

HISTORY  
of NAVARRO  
COUNTY



by Annie Carpenter Love



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HISTORY  
of  
Navarro County

By

ANNIE CARPENTER (MRS. W. F.) LOVE

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ANNIE CARPENTER (MRS. W. F.) LOVE



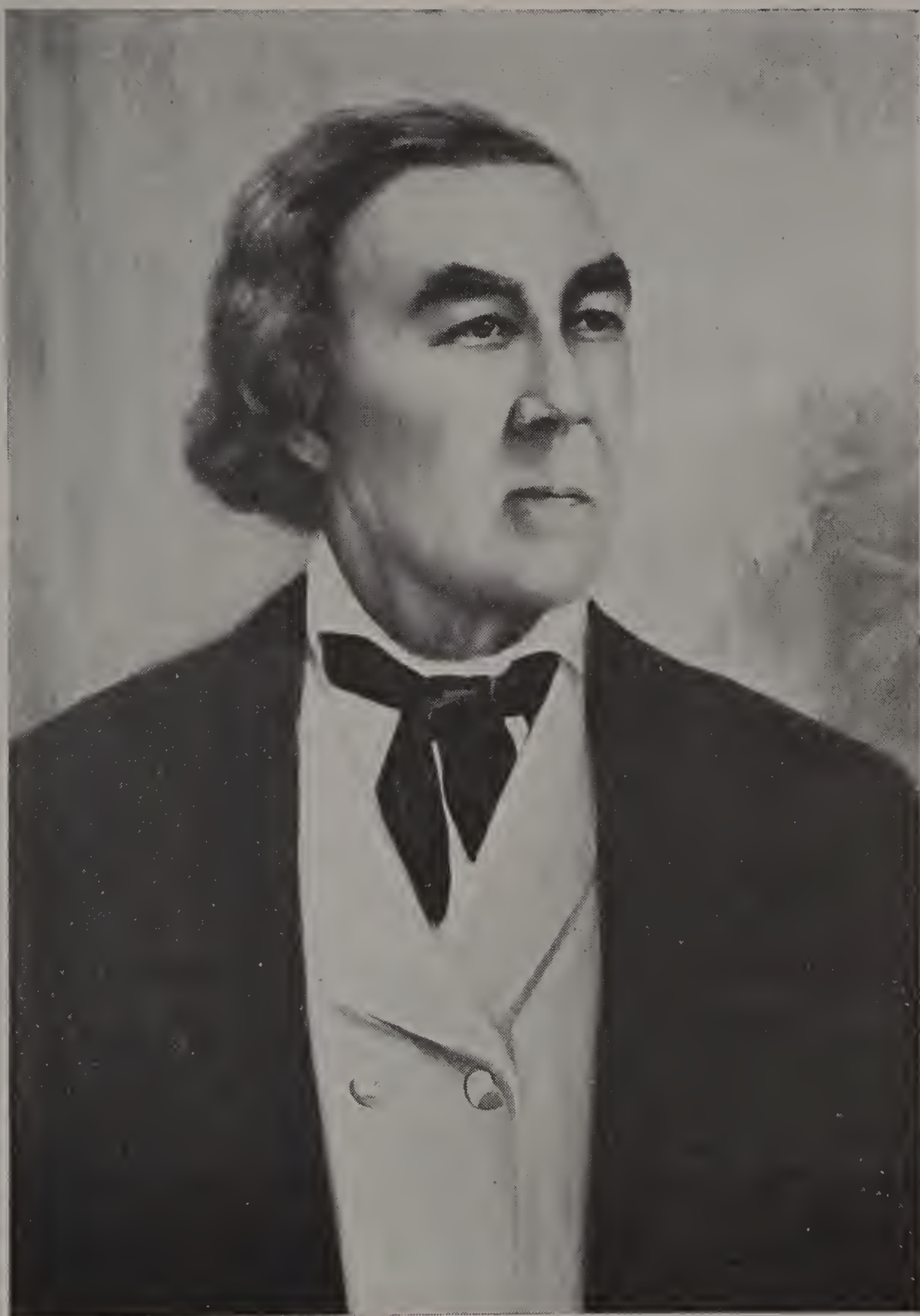


Dedicated to my Father  
THOMAS W. CARPENTER  
and to my Mother  
ELLEN ISAPHINE (DICKSON) CARPENTER  
Navarro County Pioneers

PRINTED IN TEXAS

- 1 -

Navarro County was so called in honor of Jose Antonio Navarro, a loyal Texan, who played a prominent part in the struggle with Mexico and who, by honesty and faithfulness, won the enduring admiration of all true Texans.



*Jose Antonio Navarro*

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Spring Hill . . . Dresden . . . Raleigh . . . Taos or Porter's Bluff . . . Chatfield . . . Wadeville . . . Rural Shade . . . Richland . . . Blooming Grove . . . Bazette . . . Cryer Creek Kerens . . . Dawson . . . Frost . . . Barry . . . Purdon . . . Rice . . . Currie . . . Powell . . . Mildred . . . Winkler . . . Cook's School House and Corbet . . . Retreat . . . Pleasant Grove . . . Petty's Chapel . . . Roane . . . Emhouse . . . Pinkston . . . Eureka . . . South Navarro . . . Navarro . . . Rodney . . . Brushy Prairie . . . Emmett . . . Angus . . .  
**POPULAR NAVARRO COMMUNITIES:** Round Prairie, Long Prairie, Alligator School House, Black Hills, Farmers, Buffalo, Cade, Birdston, Montfort, Pickett, Eldorado, Jester, St. Elmo, White's Chapel, Drane, Hester, Tupelo, Pursley, Brown's Valley, Neil's Valley and Rushing.

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Readers can appreciate that it has been impossible to collect the name of every pioneer family of Navarro County. Therefore any which might not be included have been names which did not appear during an exhaustive search for all information about Navarro County and its early history.

## PREFACE

The sources from which this work has been compiled are varied. Information has been gleaned from such publications as the Southwestern Historical Quarterly, official records of Navarro County and in the archives of the State of Texas at Austin, the Dallas Morning News, the Corsicana Daily Sun, copies of the old Corsicana Observer and Navarro Express, Fulmore's History, sketches of Navarro and other counties.

An expression of appreciation is made for the assistance given by T. P. Kerr and J. D. Hamilton (deceased) and an acknowledgement of the invaluable cooperation of my brother, John W. Carpenter.

Much assistance also came from an appeal by County Superintendent Andrew K. Steele to county teachers to assist in securing historical data. The appeal was responded to by Mr. Brinberry of Rural Shade and pupils Opal Harris and Ethel Stucker; Maurice Keathly, teacher at Jones School and pupil Ona Bell Ramage; Miss Christine Woodring, teacher at Emhouse, and pupils Edward Anderson and Eunice Way; J. K. Brim, at Angus, and pupil Corinne Caffy; J. C. R. Sanders, at Rice, and pupil Grafton Goodwin; Mrs. Mabel Boltz, at Petty's Chapel; Mrs. Dale Owens, of Kerens, and Ellis Head, student.

Many individuals have furnished authoritative information. Most sincere thanks are offered to all of these.





## CHAPTER I

### EARLY TEXAS

THE chief incentive to the writing of this history of Navarro County has been a wish to preserve, in permanent form, a record of the past that it may no longer be clouded in ignorance or perplexed by fiction; to rescue from oblivion the memories of the pioneers, whose heirs we are.

Much of the prosperity and happiness that we now enjoy is due to the struggles and tribulations of our forefathers. Every worthy descendant of those gallant and adventurous spirits should feel a strong desire to become more intimately acquainted with their history and character.

A veneration of what has gone before and anticipation of what is to come are the main factors by which man differs from lower animals. It behooves citizens of today to teach their children love and respect for the pioneers who opened up this great country.

The State of Texas approximates one thousand miles from North to South and about the same distance from East to West and its historical romance is further enhanced by its physical variations, since within the confines of this great State may be found extremities of

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climate from the frigid plains of the Northwestern Panhandle to the tropical climate of the Rio Grande Valley. No other state possesses such a variety. The geographical description of Texas is within itself a romantic volume and the resources are apparently without limitation.

The name "Texas" is derived from an old Indian tribal designation, "Tejas", or "Tecas", and authorities agree that the word meant "friendly" or "friends". The term was not applied to any specific tribe of Indians but embraced ten or twelve tribes, each with a distinctive name, who inhabited the region which now comprises approximately the Counties of Cherokee, Rusk, Houston, and Nacogdoches. Records indicate there were about eight hundred heads of families who cultivated the soil, lived in wood houses, and possessed a higher order of intelligence than surrounding tribes of Indians and these outstanding tribes were generally referred to under the appellation of the Tejas Indians.

In 1680 DeLeon and Father Massenet arrived at Nabadache village in what is now the Northeastern part of Houston County at the junction of San Pedro Creek and the Neches River and established the Mission "San Francisco De La Tejas." DeLeon wrote to the Viceroy in Spain, "The Tejas are a well governed people and plant large quantities of maize, beans, calabashes, canteloupes and watermelons."

The region inhabited by these friendly Indians soon became known as the Province of the Tejas and, after exploration of about a quarter of a century, this desig-

## EARLY TEXAS

nation had become so firmly implanted that later designations did not seem to apply and what is now Texas is the outgrowth of the term as originally given to the small section of the State inhabited by these friendly tribes. At one time Spain endeavored to name the territory North of the Rio Grande "New Philipinas" in honor of King Philip, but "Texas" had become so fixed in the minds of the inhabitants that the name "Nuevas Philipinas" soon fell into disuse. The name of Texas has come down, not only as a geographical name, embracing all of the original territory of Texas, but following the changes, political and otherwise, has attached itself to all of the territory within the present boundary of the State.

During the Spanish dominion, the whole population of Texas, exclusive of Indians, did not exceed 5,000 souls, nor did it exceed that at the time that Anglo American settlement began in 1822.

The Spanish explored and gave names to all of the conspicuous features along the gulf shore from Sabine Pass to the Rio Grande; islands, bays, passes, all streams emptying into the Gulf of Mexico and to many of the tributaries as well as to the mountains, trees, birds and fishes.

We have no sounds, inlets, straits, capes and lakes, but have passes, points, bayous, lagoons, matagordas, and mingled with these are many Indian names. Among the trees, we have the Mesquite and Huisache and Yupon, and among the birds are the Chaparral.

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The names of several counties in Texas were hoary with age before Texas began to develop into geographical significance. These names were probably here before Columbus discovered America. At any rate Coronado and the followers of DeSoto found them here, with a well established identity, fifty years after that event.

Nacogdoches, Pecos, and Pueblos, are among these prehistoric names. The Pecos tribe of Indians had a village at the head of the river which now bears that name. When Coronado made his expedition the tribe had a tradition that it had never been conquered.

Upon entering Texas the Spanish, being desirous of erecting a barrier against the French, English, and Americans tried to secure the allegiance of the Indians, and introduced to them the customs of civilization.

As the priests were not able to control the savages, missions under the protection of the presidios, thought to inspire awe, were built.

These measures failed to secure the desired result and from 1772 to 1783 military discipline was tried.

For almost twenty years, the Spanish tried to hold the Indians to their promised allegiance by a systematic distribution of presents and special trade privileges but at the opening of the nineteenth century the Indian problem was more complicated than at the beginning of Spanish occupation.

After Mexico became a republic the policy toward immigration became more liberal and the great current

## EARLY TEXAS

of oncoming settlers began. As stated before Texas had few inhabitants other than Indians and, in the years immediately succeeding the Mexican Revolution, colonies sprang up and Texas assumed great importance.

There have been many opinions expressed and many explanations made of the various causes which led to Texas Independence but the final and vital reason was that Texans considered that they were alien subjects to an inferior race.

The revolution passed through two phases: first, a defense of Mexico's Republican Constitution of 1824 in an effort to secure the cooperation of Mexican Liberals who opposed military despotism. The Texas leaders earnestly tried to be loyal to the Mexican government. The second was a struggle for absolute independence.

There were many in the United States who censured the Texans, but the majority of prominent citizens of Texas were former citizens of the United States, of Anglo-Saxon origin, and of course had many sympathizers.

There were many Mexicans opposed to military despotism of the leaders, who exerted every effort to secure for Texas and Coahuila the rights and privileges to which they laid claim but they were unable to turn the scale. When it became evident, after repeated failures to secure the rights of a state, that the interests of Texas were secondary and subject to those of Coahuila the Texans felt there was no other course possible, than the one which was pursued.

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When the revolution by Texas against Mexico began there were no political divisions such as counties. There were departments and municipalities. There were three departments: Bexar, Brazoria, and Nacogdoches.

There were eighteen municipalities: Austin, Bexar, Brazoria (formerly called Bevil), Liberty, Matagorda, Milam (formerly called Viesca), Mina (afterwards called Bastrop), Nacogdoches, Refugio, San Augustine, San Patricio, Shelby or Teneha, Victoria, and Washington. Five additional were created by the Provisional Council in 1835: Coronado, Jackson, Jefferson, Red River, and Sabine.

The department was ignored as a political unit in several conventions, being unsuited to a representative form of government.

Representatives came from the various municipalities, and they were the nucleus of the counties created by the First Congress of the Republic of Texas.

The province from which Navarro County was finally formed, was called Viesca, later Milam, and still later, Robertson County.

Texas became a Republic in 1836, and the trickle of immigration became a steady flow, which now, almost one hundred years later, has not ceased.

With indomitable spirit the early arrivals hewed homes from the wilderness, established a semblance of order. Towns were built, roads opened, justice, regu-



GULF OF MEXICO

SAN PATRICIO

Rio Grande

GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS

APACHES FARONES APACHES MESCALEROS

EXETER

BERT

RED RIVER

BOWIE

MILAM

BRAZOS

HOUSTON

WASHINGTON

TRAVIS

FAYETTE

MONTGOMERY

HARRIS

JASPER

LIBERTY

VICTORIA

JACKSON

BEAUFORT

TARRANT

DALLAS

[Palo Alto]

[Resaca de la Palma]





## EARLY TEXAS

lated by law, was administered, and education to the utmost extent encouraged, freedom in religion and conscience was allowed.

The recognition of Texas as a republic, was acknowledged by the leading nations but many difficulties were confronted. It was impossible, with affairs in the chaotic state which then prevailed, to do more than to meet issues as they arose. In the President's message, to the First Congress of the Republic, he said that the Indian situation was very critical and that the military forces in the field were far outnumbered by the host marching against them, and "were it not that there is a vast discrepancy between the military capacities of the opposing armies, the subjugation of Texas would be inevitable, but that discrepancy had constituted an important ground of confidence in their success, and it was worthy of all estimation, for it was a discrepancy not only of military power, but of moral attributes and of political knowledge."

Houston's policy with the Indians was firm yet conciliatory, for while he was opposed to aggression against the Indians, he was in favor of sure protection of the frontier. In the years following the Texas Revolution many settlements and colonies appeared in the new Republic of Texas.

The year of 1821 saw Mexico throw off the yoke of Spain and grant to Moses Austin the right to settle a colony in the Province of Texas.

Four years later, Robert Leftwich was sent from

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Nashville, Tennessee, to procure a contract to settle eight hundred families. The territory sought for the settlement of the colony was embraced in the following bounds: beginning on West bank of the Navasota Creek at the upper crossing of the San Antonio Road, thence Westward with said road to the dividing ridge between the Brazos and Colorado Rivers; thence to the ridge of hills Northward to strike the old Comanche trail leading to Nacogdoches; thence to Navasota creek and down the said creek with its meanders to the beginning. It embraced parts of what is now Burleson and Brazos Counties, all of Williamson, Milam, Falls, McLennan, Bell, Coryell, Limestone, Navarro, a part of Hill and small parts of other Counties. The date of the contract was April 5, 1825. Leftwich died and Sterling Robertson took charge of the company's affairs, reorganized the work and established his headquarters at a place near where the city of Marlin now stands. Robertson County was created from Milam December 14, 1837, and as the creating of other counties became advisable survey parties were sent out and divisions made. In 1838 a party of surveyors were sent out to survey what is now Navarro and some adjoining Counties. An account of this survey will be given further on.

Since Texas embraces such a wide expanse of territory it is not surprising that the growth was very slow for a number of years. There were no good roads; only a few passable trails, no navigable streams of any great length; only three good harbors and the means of transportation were by sail boat on the gulf or by cart

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or wagon. Those who endeavored to travel overland found it necessary to cut their way through the wilderness mile after mile or traverse Indian-infested territory for hundreds of miles. Immigration must of necessity, therefore, have been slow and tedious and demanded from those hardy pioneers a high order of patience and fortitude. During the early days of the Republic the six hundred miles of Texas border was open to attack from Mexico and the frontiers were besieged by the savage Indian but in spite of these hardships and the necessity for building homes in a new country and procuring a livelihood from tilling the soil, the settlement of Texas continued apace and how much was achieved in spite of terrific hardship and constant danger! Due no doubt, in part, to the great exertion necessary to establish a homestead under such adverse conditions, the Homestead Law was enacted first in Texas, during the Third Congress of the Republic. This Bill was introduced in the House of Representatives by \*Louis P. Cooke of Brazoria County and was first read on December 29, 1838, again on January 2, 1839, and passed the final reading on January 22, 1839 without opposition. The author of this law was extraordinary in many ways and appears to have been a courageous, although somewhat wild and reckless, man but his name deserves to be kept from oblivion since it is seldom that a man leaves such a broad and

\*Louis P. Cooke was born in Tennessee and was in the Texan war during the years 1836 and 1837. Later was made a lieutenant colonel and elected a member of Texas Congress in 1838. Both he and his wife died of cholera in Brownsville in 1849.

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deep mark upon jurisprudence during so brief a term as legislator.

Between the years of 1842 and 1845 two settlements were made in the vicinity of what is now known as Navarro County and were designated as Peter's colony and Mercer's Colony. Peter's Colony, twelve miles square, was opened up in 1842 with a settlement on Waxahachie Creek, now Ellis County. Several families moved there including those of John and William R. Howe, Col. J. M. Riggs, James Patton, the Billingsleys, Sutherlands, Mayfields, and others. W. J. Stokes said that with his mother he moved to Texas in 1839. His uncle, Thos. I. Smith, who had participated in the Revolution of Texas, joined them at Yellow Prairie but the Indians stole all of their horses and they came to the home of W. R. Howe, who was Smith's brother-in-law. This was in 1844. Wm. Howe must have been an energetic man. He hauled his "bread stuff" from Buck-Snort, on the falls of the Brazos, eighty or ninety miles away. He was known to have on hand always a good meat supply. When finally the committee to organize a new county met at Austin his home was chosen to house the court until a county seat should be selected. Court was held there until 1848 when Wm. Howe died. A site was then chosen.

In Mercer's Colony there were twenty-five or more families living around Spring Hill, Melton or Dresden, Pisgah Ridge and Bazette. These communities were compact in order to secure protection from Indians and rough characters.

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The first surveys that were made in the vicinity of the present County of Navarro were made by Thomas Jefferson Chambers, who, at that time, was superior of Texas for Mexico. His salary for the years of 1834 and 1835 was five sitios of land. Chambers Creek was named for his brother who was a lawyer. Several other large surveys were made at that time in this vicinity and the overlapping of claims gave rise to many disputes as to boundaries. These land trials were the chief cause of litigation in Navarro for many years and were finally settled in 1866 with the Rachel Leach case on trial.

Many land grants were made in Texas after Mexico became a Republic. Some of these claims included tracts in what later became Robertson County. Others were made during the period in which Texas was a Republic.

Owners of some of these claims lived in other states but many of them lived in Texas and besides all these, hundreds and thousands were turning their thoughts and hopes toward Texas.

As rapidly as the population justified other counties were formed.

Of the groups of settlers in the area of the present County of Navarro some were one hundred and twenty-five or more miles from Franklin. With no roads or bridges, and the dangers from savages, they began to consider ways and means of changing these conditions.

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Of the following names and claims, some were signed in Austin and some in Franklin, Robertson County.

Some of those who had claims in Navarro County in those days were as follows:

John DeArman, 320 acres, headright certificate, ten miles Northeast of Corsicana, 1850.

Survey for George W. Dougherty of 1280 acres, situated on Chambers Creek, a branch of Trinity River, being the quantity to which he is entitled by virtue of Bounty Land Certificate No. 6050, issued to him first day of January, 1839, by A. Sidney Johnston, Secretary of War. (Page 15, Book A, County Clerk's Office.)

Others who received land grants on Chambers Creek were:

John Nelston, 1280 acres, 1839.

Jacob Hendrick, 1280 acres, 1839.

Joseph Young, 1280 acres, 1837.

G. A. Allen, 1280 acres, November, 1838.

Edward Campbell, 1280 acres, August, 1838.

William Gibson, 1280 acres, 1839.

Simon Garcia.

John Carpenter, 960 acres, November 11, 1837.

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Richard Newman, 1280 acres, West bank of Trinity including Bazette Bluff in 1840.

Robert Porter, 1-3 of a League on Trinity, January 6, 1838.

Micajah Autry, 1920 acres on Richland Creek, 1839.

N. H. Carroll, 640 acres four miles West of Trinity, December, 1837.

William M. Love, 1-3 of a League, March 16, 1838.

Some of the early land warrants made were:

Robert R. Goodlow, 2-3 of a league of land, February 21, 1838; William F. Henderson, 1-3 of a league West of Trinity River, 1838; David Clary, 26 labors of land August 21, 1838, West of Trinity and on Richland Creek; Robertson County school land 25 labors of land by virtue of an act of Congress of the Republic, entitled "act appropriating land for the establishment of a general system of education," Jan. 26, 1839; John Kerr 1/3 of a league of land on Chambers Creek, March 19, 1839; David Love 640 acres on Richland Creek, "being the quantity to which he was entitled by being in the battle of San Jacinto," July 28, 1858; John Pevehouse 640 acres for "being in the siege of Bexar," July 18, 1838; Alphonso Steele 640 acres for "being in Battle of San Jacinto," November 14, 1838; Ethan Melton

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

640 acres on Richland Creek, donation land warrant; John White 640 acres on Pin Oak Creek, Headright certificate; John Treadwell, Headright certificate; William Mayfield, 1280 acres, one mile North Bazette crossing, December, 1839; Thomas Wright on Richland, 22 labors, March 8, 1838; Jefferson McKinney paid \$2,000 cash to Joseph West for land on Richland Creek May 3, 1838.





## CHAPTER II

### INDIAN TROUBLES

**S**INCE the first written history of incidents, in what is now Navarro County, is so interesting it is reproduced herewith as a clear delineation of one of hundreds of such which the early settler was forced to expect before he could make for himself a home in this strange new outpost of civilization.

This first record of events occurring in Navarro County was of occurrences in the spring of 1838. An account of it was published in 1860 in the Navarro Express, the county paper at that time. The record was written by Col. W. F. Henderson, whom many now living remember, who died at his home in Corsicana not so many years ago. He came with a party of men surveying for the State of Texas with the purpose of organizing a new county. Following is his description of the expedition:

“Early in the Spring of 1838, having received a deputation to survey and locate land in Robertson Land District, I started from a point soon after known as Old Franklin with about fourteen men and reached Old Parkers Fort, or Springfield, then a settlement of

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about twelve families. The Fort had been surprised and violently assaulted the year before by the Indians, several Indians being killed, while the wife and children of one of the settlers, Mr. Parker, were captured and held as prisoners.

“After waiting there a day or two for Colonel Richard Sparks and party of Land Locators to join us from Fort Houston on the other side of the Trinity (now Palestine) we started; leaving word for Sparks to follow us, and ran a connecting line from the highest point of the Navasota River to Pin Oak Creek, striking it not far from its mouth where it runs into Richland Creek.

“Just before reaching Pin Oak Creek and as I was surveying said line we heard two rifle shots in quick succession. I remarked that Holland (a man in my employ) could hardly load and fire so rapidly. This aroused our suspicion of foul play; however, we surveyed on and reached Pin Oak that night, struck camp and with little degree of uneasiness awaited Holland’s arrival but he came not. Next morning my surveying partner and I commenced surveying different tracts. This separated our little band in half with several miles distance between us in the course of our surveying during the day.

“The following night we met and camped to-

## INDIAN TROUBLES

gether without any alarming incident having occurred to make us apprehend danger from hostile Indians except the disappearance of Holland which alone should have put us on our guard but really we were so hopeful of his return that the suspicion of a contrary fate did not then arise.

“The next morning, after nearly starving on one turkey to fourteen men, we proceeded to work. My other hunter, Rogers, being now alarmed would scarcely venture a rod from camp, therefore our fare was limited and we were solely dependent on game and the exertions of our hunters for our subsistence.

“The next night brought us all to camp with Holland still unheard from, and only one turkey again with a little parched corn ground fine, sweetened, and flavored with ginger, had to suffice.

“The men became much demoralized at this state of affairs and greatly agitated about Holland’s long continued absence. They came to me and said they would positively not stay any longer and must return to Springfield. We had consultation with Barry who was urgently advised to give up or suspend the trip and go with me as I had decided it was advisable to go in and useless to continue without hands.

“This proposition met not his approbation

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

and unhappily for him he declined, saying he would proceed with the work and that I could rejoin him as soon as I had obtained hands in Springfield. This I promised to do as early as possible and left him and started on foot as one of my pack ponies had killed himself by stampeding with an ax which became untied and cut his leg so severely that he died from bleeding.

“We had not gone more than five miles from camp, all my men on foot, (except an invalid who was riding the only horse left) when we beheld some buzzards collected near a Cedar ravine.

“No sooner noticed than I remarked, ‘There is Holland’s body!’ He was lying stripped of all clothing save one sock and so much mutilated by the buzzards that we could not tell whether he was scalped or not.

“Upon this sad realization of our forebodings I urged upon my employees the necessity of returning to Barry’s Camp both as duty to them and the safety of our own party, as we had but two guns.

“But demoralization had set in upon their hearts like some terrible disease, only to be increased at the awful sight the harrowing spectacle of poor Holland’s body presented.

“They would not consent to my proposi-

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tion and nothing was left for me to do but to move forward with them. We reached Springfield that night.

“Early the next morning I called for volunteers to go back with me and rescue Barry’s party. Only two men, (Lamb and Sluglin) volunteered. We hurried back without molestation and reached camp that night only to find it deserted. We were at a loss what to do but hearing the barking of dogs (and knowing Barry had two), we followed the direction and struck camp near ten o’clock on the further side of Pin Oak Creek. We found them in great consternation at the death of Barry who had been brutally killed that evening by Indians whom Barry had discovered a mile distant on the prairie mounted on horseback and numbering fifteen. He and his three men, mistaking them for Sparks’ party attracted their attention by waving their hats but alas! from the answering yells and rapid charge they were found to be Indians. Then ensued a fearful race for life, they being afoot and about as far from the timber as the Indians were from them. Barry being in bad health was overtaken and slain. Being badly armed (not more than half of us having guns) and having decided to return to Springfield immediately we took advantage of the moonlight and like the Arabs of old did we fold our tents and silently steal away.

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“Our party got separated during the night but by ten o’clock next morning we all reached Springfield in safety where we found the little settlement in the utmost terror and confusion not only from our disaster but from the equally sad return of Sparks’ party which having reached and left Springfield a few days previously had proceeded to and camped upon Richland Creek a short distance from Pin Oak. They then struck camp and proceeded to send out two men at a time to look for us.

“The second day while all were lying asleep in camp (except the two scouting men), they were surprised and attacked by Indians. Sparks was killed and the rest stampeded without horses, guns or provisions.

“These annoyances from the Indians continued for a long time and although our plans were frustrated after the results of these expeditions we did not give up but in the fall made another attempt which proved more disastrous than all.”

The author of the above historical document played a prominent part in the later history of Navarro County. After the organization of the county in 1846 Col. Henderson practiced law in Corsicana and was for years a familiar figure in the community. His home was on what is now Seventh Avenue in Corsicana. His son, Calvin, was one of the first white children born in

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the present confines of Corsicana. Col. Henderson retained his vigor throughout his life. One of his greatest pleasures was to sit and talk over the early days with old friends during a session at a checker board.

During the early days of Navarro County the diary of any one of the inhabitants would have been very liberally interspersed with Indian warfare and Indian "scares."

