A TOWN OWNED BY NEGROES
MOUND BAYOU, MISS., AN EXAMPLE OF THRIFT AND SELF-GOVERNMENT
BY
BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

BOLIVAR COUNTY is noted among the counties of Mississippi for two reasons: it contains the richest soil in the famous Yazoo Delta, and it possesses the only regularly constituted Negro town in the Southern States. This town, called Mound Bayou, gets its name from a large mound, a relic of the prehistoric inhabitants of the country, which marks the junction of two of the numerous bayous that make so important a part of the natural drainage system of this low and level land.

Situated in the heart of the wide alluvial plain between the Mississippi and the Yazoo Rivers, Mound Bayou is the centre of a Negro population more dense than can be found anywhere else outside of Africa. The Negroes outnumber the whites seven to one throughout the Delta. There are whole sections of these rich bottom-lands where no white man lives. Mound Bayou and the territory for several miles around it on every side is one such section—a Negro colony, occupying 30,000 acres, all of which is owned by Negroes, most of them small farmers who till 40 and 80-acre tracts. The town itself has, at present, a population of about 300. Of these, eighty-three are registered voters.

Mound Bayou is a self-governing community. That is one of the interesting things about it. It has had, since it was incorporated in 1898, a mayor, three aldermen, a constable, and a town marshal, all of them Negroes. This was necessarily so, because no white man has ever lived in this community since it was established, except the man who introduced the telephone system, and he remained only long enough to teach some of the townspeople how to manage the exchange.

The colony, of which Mound Bayou is, so to speak, the capital, grew out of a correspondence and an interview between Maj. George W. McGinnis, land commissioner of what was known at that time as the Louisville, New Orleans, and Texas Railway, and Isaiah T. Montgomery, the man who founded the colony. The railroad, now known as the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley, wanted to settle the vacant lands along its right-of-way. It was

woman was doing full work again, but living at the institution under the daily observation of a physician. The patient should not return to his home life until correct habits as to hours of work, exercise, sleep, bathing, recreation, and so on, have been worked out satisfactorily and have become thoroughly established.

We individuals all differ; no two persons are alike. Individual equations in each one of these cases should be solved, and then habits thoroughly established. It is not a thing that can be done suddenly. It needs long observation on the part of a physician specially trained for such work. It involves a consideration of the mental states, the emotional states, the methods of work, the temperament of the individual, his education and experience, his age, and his financial resources.

This health education having once been thoroughly done, there should not arise the necessity for it to be done again. It should mean a large increase of power throughout all the subsequent life of the individual. If his stomach is weak, he should discover how to handle it most wisely. Has he a weak heart? He should learn to work so as to get the most out of himself with the least danger. Has he a nervous system that is apt to play him false in times of great pressure? He must learn how to get the very best work out of this defective piece of machinery, unless indeed it be possible to remove the cause within the nervous system itself, so that the weakness no longer exists and he shall not, therefore, be obliged to look after it.

To know one’s limitations is the first step to success. To know how far one can venture with safety is to be able to charge right up to the danger line with the confidence and audacity that win out.
Montgomery’s idea to establish on these wild
lands a Negro colony, and his plan was heartily
seconded by the officers of the railroad. In the
spring of 1887, accompanied by a civil en-
gineer, he made a personal inspection of these
lands and finally located a site for the present
town on the line of the railroad 104 miles south
of Memphis and 116 miles north of Vicksburg.

Twenty years ago, this whole region was
wild and inaccessible. The country was cov-
ered with a heavy hardwood forest, which
united with a dense undergrowth of briars
and cane to make a dense jungle, through
which it was only possible to thread one’s
way by the use of a magnetic needle,
cutting the path as one proceeded. Through
this semi-tropical jungle, the railroad had
blazed a wide furrow for a distance of 200
miles from Memphis to Vicksburg, along
which were scattered a few straggling villages,
with here and there a larger town.

One morning in the fall of 1887, a north-
bound train stopped in the midst of this wilder-
ness, a party of Negroes stepped off, and the
train went its way. The leader of the group,
a small, slender man, with strongly marked
features and a deliberate and thoughtful man-
ner, held in his hand a plot, which he looked
at from time to time. This was Isaiah T.
Montgomery and the men with him were the
first contingent of prospective settlers.

