians were tried for the murders of Carr's children, brother-in-law, and slave, and for the Thomas County murders on 25 June 1827. One of the Indians died in captivity, but the court convicted the surviving three of murder and ordered their execution. The first two were hung in succession on June 28th, and “they bore their fate with uncommon fortitude.” When the last one was

hung, the rope suspending him by the neck broke, and he fell to the ground. He stood and inquired whether *"they were done with him."* When receiving a negative response, *"...he said with great non-chalance, "Try it again then."*

Immediately following the Indian attacks, Allen Carr joined the militia in their search for the Indians who committed the atrocity, leaving his wife to attempt to salvage what she could from their destroyed farm and comfort his widowed sister, Mary Carr Truluck, besides caring for their infant son. The next week, Carr's wife and sister petitioned the Florida Territorial Legislature, *"...praying a sustenance in consequence of injuries sustained from the Indians..."* On 13 January 1833, Allen Carr's representative in the United States House filed his petition, *"...praying indemnity for depredations committed on his property by the Seminole Indians."* The House tabled Carr's petition on February 4th, where it remained for the next twenty years. He never received any compensation.

Shortly after his daughters' murders, Allen Carr moved his family to Alabama, settling first in Wilcox County. He had another daughter, Sarah, born there in April 1831. He soon moved to neighboring Butler County, where he bought a farm in 1836. In January 1837, he immigrated to what is now Union Parish with his family. Allen Carr's wife died during the 1830s, so by 1840, he lived on his farm a few miles from Farmerville with his son, Allen Carr, Jr. and daughter, Sarah Carr.

Carr owned adult enslaved males, Dick and Jerry, as well as five adult enslaved females. By all accounts, Carr treated his slaves extremely well, described as a *"too kind and indulgent master."* In the spring of 1842, Madison J. Mullen arrived in Union Parish and found employment near Carr's farm, and by late 1843 or early 1844, Mullen became indebted to Carr. In an attempt to erase his debt, Mullen began grooming Dick and Jerry to assassinate Carr. To bring his nefarious scheme to fruition, Mullen convinced the enslaved men that they suffered *"...under the exasperation of some imaginary affront..."* from Carr, and he then provided them with a shotgun.

On Monday, 15 April 1844, while Carr sat beside and played with his daughter, Sarah, on their farm, one of the enslaved workers loaded the shotgun *"...with a heavy charge of buck-shot, discharged the contents into his master's head, producing instantaneous death..."*, while the other enslaved man assisted. After murdering Carr, the slaves and Mullen absconded. Although local authorities captured Dick and Jerry quickly, Mullen initially eluded them. After a trial, the jury found the slaves guilty of murder, and the judge sentenced them to death. Sheriff James H. Seale built gallows for the slaves' public executions in Farmerville, and they were hanged for murder on Friday, April 19th, the first state executions in the newly created parish.

Meanwhile, local farmer Frederick Brazeal apprehended Madison J. Mullen, for which Carr's estate paid him a reward of \$150. In addition, the estate paid attorneys McGuire & Ray another \$150 for their prosecution of Mullen. That fall, the Union Parish District Court convicted Madison J. Mullen of *"using language to slaves calculated, and no doubt intended, to excite insubordination."* For his scheme that resulted in Allen Carr's murder, the judge sentenced Mullen to twenty-one years' hard labor in the state penitentiary in Baton Rouge. Sheriff Seale left Farmerville on November 9th to convey Mullen to *"his future residence at Baton Rouge,"* with the New Orleans newspaper predicting that Mullen *"will no doubt learn the folly of his villainous conduct before he has served out his time."*

Allen Carr's infant son born two weeks before his sister's murders by the Indians, Allen Carr, Jr. grew up to serve as Union Parish Deputy Sheriff in the 1850s, and he later moved to Marshall, Texas, where he became a prosperous merchant. Sarah Carr, who sat in her father's lap as his enslaved men killed him, grew up, married twice, and had a large family of children. Her first husband, Edward B. Windes, was a Union Parish farmer, and her second, Robert W. Futch, worked as an attorney, newspaper editor, and represented Union Parish in the Louisiana Senate.