One of the most fascinating of the early Navarro County frontiersmen was "Buck" Barry. He lived in Navarro County several years — and was a prominent figure. His home was where the present library now stands. He set out the large Bois d'Arc trees which still stand between the library and the Y. M. C. A. When he moved West A. Duren bought the home and reared his family there. In the recent volume "Buck Barry—A Texas Ranger" by James K. Greer, there are many interesting sidelights on early days in the territory which later became Navarro County. He speaks of the fact that between the Trinity River and the Falls of the Brazos only three settlements and one Indian trading house were to be found but several camps of buffalo hunters, and in the same paragraph he mentions the fact that the buffalo were in greater numbers along Chambers Creek, ten miles below where Corsicana now stands, than at any other point in their varied travel. This neutral ground abounded in game of all kinds. Indian tribes from East and West hunted here, therefore there were frequent clashes.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Until the Anglo-Saxon settlement reached considerable proportions the Trinity River was considered the line of demarcation between the territory in which the whites were welcome and the Indians' hunting ground upon which no white foot could safely tread. This neutral ground was, however, particularly dangerous to the white man because the Indian tribes were always at enmity with one another and each felt the white man was a natural enemy and although the woodland Indians were supposed to be friendly to the whites, with the exception of the Tejas tribes, their friendship was somewhat undependable and any real or fancied wrong might provoke sudden danger to the white settler. The prairie Indian tribes, among whom were the warlike Comanches, resented the intrusion of the white man from the very first and at all times were on the lookout for more scalps to hang to their tent poles.

During the fall of the year the lands west of the Trinity River became good hunting grounds and from East of the Trinity there came the Cherokees, Shawnees, Kickapoos, Delawares, Caddoes, Ionies, and Anadarcos to lay their traps and with guns purchased from the traders kill sufficient game to last them through the winter. From West and South of the Trinity on gaily decorated ponies and armed with bows and arrows, and lances came the Tehuacanas, Keechis, Wacoos and Comanches and any white men found in this hunting ground were exposed to danger from any or all of these tribes whose hunting grounds were encroached upon.



## INDIAN TROUBLES

The Indians felt intense animosity toward the settlers who came to the territory now embraced by Navarro County to locate their claims for land given them as reward for participation in the revolution of 1836. These ex-soldiers formed into groups and usually had with them one or more surveyors and surveying instruments and it is easy to see why the Indian was anxious to put a stop to this encroachment which had a semblance of permanency and why these early surveying parties were met with animosity since the Indian realized it was the opening wedge in an effort to drive him off his hunting ground and take from him his means of livelihood. This feeling brought on such conflicts as the report copied in full on the preceding pages and if a complete history of all these conflicts were kept they would doubtless afford hundreds of similar instances which occurred throughout the central part of Texas during the years of early settlement.

Here is W. F. Henderson's description of the second attempt to survey Navarro County in the fall of 1838:

“The surveyors headed by W. F. Henderson and Walter P. Lane, who afterwards was Major of Hayes' regiment in Mexico, Samuel T. Allen, Asa Mitchell, John Baker, Euclid Cox, James Smith, Thomas Smith, Richard Davis, Wm. M. Love, Wm. Jackson, William Trimmer, Rodney Wheeler, and some other men by the names of Baker, Violet, Ingram, Neill, Jones, Fikes (about 80 years old), Hard, McLaughlin, Thomas, Barton and Earle made

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another attempt in October of that same year. It is surprising that they were not afraid to do this, with so many Indians about and so soon after the other disaster, but they had the true spirit of the American pioneer and fear seems not to have been a part of their equipment.

“There was no commander but all went along either as chain bearers or locators and for mutual aid and protection.

“From Franklin the company, mounted on horseback, passed up by Tehuacana Springs on the Southwest branches of Richland Creek the scene of their labors. On their way they met a great many Indians in small squads sometimes a half dozen sometimes twenty or thirty all of whom professed to be friendly but all betrayed by look or gesture a feeling of dissatisfaction arising from their opposition to the survey of their favorite haunts.

“On the next morning the work was begun, several lines were run, partly in the timber, and partly in the prairie, the neighborhood being divided into both, the country very broken with very many deep ravines.

“The first night was spent in that vicinity at the home of Dr. George W. Hill.\* The next morning they went to work a few miles away.

\*The home of Dr. Hill was located 150 yards from Indian Springs.



*Top: This home now occupied by J. A. Dickson and sister, Mrs. S. E. Gray, was built originally as a two-room cedar log house by Mish Clary. It was later occupied by Nelson Pittman and finally by the M. M. Dickson family.*

*Below: The site of Indian Springs (Spring Hill), long since dried up.*



## INDIAN TROUBLES

The compass proved defective at the outset and Henderson dispatched W. M. Love and William Jackson back to Parker's Fort for a magnet, reducing the company to twenty-two men. While the work was going on in the morning squads of Indians were seen in every direction moving to and fro, others in apparent consultation. It is strange that such indications did not alarm the little party but it seems they had no idea of an attack up to that time. At eleven o'clock they struck fire and breakfasted on a spring branch. About fifty Kickapoos camped opposite them for the same purpose. Some of the latter crossed and told Henderson's party that they would be attacked that day by seventeen Ionies. When the survey was renewed they ran a mile into the the prairie and while making a corner twelve Indians passed through them and one asked in English 'Is that a mile?' Another pointing to the compass on the staff said 'Is that God's eye?' But all looked displeased.

"The next line was being run parallel with a deep ravine at about eighty yards; the nearest timber being about a mile distant, when they were fired upon from the ravine—the enemy lying under the bank and also concealed by the bushes.

"Without the least confusion, for by now the surveyors were convinced there was dan-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ger, they collected their instruments and formed so as to fall back to the timber. Before this movement began, however, the Indians appeared from every direction and immediately surrounded them and poured bullets and arrows among them on all sides yet at such a distance as to do little execution. The surveyors fighting their way bore for the timber but when a few hundred yards from it they discovered that it was already infested by about two hundred of the enemy. They then bore off obliquely to a ravine in the prairie and succeeded in making a lodgment just before the junction of the two ravines skirted by small bushes. Immediately at the point of the junction stood a Cottonwood tree and about eighty yards below them there was water and several trees but the enemy had made the position in advance of them. While on the retreat to this point the party in the midst of the bullets and arrows held an election and chose Neill as their commander. It was now about one o'clock p. m. Twenty-two men in a small ravine in the open prairie were surrounded by at least three hundred Tehuacanas, Ionies, Wacoes, Caddoes and Kickapoos. Soon after reaching the position Neill was wounded and disabled and at his request Cox was made Captain.

“A general fire was kept up on all sides but the chief execution was done by Indians

## INDIAN TROUBLES

climbing the trees below and getting fair view of our men. In this way every little while someone was either killed or wounded. Cox was a resolute man and seeing the necessity of dislodging the enemy from the trees took an exposed position on the bank behind the lone Cottonwood tree. He was killed and again the band had no leader but it was mutually agreed that all would stay together and each man use his own discretion in the defense. When Cox fell the Indians rang a shout of exultation and the body made a charge but they met such a deadly fire from rifles and pistols they fell back, yet again and again amid hideous yells they made charges up first one bank then another and as often were driven back with killed and wounded. During this state of the engagement about fifty Indians on horseback made their appearance on a ridge about two hundred and fifty yards distant occasionally beckoning the Americans and calling to them 'Kickapoos good Indians, come to Kickapoos.' This was believed to be a ruse to decoy them but the old man, Fikes, exhausted and unable to fight determined to test their sincerity saying that his days were few at best. He mounted and rode toward them but was killed, whether by some of the others our men could not tell.

"Davis being badly wounded pursued the same course and shared the same fate. In this

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manner the fight continued till eleven o'clock at night one charge after another followed by a repulse, many an Indian being killed and our party suffering considerably also. Twelve hours of intense and laborious excitement with increasing numbers of the enemy, the suffering for water, and the certainty of final annihilation in that position had brought the gallant fellows to a state of desperation. A retreat of a mile through the prairie in the bright moonlight was the only alternative. Most of them must fall but possibly a few, probably none, might escape. Ingram, Jones, Violet, Thomas Smith and John Baker were wounded up to this time in addition to the slain. They were mounted on horse and surrounded by the remainder on foot and thus trusting to stout hearts and a soldier's God they left the ravine and surrounded by three hundred Indians afoot and on horse and amid the most deafening yells they slowly advanced but with firm resolve of brave hearts toward the nearest timber which skirted another of those ravines peculiar to that region.

“One by one their number was reduced by death. Ingram wounded before the retreat was shot in the head and fell from his horse. When they reached the timber but seven of the original number were alive. John Baker and James Smith escaped together at this point, eluded pursuit and got into the falls of



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the Brazos. McLaughlin, a youth, instead of leaving the ravine with his brave comrades secreted himself in some bushes and when the Indians pursued the others he fled down the stream and finally reached the settlements on the Trinity boasting of his shrewdness.

“On reaching the timber Henderson, Lane, Violet and Barton still clinging together fell into a dry branch and were hidden from their pursuers by continuous bushes. Here they lay in silence for an hour during which time a portion of the enemy continued their yells around them but finally retired and all was still as death. To remain till daylight was certain death. Violet was so badly wounded that he could only walk by the aid of one man one of his legs being powerless. By perseverance they descended the branch some two miles and in a thicket found some water. Painful as it was, Violet was left there with a solemn promise that if the others should get in, relief would be hastened to him. The other three, Henderson, Lane and Burton had but two guns, two pistols and one Bowie knife left. They traveled till daylight in their measured pace, Lane resting an arm on each of his companions. They lay concealed all the next day without water. On the second day and third night having become bewildered and their tongues parched they traveled over hill and dale they knew not whither but no water was

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found. On the next day with swollen tongues and parched lips they suddenly came upon six Kickapoo Indians. By this time their clothes were torn in shreds, their emaciated bodies were covered with blood and Lane could not articulate while Henderson and Barton were not much better. Five of those Indians looked on them with frowns and asked how they came to be in such a situation to which they replied with some deception that they had fought with the Ionies. Henderson discovered an expression of compassion from the other Kickapoo and offered him his Bowie knife to take them to water. The noble son of the Forest looked compassionately upon him and lighting his pipe handed it to Henderson adding 'Kickapoo good Indian, smoke with Kickapoo.' He then led them about five hundred yards and imagine their joy at beholding that lucious fountain of nature, the celebrated Tehuacana Springs.

“After indulging in this beverage and some meat prepared by the Indians, Henderson offered him his gun, all he had left, if he would allow Lane to ride his horse and pilot them to Parker's Fort. He promptly accepted the offer and faithfully performed his engagement. They got in the next morning. With poor Violet this sketch, already too long, shall close.

“A party piloted by William Love was at

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once sent to the poor fellow and fortunately they touched at Tehuacana Springs also and what must have been their surprise to find the sufferer there! Incredible as it may appear he had crawled on his hands and feet and by a mysterious Providence he had just reached the springs, when his deliverers arrived. He was taken in and finally recovered. The little stream at the extreme head of which this bloody tragedy occurred has been made to perpetuate it through the significant name of 'Battle Creek.'

“As soon as these men got to Franklin the news was spread and by next morning fifty men piloted by William Love started to the scene of the disaster. They supplied Violet with all possible help and went to the battle ground to bury the dead and to see if they could find any more wounded. When they reached the place the wolves had stripped the flesh off the bones and they were gathered together and buried.”

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An account from the memoirs of Gen. W. P. Lane:

“A surveying party was being formed at Franklin, Robertson County, in October, 1838. I went with William Love and others from San Augustine to join it; all of us having lands to locate. We organized at Franklin, twenty-three of us, electing Neil as captain, Hender-

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son being our surveyor. We started via Parker's Fort for Richland Creek where we intended to make our location. The second day we camped at Parker's Fort which was then vacated having been stormed a few months before by a body of Comanches who murdered all the inhabitants or carried them off in captivity, the two historical Parker children being among the number. We passed Tehuacana Hill on our way to Richland Creek and crossed through a dense thicket to the other side of the Creek and encamped about a mile on another stream (later called Battle Creek) where we would commence operations.

"We found there some three hundred Kickapoo Indians with their squaws and papooses who had come down from their reservation in Arkansas to lay in their supply of dried buffalo meat for the country then abounded with any amount of game and from the hills you could see a thousand buffalo at a sight.

"The Indians received us kindly as a great many of them spoke English. We camped by them three days going out in the morning surveying and returning in the evening to camp to procure water.

"The third morning at breakfast we observed a commotion in the camp of our neighbors. Presently the Chief came to us and re-

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ported to us that the Ionies (a wild tribe) were coming to kill us. We thanked them for the information but said we were not afraid of the Ionies and said that if they attacked us we would 'clean them out' as they had nothing but bows and arrows anyway.

"They begged us to leave saying that if the Ionies killed us it would be laid on them. We refused to leave but asked the Chief why, as he took so much interest in our welfare, he could not help us whip the Ionies? He said they could not do that as his tribe had a treaty with the Ionies. He begged us feelingly to go but as we would not do so they planned a little surprise for us.

"They knew where we had made a corner the evening before and knew that we would go back there to commence work, so they put one hundred men in a ravine we had to go by. We started out from our camp to resume our work, several of the Indians going with us. One of them stuck to me like a leech and succeeded in begging a piece of tobacco from me. Then shaking hands with me he crossed the ravine within fifty yards from his friends who were lying in ambush for us. We got opposite to them not suspecting any danger when about forty arose from the ravine and fired into us, killing some of our horses and wounding some of our men. Captain Neil ordered us

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to charge them which we did and routed them out of the ravine when they fell back on a small skirt of timber fifty yards off from which sprang up one hundred and fifty Indians and confronted us.

“We retreated back into the Prairie. The Indians mounted their horses and surrounded us and went 'round us in a circle firing into us. We got to the head of the ravine in the Prairie and took shelter in it. The Indians put a force out of gun shot to watch us while their main force went below about eighty yards where the ravine widened and they had the advantage of the brush. They opened fire on us and shot all our horses except two which were behind a bush to make sure that none of us should escape.

“The Indians had no hostility towards us but knew we were surveying the land, that white people would soon settle there and break up their hunting grounds so they wanted to kill us for a double purpose—none would be left to tell on them and it would deter others from coming into that section of country surveying.

“Each commenced firing into the other up and down the ravine, we sheltered by nooks and they by brush on their part. Euclid Cook got behind the only tree on the bank firing at them. When exposing himself he was shot

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through the spine. He fell away from the tree and called for some of us to come and pull him down into the ravine. I dropped my gun and ran up and pulled him down. He was mortally wounded and died in two hours.

“We fought all day without water waiting for night to make our escape but when night came also came the full moon making it almost as bright as day. Up to this time we had several killed and some badly wounded. We waited till near twelve o'clock for the moon to cloud over but as it did not we determined to make a break for Richland Bottom. We put our four worst wounded men on the two remaining horses. As we rose upon the bank the Indians raised a yell on the prairie and all rushed round us in a half circle pouring hot shot into us. We retreated in a walk wheeling and firing as we went and keeping them at bay.

“The four wounded men on horseback were shot off and we put other badly wounded ones in their places. We got within two hundred yards of the timber facing round and firing when Captain Neil was shot through the hips. He called to me to help him on a horse behind a wounded man, which another man and I did. We had not gone ten steps further when Neil, the wounded man and the horse were all shot down together. I was shot

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through the calf of the leg splitting the bone and severing the leaders connected with my toes. I fell forward as I made a step but I could support myself on my heel. I hobbled on with the balance to the mouth of the ravine which was covered with brush into which four of us entered and the other three took the timber on the other side. We had gone about fifty yards down the ravine where it was dark and in the shade when I called to Henderson to stop and tie up my leg as I was bleeding to death. He did so—cut off the tip of my boot—and bandaged the wound. We saw about fifty Indians come to the mouth of the Ravine but they could not see us as we were in the shade as we went down the ravine. They followed and overtook our wounded comrade whom we had to leave and killed him. We heard him cry out when they shot him and knowing that they would overtake us we crawled on the bank of the ravine and lay down on our faces with our guns cocked ready to give them one parting salute if they discovered us. They passed so closely that I could have put my hand on any of their heads. They went down the ravine a short distance when a Conch shell was blown on the prairie as a signal for the Indians to come back.

“After they had passed us we went down to Richland Creek where we found a little pond of muddy water into which I pitched head for-



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ward having suffered all day without water and also from loss of blood. We here left Violet, our wounded comrade. His thigh was broken and he could crawl no further then. He begged me to stay with him as I was badly wounded and as he said could not reach the settlements, some ninety miles distant. I told him I was bound to make the connection so we bound up his thigh and left him near the water.

“We traveled down the creek 'til daylight, then 'cooned' over the dry creek on a log so as to leave no track in the sand to a little island of brush where we lay all day long. In the morning we could hear the Indians riding up and down looking for us. They knew our number, twenty-three, and seven had escaped. They wished to kill all so that it could not be charged to their tribe.

“We started at dusk for Tehuacana Hills twenty-five miles away. When I rose to my feet after lying all day in the thicket the agony from the splinters of bone in my leg was so severe that I fainted. When I recovered consciousness and before I opened my eyes I heard Burton tell Henderson that they had best leave me as I could not get on and would greatly encumber them. Henderson said we were friends and had slept on the same blanket together and he would not leave me. He would stick to me to the last. I rose to my

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feet and cursed Burton both loud and deep telling him he was a white-livered Plebeian and in spite of his one hundred and fifty pounds I would lead him to the settlement, which I did.

“We traveled nearly all night but next day got out of our course by following buffalo trails that we thought would lead us to water. The country was so dry that the earth was cracked open. On the third day after the fight we sighted Tehuacana hills. We got within six miles of it when Burton sat down and refused to go any further saying he would die there. We abused him and sneered at him for having no grit and finally got him to the spring. We luckily struck the water one hundred yards below the spring where it crossed a weedy marsh and was warm. Just as we got in sight of the water ten Indians rode up to us. I saw they were Kickapoos. They asked us what we were doing and I told them we had been out surveying but had a fight with the Ionies and got lost from our comrades who had gone another way to the settlement. They wanted to talk longer but I said ‘water! water!’ The Chief said ‘There is water.’ I made for it and pitched head foremost into the weeds and water on my face and drank till I could hold no more. Luckily for me the water was warm. If I had struck the spring above, the water would have killed me. Hen-

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derson and Burton were above me in the water. In a short time they called me. I heard them but would not answer. I was in the water covered by weeds and felt so happy and contented I would not have answered for any consideration. Henderson and Burton got uneasy about me as I did not answer and came down the bank to find me. An Indian saw me in the water and weeds and waded in and snaked me out. I asked the Chief what he would take to carry me to a settlement on a horse. He looked at me (I was a forlorn object suffering from hunger and want of water. my eyes were sunk nearly to the back of my head) and said 'Maybe so you die tonight'. I told him 'No' unless he killed me. He replied 'No kill'. He asked 'Want eat?' We said 'Yes'. He answered 'Maybe so. Camp in two miles. Come go. Squaws got something to eat'. He helped me on a horse and we went to camp. The women saw our condition and would give us only a little at a time. They gave us a wooden bowl of soup composed of dried Buffalo meat, corn and pumpkins all together. Green turtle soup with all its spicy condiments dwindles into insignificance when compared to my recollection of that savory broth. When we handed back our bowls for more they said 'Bimeby'. They waked us up twice during the night and gave us more. They understood our condition, knew that we

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were famished and to have given us all we wanted at one time would have killed us. We slept till next morning when we wished to start, knowing that at any moment a runner might come into camp and tell them that it was their tribe that had attacked us and as we were the only ones that could incriminate them we must be killed. I traded a fine rifle of Henderson's for a pony and saddle but when I started to mount him a squaw stopped me and said 'No, my pony.' I appealed to the Indian who looked at me ruefully and said 'Squaw's pony' showing that "Petticoat Government" was known even by the Kickapoos.

"We started on foot, my leg paining me severely. We had gone about three miles when six Indians galloped up to us on the prairie. I told my comrade our time had come. We got behind two trees determined to sell our lives dearly. They rode up saying 'Howd'y? We want to trade guns', showing an old dilapidated rifle to trade for our good one. We soon found out it was trade or fight so we swapped with the understanding that they would take us to Parker's Fort, about twenty-five miles, on pony, which they agreed to do. An Indian went with us the balance going back and taking the rifle.

"We got near the Fort in the morning when Burton proposed to Henderson to shoot the Indian who was unarmed and I could ride to the

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settlement. Henderson indignantly refused and I told Burton that rather than betray confidence I would walk on one leg. Five minutes later I heard a gun fired to the right. We asked the Indian what it meant. He replied 'Cosette, Kickapoo Chief, camp here.' So if we had shot the Indian we would have brought down a hundred to see what it meant. He then told me 'Maybe so you get down, yonder is Parker's Fort. Me go to Cosette's camp'. I did so. We struck the Navasota below the Fort and waded down stream a mile fearing the Indians would follow us. We crossed in the night and went out some three miles in the prairie and slept. The Indians that morning had given us as much dried Buffalo meat as we could carry so we had plenty to eat on our way. We traveled all next day and part of the night having got on the trail that led to Franklin. We started the next morning before day. Going along the path, I in the lead, we were hailed, ordered to halt and tell who we were. I looked up and saw two men with their guns leveled on us about forty yards off. I answered 'We are friends, white men'. I didn't blame them much for the question for I was in my shirt and drawers, with a handkerchief tied 'round my head, having lost my hat in the fight, and they thought we were Indians. They proved to be my old friends, William Love and Jackson, who had

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left our party some six days before for the settlement to get us another compass. They were horrified when we told them of the massacre. They put us on their horses and returned with us to Franklin, a distance of some fifteen miles. The news spread over the neighborhood like wildfire. By the next morning fifty men were raised and, piloted by Love, started for the scene of our disaster. I had been placed in comfortable quarters at Franklin and kindly nursed and attended by sympathetic ladies. Henderson and Burton bade me good-bye and went to their respective homes.

“We told Love’s party where we had left Violet with his thigh broken and asked them to try to find him. The party got to Tehuacana Springs and being very thirsty threw down their guns to get a drink. Violet who had seen them coming across the prairie thought they were Indians and secreted himself in the brush close by but when he heard them talk and found that they were white men he gave a yell and hobbled out saying, ‘Boys, I’m mighty glad you’ve come!’ He came near stampeding the whole party they thinking it was an Indian ambushade. Poor Violet after we left him in Richland Creek bottom stayed there three days subsisting on green haws and plums. Getting tired he decided to make for Tehuacana Hills as he knew the course. He splinted and bandaged his thigh as best he

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could and then struck out. He got there after a day and night's travel. Being nearly famished he looked around for something to eat. In the spring which was six feet across he saw a big bullfrog swimming around. Failing to capture him he decided to shoot him. He pulled down on him with a holster pistol loaded with twelve buckshot and the proportional amount of powder. Having his back to the embankment, down which the water ran, the pistol knocked him over senseless breaking the ligature which bound his thigh. He remained insensible, he thought, about two hours. When he became conscious he bandaged his leg again as well as he could and crawled up to the spring to look for the frog. He found one hind quarter floating around, the balance having been blown to flinders. Being very hungry he made short work of that. In a few hours after that Love's party came up and supplied him with all he wanted. They left him there until their return they going up to the battle ground to bury the dead and see if they could find any more wounded.

“When they got there they found the bones of all our killed, the flesh having been stripped off by the wolves. They also found, much to my satisfaction, eighty piles of green brush in the lower part of the ravine from which the Indians were firing at us during the day and under each pile of brush was a copious quantity

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of blood which proved that we had not been fooling our time away during the day.

“The company returned to Franklin bringing Violet with them. He recovered from his wound.”

The grave had been marked by stones and for many years was a sacred spot and kept in memory by those who were citizens in Navarro and the story was kept in the minds of the young by frequent repetition but time passed swiftly by, each one busy with the affairs of life, and the memories of those brave men grew dim until the son of one of the men who had not forgotten erected a monument to the men buried there. This was John P. Cox who at that time, fifty years after the tragedy, was County Clerk of Navarro County. The names of the dead buried there are on the stone. The grave is in a field just a mile or so out Northwest of Dawson.

It was a tragic chapter in the history of the county and was a part of the price paid for this present prosperous and happy country.

About a year after this, a battle with the Indians was fought with Captain Chandler and Lieutenant William Love heading about forty Texans. This was a running fight and was continued for about ten miles. A number of the Indians were killed while the Texans lost only one man. At the beginning of the engagement the Indians began to retreat and ran to their encampment which was stormed by the Texans. Nearly four thousand dollars worth of property was re-captured.



## CHAPTER III

### ORGANIZATION

AS soon as Texas achieved independence the citizens began to talk of and advance arguments in favor of annexation to the United States. On any subject so important, however, it was natural that differences of opinion existed and many acrimonious debates and much impassioned oratory were expended both in Texas and in various parts of the country on the subject of annexation of Texas to the United States of America. Mexico continued to claim title to Texas and, since the United States had signed a treaty of friendship with Mexico, it was natural they hesitated to violate these covenants or make the initial step toward annexing a part of the country which was so embroiled in political dissension, particularly when this meant saddling onto the United States government the debt owed by the Republic of Texas. The question of slavery also entered into the discussion and there was much argument as to whether or not Texas would enter the Union as a free state or a slave state. There is no doubt but that a majority of the inhabitants in the Republic of Texas were in favor of annexation, but lack of means of travel and poor facilities of exchanging mail meant that, with the inexperienced diplomats and lack of coordinated management, this sentiment

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could not readily crystalize. Lecturers and spell-binders were sent into different states and popular sentiment was aroused to the point where James K. Polk was elected President on the platform which included a favorable attitude toward the annexation of Texas. George M. Dallas was elected Vice President and his name is indelibly written in the annals of Texas by having one of the chief cities of the State named in his honor.

On April 12, 1844, the Treaty of Annexation was signed and on the 4th of June, the following year, the President of Texas, Anson Jones, issued a proclamation calling attention to the fact that inhabitants of Texas now had the choice of remaining as an independent Republic since Mexico had recognized the independence of Texas on June 2, of that year; or the inhabitants might vote in favor of annexing to the United States as one of the members of the great American Union. A convention was assembled at Austin on July 4. Terms of annexation were ratified, a constitution for the new State was formed and the assembly was adjourned on August 22. Under this constitution, an election was held on the third Monday in December of 1845 to name a Governor, Lieutenant Governor and members of the Legislature.

One of the first acts of the First Legislature was to create new counties in order to establish a more compact form of government and to take into consideration the rapid increase in population and at this first meeting, on April 25, 1846, the following law was enacted:

## ORGANIZATION

“That all that portion of the County of Robertson included within the following bounds be, and the same is hereby erected into a new County, to be called and known by the name of Navarro, to-wit: beginning on the East bank of the Brazos River, at the Northwest corner of Limestone County, and thence, with the line of said County to the Trinity River; thence up said River to the line of Dallas County; thence, West to the corner thereof; thence, North with the line of said Dallas County to the old Southern boundary of Fannin County; thence West to the Brazos River, and thence down River to the place of beginning.

“Sec. 2. Be it further enacted, that said County of Navarro, as to the right of representation, shall be considered as a part of the County of Robertson, until entitled by numbers, to the right of separate representation.

“Sec. 3. Be it further enacted that until the seat of justice shall be permanently established, as hereafter provided by law, the temporary seat of justice shall be at the residence of W. R. Howe and all courts shall be held thereat.

Organization of Navarro County was forwarded by a committee composed of C. M. Winkler, Thos. I. Smith, D. R. Mitchell, J. C. Neil, E. H. Tarrant, Jacob Eliot and William Love. This committee received much assistance from Jose Antonio Navarro and recognized it by naming the county in his honor. In addition, the county seat was named in honor of the home of his parents—Corsica.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

“Sec. 4. Be it further enacted that this Act take effect and shall be in full force from and after its passage.”

(\*Approved April 25, A. D., 1846).