It was not easy, as I have often heard Mr.
Montgomery say, to find settlers in that early
day. The task of taming this wild country
seemed hopeless to men with so few resources
and so little experience. On this particular
morning, Mr. Montgomery thought it best to
make a little speech before proceeding with
the work that had brought them thither.

“You see,” he said, waving his hand in the
direction of the forest, “this is a pretty wild
place.” He paused, and the men looked
hesitatingly in the direction he had indicated,
but said nothing.

“But this whole country,” he continued,
“was like this once. You have seen it change.
You and your fathers have, for the most part,
performed the work that has made it what it is.
You and your fathers did this for some one else.
Can’t you do as much now for yourselves?”

The men picked up their axes and attacked
the wilderness. The idea of the thing got
hold of the minds of some of them, so they
went back home and prepared to return and
take up the work of pioneers. It was not
until February, 1888, however, that the first
permanent settlers moved in. A month later
the ground was cleared sufficiently to set up a
small store. Two dwellings were also erected.
A few of these early buildings may still be seen
in remote corners of the community. They
were constructed of the materials at hand,
walls of rough-hewn logs, roofed with a sort
of shingle split with an axe from hardwood
blocks.

There was, of course, no land to be culti-
vated when the first settlers arrived on the
scene and no crop-lien system to provide in
advance for provisions until something could
be earned from the land. But the railroads
needed cross-ties for their constantly extending
lines. Timber agents came along in search
of stave-bolts and spoke-material. This gave
the settlers a chance to earn something while
they were clearing the land. In this way the
colonists solved the problem of living off the
wilderness while they were engaged in sub-
duing it. At the end of three years they had
located and purchased 4,078 acres of land and
had cleared and made ready for cultivation
some 1,250 acres. They had earned during
this time $8,780 from their timber operations
and had raised 379 bales of cotton and 3,045
bushels of corn on the 655 acres of land which
they had cleared.

The wilderness had become the frontier.
The colonists came in faster now. The ragged
outline of the forest steadily receded in all
directions and large areas were opened for
cultivation in the surrounding territory.

THE GROWTH OF THE COLONY

It was not the ordinary Negro farmer who
was attracted to Mound Bayou colony. It
was rather an earnest and ambitious class
prepared to face the hardships of this sort of
pioneer work. The scheme was widely ad-
vertised among the Negro farmers throughout
the state and drew immigrants from all parts
of Mississippi, and a certain number from other
states. Some of the most valuable settlers in
the community came from the “white-capping”
counties in the southern part of the state. No
doubt, the fact that the men who settled Mound
Bayou are a select class has been an important
factor in its success.

After twenty years of existence, Mound Bayou
colonial numbers about 800 families, making
a total population of some 4,000 persons.
Of the 30,000 acres of land owned by members
of the community, about 6,000 acres are already under cultivation. This land produces annually about 3,000 bales of cotton and from one-half to two-thirds of the corn and fodder consumed by the community. The original site of the town has been extended until, including the thirty acres in the original plot and the several additions that have been made since, it embraces a tract of ninety-six acres.

With the influx of population, the value of land in the town and the surrounding country has greatly increased in value. Property inside the town that formerly cost from $7 to $9 an acre sells at present, in the form of building lots, at prices ranging from one to three cents per square foot. This land, which was assessed at one time at two dollars an acre, has now an assessed valuation of $23,073.55.

The business of the town has grown with the growing population. There are thirteen stores and a number of small shops in the town which do an annual business of something like $600,000. The express business at Mound Bayou amounts to $250 per month. The railroad station is the tenth in importance between Memphis and Vicksburg, according to a writer in the Planters Journal, and the railroad traffic amounts to $40,000 a year.

There are six churches and three schools in the town. One of these, the Mound Bayou Normal and Industrial Institute, conducted by B. F. Owsley, has a building which, with the seven acres of land belonging to and adjoining the school, is valued at $3,500. This school was started by the American Missionary Association before the town was incorporated. The expenses of maintaining it, about $1,500 a year, are met in part by the society that founded it, but in part by a tuition fee of $1 a month from its pupils. A second school, established and maintained by what are known familiarly as the “Sister Workers of the Colored Baptist Church of Bolivar County,” has a large two-story building for recitations, and plans are now being made for the building of a dormitory to provide accommodations for pupils who come in from the surrounding farms to get the advantages of better schools than the county can provide.

