

Corps of Engineers Commander Visits Levee District Headquarters

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently welcomed U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District Commander Col. Tom Smith at the levee district headquarters in Clarksdale. The meeting was designed to help Col. Smith become acquainted with the organization's progress on the flood protection work along the Mississippi River.

At the meeting, officials presented Col. Smith with a resolution they drafted thanking the Memphis District for the many years of cooperative efforts to protect the citizens of the Delta.

The document reads in part:

Be it resolved by the Board of Levee Commissioners of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta, and the individual members thereof, and on behalf of the citizens of the Levee District, that the Levee Board extends its sincere thanks and appreciation to the Memphis District for its work in providing flood protection to the Levee District; and

Be it further resolved that the Levee Board expresses its appreciation to the



Left: Memphis District Commander Col. Tom Smith
Right: YMDLB President Sykes Sturdivant

Memphis District for its cooperation with the Chief Engineer and personnel of the Levee Board in the maintenance and improvement of the mainline Mississippi River Levee System, which we consider to be the best in the world.

The maintenance of the mainline levee within the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District has been rated as "Outstanding" by the Corps of Engineers every year since 1958. The "Outstanding Maintenance" rating is a result of the programs and procedures practiced by the Levee Board to assure that the levee remains in excellent, functional condition at all times.



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LINKS & PARTNERS

Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District
www.leveeboard.org

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — Vicksburg District
www.mvk.usace.army.mil

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — Memphis District
www.mvm.usace.army.mil

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — Five Day River Forecasts
www.mvm.usace.army.mil/hydraulics/docs/nws/msrv3.txt

Waterways Experiment Station
www.erdc.usace.army.mil

Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks
www.home.mdwfp.com

USGS National Mapping Information
www.nationalmap.gov

Mississippi Forestry Commission
www.mfc.state.ms.us



The River's Edge

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U. S. Representatives Thompson, Peterson Visit Tallahatchie County

Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board Briefed on 2008 Farm Bill

U. S. Representative Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) and U. S. Representative Collin Peterson (D-Minn.), chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, recently visited Tallahatchie County and briefed members of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board and Delta agricultural interests on the status of the 2008 Farm Bill.

The U. S. Senate passed its version of the Farm Bill on Friday, December 14, and the bill will now move to a joint House-Senate conference committee to reconcile differences. Rep. Peterson will be the lead negotiator for the House of Representatives, which passed its form of the bill in July.

"The House bill is important because it protects Delta crops such as cotton, beans, rice, and corn," Rep. Thompson said. "Rep. Peterson has indicated that he will fight to protect these too. He and I agree that we have a good bill, and we need to move forward with it."

Rep. Peterson also had the chance to tour several towns and rural areas throughout the Delta.

"Seeing the Delta first-hand helped Rep. Peterson understand the region and some of its issues," said Sykes Sturdivant, president, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board. "His tour will benefit citizens because of the various USDA grant programs that are available to provide assistance to county and city residents."



Above: YMDLB commissioners and CEO review bills with U.S. Representative Bennie Thompson. Back row, left to right: Ralph Sewell, CEO Kelly Greenwood, Bobby Rushing. Front: President Sykes Sturdivant, Rep. Thompson, and Vice President David Cotton. Below: Representative Bennie Thompson speaks with Johnny Henson in Washington, D.C.



