

MEMORIES OF CHUNKY
Sarah Judson Cooper Armstrong
1851-1937

Mrs. Sarah Judson Cooper Armstrong, age 85, says she has lived in Chunky for 75 years and is, with one exception, the oldest resident of that place. Chunky's oldest resident is Grandpa Tatum, 85, who is only a few months older than Mrs. Armstrong.



Sarah Cooper Armstrong

Mrs. Armstrong is one of the three surviving charter members of the Chunky Baptist Church. Reminiscences of her early life are overshadowed by those of the dark days of the War Between the States, she declares.

The Civil War, she states, was declared soon after she, with her mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. James Madison Cooper, three half-sisters and one half-brother, settled in the Chunky community.

Very soon her half-brother, William Cooper, enlisted in the Confederate Army and was slain near Biloxi.

Once a small group of Confederate soldiers were camped on the banks of Toney-Caney, a small stream on the western edge of Chunky. Word was received that the Yankees were coming. Being outnumbered by far by the Yanks, the boys in grey were ordered to move on, but the order came too late. Union soldiers arrived before the Confederate camp could be broken.

A line of battle was formed by the Union men, who fired on the fleeing greys. One Confederate man, a negro slave fighting beside his master, was slain.

When the din of battle was heard in Chunky, Mr. Cooper hurriedly placed his daughters in the corner of the large fireplace of the house, from which point of vantage they watched 3,000

Yankee soldiers file by on either side of the house. Many of the soldiers invaded the home and commanded Mrs. Cooper to cook food for them. The rooms of the house were ransacked and meat and other articles of value were taken.

Mrs. Armstrong's husband [R. C. Armstrong] died 56 years ago. Her only son, George Armstrong, died at his home in Montgomery a few years ago. She has four granddaughters and one grandson, all of whom live in Montgomery. She says her greatest pleasure in life is receiving mail from her grandchildren. Incidentally, Mrs. Armstrong claims she receives more mail than anybody else in Chunky, of which she is proud.

The story of how the Cooper family came to make their home in Chunky is an interesting one. Mr. Cooper was traveling through from Arkansas. As his small caravan reached the Chunky river, a wheel came off a wagon.

Of necessity, the Coopers camped at Chunky until the wheel could be repaired, intending to continue their journey in search of suitable lands. The citizens of Chunky, which at that time was as large and thriving a village as Meridian, were so congenial and hospitable, the Coopers decided to stop there permanently. Her father went into business and prospered.¹

¹ Newspaper clipping, date and name of publication unknown