The town is gradually increasing its facilities for doing business and is acquiring all the machinery of a highly organized community. Mound Bayou has a bank, three cotton gins, a telephone exchange, a weekly newspaper, and is preparing to issue bonds for the construction of waterworks and the erection of a system of electric lighting. It is an indication of the progress of the town that a well-kept cemetery—an institution too often neglected by Negroes—has been established on one side of the town, and a public park of five acres has been laid out on the other. Mound Bayou, though an exclusively Negro town, keeps up its connection with and interest in the outside world. The post-office business amounts to between $400 and $500 a quarter. Fifty Memphis papers are sold every day in the town and there are a number of subscribers to the magazines of general information.

The business interests of Mound Bayou town and community centre in the Bank of Mound Bayou, organized March 8, 1904, with a capital stock of $10,000. The earnings of the bank during the first eight months of its existence amounted to 17 per cent. In 1906, it paid a dividend of 16 per cent. and set aside a considerable sum as a surplus. The following statement indicates the condition of the bank on Feb. 12, 1907:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>ASSETS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital paid in</td>
<td>Loans and discounts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deposits for capital account</td>
<td>Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Fixtures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undivided profits</td>
<td>Overdrafts secured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deposits subject to check</td>
<td>Cash and sight exchange</td>
</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
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As practically all of the business of the colony centres in the bank, it is natural that nearly all the prominent business men of the town should be represented on the board of directors. Charles Banks, the founder and cashier of the bank, was a successful business man at Clarksdale before he came, in 1903, to Mound Bayou. He became interested at that time in the success of the enterprise, sold out his business interests at Clarksdale, and cast in his fortunes with the colony. He is the youngest and most aggressive business man in the town. John Francis, the president of the bank, came to the settlement in an early day from New
Orleans and worked for a time as a clerk. The Bradstreet and Dun mercantile agencies assess the value of his property at $20,000 to $25,000. His neighbors say that he and his wife are worth $50,000. W. T. Montgomery—who is the postmaster, the brother of the founder, and vice-president of the bank—is a man of independent means. He owned and conducted for twelve years a farm of 640 acres near Fargo, N. D., which he sold at the time of the rise in Dakota lands at an advance of from $20 to $25 per acre over what he paid for it and invested in other lands in the neighborhood of Winnipeg, Canada.

Among the directors of the bank are R. M. McCarthy, who owns 450 acres of land in the colony and runs a cotton gin. T. C. Jordan has a bakery and meat market. He started in the colony as a farmer. He is now said to be worth something like $8,000 or $9,000. J. Barker is the town marshal. C. R. Stringer is treasurer of the town. H. A. Godbold, who came into the settlement as a farmer about 1895, runs a general store. The bank and its directors, because they represent and are so completely identified with the interests of the town, have come to have the position of a sort of chamber of commerce, guarding the credit of the various enterprises and directing and inspiring the economic and business development of the colony.

There are some special difficulties in the financial direction and development of a town and colony like Mound Bayou. For instance, it has been the constant aim of the men who founded the colony to preserve it as a distinctively Negro enterprise. Separated from, yet intimately bound up with the commercial and political interests of the other communities about it, the problem of preserving this isolation has often been a perplexing one. A difficulty arose a few years ago when the Louisville, New Orleans, and Texas Railway was sold to the Yazoo and Mississippi. Practically all the lands purchased from the railroad company had been subject to a lien for deferred payments. With the change of ownership in the railroad, a wholesale foreclosure of these mortgages seemed imminent. Charles Banks and his associates in the bank managed, however, to have the loans renewed and upon terms by which the mortgages were to bear 6 per cent. interest instead of 8 per cent.

In time, all of the original purchase money for these lands was paid, but many of the colonists had borrowed money for improvements. There was, therefore, a constant danger that farmers who were not able to discharge the mortgages when they came due would lose their holdings. To provide against this, the Mound Bayou Loan and Investment Company was formed, with a capital stock of $50,000. W. T. Montgomery was made president of this company and Charles Banks secretary and treasurer. The plan of this company was to sell stock to the farmers in the community. The price of shares was fixed at $50, payable in monthly installments of one dollar. By this means, a capital was secured to take over the mortgages of those members of the community who were not able to pay the loans as they fell due, and at the same time provide a way by which the owners of the land might accumulate a sum sufficient to pay off the indebtedness for which the mortgage was issued. It is expected that the capital accumulated in this way will eventually be used to assist settlers coming into the colony to acquire and pay for lands, and in this way extend the holdings and the influence of the colony.