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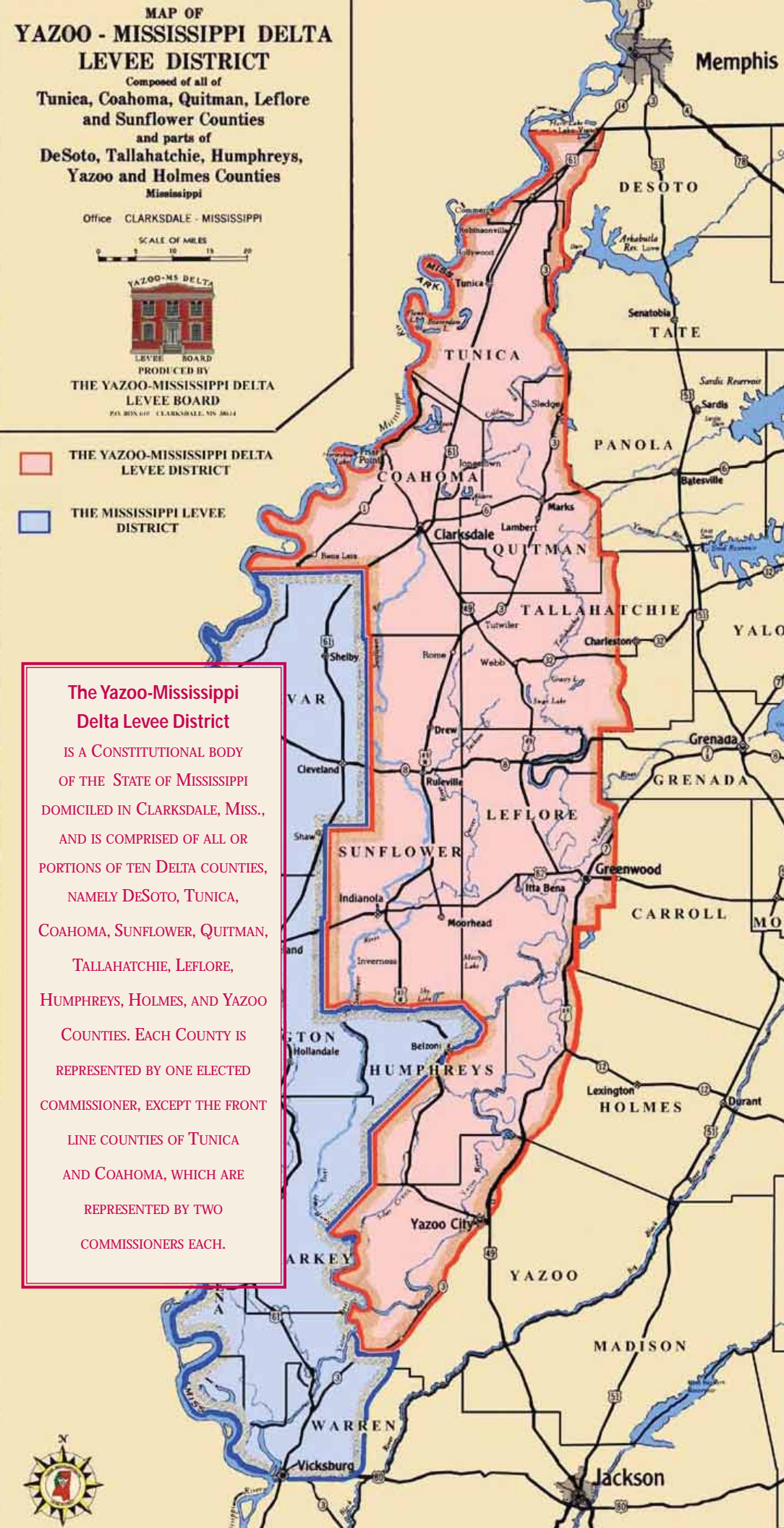
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The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District
IS A CONSTITUTIONAL BODY
OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DOMICILED IN CLARKSDALE, MISS.,
AND IS COMPRISED OF ALL OR
PORTIONS OF TEN DELTA COUNTIES,
NAMELY DESOTO, TUNICA,
COAHOMA, SUNFLOWER, QUITMAN,
TALLAHATCHIE, LEFLORE,
HUMPHREYS, HOLMES, AND YAZOO
COUNTIES. EACH COUNTY IS
REPRESENTED BY ONE ELECTED
COMMISSIONER, EXCEPT THE FRONT
LINE COUNTIES OF TUNICA
AND COAHOMA, WHICH ARE
REPRESENTED BY TWO
COMMISSIONERS EACH.

Congressman Berry Introduces Flood Warning Amendment

Amendment Introduced to Reword Proposed Warnings

U.S. Representative Marion Berry (D-AR) has introduced an amendment to H.R. 3121 that will reword the proposed warning on maps updated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Map Modernization Program. The new wording will read: "Note: This area is shown as being protected from at least the one-percent-annual-chance flood hazard by levee, dike, or other structure. Overtopping or failure of any flood control structure is possible. Property owners are encouraged to evaluate their flood risk, based on full and accurate information, and to consider flood insurance coverage as appropriate." The amendment also adds that this note "shall not be considered a requirement of participation in the national flood insur-

ance program" and that the director may add notes designating areas protected from the 500-year flood.