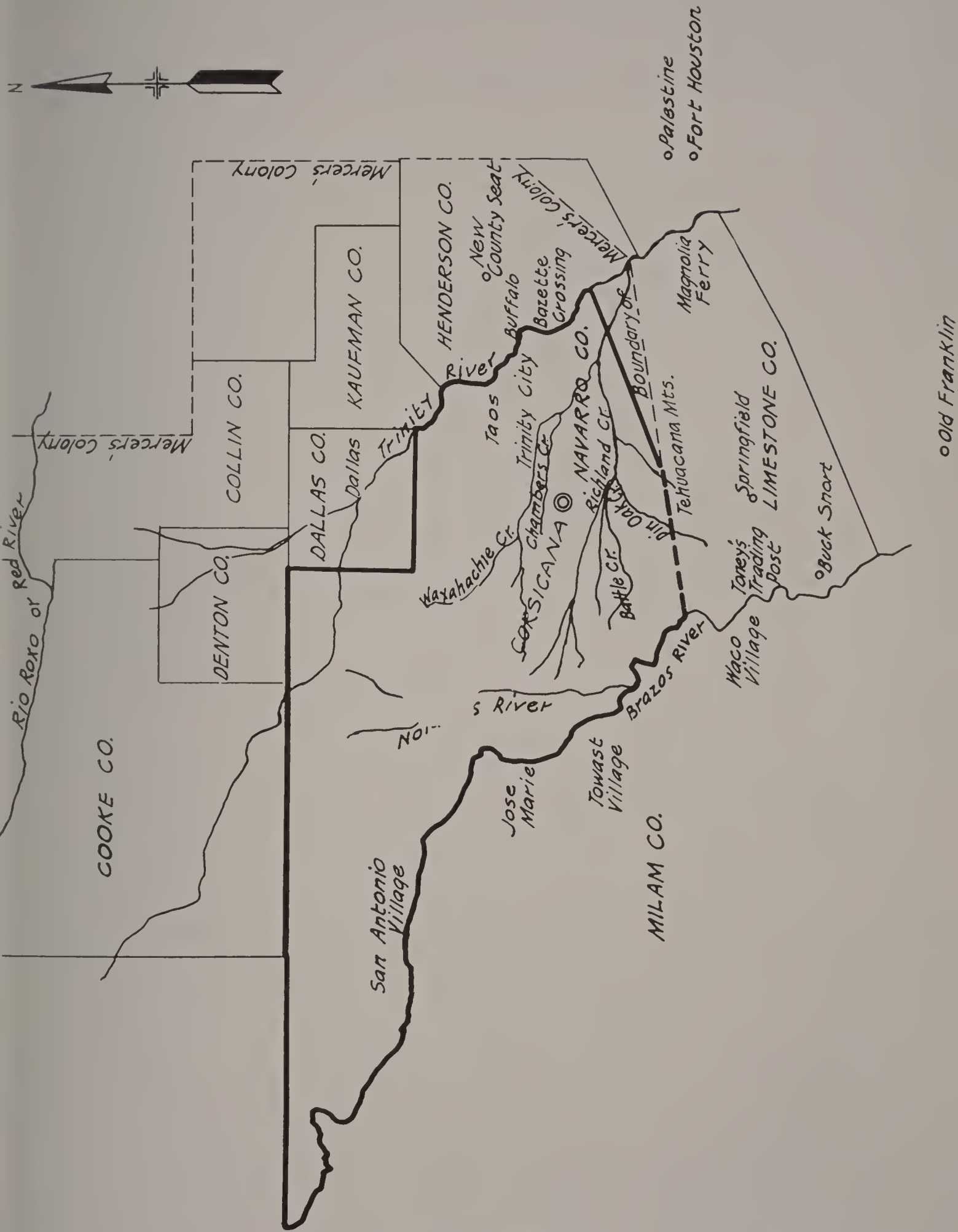
Navarro County was so called in honor of Jose Antonio Navarro, a loyal Texan, who played a prominent part in the struggle with Mexico and who, by honesty and faithfulness, won the lasting respect of all true Texans.

Senor Navarro was born in San Antonio in 1795, and therefore would have been about forty years of age, when Texas independence was declared. Don Angel Navarro, the father of Jose Antonio Navarro, was born in Corsica in 1739. He came to America to settle in what is now San Antonio, and engaged in the mercantile business at that place for many years. Jose Antonio was given as good an education as pioneer schools afforded. He became a lawyer and was respected by all of his friends, among whom he numbered Stephen F. Austin.

Senor Navarro married Margarita De La Garza in 1825, and of their several children, two sons were officers in the Confederate Army.

Jose Antonio Navarro served in the Congress of Coahuila, and in that of the Republic of Texas. After Texas became a State in the Union he was again elected to a place of honor.

\*Gammel's Laws of Texas.



—Courtesy of Dr. Dienst of Temple, Texas.

The map of Navarro County, as first organized in 1846, copied from J. de Cordova's map of Texas. This map was accepted by state officials at Austin on July 6, 1848.



## ORGANIZATION

At one time during the revolution, he was captured and imprisoned for several years but even under this trying ordeal he maintained a dignity which endeared him to all who knew him. He died at the age of seventy. Navarro County was named in his honor particularly due to the kind assistance which he gave to the committee engaged in forming the county, and to further eulogize him the county seat was called Corsicana, in honor of the native land of his ancestors—Corsica.

The picture of Senor Navarro is a copy from a photograph from which a life size portrait was painted by a distinguished artist, and which was presented to Navarro County by Hon. Richard Mays, a prominent Corsicana lawyer.

The painting hangs in the Navarro County district court room.

The first election of county officers in Navarro County was in July, 1846, at which time Dr. John A. Young was chosen as Chief Justice, as a county judge was then called: James A. Johnson, sheriff, with Wm. A. Ladd, Isaac Hartzell, Wm. Browning, bondsmen; Eleas Rogers, assessor and tax collector; Ethan Melton, treasurer; W. B. M. Nicholson, (did not serve long), district clerk; R. N. White, county clerk; Isaac Cline, constable beat No. 2; Thos. A. Ward, land commissioner at Austin.

Dr. John Young died soon after, and Gen. E. H. Tarrant, filled that place, and Col. Riggs was district clerk.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

By Act of the Second Legislature, a committee composed of Thos. I. Smith, Wm. F. Henderson, Ethan Melton, James Johnson, and James M. Riggs, was appointed to select a spot near the "old Richardson Settlement" on which to locate a seat of justice. There were several log houses, all of them empty, scattered along from the present site of the Orphans Home (where John Richardson lived at that time) to the present site of the square. Hampton McKinney had already moved into one of the houses but when it was chosen he lifted his headright and took his land at another place.

In 1848, when the Richardson Settlement was chosen many, under the leadership of Gen. Tarrant,\* ob-

\*General Tarrant was born either in Tennessee or North Carolina, and while still a youth joined frontier forces of Andrew Jackson to fight Indians. He was an outstanding figure in the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, fought after peace already had been declared in America's second war with England.

He came to Texas in 1835, but little is known of his life during the intervening years. He joined the forces warring against Mexico and later the Texas rangers. He became commander of the Northwestern Texas frontier region, battling hostile savages and outlaws. In 1838 he was elected to represent the Red River district in the Congress of the Texas Republic, but soon resigned to take up his command of the rangers. Three years later he led a small detachment in a bloody skirmish with a band of pilfering Indians on Village Creek, near where the Fort Worth-Dallas pike crosses the stream. The fight, in which the white men were victorious, broke the Indians' power in this section of the Southwest.

As he grew older and no longer could endure the hardships of the trail and saddle, General Tarrant again became a lawmaker, serving several terms in the State Legislature after Texas was admitted to the Union. He died in 1828 at old Fort Belknap and was buried in Ellis County, from which place his body was removed to Ft. Worth in 1928.



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jected because it was not nearer their settlement and in a few months seceded, and Ellis County was formed.

Following is the report of the Commissioners for the August, 1849 term of court as recorded in the "Day Book", with S. C. Cross, Chief Justice.

The commissioners were Archibald M. Sloan, F. R. Kendall, Wm. J. Stokes, Sheriff, R. N. White, County Clerk.

"To the Hon. County Court of Navarro County: We the Commissioners, appointed by an act of Legislature passed the 12th of Jan. 1848, to establish the Town of Corsicana and perform all acts and duties appertaining there unto, as set forth in said act, do, in compliance with the Fourth Sec. of said Act, requiring the Commissioners to make a full Exhibit of all their proceedings in the premises to the County Court within eighteen months from the passage of the Act, make the following exhibit, viz: "On the 25th of Feb. 1848, the Board of Commissioners met and after due examination, selected for the Town and accepted a donation of one hundred acres from Thos. I. Smith for a town site, said Smith executing a title Bond for same.

"C. C. Taylor was appointed to survey the Town and make the necessary maps, and for doing which, he was to receive \$125.

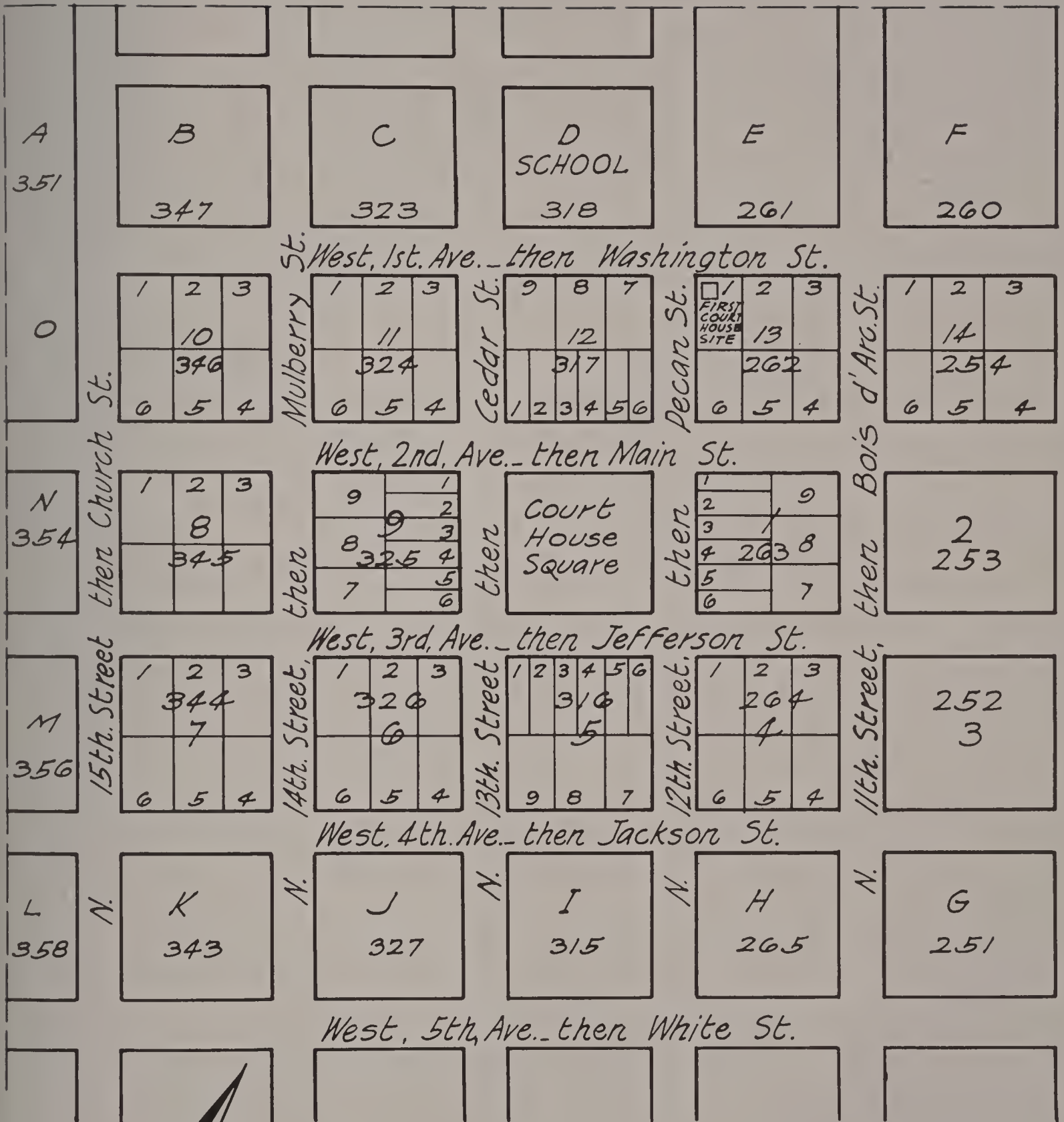
"The contract for building the temporary Court House was taken by J. A. Johnson for \$100. This sum was to be paid out of the first money arising from the sale of Town lots.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

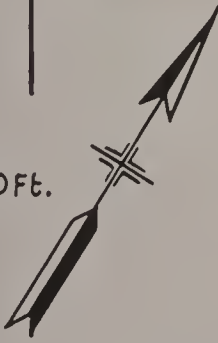
“On the 1st of May, 1848, a sale of Town lots was had, at which lots were sold, to the amount of seventeen hundred and eighty-five dollars, for which notes with security were taken, falling due 12 and 18 months from date: Some time last May we had a reason to fear that the School League conflicted with the Campbell survey, enough to include the tract donated for the Town, and it has since been ascertained beyond a doubt, by a survey of D. R. Mitchell that the School League is run by courses and distance does include it. Under these circumstances we thought it best, for the interest of the County, to postpone bringing suit against the estate of Thos. I. Smith upon his bond, until next District Court, upon D. R. Mitchell’s promising to get an order from the County Court of Robertson, to float the part of the School League covering the Town, and locate it elsewhere. When this is done, we think an Act of the Legislature validating the one of the County Court Robertson can be obtained, and that the Title will then be safe.

“We would further report that a contract was entered into by the Commissioners with Charles Wantland and Charles Young to dig a public well, the water to be obtained, and the well curbed, etc., for \$100, but the work was so badly done, that the Commissioners refused to allow the full amount stipulated and it was finally referred to arbitrators, who brought in \$68, as the sum to which they were entitled, which amount was allowed.

“In conclusion we would state that the Act of Legis-



SCALE  
 1-inch = 300ft.



"Old Town Plat" of CORSICANA  
 Part of J. Ortez Survey



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lature provides that the function of the Commissioners shall cease at the expiration of eighteen months from the passage of the Act, unless the County Court shall deem it necessary to continue for a longer period.

“Owing to the uncertainty about the Title, scarcely anything has been accomplished by the Statute and we think it requires at least eighteen months longer to finish the sales, collect the proceeds, and apply them to the erection of County Buildings. All of which is respectfully submitted.”

(Signed): WM. F. HENDERSON,  
JAS. M. RIGGS.

The land on which Corsicana was located was originally granted to a Mexican settler Jesus Ortez, by virtue of his certificate of settlement, dated March 16th, 1838. This certificate was traded and passed through several hands, prior to its final location; being at one time owned by G. A. Campbell, and finally passing to David R. Mitchell, who was Surveyor of Robertson County Land District.

He held in his name the title to this for himself and associates Thos. I. Smith and J. C. Neill.

The title was finally cleared, and the hundred acres known as the “Old Town Plot” was conveyed to the Commissioners on June 30th, 1850.

The years of 1848 and 1849 saw the original Navarro County considerably reduced in area.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

In order that a new county might be formed from portions of Navarro, Freestone, Limestone, Hill, McClennan and Bosque an attempt was made in 1876 to take part of Navarro County but this was defeated and the outlines of Navarro remained as originally formed.

Navarro County is slightly Northeast of what would properly be called Central Texas. Its deep, black loam and mixed soils, make it ideal for many forms of agriculture. The entire county is well drained by two streams, Richland Creek and Chambers Creek, together with their numerous tributaries all of which flow into the Trinity river along the Eastern boundary of the county. Both of the two above mentioned creeks play an interesting part in Navarro County's early history due to the fact that many of the early Indian battles and skirmishes between contesting land owners occurred on the rich bottom land and the various farms which are peaceably tilled by their owners today, have in days of old, changed hands under very exciting circumstances. Much of the central western and northern portions of the county is prairie. Nearly all is now in cultivation. In early times many kinds of small game were plentiful in Navarro County but the onward march of civilization has taken its toll and today only the innocent dove remains to intrigue the hunter. The dark brown buffalo and the predatory bear and wolf have long since succumbed to the onward march of the tractor and while an occasional wildcat is killed in the bottoms, Navarro County is today lacking in the excitement out of doors which it afforded those who came with their long rifles in days gone by.

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From the time of the organization of the county, settlers and home seekers poured in—halted for a few years by the Civil War but only for a few years. They came from Northern, Southern, and Eastern States, trekking toward the new land, trusting that, through their effort and sacrifice, they might find conditions which would be better for their children.

They came to the new country—so much talked about,—a land infested by marauding savages, but which promised better things for the future, than the places they had seen despoiled. Texas!—The very name held for them romance, adventure.

Along with the stories of scalping and hardships, blue northers and sandstorms, the wild cowboys and the boundless plains, were also tales of the wonderful fertility of the soil, the numberless buffalo and cattle, game of all kinds, the generosity and kindness of its people—and land almost for the taking.

They came—old and young—people of all sorts, but the true spirit of the homeseeker was predominant as the development of the State has proven. Those who were unworthy and dishonest were soon made to feel that Texas was no place for them.

With the opening up of a new rich country like this, the tide of immigration began again, after the war. Hundreds and thousands of people came from Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, the states to suffer most from the terrible Civil War. They gathered the little remnants of money and their

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

families, giving away much of their precious treasures of home and sacrificing what little property they had left from the dire trials through which they had passed; bringing just what they could carry in covered wagons, they set out on the long arduous trip to Texas!

Those were not just pleasure trips, although there was an element of romance as well as the gravity of life and death in the undertaking. When they said "Goodbye" to their friends and relatives and the places they loved they knew it probably was for the last time as many had passed their youth, but they had suffered so much that getting away seemed a relief. They believed that the future in a new rich country, where land was to be had for almost the taking, would be better.

The story of that emigration was not that of the gold hunters, or adventurers, but, in the main, home-seekers.

Many weary mothers cared for their little ones on that long trek, camping at night and cooking over the camp fires and planning for the day ahead. Fathers looked out for provender and good water for their families and stock. Generally there were several wagons in a group for mutual help and protection. Frequently a horse, a mule or an ox would give out and the whole party would be delayed until another could be procured.

Navarro County has had six court houses, the first being William R. Howe's residence, which was located in what is now the town of Forreston in Ellis County. This served as a court house during the years 1847-





*Fifth Navarro court house built in 1880.*



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1848. The second court house was a log house which was built in Corsicana in 1849 and used until 1853, at which time a two-story frame building was erected and utilized until 1855. The fourth court house was erected in 1855-1858 and was made of brick. This court house was the seat of government until 1880, at which time the fifth court house, a brick structure, was erected. This edifice was used until 1905 when the present brick and granite building was finished .

Many court records were destroyed when the third court house was burned in 1855. It is interesting to note that the fourth court house\*, which was built in 1858, was laid on a foundation of heavy cedar timbers and when excavations were made for the next court house about twenty years later, these cedar boards were found to be in good condition.

The County Judges of Navarro County have been: Dr. John A. Young, Gen. E. H. Tarrant, S. C. Cross, J. R. Loughridge, Samuel Wright, Presley Donaldson, John L. Miller, T. L. Haynes, S. H. Kerr, W. R. Bright, F. M. Story, R. C. Beale, James L. Autry, J. L. Harle, John H. Rice, M. L. Shelton, J. F. Stout, A. B. Graham, C. L. Jester, J. M. Blanding, R. R. Owen, H. E. Traylor, A. P. Mays, Warren Hicks and Clay Nash.

The District Judges of Navarro County were in order as follows: R. E. B. Baylor, Bennet Martin, John H. Reagan, Henry Jewett, John Gregg, James Walker,

\*The photograph of this court house shows citizens voting under the guard of negro soldiers. This was immediately after the Civil War.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Robert S. Gould, Nat Hart Davis, F. P. Wood, D. M. Prendergast, L. D. Bradley, Sam R. Frost, Rufus Hardy, L. B. Cobb, H. B. Davis and Hawkins Scarborough.

In order to show the names of some of the early families in Navarro County, included here is a list of the jurors for 1848:

Jesse Ammons, Elijah Anderson, I. N. Anderson, George Bragg, Thomas Bragg, Joseph Bragg, Henry Brown, J. B. Barry, Thomas Bell, Joseph Bell, Daniel Billingsly, Nathan Billingsly, John Billingsly, Johnathan Billingsly, James Billingsly, J. S. Berry, R. F. Berry, Reuben F. Cox, Jesse Bolin, Armsted Blevins, David Boyle, Adam Beaty, Shepherd Bailey, William Barrett, William L. Browning, Samuel Bowman, Jackson Blevin, J. M. Bartlett, Benjamin Cox, James Cox, Isaac Cline, Henry Cook, John Carr, William Crabtree, Jeremiah Crabb, S. A. Carroll, Elias Carroll, David Caddell, J. W. Caddell, Joseph Carroll, N. H. Carroll, J. C. Clark, Nelson Coburn, Alexander Dickson, James De Arman, Jonas De Arman, William Donaghn, Aaron R. Estes, John Eds, Hiram Estes, David Evans, M. T. Flaherty, D. P. Farris, William W. Fullerton, William Frost, J. L. French, William French, James Fletcher, Monroe Flemming, Philips S. George, Edwin Garlic, R. D. George, Owen Humphrey, C. Hodges, Jackson Haines, D. Hamilton, William Hogan, B. F. Hain, John A. Martin, Henry Hartin, Nacy Howard, William Howard, Nathan Hobbs, James Hogard, William Hogard, C. C. Haynes, John Wilburn, Andrew Hamilton, J. C. Han-

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ly, Henry Harrell, John Wilburn, Andrew Jackson, J. C. Jones, J. O. Jones, Reuben Jones, Elijah Jeffries, T. L. Jordan, R. R. Jackson, L. C. Jones, James Jackson, E. R. Johnson, Henry Lee, L. R. Lee, L. Loggins, William Meador, William H. Morrell.

Navarro County originally embraced what would, today, be considered a rather large area for a county, but since Ellis, and other counties were made up from some of its original territory, it is today a rectangle of approximately forty-eight by thirty-three miles, and embracing an area of some 1,190 square miles or 697,600 acres. The highest point in the County is one and one-half miles Northwest of the confluence of Freestone, Limestone, and Navarro Counties. This is a ridge which has an elevation of 581 feet above sea-level—Corsicana's elevation is 445 feet.

Old Springfield Road\* which was the main line of travel between Houston and North Texas, came by way of Navasota, near Bryan, and thence to Springfield, in Limestone County, and thence along the westerly slope of the Tehuacana Hills. It reached the South line of Navarro County South of the present hamlet of Rushing and, passing by Rushing, it followed the high ground of Pisgah Ridge, crossed Richland Creek at about the site of the present "Love" bridge. It crossed the prairie through the old Highnote settlement, and reached the present Southern limits of Corsicana at about the corner of what is now known as "Thorpe

\*From researches made by Mr. William Elliott, Navarro County Civil Engineer.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Addition" just West of the residence of the late Judge Sam R. Frost. From here it ran East with what is now West Thirteenth Avenue at its intersection with South Twentieth Street, thence North with Twentieth Street back of the present high school building, and between the homesteads of the late S. A. Pace, and A. L. Lotspeich, and on to Old Main Street (now West Second Avenue), and thence East with Old Main Street to the court house.

Over this road much of the hauling required by the early pioneers was done. Within a short time roads were surveyed in many directions and were kept in a state of repair by overseers who were appointed by the County Court. These overseers in turn "warned in" workmen; every man between the ages of twenty-one and sixty years of age being required to do his share of work or hire a substitute. A definite record as to the opening up of a road is the record of the County Court for August 16, 1852, and is as follows:

"Presley Donaldson, Chief Justice, F. R. Kendall, A. M. Sloan, A. Barry, Elias Carroll, Commissioners, William Stokes, Sheriff, R. N. White, County Clerk. A petition for a road leading from Corsicana to Wild Cat Bluff on Trinity River. It is ordered by the Court that James Wilson, Corban Jones, J. H. Parsons, Frank Owen and Elijah Anderson be and they are hereby appointed to review and make a road the nearest practicable route from Corsi-

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cana to Wild Cat Bluff on Trinity River and make returns at the next Term of Court.”

In 1848 there was a public road of well defined proportions running from Taos out to Chatfield and in the same year Joshua Hanley was overseer of the road and he had working for him Messrs. Jonas, Matthews, Johnson, Fisher, Miller, Hanley, Bartlett, as well as Sperlin and some of the slaves belonging to this gentleman and also Messrs. Wade, Lieze, Box, Brown, Goode, John Matthews, Chatfield and Killiam. The Commissioners' Court instructed Mr. Hanby to “open up this public road, following the nearest practicable route and to make returns at the next term of court.”

In July, 1848, Robert H. Porter was made overseer to work the road between Corsicana and Taos and under his jurisdiction William Mitchell, Joseph Boren, Robert Jackson, J. V. Session, Thomas Herrin, William Noble, and the overseer himself came with their slaves to engage in the road work. Survey was made in 1848 for a road from Corsicana to the mouth of Pin Oak Creek where it emptied into Richland Creek and this survey was made by M. Johnson, John Raines, J. Petty, N. Matlock, L. Choat, J. Randle, William F. Henderson, A. Henderson, T. H. McKinney, J. I. McKinney, Dr. Augburn, J. A. Harlin, William Hamilton, R. Goode, J. Brown, R. Ellis, H. Beeman, L. Parson, John Harris, Robert Ray, H. Hogard, Fletcher M. Flemming, William Roberts, Harris Paris, E. Wantland, F. Young, A. Highnote, H. Highnote, and N. C. Hodges.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

In 1848 records indicate that Eleazar Nash was appointed overseer on the road from Corsicana to Springfield while in the same year Joshua Hanley was overseer of the road from Chatfield to Taos, Jeremiah Crabb was overseer on the road from Corsicana to the county line in the direction of Pine Bluff, and in 1853 Henry Fullerton was appointed overseer on the road\* from Dresden to "Waco Village".

Waxahachie Road was the principal road to Dallas and North Texas, via Waxahachie and Red Oak. It started from the West side of the Old "Square" (Corsicana Court House), and proceeded north along what is now North 13th Street, intersecting the present "Emhouse Road" just South of the Trinity and Brazos Valley Railway crossing. It continued, passing the Zion's Rest Church, and on about the same course, North-North-West, through what is known as the "Farmer Settlement," leaving the present Town of Rice some two to two-and-one-quarter miles to the East. It there crossed the Navarro-Ellis County line about where Cummins Creek crosses the line, and swung West in a fairly straight course towards Waxahachie.

The travel over these early roads was by horseback, wagon, buggy or stage coach and in the Navarro "Express" of 1860 this news item appeared:

"Recently the new line of four horse coach-

\*This road was part of the historic "Cow Head" road which extended from Corsicana to Waco. It was marked originally as a trail with skulls of cattle so placed as to serve as route markers.



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es on Colonel G. W. Grant's line via Corsicana, Fairfield, Centerville, Madisonville and Anderson shortens the line nearly forty miles. When Grant's line becomes a little more known it will attract a great portion of the travel.

“At Waxahachie, Van Metre mounts the Box: it is after midnight: you go whirling down the beautiful Waxahachie Creek, passing well improved farms and many evidences of thrift and industry.

“Passing on down you cross Mustang Creek, a small stream. At Corsicana, Charlie Lyons takes the strings and you go whirling South at the rate of six miles an hour. He puts you into the careful hands of Joe Cushion. Joe takes you to Centerville and hands you over to Hezzleton; Hezzleton gives up to Mays, and Mays sets you down at Fauthorn's in forty hours from Waxahachie!”

The Civil War doubtless caused some interruption to travel in Navarro County as well as in all other parts of the South and with the coming of the railroad the stage coach with its picturesque driver and foaming horses passed. The coming of the automobile necessitated smooth, level roads and the old time overseer with his team and his “hands” recruited from the

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

adjoining farm have been replaced by an efficient State Highway System which acts in cooperation with the Federal Department and Navarro County will soon be criss-crossed by both National and State highways.



## CHAPTER IV

### YOUNG CORSICANA

ONE of the first requirements of any town is a place for boarders, visitors and travellers to rest. The first hotel opened in Corsicana was operated by the family of Hampton McKinney. It was a log house, with two big rooms, and a long gallery in front; in addition to the two big rooms, there were two small rooms added at one corner, and a long "L" at the back for a kitchen and dining room, and for store room. The upstairs was simply one big room. Nearly all of the rooms had fire places. The first cook stove seen in Corsicana, was said to have been in the "McKinney Inn."

Rev. McKinney, who operated the hotel, was a minister who came with his family to Texas from Illinois. They arrived in Navarro County before Corsicana was in existence, living first at Richland or Dresden.