THE TOWN'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mound Bayou has been from the first, at least in the minds of the men who founded it, more than a business enterprise. As a matter of fact, its most conspicuous success has been its local government.

The records of the mayor's court show that, as Delta towns go, Mound Bayou is a remarkably quiet and sober place. There have been but two homicides in twenty years. Both of these were committed by strangers—men who drifted into the community in the early days before the local self-government and the traditions of the town had been established. One of the men killed was Benjamin T. Green, who was the partner of Isaiah T. Montgomery in the early days of the town. The man who committed this crime was afterwards identified as a fugitive from justice, who was wanted for some desperate crime committed in the vicinity of Mobile. The murder was the result of a trivial altercation in regard to a box of tacks.

During the whole twenty years of the town’s existence, only three persons have been sent to the circuit court for trial. Two of these were men convicted of theft. Since the town obtained its charter in 1898, there have been, up to February, 1907, but 163 criminal cases tried in the town. Of these, fifty were
committed by strangers or by men who had come into town from the surrounding community. Twenty-eight cases were either never tried or were of so trivial a nature that no fine was imposed. Sixty-four were cases of disturbing the peace.

It is interesting to read the records of the mayor’s court. They are an index to the life of the village and reflect the changing current of public opinion in regard to the moral discipline and order of the town.

In July, 1902, the records show that fourteen persons were arrested and fined for failure to pay the street tax. Every citizen of the town is required to do $3 worth of work on the streets every year. Some had neglected to pay this labor tax and allowed the streets to fall into a condition of neglect. As a result of a discussion of the matter in the town council, a number of the delinquents were arrested and compelled to pay fines amounting to $3.30 and costs amounting to $1.40, each.

Again, in 1904, a man was arrested for gambling. He had established what is known in sporting parlance as a “crap” game, and on Saturday nights a number of the young men of the village were accustomed to gather at his place to gamble. He was repeatedly warned and finally the town marshal and some of the more substantial citizens made a raid upon the place and arrested fifteen persons. The cases were dismissed after each man had paid a fine of $2. A year later, another man was arrested for running a “blind tiger,” selling liquor without a license. He formerly owned a store in the town but began selling liquor, then commenced to drink, and was rapidly “going to the dogs.” After his place had been closed, he went out into the country and took up farming again. It is reported that he is doing well there.

During the year 1905, there were several disturbances in the town which were traced directly to the illicit liquor sellers. Men would come into town on Saturdays to do their marketing, fall to drinking, and end in a fight. Things became so bad at last that a public meeting was held in regard to the matter. As a result of this meeting, the town marshal, the mayor, and the treasurer were appointed to get evidence and secure the conviction of those who were guilty. Six persons were convicted and fined at that time. One of these, a woman, left town. Another is still under suspicion and the rest, now on their farms, have become respectable citizens. To my mind, the interesting fact in regard to these prosecutions is that they served not merely to correct a public abuse but to reform the men who were prosecuted. In most cases, these men went back to the farms and became useful members of the community.

It seems to be pretty well agreed that the moral conditions of the Mound Bayou colony are better than those in other Negro settlements in the Delta. Some years ago, when the question was an “issue” in the community, a committee was appointed from each of the churches to make a house to house canvass of the colony, in order to determine to what extent loose family relations existed. The report of this committee showed that there were forty families in the colony where men and women were living together without the formality of a marriage ceremony. As a result of this report, the people of the town gave notice that these forty couples would have to marry within a certain length of time or they would be prosecuted. Nearly all of them acted upon this suggestion; the others moved away.

“Since then,” said Mr. Montgomery, in speaking about the matter, “we have had no trouble of this kind. Upon occasions, the women who are conspicuous in towns and cities and who travel in the Delta, making the various camps on pay-days and who more or less infest the larger plantations, have tried to get a footing here, but have never succeeded. They can get no place to stay and have to leave on the next train. This is now generally known and we have no trouble on that score.”

When I asked Mr. Montgomery how he explained the fact that they had been able to obtain such good results in the way of order and morality among the people of the colony, he said: “I attribute it to the force of public opinion. The regulations that we enforce have public sentiment behind them. The people recognize that the laws, when they are enforced, represent the sentiment of the community and are imposed for their own good. It is not so easy for them to realize that where the government is entirely in the hands of white men.”