"We appreciate Congressman Berry's commitment to protecting our region from economic disaster," said Kelly Greenwood, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board CEO. "Since coming to Congress, Rep. Berry has made improvement of the Mississippi Delta region one of his top priorities."

In September 2007, the bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, where it stands.

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board voiced concern that the original proposed warning discounts the board's flood-control structures and efforts to

protect the citizens of the Delta. The proposed warning states that areas protected from the one-percent, annual chance (100-year) flood of the Mississippi River may be at risk; when, in fact, the levees maintained by the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board offer greater than 500-year protection, which is only a 0.02 percent risk of main-line levee failure.

"The wording on the proposed maps was so alarming that it would likely prompt mortgage lenders to require flood insurance for homes and businesses in communities protected by the levee, which would be an economic nightmare," Greenwood said. "During one of the greatest disasters in the Mississippi Delta—the Great Flood of 1927—our levees did not break."

New Web Site — Check Us Out!

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently launched a new Web site, reflecting a new look and updated information with easier navigation for users.

The Web site retains its current address (www leveeboard.org) and continues to carry pertinent information, including historical information, flood misconceptions, and a profile of the YMDL district and commissioners.

Updated information includes district maps, important news, press articles, past issues of the newsletter, and links to YMDLB partners.

Teachers should find the site particularly useful, with pages dedicated to education news and a reorganization of the history of the levee and how the levee works.

"The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board is committed to educating students and teachers on levee functions, flood control, and the history and responsibilities of the board," said Sykes Sturdivant, YMDLB president. "The board strives to educate youth, who in turn educate their parents, through many ways, including teacher workshops, classroom curriculum, levee tours, and field trips."

The site now has a more modern design that reflects the graphics of the YMDLB newsletter.

"We rely on our newsletter and our Web site to keep people updated on the many projects that we are involved in around the state," said Kelly Greenwood, YMDLB CEO. "After a serious upgrade, our new site is a vast improvement over the former look, and we hope that citizens in the 10 counties we represent will check it out and use it as an informative resource."

Visit www leveeboard.org to see the new look.



Did you Know? Tunica River Park Walking Trail Opens

In addition to the newly opened Clarence Cariker Horse Trail, the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board completed a 1.9 mile walking trail at the Tunica River Park in 2003. Partly



owned by both Tunica County and the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board, the trail includes observation decks overlooking scenic river and lake views. So whether you are enjoying a leisurely stroll after a picnic on the water or a fast-paced jog to end your day, the walking trail is the perfect spot for both residents and visitors.

For more information, visit <http://www.tunicariverpark.com/museum.asp>.

Second Fishing Rodeo Held in Coahoma County

Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board & Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks Combine Resources



Almost 100 fifth and sixth grade students from Jonestown Elementary School recently caught fun and fellowship at a fishing rodeo sponsored by the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP).

Students from the school were bused to Mile 78 Landside, one of 26 public fishing holes within Coahoma and Tunica counties, to try their hand at catching a prize-winning catfish.

This is the second rodeo held at YMDL district fishing holes normally open to the public. The first was held in April and was attended by more than 150 students from three different Coahoma County schools. Sturdivant said that YMDLB hopes to partner with MDWFP to make the rodeo an annual event.

"Many of these young men and women have never held a rod and reel, much less baited a hook," said Sykes Sturdivant, president, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board. "Through this partnership, we hope to influence these children's lives for the better by giving them the chance to try a



Top: David Williams, Jr., YMDLB commissioner, helps a student unhook her fish at a recent Fishing Rodeo in Coahoma County.
Bottom: LaShun Sims, YMDLB surveying technician, fishes with students at Mile 78 landslide.

new experience, one they might enjoy and pursue on their own."

YMDLB board members and staff and MDWFP employees volunteered at the event.