The old McKinney tavern was an example of the carefully built log house. The logs forming the main part of the building were first put in place, then these were covered with riven boards. These riven boards were made by splitting blocks first into halves and quarters and later with axes and wedges, split-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ting out boards which were piled in square stacks and allowed to season for a time before being nailed into place. These boards were oftentimes smoothed with carpenter tools and then nailed onto the logs and the interior spaces filled in with mortar. In some cases these boards were whitewashed but in most instances they were left in their natural weatherbeaten color. During the winter quilts and buffalo robes were often tacked up inside to keep out the cold.

The McKinney Inn was located on or near the present location of the jail, and was a busy place, as there were regular boarders, besides a continuous stream of travellers. When the courts were in session, many of the legal visitors had the McKinney Inn as headquarters. The photographers' galleries were located there at times. For a while Daguerreotypes were made, and a very good kind they were.

Several young lawyers boarded there, among them Alexander Beaton, who married Miss Jane McKinney, and John L. Miller, who became the husband of Miss Mary McKinney.

The Miller home for many years was on the corner of Jefferson and Church streets, and now on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Fifteenth street, is the home of their daughter, Miss Ursula Miller, and their son, Beaton Miller.

Major Beaton and his wife for many years lived on "Gem" Hill South of town about a mile.

The post office in Corsicana was not established be-

## YOUNG CORSICANA

fore 1849. R. N. White was first appointed postmaster, but as he was County Clerk, Hampton McKinney was made postmaster, and the post office was in his Inn.

Contemporary with the McKinney Inn was one kept by D. R. Mitchell, located about midway of the South side of Block 263, of the "Old Town Plot." This was called, sometimes, the "Lower Hotel." D. R. Mitchell was at one time surveyor for Robertson County. After he had chosen Navarro County as his home, he was a prominent and popular citizen. After his death appreciative citizens of Corsicana placed a monument over his grave in memory of his loyalty and generosity. His daughter married Dr. W. F. Seale, who lived in Corsicana. Mrs. F. J. Lindsay, a daughter of Dr. Seale, and granddaughter of D. R. Mitchell, and many other of his descendants now live in Corsicana.

Following is a list of Corsicana postmasters in the order in which they served:

Hampton McKinney, June 21, 1852; Joel D. Hicks, February 7, 1853; M. V. Powell, February 18, 1854; Lucious T. Wheeler, August 15, 1854; Robert G. Leetch, September 17, 1857; David B. Smith, March 19, 1858; John Miller, January 24, 1859; R. A. Van Horn, August 17, 1859; Turner W. Garner, September 29, 1859; William M. McKinney, April 9, 1860; Julius A. Oakes, June 16, 1860; Harriet A. Trent, January 26, 1866; Alex H. Davis, October 8, 1866; John T. Parrish, April 23, 1868; William P. Parrish, December 3, 1868; David I. Page, June 9, 1871; George W. Smith, November 10, 1871; R. J. Shelton, June 12, 1872; L. P. Barton, July 12, 1872; Robert J. Shelton, August 12, 1872; Isaac Baum, April 3, 1876; Mrs. Pauline Wood, January 29, 1879; Henry M. Ryan, June 15, 1881; Adolph Zadek, November 18, 1884; Andrew F. Wood, April 20, 1886; Adolph Zadek, August 29, 1889; Nathaniel J. Mille, December 21, 1893; Louis C. Revare, February 2, 1898; James W. A. Clark, January 13, 1902; H. E. Kinsloe, February 5, 1906; Archie N. Justiss, March 10, 1914; Pierce Mayer, February 14, 1923, still serving.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

The graves of Hampton McKinney and his wife, and that of D. R. Mitchell, are just within the Oakwood Cemetery, near the front gate. They are on a part of the original one hundred acre tract donated by Thos. I. Smith and D. R. Mitchell, to the City of Corsicana.

About the year 1850 much of the social life of Navarro County and surrounding territory centered in the Haynes Hotel and a copy still exists of an old invitation to one of the Christmas Balls held in this frontier hostelry.

“The pleasure of your company is respectfully solicited at a ball to be given at the Haynes Hotel in Corsicana on the 24th inst., at 5 o'clock p. m.

Corsicana, December 13, 1852.

### MANAGERS

P. M. Monnell	D. B. Hartzell
P. H. Carethers	W. B. McCabe
P. D. Hicks	A. F. Bartlett
D. R. Mickie	E. H. Root
J. H. Martin	

Mr. B. Barry, Present\*

As was usual with the frontier town the greater portion of the business activities centered around court house square and on the Northwest corner of the old Corsicana business district Alex Michael built a two-story brick store building which was the first brick edifice in Corsicana. Michael's store was a forerunner of

\*Indicating that Mr. Buck Barry was guest of honor.

## YOUNG CORSICANA

the present department store, judging from the sign which read "Dry Goods, Groceries, Hardware and Drugs." The second story of Mr. Michael's building was a newspaper office and both the store and the newspaper changed hands from time to time, through the years.

Dr. Martin had his office just across the street North from Micheal's store and there were also other offices on the East side of the square; S. L. Tatum operated a tin shop and hardware store on the South side of the square and his descendants still are engaged in the hardware business in Navarro County. A. Fox & Brothers had a store on the square until the coming of the railroad after which this was moved to Beaton Street. Mr. Fox was widely respected for his business ethics and he was given not only the patronage but also the friendship of the inhabitants of Navarro County. He lived on Fifth Avenue in Corsicana until a few years ago, dying at an advanced age after a lifetime of serving the community.

Thomas Haynes had a carpenter shop on the South side of the square and in addition to being a carpenter also served as County Judge of Navarro County. One term of District Court was held in his carpenter shop due to the court house having burned down. Records indicate that Mr. Haynes was allowed 50c a day recompense as rental on his carpenter shop for use as court house.

William Hamilton operated a store on the West side of the square and slightly back of his store erected a

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

log house of one story and an attic. This log house was replaced by a plank or framed house, lumber for which was hauled from East Texas in ox wagons. This house stood for many years, was torn down and later rebuilt in East Corsicana where it now stands.

S. H. Kerr had a wagon, buggy and furniture shop on the spot where the Mulkey home now stands. Mr. Kerr's activities were varied and in addition to operating his business he also taught school for a time and later in life was County Clerk.

Wybrant and Ransom operated a drug store on the square. Jernigan's saddle shop was on the Southeast corner of the square. He later sold out to C. W. Jester.

Jacob Hartzell operated a business on the square but he left Corsicana and moved to Dresden. Capt. Wm. Peck was also in business on the square for awhile.

It is usual that a business man is remembered for his business attainments but one of those, who occupied a prominent part in the early business life of Corsicana when it clustered around the square, was famous for an entirely different thing. There was a Mr. Kuchoffer whose two beautiful daughters were known far and wide for their comeliness.

In a frontier town two important things were the jail and the saloon. In the case of Corsicana, the saloon was in the middle of the South side of the square and was operated by Bob Morrell. As was usual with the saloon of olden days, a rough crowd congregated around the barroom and Saturday nights were enliven-



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ed with either fighting or frolicking, according to the effects of the spirits imbibed by those under the influence of liquor.

The jail at that time was a log cabin located near the present Aaron Ferguson home on the corner of Thirteenth Street and Fourth Avenue. The log cabin was not considered sufficiently secure to assure the proper detention of prisoners and when a culprit was in the city lock-up the additional precaution of a guard was taken, this guard being paid \$1.00 per night for acting as warden of the jail to assure the prisoner's safe keeping and to prevent the culprit from kicking the walls out of the jail and escaping. There was a regular jailer who stood guard during the day and it can be readily seen that the cost of guarding a prisoner would soon amount to enough to build a jail. Doubtless the city fathers also realized this fact and in 1855 a contract was given to Harvey Beeman to build for the embryo city a place of safe keeping for prisoners. This jail was built at a cost of \$1800 and was located near the site of the present jail.

During the slave days a resident of early Corsicana took advantage of the qualifications of two of his slaves to further his business. This was Tom Van Hook who had two slaves that were expert blacksmiths and their reputation was gained not only for the quality of their work but for the speed at which it was turned out. This blacksmith shop was just across the street from the L. H. Lee home on Second Avenue.

Solomon Van Hook was an early resident and lived

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on a farm a short distance from town, and a Col. Pillar owned a home during the early days which was located on what is now Jester Place.

Early residents recall that a Sam Brooks, who lived in the Eastern part of the county, was one of the first to develop the fruit growing industry in Navarro County and his success in this line caused him to be given the nickname of "Peach" Brooks, by his Corsicana friends.

There were two Baird brothers who were early residents of Corsicana whose appearances were at great variance—one had bright red hair and beard, whereas the other was equally noticeable for his raven black hirsute adornments; naturally they were immediately known by the cognomen of "Red" and "Black."

It is interesting to notice that the idiosyncrasies of certain individuals have left their mark on various communities and this is true of Navarro County as well as any other section of the country. One case in point might be recalled: an old man lived on a creek South of Corsicana and he conceived the idea of domesticating the buffalo by a very novel plan. His idea was to go among a herd of buffalo until they became accustomed to him and then impound a certain number in a large pen which he had built on the above mentioned creek. This old man was a great believer in mesmerism and he felt sure that his powers were such he could, by this mesmerism, tame the buffalo to where he could milk them or work them to a plow or wagon. The pen was duly erected and the early settlers say that he

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managed to get some buffalos within this stockade; but either the log pen was not sufficiently strong or his power of mesmerization weak, for the herd of buffalo proceeded to tear down the logs and go about their way despite all his effort to the contrary. The scattered logs remained for many years until hauled away for fire wood, the old man died and went to his reward but land deeds in the Court House still refer to this creek as "Mesmeriser's Creek."

During the early days many ideas were formulated which today may seem novel but at that time appeared perfectly logical. The great number of bones and horns scattered throughout the country caused one man to dream of an immense factory in Corsicana for the manufacture of buttons and his first move was to gather wagonload after wagonload of horns and bones and pile them into one huge mound with the hope that he could interest capital and thus erect his dream factory, which would revolutionize the manufacture of buttons and upset the entire button industry. This pile of bones was near Elm Creek South of town. Unfortunately for him capital did not take so kindly to his idea and the pile of horns and bones was scattered by cattle and disintegrated by the elements.

Not far from this pile of horns and bones was a tree which had a certain grim attraction due to having been the gallows upon which a notorious horse thief was hung by the Vigilantes. Horse thieves were dealt swift justice in the early days due to the fact that a man's horse was one of his most prized pos-

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sessions and horses were carefully guarded against both white and Indian horse thieves by their owners. The horse thief who was hung on the particular tree dangled from the limb until his body, swinging in the wind, wore the rope thin and caused it to break where it was passed over the limb of the tree and the body then fell to the ground. His old felt hat lay underneath the tree for a long time as a mute reminder of the tragedy which befell the evil doer.

The hanging of a horse thief or the catching of a band of Indians, which would try to steal horses on a moonlight night, offered some excitement to the community. The early settlers did not have so many variations since there were very few holidays and until the coming of a more organized social and community life, Christmas and election day were the only generally accepted holidays, although circus day was a day of recreation and excitement after the year 1857 at which time the John Robinson Circus first came to Navarro County. The circus of early times was tortuously transported over land by wagon or ox team and it carried no such accompaniments as red lemonade, balloons, whips or all-day suckers to bring excitement and intense joy to the young folks. The circus was sufficient excitement to afford a matter of conversation and pleasurable thrill for days prior to its arrival and weeks after its departure.

Among other things which added to the joy of living in the early days of Navarro County was the occasional dance, or ball, which was usually held in the court house. Inhabitants far and near gathered at

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these functions and they were the beginning of many romances and many of the early love affairs had their inception at these county-wide social functions.

The first Masonic Lodge was organized by J. D. Martin and the Lodge room was the upper story of the old academy building which was made of cedar logs. The Masonic Brotherhood was strong in the new county. All of the towns and communities had a Masonic Lodge, and the members were urgent and regular in attendance. Besides other influences for protection, it was said that the Indians would not steal from or mistreat a Mason.

Corsicana was given legal status February 8, 1854, and recognized as a town with the right to sue and be sued, to buy, hold and dispose of real estate and the first form of government was by Mayor, six Aldermen, City Treasurer, City Recorder and Constable. A town was created and the Mayor was Judge with criminal and civil jurisdiction.

The Texas Almanac of 1857 has an interesting description of Navarro County and among other things mentions the fact that there were large numbers of cows, sheep, hogs and other livestock raised in the county and also mentions that there were a number of saw and grist mills, as well as churches and schools. It is also interesting to note that at that date the markets were Galveston and Houston and transportation was by way of the Trinity River, when navigable, otherwise by ox wagons, and casually mentions that the distance to Galveston was about two hundred and fif-

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ty miles. There were contractors who did regular hauling of lumber and supplies. The Texas Almanac for the year 1857 also speaks of the fact that most of the buildings in Corsicana were "neat and tasty" structures of wood. This same authority also mentions an interesting fact in that Taos, or Porter's Bluff, was a shipping point for Corsicana and was a place of considerable trade during navigation. The Texas Almanac referred to also mentions that the H. & T. C. Railroad "will probably pass through Navarro County."

During this era, the pioneer was not content with fighting the hostile Indian but some of the rough element incited feuds and for a time Corsicana had a rather-bad reputation for the hectic conditions which existed. A Vigilance Committee was maintained for a number of years and this committee was kept busy keeping down feuds, controlling various unruly factions and dealing swift justice to horse thieves and bad characters. The rapid shifting of population and the necessary adjustments which are to be found in any new country were responsible for this condition and records indicate that culprits were shown that Navarro County tolerated only law abiding citizens.

The pioneer also found himself confronted with other trials besides those brought about by the savage Indian and the unruly white. In 1853 grasshoppers descended upon Navarro County in such numbers that they resembled a black cloud coming from the North and every living green sprig, grass, leaf or crop,

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was destroyed by the hungry insects. The reddish-green cloud of insects rolled over the country like a flood until there was a heavy coating of the insects upon the ground and after the third day Navarro County looked as though a fire had swept over it and singed every living plant. The grasshoppers entered houses, cutting holes in clothing hanging in the closets and devouring wheat, corn or any food left within their reach. This scourge passed in about two weeks. Vast quantities of grasshoppers were devoured by hogs and fowls which fattened on this diet. Unfortunately the chickens which ate the grasshoppers were unfit for food because of the taste and odor which the grasshoppers imparted to the meat of the chicken; they did not affect the hog meat, however, since hogs were not killed until cold weather. Another visitation was made by the grasshoppers in 1857 and 1858 but it was not so serious. In the winter of 1848 an extremely cold spell caused a great deal of hardship and suffering and the following year brought a summer so hot and dry that eggs were cooked in the sun and prairie fires, which were always dreaded, added to the suffering. Many mysterious fires broke out in residences and stores and negroes were blamed for them until by an odd coincidence the truth was apparent. At a store belonging to Uncle Billy Oldham, in what is now Waxahachie, some matches ignited while clerks and proprietor were near them. To further test the heat, and in order that all might be convinced of the source of the mysterious fires, matches were placed in various places and in a few minutes burst into flames. The short buf-

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falo grass when dry was a constant danger and the following account of a prairie fire will indicate to an extent at least, something of the terror inspired by one of these conflagrations;

“The most exciting of the early days on the frontier were those when the prairies were on fire. It being very dry during the summer the grass dried up as though it had been mown and was excellent forage for the stock. They kept fat on it when they could get plenty of water, which was obtained by digging holes in the ground in the bed of the creeks after they dried up. Sometimes the water had to be drawn for them, which was done in turns by the settlers or someone was hired by the community to attend to the matter.

“Fires would break out from camp fires of travelers or were started by smokers emptying their pipes and occasionally some reckless fellow would set fire to the grass to see it burn. The wind was generally strong at that season of the year, so strong that there were but few days when one could carry an umbrella. When the fire got headway so fearful was its march that it was difficult to keep out of its way. It leaped branches and creeks and to save homes and range for the stock about the only remedy was to ‘fire against it’, as it was termed, which had to be done in time. The feat was accomplished by using



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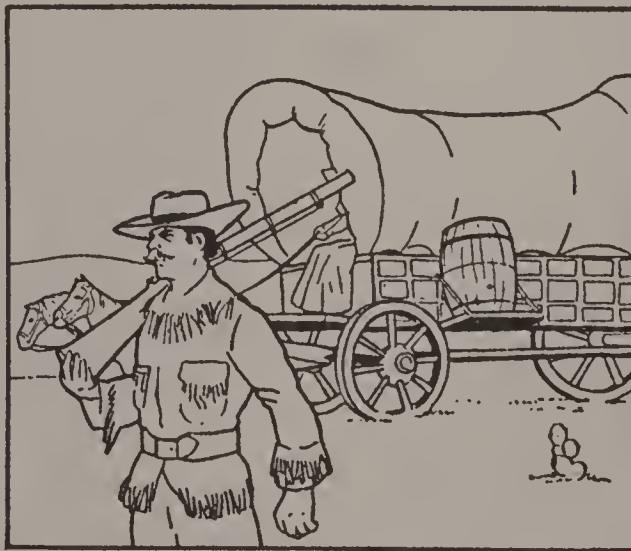
plows, wet blankets, etc., and then after it was headed in this way the next thing was to drive the stock out of the ring of fire which was fearful and hazardous, for the flames would be eight and ten feet high if the wind was not strong enough to keep them closer to the ground. The fire roared like low rumbling thunder. Weeds and grass stems whirled in the air, rabbits and rats passed and birds screamed in the air. Birds of prey, thick as buzzards over a carcass, took advantage of the terrible situation to catch their prey and seemed to add consternation to the scene. Cows lowed and horses neighed and ran helter-skelter. Amid this excitement men well mounted would enter the arena equipped with spurs and whip and by halloing would get the stock on a run at full speed and crowd the rear ones on to the front ones so that when they struck the fire front ones could not stop but would be pushed through the fire and the rear ones and men following all together at a fast speed the flames would be pressed to the ground by the herd.

“But while it could be and was done yet amid such a scene the men would tremble for it seemed that not only the fire but all nature joined in a carnival of destruction.”

During the hardships, however, there were interspersed days and nights of joy. The old time square

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dance, the box supper at the church, and gatherings at neighboring houses broke the monotony of daily strife and life went on. Those who enjoyed hunting found themselves in a hunter's paradise; wild game was on every hand and so plentiful that much of it was wasted and wantonly destroyed. Buffaloes were killed for their hides and the carcasses left to decay and the bones to bleach.



## CHAPTER V

### THROUGH THE CIVIL WAR

THE early settlers in Navarro County found it essential, that their homes be built near two prime requisites, these two essentials being wood and water. Wood was necessary because of the need for it in building homes and making fences, for heating and for cooking. Water was, then as now, the one thing which the human race must have at very short intervals in order that it may live. With today's conveniences and in this age of efficient mechanical contrivances water, among other things, is at hand with only a turn of the faucet, and if we sometimes become annoyed over trivial inconveniences it might be well for us to think of the days when our forefathers found it necessary to walk, oftentimes, miles or travel great distances in ox carts to procure a sufficient supply of water to assure their very existence. During the early days in Navarro County the prairies were looked upon only as grazing land and homes were always established in wooded sections. It was also essential that the early settler fence portions of his land both as a protection against encroachment on the part of the buffalo or bad stock and also to keep his own livestock in bounds. Various things were used as fence, the most

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common of which in Navarro County was the rail fence and hedge rows of Bois d'Arc. The Bois de Arc was very hardy and until this day there may be seen many remains of the early Bois d'Arc hedges which served as fences. As soon as barbed wire came into use it immediately superseded all other material for fencing and the old time rail fence is another relic of the past.

The family life of early Navarro County was of the most simple form. The pioneer was concerned principally in establishing a home and sustaining life for himself and family. Houses were built of logs and other materials at hand. The fire place at one end of the log house served as both the heating unit and the means of preparing meals. Cooking was done on the hearth and in pots swung by cranes built into the fire place and prior to the Civil War there were few cook stoves in use in Navarro County.

Clothing was home spun of cotton or wool and shoes were, in most cases, made by hand from the hides of cows or buffalos. The bed upon which the pioneer found surcease from his daily toil was made of feathers of various kinds or from straw or corn shucks. Bed springs were among the luxuries which were unknown and the silken coverlet of today is the descendant of the early homespun blanket or handmade quilt of our forefathers.

The early settler worked all the week and found every moment of his six days filled with activity but the Sabbath was universally respected except in the case of some irreverent individual and any person who dis-

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regarded the Sabbath was looked upon as outside the general pale of civilization. It is interesting to note that a sincere reverence of the Supreme Deity accompanies those who live under extremely rigorous conditions and in such cases an individual feels more strongly the need of a protection beyond his own inherent strength. The family Bible occupied a place of honor on the most prominent table or shelf and this Bible was not only a source of inspiration and a guide to worship but also served as the genealogical record wherein were entered carefully the births and deaths of those comprising the family. Family prayers were held by many. The religious influence was further promulgated by occasional camp meetings and at such meetings the families were collected in wagons and carryalls, together with food and arrangements for sleeping, to spend days or weeks. After the camp meeting was over many families had no other social activities for weeks or months.

Young folks had picnics, parties, horse-back rides and very simple gatherings but life was as thrilling and meant as much as at the present. There was always a feeling of hope and promise for the future and primitive conditions and hardships were to them only existing conditions and accepted as such. Gradually the methods of travel improved and more intercourse between various communities increased interest in social affairs and soon better homes were built and at the time of the Civil War a few brick houses had been erected in Navarro County.

By 1860 three court houses had been built in Corsi-

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cana and settlements established at Springhill, Dresden, Chatfield, Taos, Wadeville, Rural Shade and Pisgah. Roads were being surveyed, political meetings were being held occasionally, the court house and Masonic Hall saw temperance meetings and fraternal gatherings, and social life in the community was having its inception.

The first style of building in this new country was dependent solely upon the materials at hand but as the settlements increased and the country became more thickly populated various styles of architecture evolved and from the first log house with its loft above and a lean-to in the back, the more pretentious log house of two rooms — sometimes an open hall between, a gallery in front or an “L” for kitchen and dining room, being erected by the more prosperous citizens. In Navarro County this evolution brought plank houses, made of lumber hauled from Houston or Jefferson, but following the same general style of architecture. Between the Seventies and Nineties more elaborate homes began to be built and towers and cupolas added and scroll work placed on windows and porches. Following these came the ornate windows, many with elaborate designs of leaded colored glass, as well as the open archway, bay window and the entire building topped off by lightning rods. This era also brought into use the heater and the cook stove, both of them burning wood, and in addition to the conveniences just mentioned the household furniture evolved from hand-hewn necessities to the more elaborate horse hair sofa and chair, and prosperous families covered their floors with

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carpets which were securely nailed down completely around the four sides of the room. Carpet cleaning time each year became an event of serious proportions. Many of these first homes were early American, and other styles of architecture and today these old houses may be seen in Navarro County after having stood for three-quarters of a century and they will, with care, endure for many more years. The Dawson home near the town of Dawson, the Robinson home at Dresden, the Lisman and Hodge homes at Chatfield and several old Corsicana residences bear mute evidence of architecture of the period. Much patience and a great deal of ingenuity were required to erect these old homes and they should be viewed with the respect and admiration due them, not only for the intrinsic value, but also for the effort required to erect such a house in the early days of Navarro County.

The first churches and lodge rooms were built as one long room and the church usually had a steeple on top and pulpit on the platform which was large enough to accommodate a small reed organ and choir. The steeple of the church invariably had its bell and the sweet tones called the pioneer to worship each Sunday morning and made him realize that the Sabbath was a day of rest and meditation.

The school houses were log structures with puncheon seats and no backs. Later came the frame building and long benches and boards upon which the pupil placed his "Blue Backed Speller" and "McGuffie Reader." The patent desk of today and the comfortable busses which

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transport the pupils to school and return them to their homes are relatively new things in the world of education but many great minds were developed under the hardships of the old school house with its rigorous curriculum, the main item in many cases being a peachtree switch always close by the teacher's desk.

One of the prime requisites which the first settlers in Navarro County possessed was ingenuity. The sources of supply were always far removed and in many cases it was necessary to adopt substitutes for various articles of food or clothing. When bread was not available buffalo meat was dried and mixed with wild honey. This combination was not only healthful but also had a pleasant taste and had the additional advantage of being plentiful. The wild honey was easy to procure. Bees were plentiful and found flowers and mesquite blooms and grasses and flowers in profusion from which to extract the nectar.

A substitute for coffee was oftentimes made from parched grain or potatoes. A beer-like beverage called Methiglen was made from wild honey. When it was possible to get coffee the bean was purchased green and before becoming usable was parched and ground. To procure coffee meant a trip to Houston overland or purchasing it after it was brought up on little steamboats which plied the Trinity and unloaded supplies at Taos or Bazette Ferry. Every grain of the coffee was carefully hoarded and used only at special occasions such as Sunday morning or when favorite company came for a visit. Sugar was a rarity and the cof-



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fee was imbibed usually in its natural state and without the addition of cream or sweetening.

When bread was made it was salt rising light bread of flour or of corn meal. The "corn pone" was a staple article of food made by scalding meal and cooking it in a greased skillet. Occasionally a pie or cake would be cooked in the iron skillet or "dutch oven," and while the lack of our modern conveniences doubtless limited the varieties the frontier housewife succeeded in preparing nourishing and delicious menus.

In order to give color to the homespun cloth, dyes were made from oak bark, copperas or weeds of certain kinds. Flax made a durable cloth which became more soft with usage. The clothes for the men were oftentimes of buckskin which was a favorite winter material due to its warmth and durability. So well did the frontier mother fabricate cloth on her loom and spindle that oftentimes the garment lasted longer than the maker. As the demand for furniture increased carpenters became more and more skilled as cabinet makers and beautiful examples of workmanship still exist in some of the old homes. Many of the immigrants brought their own silver and some utensils with them and the supply of kitchen utensils was enhanced by the traveling "peddler" who exchanged tinware for buffalo skins, eggs or any salable commodity.

Rugs and carpets were made from scraps or woven on looms. They were seldom made in any definite pattern, the stripes merely coming according to the color of the material at hand. Floors were covered with dried

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buffalo skins and the bottoms of the chairs were made from the same material. Some chairs were made more restful by being cushioned with sheep skin on which the wool was allowed to remain. This sheep skin also was greatly desired by the cowboys for their chaps as it afforded a protection from the weather as well as from the shrubbery through which they rode. These buckskin pants were oftentimes utilized in odd ways. One of the early settlers\* once found a bee tree while enroute home, and having no other means for transporting the honey, removed his buckskin pants, tied the legs at the bottom and with the improvised receptacle carried home a bountiful supply of the delicacy.

Frontier mothers learned quickly to make effective medicine and render first aid services. Herbs were used and the services of the physician were rare until settlements grew to considerable proportions. It was a simple matter to find digitalis, foxglove, balmony or other plants which possessed medicinal qualities, growing in profusion on the prairies. Many of these frontier mothers became skilled in this direction and their reputation spread not only through their settlement but to neighboring settlements and they were oftentimes sent for as one would call in a specialist today. When the population increased and this amateur dispenser of home-made herbs was displaced by the old time family

\*This man was Harvey Beeman, who came to Texas, participated in the battle of San Jacinto, and settled in Navarro County in 1845. He built the third court house—a frame house. His wife was a Miss Wantland. They have many descendants in Navarro County.

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doctor, he found his time divided between administering to the sick and covering intervening miles of trails on horse-back. The early physician deserves a great deal of credit as he gave little thought to riding fifty miles over a rocky trail, to become worn and exhausted and with the realization staring him in the face that his pay might be a few bushels of corn or a side of meat. The call might have come to him in the middle of the night and although faced with a long and weary ride through a bitter Texas norther, never did he falter in his mission to preserve life and lessen human suffering.

To get a clear picture of some of the conditions which existed in Navarro County in about the year 1844, we will quote from a history of this section written in 1892 by one of the early residents:

“Deer, antelope, buffalo, wild horses, bears, panthers, wolves, Mexican hogs, wild turkeys, prairie chickens were in great abundance. The deer in herds were to be seen in any part of the country. The antelope were not so plentiful as on the plains. The buffalo came and went like a mighty torrent. They always traveled against the wind even though it carried sleet and snow.

“The wild horses were seen in droves of from two to fifty. There were a great many on the prairies but more to be found in the cross timbers.

“Bears prowled around the thickets and the panthers' wild screams and howling of the

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wolves made night thrilling. The wolves in those days were large and known as the 'loafer.' They gradually disappeared and gave place to the little common prairie wolf of later years.