One thing that has helped to maintain order in the colony is the fact that Bolivar County prohibits the sale of liquor. More than once the liquor men have attempted to pass a law that would license the selling of liquor in the county. Some years ago a determined effort
was made to repeal the prohibition law. In order to secure the vote of Mound Bayou, which seems to have the balance of power in the county on this question, a "still hunt" was made among the voters in the community. A plan was arranged by which a saloon was to be established in the town and one of the citizens made proprietor.

"This scheme came very near going through," said Mr. Montgomery. "The plan was all arranged before we heard of it. Then we called a meeting and I simply said to the people that experience in our own town had taught us that a saloon was a bad thing to have in the community. I said that if the law was passed, a colored man might run the saloon here, but in the rest of the county they would be in the hands of white men. We would pay for maintaining them, however, and we would be the ones to suffer. We voted the law down and there has been no serious attempt to open the county to the liquor traffic since."

In a certain sense, it may be said that the Mound Bayou town and colony have been a school in self-government for its colonists. They have had an opportunity there, such as Negro people have rarely had elsewhere, to learn the real meaning of political institutions and to prepare themselves for the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.

It is interesting to note, in this connection, that this is one of the few instances in which Negroes have ever organized and maintained in any Southern state a government which has gained the entire respect of the Southern people. A writer in a recent number of the Planter's Journal, published in Memphis, says:

"Will the Negro as a race work out his own salvation along Mound Bayou lines? Quien sabe? These have worked out for themselves a better local government than any superior people has ever done for them in freedom. But it is a generally accepted principle in political economy that any homogeneous people will in time do this. These people have their local government, but it is in consonance with the county, state, and national governments and international conventions, all in the hands of another race. Could they conduct as successfully a county government in addition to their local government and still under the state and national governments of another race? Enough Negroes of the Mound Bayou type, and guided as they were in the beginning, will be able to do so."

The story of Mound Bayou would not be complete without some account of the man who founded the colony and to whose patience and wisdom it owes the greater part of its success.

Isaiah T. Montgomery was born on the plantation of Joseph E. Davis, a brother of Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederate States. The plantation where he was born, in 1847, was known as "The Hurricane" and was situated in Warren County, Miss. His father, Benjamin Thornton Montgomery, came originally from Virginia. He was purchased in Vicksburg by Mr. Davis, while he was still a boy. He had picked up a little education from his young master in Virginia before he was sold South. After he came into the possession of Mr. Davis, he managed to acquire, in some way that Isaiah could never account for, a very good practical education, so that he was able to make surveys and draw plans for buildings, and for years he was in practical control of the plantation upon which he was employed. There were four children, all of whom received the rudiments of an education from their father.

When he was nine years of age, Isaiah was set to work sorting and filing letters and papers in Mr. Davis's office, and from that time he lived in his master's home. He had a great deal of copying to do for Mr. Davis and it was in this way that he gained a practical knowledge of written English that has stood him in good stead ever since. As he grew older he became the special attendant of Mr. Davis, having charge of all his public and private papers, and he worked steadily in his office until the breaking out of the Civil War. In 1863, Mr. Davis retired, upon the approach of the Federal armies, to the interior of the state, taking with him his slaves. Young Montgomery was left behind with his father, however, to assist in taking care of the plantation.

After the destruction of the Federal gunboat Indianola, at Hurricane, and the passage of the Federal gunboats under the batteries of Vicksburg, Isaiah entered the service of the United States as a cabin-boy for Rear-Admiral Porter. He was present, in his capacity as cabin-boy, at the battle of Grand Gulf, accompanied the first expedition up Red River, and was a witness of the operations at the siege and capitulation of Vicksburg. In the winter of 1863, he lost his health and was discharged from the navy at Mound City. From there he went to Cincinnati, where, through the kindness of Admiral Porter, his parents had been able to precede him.

Immediately after the war, Isaiah's father...
A TOWN OWNED BY NEGROES

A GENERAL VIEW OF MOUND BAYOU, SHOWING THE RAILROAD STATION
In the foreground, on the right, are Isaiah T. Montgomery and the town constable.

returned to the plantation and in 1866 put himself in communication with Mr. Davis. Very soon they had perfected plans with him for the purchase of the Hurricane and Brierfield plantations, containing something like 4,000 acres of land, upon which the elder Montgomery and his sons, under the name of Montgomery & Sons, conducted the third largest plantation in the state.