"We are changing lives," said Sherry Hazelwood, special projects officer, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. "No child should ever miss this moment."

YMDLB Provides Services for Panther Swamp Development

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board is currently assisting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by installing culverts at the portion of Panther Swamp located in Humphreys County.

Panther Swamp National Wildlife Refuge is one of seven refuges in the Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Established in 1978, Panther Swamp National Wildlife Refuge encompasses 38,697 acres in Yazoo and Humphreys Counties. Included in those acres is one of the largest blocks (21,000 acres) of bottomland forest in the lower Mississippi River alluvial floodplain. The upland areas or ridges often crest at no more than one foot above swamp areas and contain nuttall, willow and water oaks, and other species while overcup oak, bitter pecan, and ash dominate the transition zone from swamp to upland. Additional habitat types consist of reforested and agricultural areas.

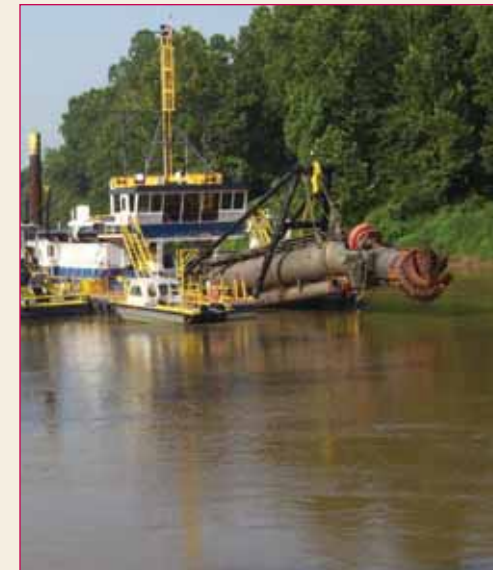
"With its close proximity to the state capital, Jackson, the refuge provides a variety of recreational opportunities and a positive economic impact to local communities," said Ralph Sewell, YMDLB commissioner representing Humphreys County.

In addition to providing resting and feeding areas for more than 100,000 wintering waterfowl annually, the refuge also provides habitat for 200 species of neotropical migratory songbirds. Resident species making their homes among the woodlands, sloughs, and reforested areas include the American alligator, white-tail deer, otter, swamp rabbit, wild turkey, squirrel, and other various small fur-bearers such as mink and raccoon.

Although limited archaeological evidence exists about the earliest inhabitants of this area, early Native Americans probably hunted, fished, and even farmed much of the area now included in the boundaries of Panther Swamp. In the late 18th and 19th centuries, the Louisiana Black Bear was common. A site near Onward, Mississippi, was made famous



Above left to right: Bo Sloan, USFWS refuse manager with the Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge; William Willis, YMDLB foreman; Ralph Sewell, YMDLB commissioner representing Humphreys County; and Tim Wilkins, former USFWS project leader and current YMDLB publications manager.



in 1902 when President Theodore Roosevelt came to Mississippi to hunt black bears with the legendary guide and ex-slave Holt Collier. Their story led to the creation of the "Teddy Bear," now Mississippi's official state toy.

All refuge permit sales are conducted from the headquarters of the Theodore Roosevelt NWR Complex. Permits may be purchased in person or through regular mail. Complex Hunting and Fishing Regulations are generally available in August each year and may be obtained at any refuge office on the complex.

Including the levees along the Whittington Channel, approximately 30 miles of gravel roads are open on the refuge for most of the year. Additionally, some portions of the refuge can be accessed from Highway 149 West and the Satartia Road. These routes offer opportunities for wildlife observation, photography, or simply a quiet drive in a beautiful natural setting. Other areas are accessible by foot or small boat.

For more information, visit www.fws.gov/pantherswamp.

Farrell Levee Strengthened with Relief Wells

Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board and Corps of Engineers to Complete Project

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board and the Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will strengthen a one-mile section of the Mississippi River levee system with the addition of 47 relief wells near Farrell, in Coahoma County.

These relief wells will assist in controlling the exit of seepage water from beneath the levee during a flood event. By controlling the method in which the seep water emerges on the landside, the potential for sand boils along the landside toe of the levee will be minimized.