"The creeks and branches did not dry up then as they do now and fish were plentiful. Honey from wild bees was plentiful and about the only sweetening the settlers had. The lack of salt was a great trial as it was hard to obtain.

"There were no roads and they traveled over the country by course and by prominent objects such as lone trees, clusters of trees and points of timbers."

The first fair in Navarro County was sponsored by Navarro County Agricultural and Mechanical Association with J. B. Jones as secretary.

The fair was held on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, October 16-18, 1860.

The place was "back of Mr. Neblett's house." (W. H. Neblett's home stood near the location of the present home of the Misses Freedman, on South Twelfth Street).

This fair was held on the grounds near the present location of the union depot. This was largely a livestock fair and Marion Martin of Wadeville, Nicholas Graham and a Mr. Finch of Chatfield and many others exhibited fine stock. There were exhibits of sewing,

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cooking and other fields of domestic accomplishment. In various ways it was an interesting fair but it was the last for several years due to the war between the states.

There were many varieties of amusements held in conjunction with the early Navarro County fairs. Tournaments were very popular for several years after the war. Participants in a tournament chose the names of ancient knights. The knight who caught the most rings on his lance rode, with a great flourish, up to the gallery where his lady-love was seated, and she was crowned.

During the latter part of the 1850's the life of the pioneer was enlivened by heated discussions of States rights, extension of slavery and other political questions. Texas was a divided state on the question of slavery and the inhabitants did not fully realize the fury of the approaching storm, while this issue was argued pro and con in every store and home and on every corner. Soon Texas was drawn into one of the most terrible conflicts the world has known and, after the South was vanquished, the inhabitants accepted their untold deprivations and humiliations and forged ahead with courage and determination. As the Union became more firmly welded the Lone Star State accepted its part of National responsibility and inhabitants of Texas no longer remember, except from an historical interest, the conflict which raged between the Northern and Southern geographical sections of our commonwealth.

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About the year 1860 the town of Corsicana had a population of some nine hundred white people and about three hundred negroes, while the population of Navarro County as a whole was something like double this figure.

When the citizens voted on secession in 1861 two hundred and thirteen favored it and only three opposed it. The question of secession was not the only one involved between the North and South, since there were several political matters upon which there was a difference of opinion. The slavery question, however, precipitated the final dissention. A meeting was held in Corsicana and the resolution to secede was adopted, the signers of this resolution being C. M. Winkler, William F. Henderson, G. L. Martin, W. H. Neblett, Joseph Clayton, Elijah Melton and J. P. Anderson. This resolution was voted upon with the results enumerated above.

Patriotic demonstrations were immediately held after the voting, Confederate banners were raised over the court house and a company of men trained for emergencies. Communications were immediately made with Montgomery, the capital of the Confederacy from whence an appeal had been made for volunteers. About ninety men responded to this call and William Melton was elected captain, J. R. Oglebie, First Lieut., and J. H. Hill, Second Lieut. Capt. Melton felt he was too old for service and resigned in favor of C. M. Winkler.

In the Navarro Express of Thursday, August 8, 1861, was a roster of this group of men who were

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banded together under the name of the "Navarro Rifles."

### A LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE NAVARRO RIFLES, AUGUST 8, 1861

C. M. Winkler, Captain.

#### Officers

	State of Nativity
Captain, C. M. Winkler.....	N. Carolina
Ist Lieut. Loughridge.....	S. Carolina
2nd. Lieut., J. R. Ogilvie.....	Tennessee
3rd Lieut., B. J. C. Hill.....	Tennessee
1st Sergeant, Mat Beasley.....	Mississippi
2nd Sergeant, C. W. Pinnington, Commissary....	Virginia
3rd Sergeant, Wm. G. Jackson.....	Texas
1st Corporal, J. T. Beasley.....	Mississippi
2nd Corporal, J. D. Stewart.....	Tennessee
Fifer, J. E. Melton.....	Georgia
Drummer, J. L. Utzman.....	Tennessee

#### Privates

J. W. Duren (Mississippi), H. Harrison (Mississippi), J. W. Simmons (N. Carolina), J. H. Austin (Alabama), R. C. Armstrong (Louisiana), J. R. Beasley (Mississippi), W. G. Platt (Mississippi), J. W. McMorris (Alabama), B. F. Harper (Mississippi), J. T. Green (Mississippi), J. W. Crabtree (Missouri), P. Smith (Alabama),

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

A. M. Lemmon (Missouri), T. L. Pursley (Arkansas), J. H. Hill (Tennessee), Jack Hill (Tennessee), J. C. Welch (Texas), Thomas Alfin (Alabama), T. J. Sessions (Mississippi), Ira Duncan (Tennessee), W. R. Jefferson (Freestone County), W. A. Fondren (Young County, Texas), R. H. Miller (Missouri), J. B. Owens (Alabama), R. N. Rice (Georgia), Joseph Hagle (Germany), E. S. Crabbe (Indiana), James H. Massey (Missouri), James Franklin (Kentucky), Charles Turpin (Kentucky), James Fagin (Tennessee), G. W. Henderson (Illinois), J. Q. Harris (Georgia), L. W. Rice (Alabama), E. M. Greer (Alabama), Dr. N. J. Mills (Kentucky), R. C. Holloway (Virginia), W. W. Fuller (N. Carolina), S. B. Terrell (S. Carolina), B. F. Childress (Alabama), J. A. Caddell (Alabama), J. W. Westbrook (Mississippi), J. H. Barnet (Alabama), S. Weil (Germany), John Holdeman (Tennessee), James Herbert (Tennessee), J. M. Polk (Missouri), J. J. Harrison (Alabama), James Hamilton (Texas), W. M. Templeton (Alabama), Wm. H. Mitchell (Tennessee) J. A. Foster (Virginia) J. H. Westbrook (Mississippi), A. L. Meador (Texas), H. L. W. Killean (Tennessee)), James Treadwell (Alabama), J. L. Anderson (Arkansas) M. L. Foster (Texas), T. A. Osborne (Alabama), Ira C. Jordon (Mississippi), Ambrose Barry (N. Carolina), E. G. Sessions (Mississippi), S. H. Neal (Mississippi), John Green (Kentucky), J. C. Walker (Kentucky), A. J. Brewster (Illinois), W. H. Boles (Nacogdoches County, Texas), G. S. Boynton (Ohio), John Pickett (Alabama), Wm. T. Smith (Hill County, Tennessee), F. P. Dillard (Virginia), T. M. Lummins (Limestone County,



## THROUGH THE CIVIL WAR

Alabama), H. E. Walker (Texas), W. P. Spence (Robinson County, Illinois), S. M. Riggs (Missouri), W. C. Towers (Georgia), M. Barry (N. Carolina), J. H. Neal (Mississippi), P. H. Osborne (Alabama).

The county appropriated \$2,500 for the purchase of arms and ammunition and a training camp was established at Spring Hill, being located a mile or two Northwest of the town.

President Davis sent an urgent call to Texas for three regiments and this company of Navarro Rifles was the first to respond. Before going to Harrisburg for training several of the older men who had not expected to serve more than one year were allowed to withdraw and the company was reorganized with the same officers. There were three training camps in Navarro County, located at Spring Hill, Corsicana and Raleigh. The captains of these companies were T. J. Haynes, Elijah Bishop, L. D. McConnico, F. M. Martin, Joseph Clayton, Henry Jones, B. J. Carroll, M. L. French, R. H. Matthews, Samuel Wright, Clinton Fouty and M. Fouty. In 1862 three companies were organized of which two were cavalry troops under the leadership of Henry Molloy and B. D. McKie. The third company was a company of infantry, under the guidance of Capt. J. H. Halbert. This was called the 18th Regiment of Texas Volunteers. Following is a roster of Capt. Halbert's company:

Capt. J. L. Halbert; First Lieut., James Talley, Corsicana; Senior Lieut., C. F. Fain, Milford; Junior Lieut.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

W. H. McElwee, Corsicana; First Sergt., A. M. Miller, Milford; Second Sergt., N. H. Butler, Corsicana; Third Sergt., E. H. Carter, Camp Speight; Fourth Sergt., J. H. Melton, Corsicana; Fifth Sergt., J. E. Smith, Corsicana; Corporal, H. L. Caldwell, Milford; Corporal, L. J. Thomas, Corsicana; Corporal, Champe Carter, Milford; Corporal, A. J. McCrary, Milford.

Following are the privates: W. J. Adams, Patton Anderson, and V. E. Burdine, Milford; William Bruton, Riley Beebe, James Bryant, Corsicana; H. G. Bostwick and R. E. Carter, Milford; P. E. Carter, Camp Speight; John Carr, William Clapton, J. S. Cull, Corsicana; G. W. Couchman, Milford; P. R. Dean, Coryell County; J. E. Dunning, Milford; Jonathan Fowler, Corsicana; S. G. Fuller, W. F. Graves, W. H. Graves, Corsicana; J. T. Graves, Milford; J. N. Graves, Milford; G. H. Graham, J. T. Graham, G. W. Goodman, C. H. Harris, A. B. Highnote, J. H. Highnote, William Hunter, Levi Hooper, Corsicana; R. S. Hilburn, Milford; Frank Hensle, Galveston; William Hooper, Camp Daniel; Richard Ingraham, Corsicana; B. F. Jackson, Milford; T. B. Jackson, Milford; J. P. Jones, Milford; J. H. Kutner, Camp Speight; Jacob Lorley, Corsicana; J. Malone, G. W. Mantooth, Felix Miller, M. W. Miller, L. C. Miller, Milford; James Maiden, W. M. McKinney, Corsicana; J. P. McElrath, Galveston; F. M. Reed, Corsicana; W. O. Rankin, Corsicana; David Reno, Milford; Thomas Ramsey, Texarkana; Charles Ramsey, Texarkana; Jepe Rector, T. J. Robinson, Milford; J. S. Roger, J. M. Scales, W. J. Smithey, John Westbrook, Corsicana; R. P. Stringer, Milford; T. J. Wilson, Corsicana; W.



*Top: Allyn's Corner, Beaton and Collin Streets in 1872.*

*Center: Third Navarro County court house, built in 1858.  
The picture shows negro Federal soldiers guarding election proceedings in about 1869 or 1870.*

*Lower: Present Navarro County court house, built in 1905.*



## THROUGH THE CIVIL WAR

J. Graham, Hillsboro; H. P. Pippin, Camp Daniel; J. M. Zachary, Corsicana.

Navarro County sent practically all of her able bodied men to the War, there remaining only a home guard of men too old for service or disabled soldiers who had returned from the battlefields. Of these elderly men and disabled soldiers patrols were formed which held misdemeanors in check and preserved law and order.

Texas did not suffer so much from the Civil War as the other Southern States. The farms were neglected and business in general suffered but the fact that Texas bordered on the Gulf and had several ports, which remained open, kept up a certain amount of commerce during the conflict. Women and children did the work, spinning and weaving clothing for the soldiers and doing all possible, to hold their homes together. The War lasted four years and these were four years of frugal living, hard work and much sadness and distress. At the end of the War the survivors returned to find their slaves freed, their farms neglected and fortunes dissipated. The reconstruction period required as much stamina as did the years of the conflict.

After the War, Union soldiers, some of whom were arrogant and abusive, were sent to Texas, but some of these men were of the highest type and records indicate that one captain in particular, A. R. Chaffee, won the respect and appreciation of all Navarro citizens for

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

his many good qualities. Capt. Chaffee later became a general in command of United States troops in the Philippine Islands.

In 1870 Texas was readmitted to the Union. In 1874 Federal soldiers were withdrawn and Texas again passed back into the hands of Texans.



## CHAPTER VI

### DEVELOPMENT

**P**ROGRESS, regular and continuous, was the portion of Navarro County in the Seventies, Eighties and Nineties.

More brick stores were built as were banks, hotels, churches, paved streets, water works, telephone, telegraph, electric lights, fire protection, public library, and Y. M. C. A., more newspapers, more mills, gins, oil mills, flour mills, and a new court house, a city hall, and there were improvements in the city government.

The citizens of Navarro County were beginning to feel "at home" and enjoy a measure of prosperity in all lines. Large pastures were cut up into farms and fenced with barbed wire. Cotton was raised extensively, and it brought a good price on an average.

Fraternal orders became more numerous, social clubs were organized, literary clubs and musical clubs followed and Navarro began to have that complacency which comes of long residence and prosperity. Progressive, yet conservative, people had time to enjoy some of those things which make life richer with time for cul-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

tivating some of the social pleasures as well as business successes.

Two "Fish Tanks" afforded much enjoyment to their organizers. The Corsicana Country Club now occupies the place of Fish Tank No. 2. For fishing, others went to Richland Creek or Patterson's Lake, to Trinity River or Daniels Lake (East of Kerens). All of these places still contribute to the pleasures of Navarro citizens.

Instead of general camp meetings, each denomination had its revival in the different churches. An opera house supplied a place for the histrionic pleasures, as well as a place for public gatherings, lectures, and high school commencements. People had time to devote to style and personal adornment. The hair was worn in pompadour, which was to roll the front hair over a "rat". The back hair was twisted into a "psyche" or an "eight," on the back of the head. On top of all of this was perched a "concoction" of silk or velvet, adorned with ostrich plumes, birds or wings and pinned on with long and much adorned hatpins. If it caused headache, the complaint was not made public.

Sometimes a broad sailor hat was worn, so broad that it sometimes required skill to enter a door or the train. High heeled kid shoes, laced or buttoned, sometimes to the knees, were correct. The toes of the shoes were pointed and the more pointed the better. Stockings were not noticed or thought about except as stockings. They did not become "hose" till some years later.



## DEVELOPMENT

Dresses were long and circular, many gored, having sometimes, three linings or crinolines, which gave them a distinguished sweep and under them from one to three underskirts were worn. In summer organdies and silks were ruffled and trimmed with yards and yards of lace or stitching and tucks. All seams were bound.

The waists, or basques, were close fitting and all seams were boned. Sleeves were leg o' mutton and contained yards of material. Corsets were things of punishment and when a woman was fully dressed in hat, shoes, and dress, she was fearfully and wonderfully accoutered.

As the years went on and "hobbled skirts" came in, Navarro did her part as usual. But that could not last. When skirts began their recession, the "rats" disappeared. "Hose" began to be noticed and this continued until a rumor of "Health and the Liberty and Common sense" evolved the present costume of woman. Those who adhere to it are modestly and comfortably dressed. The extreme bobbed hair has passed and the present coiffeur is a soft wave and a soft knot at the back of the head.

Many of the children of the early pioneers were allowed to call their parents, "Mammy," and "Pappy," especially the children of Southerners in the Seventies and Eighties. "Pa" and "Ma" were sometimes the appellations, but as conditions became more prosperous and the population grew more sophisticated "Papa" and "Mama" became the accepted terms.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Then as women were liberated with "equality", a much-used term in thought and reality, many children were taught to use the given names of their parents, while others say "Mother," and as the male parent has so far as he knows, achieved no great liberty, is called "Dad" by his family.

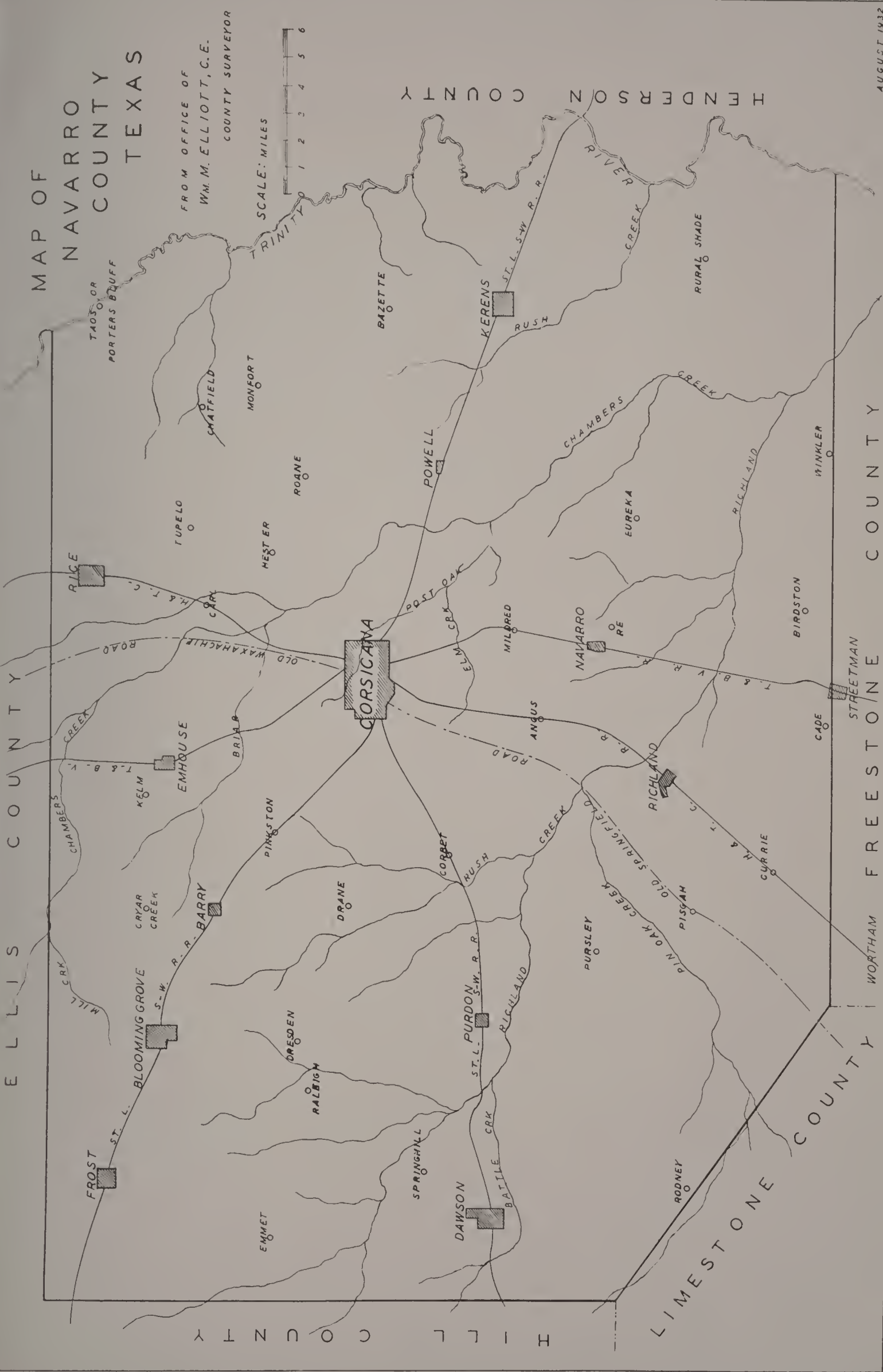
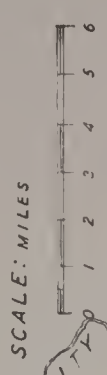
In 1886 important changes were made in the map of Corsicana; street designations being completely changed by numbering all the streets which ran North and South and designating avenues as running East and West. In this transition Church Street became Fifteenth, Jefferson became Third Avenue, while Confederate Street was changed to Seventh Avenue. Bois de 'Arc Street was changed to Main Street and Pecan Street was changed to Twelfth. White Street was changed to Fifth Avenue. Cedar Street was designated as Thirteenth and Mulberry was changed to Fourteenth. Originally the first street East of Beaton was known as Marshall and was followed in order by Belknap, Decatur, Milam, Dresden and Rusk. Washington Street was changed to First Avenue and Main Street was changed to Second Avenue while Jackson Street was changed to Fourth Avenue and a new map of Corsicana was made with pictures and locations of buildings.

This map contained correct pictures of the streets, and of residences and business houses, especially those on street corners.

From the American Sketch Book published by Mrs. Swisher in 1880 and now kept in State Library in Austin:

MAP OF  
NAVARRO  
COUNTY  
TEXAS

FROM OFFICE OF  
WM. M. ELLIOTT, C.E.  
COUNTY SURVEYOR



ELLIS COUNTY

HILL COUNTY

HENDERSON COUNTY

LIMESTONE COUNTY

FREESTONE COUNTY

WORTHAM

STREETMAN

AUGUST 1932



## DEVELOPMENT

“Children in scholastic age, from eight to fourteen, are about five hundred, thirty per cent of which are colored. Corsicana has a population of four thousand six hundred, positively, while according to the computation of competent judges five thousand souls are alive within her corporation.

“Corsicana has one hundred prominent business houses, eight churches, consisting of the following denominations: one Episcopalian, one Presbyterian, one Cumberland Presbyterian, two Methodist, two Baptist and one Catholic.

“Masonic, Odd Fellows, Knights of Honor, Manchester Unity, Jewish Order, and other secret and benevolent orders are creditably organized, and prospering in their respective orders.

“It has a spacious and attractive Opera Hall, steam cotton gins, grist and flouring mills, wagon and carriage factory, and many other smaller industries.

“Corsicana sold merchandise to the amount of one million two hundred and fifty thousand dollars during the year ending September 1, 1879. Her report of cotton from January 1, 1880 to April 3, 1880, were twelve thousand one hundred and six bales “also thirty thousand bushels of corn, sixty-five thousand pounds of hides, two thousand four hundred and thirty head of cattle. Thirty-five thousand pounds of wool.

“In 1871 the town contained a population of eight hundred with an assessed value of taxable property of one hundred thousand dollars. Today as stated above

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

nearly five thousand souls occupy the place with an assessed value of taxable property of one million.

“The legal bar of Corsicana cannot be surpassed by that of any other in the state for ability and worth and the state will yet be illuminated by such of her other lights as now shine so brilliantly. We speak of the Chesterfield congressman Mills, and the courteous and gallant Judge C. M. Winkler.

“The number of lawyers are twenty-eight, including a few recently admitted besides a number of ambitious students.

“Physicians practicing here are about ten or twelve, while two fine dentists are located in Corsicana.

“There are five restaurants, numerous boarding houses, three hotels, of which the Mallory house stands pre-eminent and first, and for courtesy, attention, cleanliness, it is utterly impossible to find its superior.

“Ten saloons do a good business here although the city is of the most orderly character and intoxication rarely seen.

“The post office at Corsicana is what is termed a second class one, and pays a salary of \$2000 per annum.

“Corsicana has four livery stables, two wagon yards, and six cotton yards.

“A contract has been sealed for the speedy completion of a fine and costly court house, which is to occupy the prominent position where the old one now stands.

## DEVELOPMENT

This building, with its stately dome, together with the many cloud kissed spires that surround it, will surely lend a more metropolitan feature to her appearance."

Names of some firms mentioned in Mrs. Swisher's Sketch Book: Mrs. Pauline Wood, postmistress; J. D. Wood, assistant; J. C. Johnson, dealer in groceries, furniture, etc.; Simpkins and Simpkins, attorneys at law; R. P. Goodman and Company, wholesale and retail groceries; A. Fox and Brother, wholesale and retail dealers in dry goods, clothing, hats, furnishing goods, boots, shoes, etc.; H. G. Damon, attorney at law; William Croft, attorney and counsellor at law; Beale and Jones, attorneys at law and land agents; Bryan T. Barry of Frost and Barry, attorney at law, notary public and general collecting agent; J. M. Blanding, attorney at law and general land and collecting agent; Chas. H. Allyn and Company, grocers; Mallory and Allen, clothing, boots, shoes and gent's furnishing goods; Bates and White, jobbers and dealers in boots and shoes; F. W. Carruthers, dealer in hardware, stoves, iron, plows, nails, crockery, glassware, paints, and oils; R. Freedman and Company, dealers in dry goods, clothing, boots, shoes, hats, notions, furnishing goods, etc; Kamsler Brothers and Company, wholesale and retail dealers in staple and fancy dry goods, hats, boots, shoes, notions, etc.; J. T. Sullivan and Company, manufacturer and dealer in boots, shoes and rubbers; J. E. Whiteselle, dealer in Michigan, Louisiana and Texas pine lumber, shingles and all kinds of building material; C. McClarkle, Austin state agent for the Tennessee improved wagon.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

### CATTLE INDUSTRY

For many years after the settlement of Navarro County the raising of cattle was the principal occupation of the pioneers. The country was all open and offered no hindrance to cattle grazing where the owners desired. The stockman of early times found the marauding Indians carrying off stock from time to time and the occasional forays made by cattle rustlers were a source of annoyance but with abundant grazing lands and ample territory over which to range his cattle these annoyances were only of a minor character.

The invention of barbed wire, the improved market for farm products, the decreasing value of cattle and the passing of a state stock law lessened the opportunities in the cattle industry and it declined.

The Texas Almanac of 1858 says that it cost at that time about the same amount to raise a cow as it did to raise a chicken but it is interesting to note that a cow also sold for about the same amount as a chicken.

With the coming of the railroads, however, and the connecting of the Atlantic and Pacific by rail, markets for cattle began to spring up along the new railroads and the price of cattle increased ten or twenty fold within a period of a very few years. The cattle drives Northward from Texas to Dodge City, Abilene and other points on the railroad are in themselves a chapter in Texas history and many volumes have been



## DEVELOPMENT

written and many moving pictures made with these early Texas cattle drives as the background.

The first person in Navarro County to secure a brand was Henry Cook who recorded a cattle brand in 1846 and he was followed by John R. Lansford in the same year. In 1847 Daniel Fuller, Daniel Boyd and practically every other resident of the county, who owned a few cattle, registered some form of brand.

With the coming of fences and increasing development of agriculture, together with a decline in the price of cattle, the industry settled down to a normal basis and the boom days of the cow business disappeared.

## COTTON RAISING

Navarro County is one of the leading cotton counties in Texas. The fibre from this plant has a very important effect on the economic life not only of America but also England, Japan, Russia and other foreign countries. For more than one hundred years the greater part of the world's supply of cotton has been obtained from the Southern half of the United States.

As mentioned previously, the cattle industry was the first to obtain an important place in Navarro County, but it was followed upon adoption of the barbed wire, by agriculture, and cotton was, from early times, the leading crop, after which the progress of cattle and cotton industries went hand in hand. Each contributed to the growth of the other. Records indicate that

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Jared E. Groce brought one hundred slaves and a small amount of cotton seed to Texas in 1821. The grant to Groce by Stephen F. Austin entitled him to eighty acres of land for each slave. His home, the first cotton plantation in Texas, was established near where the town of Courtney now stands and the first cotton gin was built on the Brazos River in 1826.

The first bale of cotton from Navarro County was grown either by William Roberts or W. C. Petty, both of whom settled in Navarro County in 1846. The first steam cotton gin in Corsicana was on Elm Creek, about two and one-half miles South of town. It belonged to Newell Hodges. The William Roberts farm was a short distance West from where the present high school stands and an old ox power mill and gin, owned by Harlan and Baker, adjoined this farm on the South. The cotton was fed into this gin from baskets and only two or three bales could be ginned in one day. There were several gins of this kind in the county during the 1850's.

William Hamilton bought a lot of cotton in 1852, hauled it to Chambers' Creek, loaded it on a flat boat and took it to Houston where it sold at about 10c per pound. This venture was not profitable and so was not repeated. Some of the cotton was hauled from Navarro County overland in ox wagons to Houston, the wagons making the return trip with lumber, food or dry goods.

The production of cotton in Navarro County had grown from 51,000 bales in 1901, the first year of

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which we have a record, to 110,000 bales in 1911, which was the peak year of production. The average production fluctuates now around 80,000 bales a year.

A cotton mill was established in Corsicana in 1896 by George T. Jester and other leading citizens and at the present time has approximately 15,000 spindles.

Henry W. Grady, said of cotton, "What a royal plant it is! The World waits in attendance upon its growth. The showers that fall whispering on its leaves, are heard round the earth.

The sun that shines upon it is tempered by the prayers of all peoples. The frost that chills it and the dews that descend from the stars are noted, and the trespass of a little worm on its leaves is more to England than the advance of the Russian Army on her outposts in China.

The fibre is current in every bank; it is gold, from the time it puts forth its tiny shoot, and when loosening its fleece to the sun, it floats a banner that glorifies the field of the humble farmer". Because all this was and is true, speculators and politicians, found a fertile field for their activities.

Navarro County, with other counties and states, lost sight of and neglected other industries, and cotton became an obsession.

Cotton was an easy crop, until the devastation of the boll-weevil and other insects, began about twenty-five years ago.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Cotton seed became valuable, and the feeding of cotton seed meal and cake, gave an impetus to cattle raising and feeding, so that the two industries became a great part of Navarro County's resources.