It was the desire of Joseph Davis, after the war, to keep together as far as possible the slaves who had grown up on his plantations. His notion was, no doubt, that the interests of all concerned demanded that there should be just as little break in the old relations as possible and that the transition from slavery to freedom should be made gradually, with the idea that the freedmen should, however, eventually become the owners of the land upon which they had previously been slaves. The plantations were conducted with this end in view until 1880, when it became apparent to the Montgomerys that unless there was a modification of the terms upon which the project had been left to them after Joseph Davis’s death, it would be impossible to succeed. The heirs could not agree to an alteration in terms, and so the scheme was finally abandoned.

It was with the same notion of carrying out, under new conditions, the plan which his father and his former master had formed years before, that, in 1887, Mr. Montgomery—as he says in a brief autobiography—“sought to begin anew, at the age of forty, the dream of life’s young manhood,” the dream of doing something to build up the fortunes of his race. It thus appears that the history of Mound Bayou is deeply rooted in the past, and is, in a certain sense, a carrying out of the scheme formulated by the elder Montgomery and his former master for the welfare of that master’s former slaves. Others than were intended have become heirs to the plans of these men,
A TOWN OWNED BY NEGROES

Isaiah T. Montgomery, who was once a slave belonging to the brother of Jefferson Davis but their good will and their forethought have made the success of Mound Bayou possible.

As the colony grows older and the life of the community becomes more complicated, new problems present themselves to the men who are still planning and directing its future.

The success of the present community has suggested the formation of others similar to this one. Already there are the beginnings of such communities at other points above and below Mound Bayou. Mr. Montgomery believes that the success of these new communities, as well as the future of the Mound Bayou colony, depends largely upon the ability of the new generation, now growing up, to profit by the experience of the older. It is with this idea that he and his associates are even now studying out a scheme by which the work of the schools can be brought into closer touch with the actual work of the colony.

"What we need," said Mr. Montgomery, "is an agricultural school, something that will teach the young men to be better farmers than their fathers have been. But, more than that, we need here a system of education that will teach our young men and women the underlying meaning of the work that is being done here. In some way they must be taught the importance of carrying forward this experiment in the spirit in which it was begun. The problem of education is at present the most important which the town and the colony of Mound Bayou have to solve."
Some time ago, Mr. Montgomery was asked by a newspaper writer what he thought of the future of the colony. What he wrote in reply shows his confidence in the outcome:

"What Mound Bayou is now, and what it has already accomplished is largely prophetic of its future. Situated in the great alluvial Delta district, lands whose productive qualities are not surpassed by any in civilization, timbered by hardwood that finds ready sale at almost fabulous prices, no part of this great section has yet reached its full development. The thriving, hustling towns dotted here and there throughout the Delta, with their factories, waterworks, electric lights and other modern improvements, have become what they are with the Delta only partially developed. What may we expect when practically all the lands have been cleared, properly drained, with a full supply of contented and efficient labor to do the necessary work? In proportion as the whole Delta approaches these conditions, Mound Bayou will progress also.

"There is another distinction that is more than likely to come to Mound Bayou as the years go by, and our schools and churches improve in power and capacity; as our streets are drained and paved, our oil lamps replaced by electric lights, and the old, antiquated, characteristic Delta pump is replaced by clear streams of artesian water. Negroes will begin to make this their resident home, even though they are engaged in business or make their livelihood elsewhere. There will be an atmosphere in which to raise their children, and they will find here social conditions for their wives and daughters very much to their liking. There are those who ask, 'Are you not afraid that some day the whites will be moved to wipe out Mound Bayou by violence?' Knowing the controlling force among the whites in this section, as I do, gathered by a stay of thirty-three years among them, I say, 'No, we are not afraid.' The Negroes who have shaped and controlled the destiny of Mound Bayou understand conditions too well to allow any radical or indiscreet policy to prevail here. On the one hand, there are too many white men around us or in easy reach who are our friends and willing..."
to see that no impediment is thrown in our way, or undue advantage is taken of us by irresponsible parties. This has been demonstrated on several occasions."

Isaiah Montgomery is hopeful and confident of the future. He is now sixty years old, but takes an active part in every movement that relates to the upbuilding of the colony which he founded. He believes that his work at Mound Bayou is only just begun and his townsmen share that belief.