If left unchecked, sand boils can lead to the movement of the sandy material beneath the levee and thus pose a threat to the levee itself. The relief wells will lessen the need for extensive flood fighting along this portion of the levee. The work will include the construction of 47 eight-inch diameter relief wells that will extend to depths of 70 to 100 feet. Other features include a pump pad and discharge pipe for moving the additional seepage water from the relief wells



Above: Kent Haney (L) and Willie Gregory, YMDLB commissioners representing Coahoma County.

back over the levee.

“A levee system is only as strong as its weakest link,” said Jon Wilson, Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and lead design engineer for the project.

“These 47 relief wells are being constructed along a one-mile reach of the levee system that, based on historical records and recent studies, could be

vulnerable during a major flood event.”

The Mississippi Levee System maintained by the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board protects more than 305,000 people, 8,100 miles of roadway, 3.9 million acres of prime farmland, and 38 school districts.

“Flood control is ongoing,” said Willie Gregory, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board commissioner representing Coahoma County. “We must be vigilant to make sure that the levees can pass through another flood event.”

Toltec Inc. of Little Rock will execute the \$1.1 million contract that is scheduled for completion in November 2008. The contract was awarded in July 2007, and the notice to proceed with construction was issued in August.

“Levees require continual maintenance, monitoring, and upgrades,” said Kent Haney, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board commissioner representing Coahoma County. “Our job is to make sure the citizens and their property are protected.”

Upper Yazoo Project Update

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board has received \$13 million in funding to be used to complete Item 6B channel work and Item 6B structures – approximately 10 miles stretching from Highway 8 West of Philip to River Road in Tallahatchie County. The balance will be used towards engineering design, real estate, and mitigation on Item 7. The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District's Upper Yazoo Project is a federally funded Corps of

Engineers project that began in 1976 near Yazoo City and focuses on cleaning out and restoring channel capacity to the Yazoo River and its tributaries at a rate of 10 to 11 miles per year. More than 140 miles have been completed with 55 miles remaining.

To view maps, please visit <http://geology.deq.ms.gov/floodmaps/status.aspx>.

Extensive Drainage Project Completed in Humphreys County



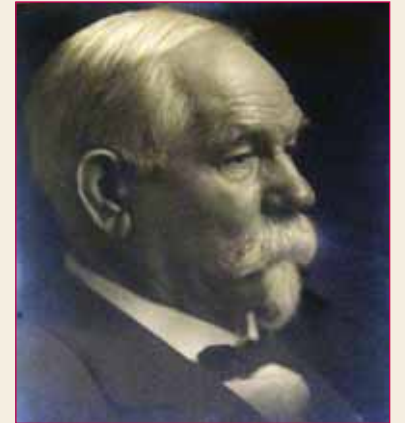
The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board provided drainage for several homes and agricultural land in Humphreys County, southwest of Louise. The Big Sunflower Rivers and Tributaries crew also recently completed extensive work southeast of Silver City and Carter. Pictured is Ralph Sewell, YMDLB commissioner representing Humphreys County.

Indian Bayou Clean Out Project Completed Recently



The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently completed the Indian Bayou Clean Out Project, working with Sunflower County and the City of Indianola. Pictured on-site are (L to R) Arthur Marble, mayor of Indianola; Bobby Rushing, YMDLB commissioner representing Sunflower County; Ruben Woods, city inspector; and Jimmie Strong, director of public work.

Father of the Levee: T. G. Dabney



Thomas Gregory Dabney has been described as the “father” of the levee system in the Yazoo-Mississippi Levee District.

A native of Raymond and educated there, he fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War and after the war worked on both levees and the new railroad system in Louisiana.

When he became chief engineer of the Yazoo-Mississippi Levee District in 1884, he found little more than the memory of a small levee. Before he ended his tenure, he had supervised the placement of two million cubic yards on a line almost 100 miles long.

He established and followed plans and specifications which provided levees in the Yazoo-Mississippi Levee District that were 20 percent larger than those recommended by the U.S. government.

One of his biographers wrote that he negotiated levee building contracts totaling \$15 million—a huge figure in those times—and that these negotiations were completed “without the slightest breath of suspicion as to any contract.”