### SCHOOLS

As soon as the settlement in a frontier country is formed one of the first thoughts is the education of the children.

The early settlers of Navarro County found no provision made for educating their children other than what they could produce themselves. But some tutors were brought from the old States and from time to time enterprising individuals would get a sufficient number of pupils to agree to attend school to afford a teacher and thus formed the basis for the present efficient educational system of Navarro County.

After the establishment of Navarro County and erection of the log court house this building was used as a school house when court was not in session, with Mack Eliot and Prof. Laffoon among the first teachers. A two-story cedar log house on the corner of Jefferson Street and Church Street was afterwards built. An academy was conducted in the lower story and the Masonic Lodge occupied the upper story.

Professor Robb taught in the academy.

William Peck and his wife conducted a successful school which opened about 1850, and boasted of more than two hundred pupils. Capt. Peck and family later

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moved to Fairfield, where they made a permanent home.

Captain Peck's son, W. M. Peck, and daughter, Mrs. Rufus Hardy, are well known in the life of Corsicana and have for many years been identified with the welfare of the town and county.

Later Dr. Modrall taught a girls' school, in the academy, and Dr. Molloy taught a boys' school, and when Dr. Modrall moved away, Dr. Molloy combined the two and was a successful and popular teacher.

Dr. Modrall was not only a teacher, but also pastor of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. While living here his daughter, Mrs. J. R. Love, died and was buried West of the town in which is now called Modrall Cemetery.

Among other teachers in Corsicana, in these years, and who taught at different places were, Mrs. Marilla Dickson and Miss Sallie Duren.

By 1860 conditions had so progressed that there were at least five good boarding schools in the county. They were located at Dresden, Chatfield and three in Corsicana.

One was advertised as follows:

“Corsicana Female Institute now in the first session of the third year, under the superintendence of the Senior Editor of this paper (the Navarro Express) as-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

sisted by Miss Belle Ish in the Literary and Miss Josephine Tully, in the Musical Department.

“Terms of Tuition:

“Junior Classes, \$10.00 per session; Middle Classes, \$12.50 per session; Senior Classes, \$15.00 per session; Latin or French, \$5.00 extra; Music with instruments \$25.00.

“Each pupil in the Literary Department is charged one dollar per session extra, to constitute a contingent expense fund—board, lodging, washing, etc., can be had in good families, at from eight to ten dollars per month.”

A boarding school at “Chatfield Point” was taught by Rev. Wm. H. Stokes, principal, and Miss Mary Stenhaur, assistant.”

Right along at this time classes were being taught in the different communities, for from the settlement of the first colonies, the importance of education was realized, and considering the difficulties which faced them at all times, there can be for them now, only wonder and appreciation.

A military school flourished in the early days of Corsicana and many of the sons of the early settlers attended. This educational institution was started by Major Henry Bishop, his wife and brother, and was located at the South end of Church (now Fifteenth) Street on land donated by Major Beaton for the purpose. The school had an enrollment of around 200 stu-

## DEVELOPMENT

dents and was very successful during its day. Major Bishop's wife died and this brought sorrow to the school's head and caused him to sell out his interest and move away from Corsicana, whereupon the school gradually lost some of its prestige and finally suspended operations entirely.

Two sisters were connected with the early educational life of Corsicana. These were Miss Ellen Ferguson who later became the wife of Dr. Mills, and her sister, Miss Sally Ferguson, who specialized in music. Another one of the early music teachers was Mrs. Ellen Reid, widow of Nick Reid who was a promising young lawyer who unfortunately died before attaining the pinnacles of success which might have crowned his efforts had he lived to a more mature age.

Mrs. Emma Townsend came to Corsicana as a bride in the early Seventies and not only has she been interested in teaching both from text books and by precept but has also been interested in everything concerning the betterment of the community. Her own life is proof of the correctness of her theories and the virtue of her teaching.

A private school was operated from 1879 until 1887 by Mrs. L. T. Gulick who never accepted more than eighty pupils and inspired these to excel in culture and learning. Her school was noted for its rigorous discipline. Mrs. Gulick always attained the love and respect of all her pupils and after a lifetime of usefulness died and was buried in Oakwood Cemetery in 1927.

Quite an elaborate "female college" existed in Cor-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

sicana in 1880 under the guidance of Professor R. J. Robert as president. Assisting him was a corps of teachers consisting of Mrs. Anna Woods, Natural sciences, Miss Emma Sims, primary, Professor Schermacher, a graduate from Leipsic, in charge of music, with Professor Cummings as his assistant. This college boasted a department of art under the jurisdiction of Miss Hopkins and a department of chemistry, physiology and hygiene under Dr. J. A. Allen who lectured at stated periods on these subjects. In the Dallas News of June 13, 1880, there appeared the following item in the society section:

“The Exhibition given by the Corsicana Female College was a decided success.

“Miss Hershey and her class in Calisthenics was one of the principal features of the evening. The music, under the efficient direction of Miss Rooney, was admirably rendered.

“An essay, ‘Knowledge is Power,’ by Miss Ethel Fairfax, was very well given. Essay ‘The Fashionable Young Man,’ was handled most gracefully by Miss Emma Rakestraw.

“The following young ladies deserve special mention: Misses Addie Robert, Ora Drane, Hattie Phillips, Maud McCormick, Lena Drane, May and Lula Johnson.”

Miss Virginia Moseley taught a private school which was located at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Thir-



## DEVELOPMENT

teenth Street and which was for years the home of Merit Drane. This school flourished during the years 1880-1884. In the same house Mrs. Miller, whose husband was a physician, conducted a school.

A convent was built and the school opened in 1880. Students from different parts of the country boarded at the convent and day pupils whose parents lived in town also attended. The site for the convent was donated by Mrs. Noonan and on this site the present church was built in 1896. The clear, sweet tones of the bell in this church have called its faithful members to worship from the year in which it was built until the present time. The convent building was sold to the city a few years ago and a grade school stands where the former educational institution flourished. Among the more recent private schools is the one operated by Miss Lucy Carroll who has very successfully conducted a fine private institution through the years and has had a class of students graduate each term.

A school for boys was taught by S. E. Gideon in the Nineties and was located on Seventh Avenue. The house was remodeled and is now a residence.

After the Civil War there were many subscription schools in operation which received a small sum of money yearly from the state. This amount allowed a very short free term of school during which time the classes were over-crowded but during the remainder of the school year the numbers were limited to those who could afford to pay tuition. Independent school districts were first organized in the late Seventies and

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

taxes were levied for the support of the schools and bonds issued and sold with which to erect buildings. Navarro County was one of the first to take advantage of this new law and the first public school building in Corsicana was erected in 1881 on the site of the present high school. A school for negroes was erected at about the same time on the site of the G. W. Jackson School. It is evident that no school census was taken in order to arrive at the correct number of teachers needed since the records indicate that only six teachers were elected whereas sufficient pupils attended school to have kept ten teachers occupied in their instruction.

The City Council in 1882 which consisted of L. R. Irons as mayor, and George Phillips, C. H. Allyn, R. P. Goodman, N. C. Read, John S. Gibson and J. D. Richer as aldermen, elected J. T. Hand of Brenham as the first superintendent of Corsicana schools. His term was to be for one year at a salary of \$1,500. The teaching staff consisted of Capt. J. A. Townsend, principal, Miss M. E. Davis, Miss Ida Lawrence, Miss Florence Z. Bright, Miss Helen Halbert and Mrs. Ellen Mills. This force was increased within a few weeks by the addition of Miss Sally Evans and Mrs. Hal Greer.

Miss Lawrence is at present librarian in the Sam Houston Teachers College at Huntsville. Miss Halbert is now Mrs. Groce of Waxahachie and Miss Davis is married and lives at Denison. Miss Sallie Evans has taught continuously in Corsicana since her

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appointment. Grateful pupils of Miss Evans have recently given her an attractive home as evidence of their appreciation. Miss Florence Z. Bright taught from 1882 until 1927 at which time she moved to Beaumont and now resides with her brother in that city.

One of the early educators of Corsicana was Capt. J. A. Townsend who, as mentioned, was made principal of the first independent school. Capt. Townsend came to Corsicana January 20, 1872, from Owensville and began teaching on January 27 of the same year. He had previously taught at Owensville and while there met and married Miss Emma Davis. He and his wife had taught private and subscription schools in Corsicana before the coming of the independent school district. His original school, known as Cedar Hall, stood on the location of the present Third Avenue Church manse but was later moved and occupied the corner where the home of Miss Molly Gibson now stands. Capt. Townsend is remembered as faithful and conscientious and did much toward the education of the youth of Corsicana.

Mr. Hand, the first superintendent, was also extremely well liked by all residents of the community. He had the reputation of being one of the outstanding men of the time in Texas school circles. He also had the reputation of being a very conservative man yet he endeavored at all times to lead in advancement of education. One of this first superintendent's outstanding accomplishments was his ability to guide and counsel the inexperienced teacher and to take a corps of teach-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ers who were new to graded school work and under trying conditions operate an efficient school system is an index of his ability. Mr. Hand remained in Corsicana schools five years and moved to Dallas but later returned to Corsicana schools for a time.

He was succeeded as superintendent of the Corsicana schools by J. M. Carlisle who was in turn followed by Charles T. Alexander and Mr. Alexander was succeeded by Mr. Faust. Mr. Hand then returned to Corsicana and his successor was H. S. Melear who still lives in Corsicana and practices law. Mr. Melear was succeeded by J. W. Cantwell and he was followed by J. E. Blair who remained in Corsicana for a number of years and left a good imprint on the school system as well as on the community. During the administration of Mr. Blair a bond issue was voted and the expansion of the school system made possible although the bonds were not sold due to the financial market becoming unsettled by the World War and the funds derived from the sale of the bonds were well utilized by H. D. Fillers who followed Mr. Blair as superintendent.

Mr. Fillers became superintendent of the schools in 1923 and retained his position until 1931, at which time he was appointed superintendent of schools at Wichita Falls and his place was taken by W. H. Norwood who had been principal of the high school for several years.

The first expansion of the Corsicana public school system was the addition of two rooms to the original

## DEVELOPMENT

Collin Street school and after this a school was built in East Corsicana. The school building in East Corsicana was called David Crockett School. A new one-story brick house located near the old one, is now the David Crockett School. The third ward school which was called the Stephen F. Austin School and originally had only four rooms was next built and this old building for a time was the high school. The next school building erected was Mineral Hill which is now the William B. Travis school. The original building had four rooms but was demolished and the present comfortable, modern structure of fourteen class rooms, cafeteria, offices and rest rooms was erected. The junior high school on West Fifth Avenue originally housed the high school. The present high school on the site of the first public school building is a credit to Corsicana. The Robert E. Lee School now occupies a beautiful site on Collins Hill, which is the highest point in Corsicana. The new junior high school was opened in September, 1931, and a new building has been provided on First Avenue which makes the Corsicana school system a credit to Navarro County.

G. W. Jackson who was elected first principal of the colored schools in 1882 retained that position for forty-four years and at his retirement he was elected Grand Master of the United Order of Odd Fellows for Texas, Arizona and New Mexico. When the old building was replaced in 1925 by the modern new building of sixteen class rooms, cafeteria and splendid auditorium it was named the G. W. Jackson School in honor of this first principal.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Members of the present Corsicana Board of Education are: W. P. McCammon, president; Mrs. H. R. Stroube, vice-president; C. A. Middleton, secretary; Mrs. W. T. Shell, Dr. J. W. David, N. Suttle Roberts, R. L. Wheelock. Members of the athletic council are: Beauford Jester, C. S. Stroud, W. H. Norwood, superintendent schools; W. P. McCammon, president board of education; C. A. Middleton, secretary board of education; O. P. Douglas, principal senior high school; O. F. Allen, principal junior high school; Johnnie Pierce, coach.

### FINANCIAL HISTORY

There were no banks in Corsicana or Navarro County until 1870. Trunks and drawers were used as depositories with an occasional box buried for protection. For various reasons some of these boxes were forgotten until they became lost. There have been many searchers for "lost or buried treasure" in Navarro County.

The first bank established in Corsicana was that of Adams & Leonard. It was opened about 1870.

Capt. James Garitty was connected with this bank, and when, a few years later, Adams and Leonard moved to Dallas, the firm in Corsicana became Garitty, Huey and Baxter. It was a private bank until 1886, when it became the First National Bank, with Capt. James Garitty, president; and J. Huey, vice president, and E. H. Church, cashier.

When first established by Adams and Leonard, it was located on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Bea-



—Photos, Courtesy Electric Studio.

*Top: Scene after disastrous fire which destroyed an entire block in Corsicana business district in 1883.*

*Center: Old R. N. White home, formerly located where the Ideal Theater now stands.*

*Bottom: Beaton street business district opposite scene of fire in 1883.*





## DEVELOPMENT

ton Streets, at the present location of Marks Bros. and in what was then called the Pundt Building, a boxed house. Later it was moved across the street, and further south. Finally to the present location, on corner of Beaton Street and Sixth Avenue. It has always been regarded as one of the most conservative and prosperous banks in the country.

The present officers are: J. N. Edens, president; C. H. Mills, vice-president; A. M. Milligan, vice-president; Mrs. Kate Whiteselle, vice-president; R. L. Hamilton, vice president; J. N. Garitty, vice-president; A. G. Elliott, vice-president; R. L. Wheelock, vice-president; J. H. Roberts, cashier; Sam H. Slay, assistant cashier; F. T. Lindsey, assistant cashier; Chas. W. Croft, assistant cashier; J. H. Brown, assistant cashier.

Not very long after this bank was established, another private bank was organized by J. B. Jones, A. F. Robbins and others.

About 1879 still another private bank was organized by Jester, Prendergraft & Company. A few years later, Prendergraft withdrew, and the bank was of the firm of Jester Bros. In 1887, it became the Corsicana National Bank, with Geo. T. Jester, president; C. W. Jester, vice-president, and L. L. Jester, cashier; T. P. Kerr, assistant cashier.

The City National Bank was organized in 1890, with W. R. Bright, president, and S. D. Curtis, vice-president; J. H. Martin, cashier. This bank consolidated with the Corsicana National Bank, in 1913.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

The First State Bank was organized in 1907, with J. A. Thompson, president; G. J. Heflin, vice-president and R. B. Caldwell, cashier. This bank was located on corner of Beaton Street and Fifth Avenue.

In 1909, the Jesters disposed of their interest in the Corsicana National, and bought into the First State Bank. Likewise J. A. Thompson, disposed of his interest in the First State Bank and bought into the Corsicana National.

Geo. T. Jester became president of the First State Bank; J. O. Burke, vice-president, and Geo. E. Jester cashier. J. A. Thompson became president of the Corsicana National Bank.

In 1931, the First State Bank merged with the State National Bank, and the Corsicana National merged with the First National Bank.

The State National Bank was organized in 1917, with B. B. Munsey, president; P. D. Williams, vice-president; G. C. Dunn, vice-president; E. L. Dupuy, vice-president, and L. C. Morgan, cashier.

In 1924, I. N. Cerf became president, with P. D. Williams, vice-president; N. Suttle Roberts, vice-president. The present officers also include Geo. E. Jester, vice-president; J. E. Butler, vice-president; W. M. Davidson, cashier, and Hallie G. Hampton, assistant cashier.

The Central State Bank was organized in 1920, with W. C. Francis, president; J. W. Oates, vice-president, and W. J. Rochelle, cashier.

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In July, 1921, C. L. Knox became president, E. Wiley Johnson, vice-president; C. J. Knox, vice-president; W. H. Fendley, vice-president.

In 1927, this bank merged with the First National Bank.

## ORPHANS HOMES

The State Orphans' Home was located West of Corsicana, and formally opened July 16th, 1889, with Col. Gaither as superintendent, and his daughter as matron.

Although the capacity was then two hundred, it opened with but sixty boys and girls. Lewis T. Carpenter was the first teacher. Col. W. A. Wortham and his wife soon were installed as superintendent and matron. They were there for about eight years, and were devoted to the children who called them "Grandpa" and "Grandma". They gave to the children loving, just, and careful supervision. There are now about 884 children. The teachers have increased in number to about thirty. The buildings from one, to more than a dozen. The dairy barn is said to be one of the best in Texas, caring for about 135 cows. J. S. Halley, present superintendent, is at the head of a very important community.

The I. O. O. F. Home, located near by, was established about the same time, and has a like history. J. D. Story and his wife were among the first who had charge there.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

There are now about 300 children; for many years there was a Home also, for aged people, but this has been moved to Ennis. Ross Harris and his wife have charge of the Home in Corsicana.

The children in these homes have an opportunity of securing an education equal to that of the children of any public school in Texas.

Many of the useful and loyal citizens now in Texas and Navarro County, were cared for and educated in one of these homes.

### LATER MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS

The Garitty Rifles, so called in honor of Capt. James Garitty, was organized in August, 1889, with G. W. Hardy, captain; Jas. A. Higbee, first lieutenant; S. B. Robinson, second lieutenant, with forty men enlisted, of them two are still here, H. C. Ballew and S. B. Robinson. The company was known as Company G, 4th Texas Guard, A. G. Huston, colonel. In 1893, Capt. Hardy was promoted to the rank of major, and Lieut. P. C. Townsend, elected captain. In 1893 and 1894 this company took first camp prizes.

In 1894 Capt. Townsend was promoted to rank of major, and Lieut. E. C. Lee, elected captain. In 1897 Arthur Polk served as captain, taking the company to the national drill at San Antonio that year.

Lieutenants Jas. W. McGill, David P. Talley and Chas. A. Rankin were well known with the old Company G of the 4th Texas Volunteers.

## DEVELOPMENT

At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, this company was mustered in as Company I of the Second Regiment of Infantry, U. S. Volunteers. It was sworn into service of the United States at Austin, Texas, May 13th, 1898. It was mustered out on Nov. 9th, 1898, at Dallas. During its service the company was located at various training camps, viz: Austin, Texas; Mobile, Alabama; Miami, Florida; Jacksonville, Florida, and Dallas, Texas.

The commissioned officers of the company were as follows: Capt. E. C. Lee; 1st Lieut., Chas. A. Davis; 2nd Lieut., Lonis P. Johnson. Non-commissioned officers were as follows: 1st Sergt., James Wade Kerr; Q. M. Sergt., Charles Clark; 2nd Sergt., H. C. Ballew; 3rd Sergt., Eugene P. Angus; 4th Sergt., Edwin H. Church; 5th Sergt., Arthur Sutherland. Corporals were: Wilmott S. Curtis, Roger Frost, Joseph M. Strupper, Joseph Hawkins, James P. Wickersheimer, Robert L. Byrd, Walton C. Winkler, Karl K. White, John W. Cranford, Collins C. Brown, Dave E. Story, Robert E. Lee.

All these men, except Karl White, from Tyler, were from Corsicana.

This company attended all of the encampments, and several riot calls, and attended to all requirements and at the outbreak of the World War, lost its identity, most of the personnel enlisting under Capt. Davis in a temporary troop, which afterwards became Battery D, 132nd Field Artillery of the 36th Division, and went overseas.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

This organization returned to the United States in March, 1919, under the command of First Lieut. Leslie, and was mustered out of the service at Camp Bowie, Texas, April 10th, 1919. It was later reorganized by Capt. Chas. A. Davis, in March, 1922, as a unit of the 36th Division, Texas National Guard. Capt. Davis was promoted to rank of major in 1922, and Lieut. John L. Walton promoted to rank of captain and placed in command of Battery D.

In January, 1924, Capt. John J. Garner was assigned to the command of the battery, which post he holds at present. The headquarters Battery of 132nd Field Artillery is under the command of Capt. Festus A. Pierce.

With the beginning of the World War, comparatively few of Navarro County's citizens realized the enormity of it, but in the course of months the awful spirit of war set fire to all Nations, and America joined in, sending soldiers money and food. Red Cross Societies flourished. All who could do so bought Liberty Bonds, observed wheatless days, and whole heartedly entered into the work of winning the War.

Navarro County sent something like two thousand young men into service. Some of these young men lost their lives and in the City Park is a monument erected to their memory. Their names are as follows: Charles B. Johnson, Isaiah D. Adams, Perry A. Allison, Leroy Andrews, Frank C. Benson, Wm. A. Bolt, Van G. Clark, Buster Cranford, (Col.), Samuel Crouch, Luther E.

## DEVELOPMENT

Dickey, Walter E. Ellis, Clyde Petty, Elbert P. C. Fulton, Robert B. Gilbreath, Stephen A. Graves, Willie Greer, Samuel Jackson, Jesse B. Jones, Lewis Wiggins, James Johnson, Wm. V. Keel, Arthur C. Loper, Lewis A. Lynch, Arnold McElroy, Benjamin McGehee, Louis C. Morris, Walter Phillips, Joe Pool, Charles Sowell, David H. Steely, David E. Stockman, Lonnie Suggs, George L. Vinson, Robert E. Wasson, Watt E. Waters, Oscar Wilson.

## RAILROADS

The progress of railroads in Texas in the early days was necessarily slow due to the obstacles to be overcome. The Galveston and Red River railroad was begun in Houston in 1853 and the plan of the promoters was to cross the State from South to North. The name of this railroad was changed in 1856 to the Houston and Texas Central. It reached Cypress, which was the terminus for some time, and was then built as far North as Courtney, where the progress again hesitated. Hempstead was the terminus for some time, then Navasota. Millican was reached in 1860. Groesbeck was the furthest point North on the railroad until it reached Corsicana in 1871.

Railroad building ceased along with other business enterprises during the Civil War and in 1870 there were only five hundred miles of railway in operation in the State of Texas.

The railroad was not secured for Corsicana without

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

effort and a Committee of outstanding citizens: James Kerr, R. N. White, J. R. Loughridge, under the chairmanship of Major Alexander Beaton, worked diligently until the necessary contributions and right-of-way were secured. Capt. Haines was locating engineer for the H. & T. C. railroad and Capt. Angus was terminal agent.

On the first passenger train to come into Corsicana were Alex and Philip Sanger. They were in business in Corsicana for a time. The Sanger name is prominently identified with the mercantile business of Texas and has been since the earliest days.

A grand reception and ball was given celebrating the coming of the railroad on the 13th day of November, 1871. The officers of the new railroad were welcomed to the city by Col. C. M. Winkler, who also made an address on this occasion. The division office of the H. & T. C. railroad was located in Corsicana for some time but was moved to Ennis in 1890.

With the coming of the railroad and arrival of new citizens, the spirit of progress awoke.

Immediately following this Corsicana was incorporated in 1871 and Governor Davis appointed Ira B. Taylor as its first mayor. Mr. Taylors' daughter, Mrs. Tom Kerr, is still a resident of the town in which her father was the first official. Dave Page was appointed marshal, and at an election in 1872 Thomas J. Haines was elected mayor of the city.



## DEVELOPMENT

### NEWSPAPERS

Hand in hand with the schools in a community which serve to enlighten the youth come the newspapers which serve in the capacity of enlightening the adult. The first newspaper in Navarro County was a weekly and was called the "Prairie Blade." This publication was under the guidance of Dan Donaldson. The Prairie Blade was sympathetic to the Whig political party and thrived during the years 1855, 1856 and 1857. As mentioned previously, this newspaper office was upstairs over Michael's store on the Northwest corner of the court house square. The first owner of the paper later sold out to Judge Martin O. Shook who ran it for a while but later disposed of his interest to R. A. Van Horn who had married a Navarro County girl and settled in Corsicana.\*

"Buck" Barry was one of several who purchased the Prairie Blade from Editor Shook for \$1,200.

R. A. Van Horn went in partnership with W. H. Neblett and the name of the "Prairie Blade" was changed to the Navarro County "Express." The coming of the Civil War made it impossible to secure a dependable supply of paper and the Express was issued only as paper on which to print it could be procured. After the hectic years which were called the "break up of '65"

\*R. A. Van Horn married Ellen Jernigan and their home stood—and still stands—midway between the present Mulkey home and the home of J. M. Kerr. The home of the bride's parents was just across the street and the cedar trees in this yard were planted by Mrs. Van Horn's mother. Mrs. Piper, who now lives in Corsicana, is the daughter of R. A. Van Horn.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

the Express was changed to the "Observer" but the publication was continued under the jurisdiction of R. A. Van Horn until his death after which his son, Frank, and C. E. Van Horn, his brother, operated the paper until it was sold to Miller and Tarver. Another paper called the Index was consolidated with this paper. G. P. Miller became sole owner of the Observer in 1881 and in 1882 it belonged to W. L. Sargent and was both a daily and weekly publication.

About 1870 there was another paper called the "Courier" published in Navarro County by C. Dalton and O. A. Eylar.

The "Texas Observer", which was a religious paper, was published in Corsicana by the Rev. J. F. Wofford and records indicate it was started about the year 1880. A four-sheet journal called the "Corsicana Methodist" was published under the guidance of M. H. Wells at about the same time.

Major John L. Miller with the assistance of Mrs. A. V. Winkler began publishing "The Odd Fellowship and Literature" in 1876. Among contributors to this magazine was Mrs. Haden who lived in a community called Bellaire which was near Dresden. Her literary efforts were much appreciated and she achieved considerable popularity. Mrs. A. V. Winkler, who assisted in the publication of the above mentioned journal, began in July of 1882 the publication of a literary magazine "The Texas Prairie Flower" and carried as a running head the statement that it was devoted to "the Pure, the True and the Beautiful." This magazine flourish-

## DEVELOPMENT

ed for three years until a financial crisis in the state compelled its suspension. Mrs. Winkler was a cultured lady from Virginia who had previously written articles during the Civil War for the "Southern Illustrated News" which was a paper published by the Confederates and the only literary magazine available due to the blockade of the Confederate States. Mrs. Winkler's husband was Lieut. Col. Winkler, whom she married during the war. It was a great blow to Mrs. Winkler to be forced to suspend publication of her magazine since she was devoted to the furtherance of literature. Among the other accomplishments of this versatile lady was her associate editorship of the "Round Table" which was a literary magazine published in Dallas, and the preparation of the work entitled "The Confederate Capital and Hoods' Texas Brigade."

The "Democrat" was a weekly publication which was established in 1885 by C. Dalton. W. F. Colquitt bought this paper in 1887 and Pierce Colquitt purchased half interest and became editor in 1890.

The People's party which thrived about the year 1890 determined to have an organ of its own in Navarro County and on November 12, 1891 the first issue was put out under the editorship of J. L. Harle. This publication was called "Truth" and had about 3,000 subscribers at the time.

The "Christian Advance" was another religious paper which operated for a while and among the old files in Navarro County may be found records of the

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

“Navarro Banner” which in 1873 was edited by E. J. Simkins and George Morris.

The “Corsicana Daily and Weekly Light” appeared first on September 7, 1888. Editor and publisher were J. F. Lewis and Fred C. Whippey. The following year they bought out a paper which was called the “Exponent” and in 1891 Mr. Whippey was succeeded by A. N. Justiss who continued as guiding spirit of the Corsicana Daily and Weekly Light until 1914 when he became postmaster. At the inception of the Corsicana Daily and Weekly Light its chief competitor was the Courier which was published by O. Pagit and L. C. Shropshire during the years of 1889 and 1890. The Daily Light absorbed the Courier in 1895 by purchasing the subscription and good will of the latter paper and the name of the Light was changed to the “Daily Courier Light.” The “Semi-Weekly Light” continued to operate as a separate entity and was owned by Ben McKie. The “Daily Sun” was first published on March 2, 1897, W. A. McKanna and associates having leased the plant of the Weekly Light in which to bring out their new daily. The first editor of the Sun, which was started as a morning paper, was Major Henry Burton and the first issue was a six-column, four-page paper the same size as the Weekly Light. Some years later a company was incorporated as the “Sun-Light Publishing Company” and this company was owned by several Corsicana and Dallas men, Judge James L. Autry being the principal stockholder and president of the corporation. This company was incorporated for \$20,000 and continued

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to publish the Sun as a daily paper and the Light as a semi-weekly publication. Lowry Martin joined the Sun-Light Corporation as cashier on July 15, 1902, at which time A. W. Hartman was manager. In the fall of the same year Albert A. Wortham began work on the paper as a reporter, the paper in the meanwhile having changed from a morning to an afternoon publication. Upon retirement of Mr. Hartman, Mr. Wortham became business manager of the corporation and within a few years Messrs. Wortham and Martin formed a partnership and secured a three-year option on the stock of the Sun-Light Publishing Company. Within the option period they purchased all the outstanding stock and then a new co-partnership was formed with each owning half interest in the corporation. The management has proved very efficient and the paper is now outstanding in its class in the Southwest, being a daily paper of from sixteen to twenty-four pages with complete Associated Press leased wire service. This paper is published in its own handsome two story brick building adjoining the post office and continues to thrive under the management of Mr. Martin and Lynn A. Wortham succeeding his father who died December 6, 1924.

