



People came to Horse Island to hunt and trap. Many families survived on wild game the hunters killed and the hides were sold to dealers in various small trading posts. Game of all kind was plentiful. The buffalo left about 1870, but deer, wolves, coon, o'possum, squirrel, beaver, otter, muskrat and even bear and panthers were plentiful. The rivers and swamps were aswarm with fish, and abundant wild fruit and berries enabled the settlers to survive without gardens or stores.

Jim Finley's family was the first white family on Horse Island. He came about 1833. Other early settlers were Jack Cude at Cotton Plant, Pleasant Cockrum at Cockrum and a Harris family at Buffalo Island. They came before the big migration previous to the Civil War.

The Civil War did affect the settlers of Dunklin County. Practically all the men joined Price's Raiders. These people were Southern Democrats and were drawn between North and South. There was some guerilla action in the county, but no real battles.

Most of the early settlers lived near Cotton Plant, out of the swamp. After the Civil War, some effort was made to build levees and bridges. Caruth and Nesbit came into existence about this time.

