



The Wesson House, located on the southwest corner of the *Pigeon Roost/Goodman Road* intersection in *Olive Branch, Mississippi* is one of only three *Dedicated Mississippi Landmarks* in *Desoto County* (the other two being the *Court House* and the *LaBauve House*, both in *Hernando*).

The site where *The Wesson House* is located was included in the two sections of land (Sections 34 and 35) purchased from Chickasaw Indian Chief, **Lush-Pun-Tubby** by **Milton Blocker** and **Stephen Flinn** more than a century and a half ago on April 13, 1836. In 1840, **Blocker** traded his interest in Section 35 and \$6,400 to **Flinn** for **Flinn's** interest in Section 34, making **Blocker** the sole owner of Section 34. *The Wesson House* is located in the extreme northwest corner of Section 34 so we know the property was owned in 1840 by **Milton Blocker**. In 1847, **Milton Blocker** was traveling down the Mississippi River on a cotton-selling trip to *New Orleans* on the Steamboat, *Medora*, when the boiler exploded and he was killed.

The next thing we know about *The Wesson House* site is that some thirty odd years later, in the mid-1870s, it was owned by **Ben F. Wesson**, who probably purchased it from **Milton Blocker Jr.** or from the **Blocker** estate. In 1875, **Wesson** built his home on the property

which fronted on *Pleasant Hill Road* (now *Goodman Road*) at its intersection with *Pigeon Roost Road*. His home is what we know today as *The Wesson House*.

The community, known since 1846 as *Olive Branch* (previously known as “*Cowpens*” and then “*Watson's Crossroads*”) was incorporated on May 1, 1874 with a population around 150. **Ben F. Wesson** was elected as *Olive Branch's* first Mayor and served one term from 1874 until 1877. He would later serve as the City's Postmaster from 1880 until 1888.

The Wesson House was passed down through the female side of the **Wesson** family for the next one-hundred or so years, through **Bet Wesson**, to her daughters **Maude Wesson** and **Pearl Wesson Humphries** and finally to **Pearl's** daughter, **Martha Pearl Humphries** who was married to **Forrest “Red” Langston**. Prior to **Martha Pearl's** death on October 15, 1987, she indicated to then Mayor of *Olive Branch*, **Milton Nichols**, that she would like to deed *The Wesson House* to the *City of Olive Branch* to be used as a museum. Following **Martha Pearl's** death, her husband, “**Red**” **Langston**, fulfilled her wishes and prepared his will leaving the house and property to the *City of Olive Branch*.

“**Red**” **Langston** died in 1991 and, upon probate of his will, the *City of Olive Branch* took possession of *The Wesson House* and property and began restoration and preservation efforts on the house which was in immediate need of repair.

In the early 90s, the *City* made application to the *Mississippi Department of Archives and History* for historical designation status for *The Wesson House*. It was determined, as a result of modifications made to the House, that it did not qualify for inclusion on the *National Register of Historical Places*, however, because of **Ben Wesson's** importance in *Olive Branch's* history, the house did qualify as a *Dedicated Mississippi Landmark* and that designation was granted.

The Wesson House presently is not open to the general public on a regular basis, however it is available to local citizens and civic organizations for special events and functions. *The Olive Branch City Beautiful Commission* holds an annual *Christmas Open House* at *The Wesson House* in December of each year, at which time it is open to the public in all of its holiday splendor. Future plans call for *The Wesson House* to be open to the public and for guided tours several days a week. There is even the possibility it could evolve into the museum for which it was originally intended.