

purchased thousands of acres along the eastern edge of the Swamp. The Varns, the Langdales, and the Sessoms expanded their land holdings and began to plant and protect pine plantations around the Okefenokee. Toledo Manufacturing Company and Superior Pine Products Company began practicing scientific forestry by the mid-1920s, but much of the barren and ragged landscape persisted. Mere remnants of the unbroken long leaf pine forest of the late nineteenth century remained. The landscape of southern Georgia at the beginning of the century was sometimes described as a forest of stumps. The National Forest Commission, created to investigate the declining forest acreage across the nation, began to promote the acquisition of Federal forest reserves in 1929.

As the year began, a spark of renewed interest in preserving the Okefenokee was ignited in Washington, Waycross, and Atlanta. In Waycross, a Chamber of Commerce committee representing all the civic organizations, the city commissioners and the county commissioners was organized with Dr. William M. Folks as chairman. U.S. Senators Walter George and William J. Harris endorsed the "Okefenokee Project." Promoters even invited President-elect Herbert Hoover to make a short lay-over in Waycross on his trip to Florida. The Waycross *Journal-Herald*, especially J.S. and Liston Elkins and Charles N. Wilson, supported the newly revived Okefenokee Association's preservation efforts.¹⁶

U.S. Senator William J. Harris introduced a bill, "S.5714 - To Establish the Okefenokee Wildlife and Fish Refuge," on February 4, 1929. Two days later, U.S. Representative W.C. Lankford of the 11th Congressional District of Georgia introduced bill "HB 17277 - A bill to authorize the Secretary of Interior to investigate and report to Congress on the advisability and practicability of establishing a national park to be known as the Okefenokee National Park in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes." In March, Congressman Lankford gave a long speech on the Okefenokee on the House floor. He supported the "movement now on foot to have this place set apart by the Federal Government as one of the national game and bird sanctuaries." He noted that two bills were pending and he felt the Swamp should be set apart as "either a

¹⁶ Waycross *Journal-Herald*, February 2, 1929; February 23, 1929, March 9, 1929.