There has been much literary talent developed in Navarro County and some of the earlier writers were Major A. Beaton, B. F. Giltner, Dan Donaldson, L. T. Wheeler, Col. William Croft, Roger Q. Mills and his son, Major C. H. Mills, Ralph Beaton, Abe Mulkey, E. J. Simkins and Major J. L. Miller. Major Miller conducted a column under the bi-line of "Old Flax" and was one

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

of the first to organize the present personal "chatty" type of column which encouraged correspondence and subscriptions from all parts of the country. The correspondents who exchanged ideas in Major Miller's column banded themselves into an organization and held annual picnics at which they met for a general good time. At the death of Major Miller, Mr. French who lived near Emmett and was known as "Uncle John," was given the honorary post of president of this group and upon his death Mrs. S. M. Roughton whose cognomen was "Snow Flake", took over the banner of leadership but since her death there is no regular organization although correspondents from each town in the county continue to send in their contributions.

The early newspaper was not only a daily or weekly record of events but also carried with it many other correlated activities. Among these the Stray Horse Association which was a very important institution during the Fifties and Sixties. Membership in this association was a combination affair and \$3.50 per year was paid for subscription to the newspaper and a membership in the association. Every issue of the paper carried notices of the stray horses or cattle and thereby enabled the citizens of each community to assist the other in finding lost cattle and horses and returning them to rightful owners. Since the range was open it can be well imagined that many cattle were constantly straying from their owners. The subscription to the newspaper and membership in the association entitled the member to insert two notices of any of his own stray cattle without additional

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charge. An early issue of the Navarro Express shows that it was published every Thursday and the subscription price was \$2 per year in advance. The date of this issue is 1860 and among the advertisers were Carter's Drug Store, which sold all sorts of drugs, perfumes, etc., and cards of the various physicians, among whom were Drs. Love, McKie, E. G. Kerr, N. J. Mills and J. B. Powers. J. T. Oakes carried an advertisement bespeaking his qualifications as gunsmith and J. Wagner advertised his cabinet shop where all forms of furniture were made, as well as door sashes and blinds. J. H. Carter had an advertisement of his boot and shoe shop and T. W. Garner was watchmaker and jeweler to the inhabitants of the city, operating his workshop at his residence. H. W. Tate & Company sold groceries and liquors and James Talley operated a grocery and hardware store, both as a wholesale and retail institution.

C. L. Jernigan's Saddlery carried a regular ad with a large picture of a saddle to call the reader's attention to his work, and both D. Wood and E. W. Burrow operated grocery stores and saloons. J. F. Erwin advertised a market which was in the rear of Dr. Carter's Drug Store and his slogan was "First Come, First Served."

A. Michael & Brother sold general merchandise and H. C. Moss announced that he carried dry goods, boots and shoes. In each of these advertisements the words "for cash" were always prominently displayed and the modern intricate credit system does not seem to have been developed at that time.

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The Dr. Love referred to above married Miss Mary Streety and moved to Corsicana a short time prior to the Civil War, practicing medicine in Navarro County until his death in the Seventies. Dr. Love's home stood on the corner of what is now First Avenue and Thirteenth Street and his descendants, among whom are Mrs. Frank Wood, who is Dr. Love's daughter, and Elmer Keith, his grandson and present fire chief, are highly respected citizens of the community. Records indicate that Dr. Love's home, on what was originally known as Washington Street, was one of the first two-story houses in Corsicana.

Three or four columns were given over to advertising patent medicines which were held forth to the early Navarro County pioneers as specifics for almost every ailment. Some of the early remedies that were highly recommended to sufferers were Dr. Parks' Balsam of Wild Cherry and Pine Tar for all pulmonary complaints, Dr. Guysott's Extract of Sarsaparilla and Yellow Dock, an unfailing cure for diseases of the blood and bilious complaints, and Dr. Hoffland's celebrated German Bitters, as well as Sanford's Liver Invigorator and Family Cathartic Pills.

Among the lawyer's cards were those of Messrs. J. L. Halbert, Mills and Beaton, William H. Mitchell, Winkler and Sweatmon, J. C. C. Winch, Croft and Wheeler, W. H. Neblett, J. T. Spence, H. D. Garden, and J. R. Loughridge.

Other interesting advertisements were:

"Williamson's Hotel  
J. R. Williamson—Prop.



## DEVELOPMENT

### “McPhail’s Hotel”

“Coffee House, Saloon, also Grocery and Bowling Alley on North Side of Square.”

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### “Melainotypes!”

“Or pictures taken on Sheet Iron. Mr. Bean, one of the oldest operators in sunlight drawing in the United States, offers his services in the above to the citizens of the place and vicinity for a short time only. The new style of likenesses, made on iron, by the colodion process, is acknowledged by the best critics to be the most durable and perfect picture ever made. Pictures put in bracelets, breast pins and rings. All kinds of picture copies. The public is respectfully invited to call and examine specimens. A good assortment of plain and fancy cases for sale at prices to suit the times.”

“E. Drane, Dentist, twelve miles Southeast of Corsicana, Texas, returns his thanks to the citizens of this and adjacent Counties for past patronage and will be pleased to work for those who may need his services. All orders in town can be left with Dr. Carter at the Drug Store.”

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

### “Carriage Manufactory

Corsicana, Texas

“Sam H. Kerr is now prepared to build and finish with dispatch buggies and wagons to order. All kinds of repairing done at the shortest notice. Public patronage solicited. Shop on the Southeast corner of the Public Square.”

### WATER

From organization, the question of an adequate water supply for Corsicana was a problem. For many years, that is before 1879, surface wells, cisterns and artificial lakes, or tanks, supplied the necessary water for living purposes, but there was no satisfactory supply for city purposes.

After the business houses became established on Beaton Street, the bankers and other business men, felt the need of some fire protection, and had built at intersections on Beaton Street large underground cisterns.

On Sept. 9th, 1879, a call was made for an assembly at the Opera House, on the 13th of Sept. This call was signed by N. J. Mills, C. M. Winkler, A. F. Robbins, A. M. Wilson, S. F. Starley, James Garitty, Drane and Johnson, J. M. Rainwater, Miller and Tarver, R. P. Goodman & Co., A. Ferguson, J. W. Rogers, Kamsler Bros. & Co., Cerf and Rapheal, J. P. Vance & Co., Stephen Smith, J. Y. Bates, J. J. Strupper, C. W. Jester, J.

## DEVELOPMENT

B. Stephens, F. W. Carruthers, J. B. Stiteler, S. A. Pace, J. Huey, Nat Pinkston, G. T. Jester, B. F. Davis, C. L. Fewell, C. C. Marshall, A. Fox & Bros., U. M. Lee & Co., C. H. Allyn & Co., Mallory and Allen.

A lake of 120 acres was impounded, about two miles East of town, and a standpipe 125 feet high erected. This afforded a water system for the business houses but not for city sewerage. The cost was \$80,000. It was completed in 1883.

At this time the Corsicana Fire Department was organized.

With J. J. Strupper, as chief, about twenty-five men met on Dec. 29, and perfected the organization. Abe Mulkey was assistant chief.

It was a volunteer company. A charter was procured under the name of the Corsicana Hose Co. No. 1, which the city council agreed to equip but it was opposed to spending much for a fire department.

In 1892, with F. N. Drane as chief, the department had one hook and ladder truck complete, two two-horse hose carriages, six fine horses, 2300 feet of hose, a good fire station, with a 1600 lb. alarm bell, three paid drivers, assistant chief, and sixty men, all volunteers.

Insurance was reduced and the fire company recognized by the council and citizens as a most important organization.

In 1894, in order to have a more extended water service, and sewerage, a deep well was bored, and at some-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

thing like 2200 feet, a hot mineral water was found. It was suitable for fire protection, bathing and sewerage, but not for drinking and laundry, or for watering yards or irrigating gardens.

This water supplied Corsicana, supplemented by wells and cisterns, until 1923, when Lake Halbert, about three miles Southeast of Corsicana was finished. It was so-called because J. L. Halbert, who was then mayor, worked untiringly toward the accomplishment of the new water supply.

Lake Halbert covers about 525 acres, and contains normally 23,000,000,000 gallons of water.

When the well, drilled in 1894, brought the abundant supply of mineral water, it also brought "showings" of gas and oil, and this was the beginning of the oil fields of Navarro County and the first field west of the Mississippi.

H. G. Johnston, Ralph Beaton and others, organized a company, and shallow wells, that is, from 500 to 1500 feet in depth, were the result. These wells were scattered in and around Corsicana, and many of them, after more than thirty-five years, are still producing.

H. G. Johnston, with associates, established the American Well and Prospecting Company, which for many years, was the largest oil well supply factory in the world, and this company originated the first oil well rotary drilling rig.

Two of the largest oil companies operating, origi-



*Top: First Magnolia refinery at Corsicana.*

*Center: Group of early Magnolia employees and officials.*

*Lower: First oil burning locomotive.*



## DEVELOPMENT

nated in Corsicana, The Magnolia Petroleum Company and The Texas Company, their organizers being Corsicana men.

The Magnolia Petroleum Company, was organized in 1897, and J. S. Cullinan, who lived here for several years, originated the idea which developed the Texas Fuel Company, the parent company of The Texas Company.

The beginning of the Magnolia Petroleum may be dated from the arrival of J. S. Cullinan in Corsicana, to supervise the erection of Texas' first petroleum refinery, which was the first in the South.

Mr. Cullinan was joined by Mr. Folger and Mr. Payne and the refinery began operations in Corsicana on Feb. 24th, 1899. The name of the original company, was the J. S. Cullinan Company, and the refinery first began running 500 barrels of oil per day, and when it was increased to 600 barrels per day, the people of Corsicana held a celebration, in honor of the event, little guessing that in the short period of thirty years, this same organization under the name of Magnolia Petroleum Company, would be operating six refineries, with a capacity of 100,000 barrels per day, and having a network of gathering lines, of more than 5000 miles, and distributing refined products over six Southwestern states.

There are thirty of the original employees who entered the organization at Corsicana, still with the Magnolia Petroleum Company.

W. C. Proctor, recently retired after long and faith-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ful service, and E. R. Brown, prominent official of the company, lived in Corsicana for many years, also E. E. Plumly who entered the organization in 1901.

W. H. Hastings, superintendent of the refinery in Corsicana for many years, died 1930; Mr. Hastings married a Corsicana girl, Margaret Pannill, whose father, Dr. William Pannill, and grandfather, Dr. Nelson Witherspoon, were Corsicana citizens.

The original name of Cullinan Company, was changed in 1901, to that of the Corsicana Refining Company, and in 1907 the corporate name was again changed to the Navarro Refining Company.

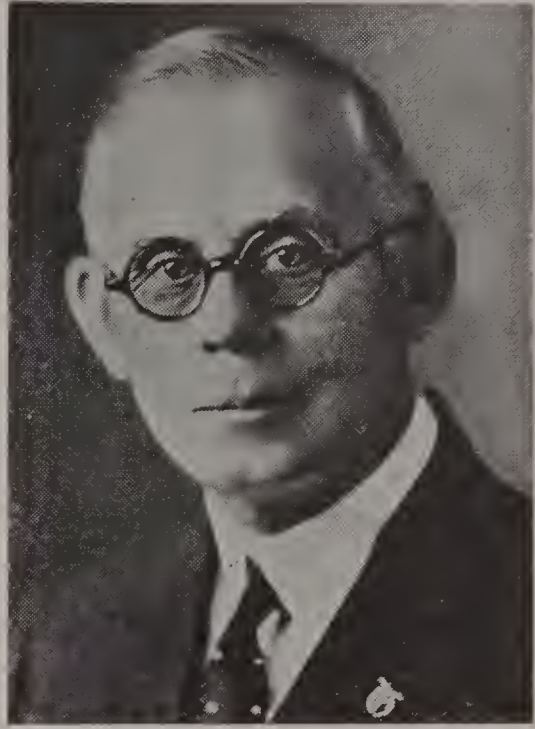
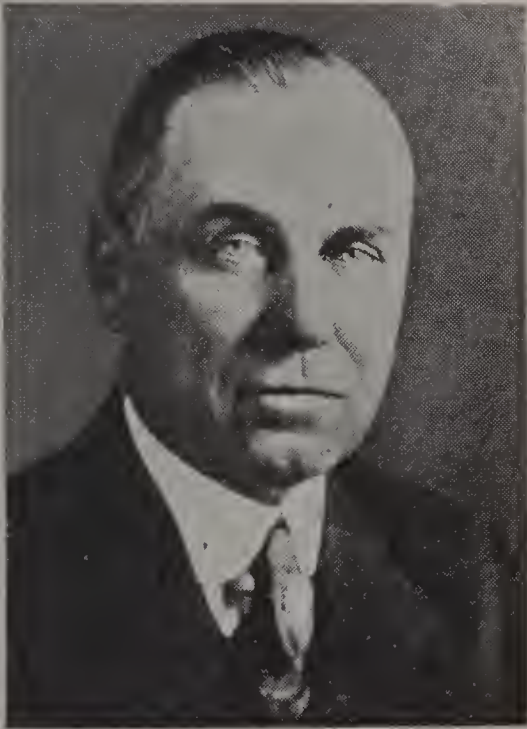
The panic of 1907, brought tribulation to the company, and John Sealy of Galveston, purchased the Corsicana properties from a receivership on Dec. 7th, 1909, changing the name to John Sealy & Company.

The present name of Magnolia Petroleum Company was given to the organization on April 24th, 1911, and since that time the company has grown rapidly, until now the annual payroll is in excess of \$2,000,000, and the employees number eleven thousand.

Besides these, other Corsicana citizens whose connection with the oil industry, has made them prominent are E. H. Buckner, president of Houston Oil Company, and Alma McAfee, originator of No-Nox gasoline.

Geologists have declared that Navarro County has yet heavy resources in oil, which have not been touched.





*Left: E. R. Brown and right, W. C. Proctor—two of the organizers of the Magnolia Petroleum Company.*



*Old tank car belonging to Corsicana Petroleum Company. The Magnolia Petroleum Company with thousands of tank cars, is a successor to this early organization.*



## DEVELOPMENT

Many of the citizens who have been enriched by oil, have continued to make Corsicana their home, thereby showing their loyalty and appreciation to their old home county.

The territory in and adjacent to Corsicana, has been producing oil from shallow wells since 1895, but it was in 1923 that deep oil was discovered. Corsicana became one of the most important oil centers in Texas. The daily peak production reached 400,000 barrels. Corsicana was a pipe line center, a refinery center, and oil well supply center, and was known throughout the oil fraternity of the nation. Ten inter and intra crude oil pipe lines convey the oil from the fields of West Texas and Oklahoma through Corsicana to the great refineries on the coast.

The deep oil was from the Woodbine sand, at an average depth of 2900 feet. At one time there were 1200 wells producing.

Corsicana has the distinction of being the first city in Texas to use natural gas for fuel and lighting. Crude oil was first used here as fuel for locomotives.

Navarro County was the first to use crude oil as a help in building roads. Ralph Beaton was the first man in Texas to sell fuel oil, for which he received 58 cents per barrel.

### NAVARRO COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

The Navarro County Bar Association was organized in 1871. Col. C. M. Winkler was chairman. Some

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

other charter members of the Association were Colonel R. Q. Mills, L. T. Wheeler and J. F. Stout.

Some of the early members of this association were: S. R. Frost, R. S. Neblett, Colonel E. J. Simkins, Rufus Hardy and J. M. Blanding. In the nineties the membership included C. W. Croft, John S. Callicutt, Lee Callo-way, J. D. Lee, W. W. and H. C. Ballew, W. J. McKie, J. L. Autry, Jink Evans, Fred Freeman, Richard Mays, R. B. Molloy, M. B. Montgomery, A. B. Lee, R. E. Prince, J. J. McClellan, W. L. Stone, S. M. Kerr, W. R. Bright, J. H. Woods, O. E. Call, L. T. Carpenter, Messrs. Jack and Jack, E. J. Gibson, R. E. Prince, H. B. Daviss, J. T. Stout and Richard Mays.

Navarro County, generally speaking, has been a law abiding community and the practice of attorneys has been mostly of a civil nature. The first hanging in Navarro County was that of Riley White, a colored man. There was one lynching held on the court house grounds in the Nineties. With the exception of the usual frontier "bad man" and the cattle rustlers, the criminal element has been conspicuous by its absence.

### PRESENT MEMBERS OF NAVARRO BAR ASSOCIATION (1931)

Beauford H. Jester, President.

Judge Rufus Hardy, Hawkins Scarborough, Warren Hicks, J. M. Blanding, J. S. Callicut, J. R. Currington, B. L. Davis, H. B. Daviss, B. W. George, W. W. Harris, Wayne Howell, C. L. Jester, Beauford Jester, W. H. Jack, S. M. Kerr, Norris Lovett, T. W. Lovett, H. S. Melear, Cleo Miller, R. B. Molloy, C. E. McWilliams, H. C. Nash, R. R. Owen, Louis Rothkopf, J. S. Simpkins, J. F. Stout, W. A. Tarver, W. M. Taylor, C. W.



*Top: Gasoline being transported across plains of Texas.*

*Center: Modern method of transporting petroleum products.*

*Lower: One of the first tank wagons.*



## DEVELOPMENT

Taylor, H. E. Traylor, Lawrence Treadwell, Fred Upchurch, C. E. Upchurch, H. E. Wassell, A. H. Willie, J. H. Woods, Ramsey Cox, W. P. Goar, R. M. Tilley, L. A. Johnson, H. C. Ballew, Chas. Banister, Richard Mays, A. P. Mays.

## CHURCHES

The numerous churches of Navarro County have played an important part in the life of the people. Fifteenth Street in Corsicana is yet called Church Street at times because of the fact that there are seven churches located on it.

In former times religious debates and discussions often became very acrimonious but a more tolerant attitude is now the rule. The Sunday morning church bell no longer peals forth to summon the worshiper, but the church performs the same important part in the life of Navarro County.

From time to time in the story of Navarro County references have been made to matters appertaining to the religious life of the community but in order that a more correlated story of the various churches be given, a definite delineation will be made of the early churches of Navarro County.

There was no place of worship in Corsicana until the building of the little log court house. As soon as it was finished it served as school, church and seat of government.

On May 16, 1853, about twenty members of the Cumberland Presbyterian church met under the guidance of Rev. John Patton and organized the first

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

definite religious movement in the then village of Corsicana. The charter members of this first organized church were: R. N. White, James Kerr, Sr., Nancy Kerr, James R. Campbell, Lucy A. Campbell, Thomas Jackson, Nancy Byers, Jeremiah Cunningham, Polly Cunningham, Caroline Goode, Emeline Lindsey, E. R. Story, Margaret Story, E. C. Story, Martha I. Story, Savana (servant girl), S. H. Kerr, C. D. Kerr and Margaret Riggs.

Rev. N. P. Modrall was the first regular pastor and was paid a salary of \$150 a year for preaching one Sunday each month. He also conducted a female academy in connection with his pastoral work.

The edifice erected by the Cumberland Presbyterians faced north on Main Street (now Second Avenue) about one and one-half blocks West of Church Street. It was built of logs. This building was used by all the denominations for some time. Many preachers traveling through the country conducted services in this church. Rev. Ferguson, the father of ex-Governor James Ferguson, preached here. Other early pastors were David Rose, Rev. Fly, Elder Byars and Revs. Hardin and Caldwell.

The Cumberland Presbyterians erected a brick church about 1874 on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Thirteenth Street. It was one long room with two doors in the East and a pulpit in the West. It was divided by an aisle, the men occupying one side and the women the other. An old-time reed organ furnished



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the music and one of the first organists in this church was Miss Lula Johnson.

One of the outstanding ministers of the Cumberland Presbyterian church in the early days was Rev. Allison Templeton, who moved from Tennessee to Corsicana in 1879 to bring harmony to the church after a disruption caused by the question of sanctification, which at that time was causing trouble to many congregations. He made a vivid impression on the people of Corsicana but unfortunately he lived only three years after reaching Texas, dying June 28, 1882. His wife remained in Corsicana for many years, dying at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Lewis T. Carpenter, in Dallas, on March 9, 1928.

The Cumberland Presbyterians, under the leadership of Rev. Jerry Ward, built a handsome brick building about 1891 which still serves the congregation. After the union with the Northern Presbyterians the word "Cumberland" was dropped from the name of the church and it is now called the Third Avenue Presbyterian Church. Some of those who preferred the designation of "Cumberland Presbyterian" built their house of worship on Twelfth Street and their first pastor was Rev. J. H. Swingle. Rev. J. W. Hornbeak has served this church for many years and consecrated his life to preaching in Navarro County. Mrs. Hornbeak was the daughter of Col. Root of Wadeville.

The First Presbyterian Church was organized May 30, 1868, by Dr. S. A. King of Waco who was a Pres-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

byterian evangelist. The charter members of this church were: Mrs. Alex Duren, Perry McCammon, Mark H. Bird, J. D. Cook and Capt. M. M. Morrison. Rev. Mosely was the first pastor.

For a while the First Presbyterians worshiped in the Cumberland Presbyterian church, then for some time in the school house and court house. After using "Cedar Hall" as a place of worship for some time they built a plain, frame church. A brick building was erected in 1878, at a cost of about \$6,000, during the time J. A. McMurray was pastor. This was considered one of the best churches in town for several years after its erection but due to improper foundation the walls cracked and it was necessary to tear the building down. The present building used by the First Presbyterian church was erected in 1903 during the pastorate of Rev. George L. Bitzer. The present manse was built in 1895 when Rev. Bigger was pastor.

The Baptist faith was first represented in Corsicana by Elder N. F. Byars, who settled in Navarro County in 1846, and he and Elder T. N. Morrell began to formulate plans for organizing the Baptist faith. The Trinity River Baptist Association was organized in 1848 and Navarro County was part of this Association. R. E. B. Baylor was District Judge and he arranged his court matters in such a manner that he could preach the gospel at stated intervals. Judge Baylor's name is assured a place in the annals of history through the great university at Waco bearing his name. Some of the other Baptist ministers who preached in the ear-

## DEVELOPMENT

ly days of the Baptist church in Corsicana were: Elders Abner Simmons, G. H. Compere, E. R. Freeman and S. G. Mullins.

The first duly organized Baptist church in Corsicana was under the direction of Rev. E. R. Freeman, who came to Corsicana with his family in 1869, moving from Crystal Springs, Mississippi. Rev. S. G. Mullins was in the same wagon train but he lived at Chapel Hill about two years before coming to Corsicana. Records indicate that two of the charter members of the First Baptist Church were Mrs. W. J. McKie and Mrs. E. O. Vaughn. The Baptist church in Corsicana has been from time to time under the direction of the following pastors: Revs. E. R. Freeman, S. G. Mullins, C. C. Lee, C. A. Coulson, Shelton Wayne, Giles, Taylor, A. B. Ingram, Jeff D. Ray, O. L. Haily, B. W. Vining, E. P. Kennedy and Howard Williams.

The original Baptist church stood where the Cumberland Presbyterian church now stands and during the formative days Mrs. F. B. Stiteler devoted her efforts toward furthering the interest of the Baptist denomination. Her husband was a teacher in old Baylor College which was then located at Independence. The Baptist denomination erected a church on the corner of Collin and Fourteenth Street which served until June, 1925, at which time the new \$150,000 church was finally opened for worship. The new church is one block West of the original location.

The first Methodist church was erected in Corsica-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

na in 1871 by W. R. Carroll and the contract called for a building forty feet wide and seventy-four feet long and twenty-four feet from floor to ceiling. This contract also stated that it was to have a steeple and upon completion Mr. Carroll was to receive \$4,000 in gold. This house of worship fronted on Fifteenth Street and the interior was arranged as were those of other early day churches. Horace Bishop was the first pastor and in 1872 while living in Navarro County he married Miss Powell of Hearne. Rev. Bishop makes his home with his daughter since the death of his wife some few years ago. He has been a Methodist pastor for sixty years.

The first state democratic convention to be held after the Civil War convened in the Methodist church building at Corsicana in 1872. This was a lively convention in more ways than one; many issues were bitterly fought on the floor and hogs sleeping under the church added to the confusion by the noises which they made. It was at this convention that Roger Q. Mills was nominated for Congress and it was also, incidentally, the first state political meeting held in Texas after the Civil War without military guard.

Another Methodist church was built in 1896 of brick. Additions have been made to the Methodist church from time to time and the pastor's home adjoining the church is of commodious proportions. A new, modern educational building has recently been erected.

The Methodist faith has been served by many men

## DEVELOPMENT

of outstanding merit, among the number Revs. Everet Armstrong, Vaughn, Solomon, Whitehurst, Barcus, Booth, Wright, Monk, Hall, Culver, and the present pastor, John Bergin.

The Episcopal faith in Corsicana was not represented prior to the year 1870 but when the H. & T. C. railroad came in 1871 several families of this faith moved into the growing village. Bishop Gregg of the Episcopal denomination first sent Rev. Waddill into Corsicana and he held services in the court house and other places. Rev. Virginius Gee of the Episcopal faith also held services in Corsicana and in the winter of 1872 Bishop Gregg confirmed a class of eight. Rev. Gee was followed by Rev. Edwin Wickens in 1873 and in the summer of 1874 under his guidance the Episcopal congregation erected their church on the corner of Fourteenth and Collin Street. This church was called St. John's Church. Mr. Wickens was succeeded in 1875 by Rev. J. J. Vlaux of Tennessee who remained about two years, after which time services were held only intermittently. Rev. J. P. Lytton of Sherman visited this church occasionally until February, 1878, when Rev. Peter Wager was placed in charge. Rev. Wager remained for about three years and in February, 1881, Rev. John B. Linn was Rector of the church, remaining in Corsicana for four years.

Various improvements were made to the church building between the years 1895 and 1906 at which time Rev. J. C. Black was Rector. In the interim

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

a new brick church had been built. The old frame church was moved to the back of the lot and converted into a parish hall. The present Rector, Rev. H. J. Ellis, began his rectorship April 7, 1918. A new parish hall has recently been completed.

The C. H. Allyn family gave a splendid two manual Pilcher pipe organ to this church.

A company of twenty people of United Presbyterian faith met in Corsicana at the home of J. L. Bonner on October 16, 1895 and there organized the Associate Reformed Presbyterian church. Services of this faith were first held in the city hall and some months later a tent was secured and erected on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Fifteenth Street and used as a place of worship. The first pastor of this faith was Rev. W. W. Orr, and during his pastorate the present church was erected. The United Presbyterian faith has been ably served by Rev. Ransome, who followed Dr. Orr, Rev. J. W. Good, Rev. R. E. Hough, Rev. A. H. Griffin, Rev. W. R. Gay and the present pastor, Rev. C. E. McStravick. The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church was transferred to the United Presbyterian Church of North America in May, 1906.

Several families of the Jewish faith moved into Corsicana and in 1899 they erected Temple Beth-El. This was a handsome frame building and the Jewish faith has been under the guidance of Alex Fox as first President; I. N. Cerf following Mr. Fox; Sam Brooks, who is now President, following Mr. Cerf. Ben Goldsmith has been secretary of the congregation for more than

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twenty-five years. There is also in Corsicana an Orthodox Jewish Church.

The Catholic faith was given sufficient money to establish a church by John Noonan and his wife. This church was erected in 1896 and the church and convent were the center of the Catholic educational movement for some years. Father Graffeo is the priest who ministers to the members of this church. Prominent among the families are Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hickey, Mr. and Mrs. John P. Garitty, Mrs. N. J. Garitty, Mrs. Walker, Mrs. Garvin, Mrs. Riley, Mrs. Wilkes, Mrs. Childress and the Shehees.

The first Christian Church in Corsicana was organized in 1888 by Dr. T. F. Driscoll who was the first minister of this faith in Corsicana. The first edifice built by members of this church was erected on Fifteenth Street between Collin and Fifth Avenue, at a cost of about \$3,500. This church served for about 17 years until the present building was constructed. The Christian faith now worships in a beautiful church with an educational building and their property in Corsicana is appraised at \$120,000. Seventeen pastors have served the Christian church in Corsicana, including the present minister, Paul L. Merrill.

There are now in Corsicana four Baptist churches, four Methodist Episcopal churches, one Catholic church, one Christian Science church, four Presbyterian churches, one Christian church, one Church of Christ, two Jewish synagogues and two Nazarene churches.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

The Church of Christ has a prosperous congregation, housed in a handsome new church on Fifteenth street. J. L. Hines is the pastor.

The Protestant Methodist, first organized in Corsicana by Rev. York, is located on Eighteenth street. The present pastors are Rev. Copeland and Kenneth Copeland, his son. The latter is still a student.

The Salvation Army is also an individual religious faith whose activities are wide-spread and the Full Gospel faith meets in a building on West Seventh Avenue.

There are also several colored churches at which the negroes worship and their religious fervor is equal to that of any nationality.

## THE NAVARRO JOCKEY CLUB

During the later Seventies and the Eighties horses enjoyed a period of notice and care, which since then has not been recorded. Beginning with the early settlements, the horse was a beast of burden, and necessary to daily life. Later breeders and stockmen, and many others, had occasion to enjoy the horse, and every Sunday the roads were full of buggies, single and double rigs, with horses of all kinds on exhibition. There were several livery stables in Corsicana. Perhaps the Mitten place was the largest, as Mr. Mitten was a real horse man. There was a race course on the Southeast side of town, where regularly there were



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races and exhibitions and some times the fair was held there.

A Jockey Club was organized on April 22, 1882 under the guiding hand of J. W. Mitten. This Jockey Club not only was to teach the proper care and handling of horses but also sponsored races and offered prizes for winners. At the inception of this Jockey Club a meeting was held which lasted through five days. One of the outstanding events of the meet was a ten mile running race between Miss Mollie Taylor of Nevada and Miss Nellie Burke who was the United States riding champion. A purse of \$1,000 was won by Miss Burke. The judges were Captain Wagley, who conducted a newspaper column known as "Cold Corner", Capt. Garitty, John S. Gibson and R. S. Mabry.

## MEDICAL SOCIETY

Doctors began to come into Texas with the first influx of settlers. A call was issued on March 11, 1857, in the first attempt to organize Texas physicians and again in 1859 a call was issued that all Texas physicians and surgeons should organize but no record was kept of the meeting although it is evident that some form of association was effected, because in 1869 throughout the state, another call was issued to physicians for "reorganization." On April 15, 1869, twenty-eight physicians responded and the results of this meeting are retained in the form of a permanent record. The first four meetings of the medical fraternity in Texas were held in Houston and at the fourth

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

meeting it was decided that the meeting place vary from time to time. One of the first laws which was fostered and passed by the early day physicians was a statute requiring each physician to register and state the school from which he graduated and file his diploma. This first group of twenty-eight has grown until at this time there are more than 7,000 physicians and surgeons in Texas.

Records indicate that the Corsicana physicians were meeting in the early Seventies and in the county such representative physicians as Doctors Starley, Witherspoon, A. C. Sloan, J. T. Gulick, Wm. Pannill, W. J. W. Kerr, J. T. Suttle, Robinson, Selman, Blackmon, Johnson, Hodge, Bryan, Kirksey, Matthews, Dean, Younger, Hoffstetter, A. P. Boston and T. F. Driskill. Dr. Driskill was a minister of the Christian church. He and his wife were dentists. Early residents also remember that among the first physicians to locate in Navarro County were Doctors McKie, who married a daughter of Col. Jacob Eliot, Leach, Oakes, Tate, Wooten, Croom, Carter and Dickson. Dr. Dickson is remembered by the early residents because of his specialty of treating by the use of herbs and roots. Dr. Selman lived at Wadeville, Dr. Robinson lived at Dresden and of the two Blackmon brothers, Ben and Dave, both of whom were physicians, one having lived at Eureka and the other at Angus.

The early physician practiced in a day when he was required to do his curing without the aid of any trained assistant or well equipped hospital. There was no

## DEVELOPMENT

such thing as a trained nurse and the physician's own saddle bags and medicine case must contain all the necessary equipment and the only assistants upon whom he could call were friends or members of the patient's family. Operations were rare and it is to the credit of the early physician that he attained marvelous results with his elementary remedies and limited means. Modern bacteriologists had not produced a serum with which to combat such diseases as diphtheria and typhoid, and lack of sanitation increased the danger of fevers and chills. Our modern hectic civilization, however, had not come into existence and brought with it the attendant nervous afflictions of today. The early physician was unaware of the real causes of many diseases and had no idea that the mosquito bite was the real carrier of yellow fever and malaria germs. Appendicitis in those days was usually diagnosed as inflammation of the bowels. The Navarro County Medical Association carried a notice in the "Observer" during the year 1879 to the effect that there would be a meeting the first Friday of each month and the discussion for the following meeting would be "Black Jaundice, or malaria—Is It a Disease or Symptom of Disease?"

Dr. J. T. Suttle came with his father to Texas in 1871 and during the early years of his practice lived near the community of Retreat but moved to Corsicana to spend the later years of his life. Of his four children his eldest son, Dr. I. N. Suttle, lived in Corsicana until his death in 1931 and established the Suttle Sani-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

tarium on Sixth Avenue and operated this hospital for several years.

The first hospital in Corsicana was established by Dr. B. F. Houston and began operation in 1908. Dr. Houston specialized in eye, ear, nose and throat afflictions. His original hospital boasted twelve beds with an operating room which was considered excellent at the time. It was used also for general practice. Dr. Houston practiced in Corsicana for forty-two years and is succeeded by his son, Dr. Trim Houston, who is a well known dentist, and his son-in-law, Dr. W. D. Fountain, who is an outstanding physician.

As the population of Navarro County increased it became evident that there should be a county hospital and from time to time efforts were made to procure the necessary funds with which to erect such an institution. The culmination of these efforts was brought to a head in 1914 under Judge R. R. Owen and Commissioners Worthington, Medaris, Payne and Slay. A brick residence of one-story was purchased. This residence was located on Ninth Street and by the addition of necessary equipment the county hospital was established, Dr. S. H. Burnett acting as director and Mrs. A. M. Haslam as secretary.

A nurses' school was started in 1917 in conjunction with this hospital and this training school has grown until some few years ago a two-story home for the nurses was built. This year, 1931, seven girls received their nursing diplomas. At the present time the county hospital is under the efficient direction of Dr. L. E.

## DEVELOPMENT

Kelton, president of the staff, with Dr. McLendon, and Messrs. Garitty, Jester and Banks as directors, and Mrs. W. B. Taylor as head nurse.

The Corsicana Hospital and Clinic was established in 1928 on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Twelfth Street in the building which was formerly the Elks' Hall. This is a completely furnished hospital under the guidance of Dr. W. T. Shell, president of staff and business manager. Dr. W. T. Shell, Jr., is assistant physician and surgeon.

The Navarro Hospital and Clinic was completed and opened to the public in 1929 on the corner of Collins and Thirteenth Streets and is a handsome four-story brick building which is a credit to the community. Dr. E. H. Newton is president of the institution and has associated with him Doctors Homer T. Jester, Wilson David, T. O. Wills, W. R. Sneed.

In addition to the physicians who live in Corsicana, Dr. B. W. D. Hill of Dawson, Drs. Blair and Currie of Kerens, Dr. A. N. Brown of Richland, and Dr. Bristow of Emhouse and Drs. Ellis and Kelsey of Blooming Grove, Drs. Rice, Knox and J. R. Matlock of Frost and Dr. Russell of Purdon, have given long and faithful service to their communities. Dr. Hanks years of service to the Corbet community were terminated by his death in 1931.

Doctors S. W. and Clay Johnson were prominent among the medical fraternity in Navarro County dur-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ing the Nineties. These brothers practiced until Dr. S. W. Johnson moved to Dallas. Dr. Clay Johnson moved to Fort Worth where he now resides.

Dr. J. M. V. Wills came to Navarro County in 1874 and first practiced in Eureka before moving to Corsicana where he continued his work until forced to retire because of ill health. Dr. T. A. Miller started practicing in April, 1889, and deserves credit for his many years of service to the community; also for rearing a large family of worthwhile children, one son being a minister of the Church of Christ and the other four being physicians. Dr. Kelton has practiced continually for 35 years. His son, L. E. Kelton, Jr., has recently completed the necessary study and is now associated with his father. Dr. J. S. Daniel began the practice of medicine first at Chatfield, thirty-five years ago and has been practicing in Corsicana for the past eighteen years. Dr. Daniel is known as the first physician to bring an X-ray machine into use in Navarro County.

Membership of the Navarro County Medical Association now comprises sixty-five active members and their names are given herewith:

J. C. Blair, S. H. Burnett, W. C. Bristow, W. W. Carter, W. D. Cross, D. B. Currie, R. C. Curtis, J. S. Daniel, J. Wilson David, J. R. Dickson, J. H. Edgar, E. B. Ellis, T. V. Fryar, Dan B. Hamill, J. J. Hamilton, M. L. Hanks, F. W. D. Horn, Homer B. Jester, J. A. Jones, W. K. Logsdon, J. E. McClung, W. O. McDaniels, T. P.

## DEVELOPMENT

McLendon, John W. Matlock, Dubart Miller, T. A. Miller, E. H. Newton, B. W. D. Hill, B. F. Houston, L. E. Kelton, E. B. Lowrey, K. W. Rowe, T. B. Sadler, Hugh Sloan, E. P. Norwood, H. H. Panton, W. R. Russell, I. N. Robinson, A. D. Sanders, G. H. Sanders, W. T. Shell, K. W. Sneed, W. R. Sneed, J. C. Stevens, I. N. Suttle, C. L. Tubb, T. O. Wills, A. B. Worsham, T. W. Wade, H. R. McMullen, A. W. Rogers, Trim Houston, R. N. Holloway, F. B. Owens, H. E. Ezell, H. B. Love, L. C. Polk, O. C. Bowmer, J. T. Carter, W. M. Ellis, W. D. Fountain, J. J. Smith, W. H. Walker, J. P. Worsham, W. W. Williamson, W. T. Shell, Jr., L. E. Kelton, Jr.

## STREET RAILWAY

The Corsicana Traction Company was organized in 1902 under a fifty year franchise and street car service was inaugurated on June 19 of that year. For several years the street car line followed Main Street but after a few years' operation it was removed to Beaton Street. A loop originally extended down Fifteenth Street and around Mineral Hill, coming back to Fifteenth Street South of the Cotton Belt Railroad. The franchise was acquired by the Texas Electric Railway Company in 1913 and street cars were operated in conjunction with the Corsicana-Dallas interurban. Due to the influx of automobiles and changing economic conditions the street railway company found it impossible to earn expenses and the operation of street cars was discontinued on September 30, 1931. The interurban line to Dallas, however, continues to operate.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

### PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Women's Clubs of Corsicana, under the direction of Mrs. Rufus Hardy and Mrs. Maud W. Gordon, began work toward securing a library for Corsicana in 1901. During that year \$1,720 was raised and the first library was opened in the Hardy-Peck Building. The patrons paid \$1 a year membership to have access to 1,270 volumes which were on the shelves shortly after the library opened.

The ladies from different clubs alternated as librarians until Miss Hettie May Leonard (Mrs. Pat Loggins) was appointed librarian. She served for some time until Mrs. Mattie C. Houston was appointed to the post.

Through the interest aroused by this initial effort a tax was voted for maintenance and Andrew Carnegie donated \$25,000 toward building the present Carnegie Library which was opened January 1, 1906.

The present library has about 21,000 volumes and with the exception of two years, during which time she was attending the University of Iowa, Mrs. Houston has been librarian and has served with the greatest efficiency. Miss Zoe Faddis was librarian during the time Mrs. Houston was taking her course in library work.

The first library board was composed of: Mrs. Rufus Hardy, Captain C. H. Allyn, J. H. Woods, Frank Drane, Mrs. F. J. Halbert, Mrs. W. J. Gordon, Miss Louise Pace, Miss Hattie Kenner and Miss Zoe Faddis.



## DEVELOPMENT

### CORSICANA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Corsicana Commercial Club originated in the Nineties, and operated without any definite organization. It met upon call of the president, having no regular time of meeting. It met in the Merchants Opera House. There were approximately 65 paying members. The dues were \$1.00 per month. J. B. Slade was the last secretary of this club. This club was composed mainly of the older citizens of the town among whom were, Capt. Allyn, James Garitty, J. E. Whiteselle, Steve Smith, W. M. Tatum, H. G. Damon, Ralph Beaton, J. H. Martin, J. D. Cunningham, R. M. Collins, F. N. Drane, P. C. Townsend, E. A. Johnson, C. W. Jester, W. H. Staley, J. S. Cullinan, J. E. Butler, J. T. Coulson, Fred Fleming, Allie Templeton, S. A. Pace, W. M. Wilson, Ben Fortson, J. B. Slade, Rufus Caldwell, E. H. Church, James L. Autrey, W. J. McKie, John L. Lee, Sam R. Frost, J. S. Callicutt, E. O. Call, B. Marks, I. N. Cerf.

About 1905 or 1906 among the younger men of the town there was organized the Corsicana Booster Club. Cal E. Kerr who had been greatly interested in a more active organization, particularly for the younger men in the city and who had fostered the beginning of this club, was made the first president and Lowry Martin was made secretary. The club was highly ambitious and to quote the first secretary "was filled with zeal, energy and conversation, plenty of everything but money". This club had between three and four hundred members paying monthly dues of fifty cents each.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

There were for a time two clubs, both interested in the same object, namely, the growth and betterment of Corsicana as a business center and better place in which to live. The Booster Club was later changed to the Corsicana Business League. The first secretary of this organization was Fred Walker and among the presidents of this club were John W. Carpenter, A. A. Wortham, Cal E. Kerr.

Guy Gibson first forwarded the project of having the Corsicana Business League and the Corsicana Commercial Club combined into one organization, in that way concentrating the man-power of the city as well as the mature experience of the older club and the youth and enthusiasm of the later organization. This was done and out of this consolidation was created the Corsicana Chamber of Commerce. The Business League had offices at this time on Eleventh Street, upstairs over the Western Union Office, which place remained the office of the Chamber of Commerce after its organization.

As an expression of appreciation for the time and effort and work which he had given to the Booster Club and Commercial League, Lowry Martin was made first president of the Chamber of Commerce. Ralph Walker became agricultural agent and C. N. Olsen, district representative for the State Life Insurance Company, became first secretary.

The past presidents of the Chamber of Commerce are as follows:

## DEVELOPMENT

Lowry Martin .....	1917-1918
T. J. Walton .....	1919
J. Frank Williams .....	1920
J. N. Royall .....	1921
R. J. Jackson .....	1922-1923
J. M. Dyer .....	1924-1925
Sydney Marks .....	1926-1927
C. L. Jester .....	1928-1929

Officers and directors of the Chamber of Commerce for 1930-31 are: Ted B. Ferguson, president; W. O. Harwell, secretary; J. N. Edens, treasurer; R. J. Jackson, national counselor; vice-presidents: F. N. Drane, A. G. Elliott, Lowry Martin, W. P. McCammon, C. C. Roberts, Clyde Foster and R. J. Jackson. Directors: O. M. Boynton, F. N. Drane, J. M. Dyer, J. N. Edens, Ted B. Ferguson, Clyde Foster, R. J. Jackson, W. A. Lang, Lowry Martin, W. P. McCammon, C. A. Middleton, E. M. Polk, Festus A. Pierce, C. C. Roberts, W. C. Stroube, W. M. Spear and Max Wolens.

## CITY AND COUNTY OFFICIALS

Corsicana now has a commission form of government with a mayor and four commissioners, all elective. The election is held on the first Tuesday in April of alternate years. The present (1931) city officials are J. W. Edens, mayor; Commissioners: R. D. Fleming, E. M. Palmer, W. C. Stroube and J. W. Jefferson; J. P. Welch, secretary; Chas T. Bannister, attorney; J. N. Garitty, treasurer; H. S. Melear, judge of corporation court; J. M. Pugh, assessor and tax collector; E.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

L. Keith, chief of fire department; W. S. Knight, chief of police; W. R. Sneed, physician, W. W. McClendon, engineer; G. M. Crook, sanitary engineer; C. B. Lewis, superintendent of water works pumping station.

County officers during 1931 were Hawkins Scarborough, district judge; Clay Nash, county judge; Cleo Miller, county attorney; Christopher L. Knox, assistant county attorney; Mrs. L. E. Hervey, district clerk; L. C. Morgan, county clerk; Dan Hanks, superintendent of county schools; county commissioners: George Boyd, D. D. Sawyer, J. W. Harris and J. O. Sessions; Rufus Pevehouse, sheriff; justices of the peace: Joe Cox, Prec. 1; Sam Jordan, Prec. 1\*; Carl D. Heather, Prec. 2; T. A. Crowley, Prec. 3; Dalton Westmoreland, Prec. 4; John B. Jones, Prec. 5; C. Healer, Prec. 6; S. A. Johnston, Prec. 7; L. W. Varnell, Prec. 8.

\*Sam Jordan succeeded W. W. Clopton, deceased.



## CHAPTER VII

### TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

#### SPRING HILL

THE town bearing the distinction of being the oldest in what is now Navarro County is the town of Spring Hill which was settled by Dr. George Hill many years before the county was organized. Spring Hill is located about twenty miles West of Corsicana near Richland Creek and the plentiful water supply from springs and from this stream doubtless influenced Dr. Hill in forming his settlement. The hills covered with beautiful trees and grassy prairies for grazing on all sides make the location of Spring Hill one of sylvan beauty.

Dr. George Hill was born in Tennessee on April 22, 1814. He attended college both in Wilson County, Tennessee, and Transylvania University, from which institution he received his degree in medicine. He came to Texas when he was only twenty-three years old, locating first at Old Franklin where he began practicing medicine and he soon married Mrs. Matilda Slaughter, a widow with two children. President Houston made him Indian agent and records indicate he moved to what is now Spring Hill about 1838. Dur-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ing the early days of Dr. Hill's residence at Spring Hill hundreds of Indians camped near his house. The spring around which they camped was a short distance Northwest of the house. On only one occasion did they cause any trouble, that when a fight occurred with a surveying party.

Dr. Hill lived in a double log house when he moved to Spring Hill but many years later this was torn down and a frame house built a short distance from the old residence. Of the early home nothing now remains except a few scattered rocks which were the foundation\*.

Dr. Hill served in the Texas Congress in the years 1839, 1840, 1841 and 1842 and in 1843 was Secretary of War under President Houston, and in 1844 was reappointed by President Jones and held this position until Texas was annexed by the United States. He died in Spring Hill and was buried there May 29, 1860.

Spring Hill is also mentioned in the early records as being the first point at which a raw-hide building was constructed. This building was erected in 1850 and used as both church and school, the first teacher being a Mr. Finch and the first preacher, Tom Williams. This raw-hide building was in the nature of an experiment, since hides were cheaper than lumber, but it served only as a temporary building.

Among the early settlers of Spring Hill were the Ritchies, Treadwells, Onstotts, Fullertons, Stockards, Matthews, Sidwells, Garners, Wilkinsons, Lawrences,

\*His step-grandson-in-law, Will Matthews, now lives there.

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Dawsons, Lees, McSpaddens and Cheathams. Both William and Samuel Wright located near there. The Jerry Johnson family also the Ruckers and Mount families moved here in later years and two doctors made this community their home, Doctors Dean and Younger. Britton Dawson moved into this vicinity in the year 1848 and on his land was the location for the town of Dawson. In 1859 he brought lumber by ox wagon from East Texas and built the house on his farm which still remains in an excellent state of preservation. Britton Dawson married, for his second wife, Susannah Cannon, who came to Texas with her stepfather, William Ritchie, and family about the year 1843. This William Ritchie was county commissioner and his home and trading post were about two miles from the grave of the Battle Creek victims. Records indicate that about the time the Ritchies arrived in Navarro County there were only five families living in the community, these being the Dr. Hill family spoken of previously, the Treadwell family and two of the Onstott brothers. Letters which still are in existence describe the method by which the Ritchies and others built their cabin. They dug holes in the ground and set posts into them, then nailed boards on each side of the posts and filled in the hollow spaces between with dirt. Mr. Ritchie and his two stepdaughters, unaided, erected the house, sawed the logs and blocks with which to get boards, smoothed these by hand with drawer knives and thus erected a livable habitation.

A flour mill was located at Spring Hill and it operat-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ed late as 1884. The farmers grew their own wheat and had it made into flour, shorts and bran.

Spring Hill was a thriving village until the railroads came and left it to one side. Some of the merchants moved to Dawson, others went to Corsicana and Dresden and the town of Spring Hill remained a village but the countryside is still inhabited by people of sterling character.

A great-nephew of Dr. George Hill who first settled Spring Hill lived near the place where his famous ancestor settled until death. Dr. B. W. D. Hill came to Navarro County in 1886, living in Spring Hill for one year, then moving to Dawson where he died in 1931. Dr. H. L. Matthews also lived in the Spring Hill community for forty-two years, moving to Dawson in 1911 where he died in February, 1924.

Spring Hill will retain an honored place in the history of Navarro County due to its having been the first important settlement.

### DRESDEN

Shortly after the settlement of Spring Hill by Dr. George Hill, Ethan Melton arrived on foot from Houston and came to Dr. Hill's home at Spring Hill. His entire belongings were a gun, a pack of clothes and a blanket. Taking a liking to the country, he settled nearby and was married to Dr. Hill's sister about 1843.

Mr. Melton's first home was a log house and was the first distributing point for mail in this community, the





*Top: Lisman home near Chatfield, built in 1857.*

*Bottom: Dr. W. S. Robinson's home at Dresden.*



## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

mail being brought on horseback. Letters in those days were not always in envelopes, sometimes they were tied with a string, sometimes folded or sometimes sealed with wax. Postage was usually about 10c per letter. The post office was first designated as "Spanky" but when on May 22, 1846, a regular post office was established it was recorded as Melton and was the first post office in Navarro County.

Mr. Melton was a prominent citizen in the early days and a slave owner since among the records were found a notice where in 1848 he bought a negro girl, 14 years of age, by the name of Mary, from A. Barry of Raleigh. This transaction was witnessed by Henry Cook and John Tucker.

In March, 1847, three acres of land were acquired for church, school and burying ground with Jacob Hartzell, Ethan Melton and Henry Cook as trustees.

Ethan Melton's first wife died at an early date and he later married a Miss Welch. Of the six children living to maturity, J. E. Melton, Angie Melton, who is now Mrs. Blayston, and C. C. Melton still live in Navarro County, the latter residing in the old home place in which he was born seventy-odd years ago. One of the historic spots in Navarro County is the Melton private cemetery which was originally the garden back of the house.

The name of Melton was changed in 1849 on the records of the county clerk's office, to Richland, the town of Richland which was about a mile south of

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Melton having been plotted on land set aside by Jacob Hartzell, D. B. Hartzell and J. A. Roark. Many lots in the town of Richland were sold. Numbers of the early residents of Navarro County settled first at this point which was at that time one of the leading towns in the county.

Jacob Hartzell or Dr. W. S. Robinson, or both, were credited with the name of Dresden, but that name has become permanent.

Jacob Hartzell and wife, Elizabeth (Berget) Hartzell, were born in Pennsylvania. They first moved to Canton, Ohio, where their son, Dan, was born and in his youth they moved to Texas and settled near Melton.

They were prominent in business and social affairs of the county. Dan Hartzell was married to a daughter of B. F. Carroll, who lived near, and made his home in Dresden. His children were Ben, who married Clemmie Haden; Dora, who became the wife of Fred Fleming; Mollie, who married Mr. Sullenberger; Carrie, who became Mrs. Lutterloh; Jacob, the youngest, still lives in Dresden.

Dr. W. S. Robinson came from Tennessee and made his home in Dresden. He practiced medicine within a radius of fifty miles, mostly on horseback, for the remainder of his life. Dr. Robinson was said to have had the first drug store in Navarro County, outside of Corsicana. He and his wife brought up a large family and have many descendants now in the county.

The town of Dresden, situated on or near Richland

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Creek, is about twenty miles West of Corsicana, and a few miles from Spring Hill. Trees, shrubbery and flowers flourished there.

Although surrounded by fertile land and every requisite for a town except easy transportation, Dresden's growth ended when the railroads chose other routes.

A few miles from Dresden lived the family of James Haden and his wife (Priscilla January). They interested themselves in the welfare of their community and in county affairs. Even in his old age, Mr. Haden was chairman of Navarro County's Democratic organization. Their children were Patty, Mary, Clemmie, Joel, John and Charles. Many descendants of this family live in Navarro County.

A tribe of Tonkawah Indians lived in the vicinity of Dresden and although unusually friendly they sometimes became intoxicated upon the white man's "fire water" and would stage a battle among themselves and create a great deal of excitement. Mothers told tales of what the "Tonks" would do to bad children and the reputation of the tribe was probably made the worse from mothers scaring their children by tales of terrible massacres which the "Tonks" might commit any time the children did not behave as the parents suggested.

Dresden became one of the foremost communities in what is now Navarro County and at an early date took the lead in education and in 1872 a large two-story school building was erected about three-quarters of a

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

mile Northeast of the town and was known as Dresden College. Professor Dick was one of the first educators and in 1875 J. B. Jones and E. J. L. Wyrick conducted a successful school there. Professor Jones married one of his students, Alice Gowan, the daughter of Richard Gowan, and they now reside in Corpus Christi. Prominent among early patrons of Dresden College were the Hartzells, Robinsons, Hadens, Ransomes, Davises, Gowans, Strouds, Polks, Highs, Thomasons, McMillans, Johnsons, Pevehouses, Welchs, Howards, Spivis, Stokes, Grants, Hicks, Youngs, Carrolls, Griffins, Fagalas, Mabrys, Bryants and Stokes. Only one store and a few residents of the old town are left at present.

The Rev. W. F. Grant was an early resident of Dresden and in addition to being a minister of the Gospel he owned a cotton gin and a corn and flour mill nearby. Other ministers serving Dresden in the early days were J. J. Davis, Finch Winburn, R. C. Armstrong and Everett Armstrong, who were of the Methodist faith, while A. Templeton was Cumberland Presbyterian and the Revs. Freeman and Mullins were among the Baptist ministers.

Among the early settlers of Dresden, in addition to the ones spoken of as having patronized the college, was the B. F. Carroll family who came to Navarro County in 1851. B. F. Carroll was a member of the Sixth Legislature of Texas. B. F. Carroll, Jr., was a pioneer apiarian in this part of Texas having found a swarm of bees in 1866 while out hunting and after carrying them home he began an industry which he con-

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ducted throughout his life. At one time the Carroll Apiaries were considered the finest in the State. Records indicate that in 1882 he sold several tons of honey. Mr. Carroll also had as a hobby the raising of fine poultry of many varieties and had rare specimens from as far away as Japan and Hindustan. His brother, Squire J. T. Carroll married Miss Pevehouse, a daughter of one of the early settlers and many of their descendants still live in Navarro County. Rufus Pevehouse, an efficient sheriff of Navarro County, is a descendant of this early family.

The Gowan family came to Dresden from North Carolina in 1867. Many descendants of this early family still reside in the vicinity, among them Frank Young. The Cunningham brothers, Estil and Jack, are also descendants of this pioneer family. The Thomison family and the Huff family of Blooming Grove are also early settlers of Dresden community.

S. J. T. Johnson and his brothers, Jerry, E. W. and W. D. came to Navarro County soon after the Civil War, settling in Dresden. These four brothers were in the mercantile business in Dresden until 1872 when S. J. T. was elected sheriff, and he afterwards entered business in Corsicana as a member of the firm of Drane and Johnson. Mr. Johnson was appointed commissioner to the North Central and Southern Exposition at New Orleans in 1885, and representative at Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1886. He was also one of the founders of Trinity College at Tehuacana.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

E. W. and W. D. Johnson moved to Corsicana where they went into business under the name of Johnson Brothers. Mrs. E. W. Johnson resides in Corsicana and, although her sons have moved away, her two daughters, Mrs. Chris Knox and Mrs. W. P. McCammon, still reside in Corsicana. W. D. Johnson resided in Corsicana after the death of his wife and daughter.

### RALEIGH

The heads of families trekking westward in covered wagons, always remained on the lookout for a good place to settle. Wood and water were prime requisites to the pioneers. It was also necessary that suitable soil for cultivation be located. Practically all of the early settlements embraced these three favorable items. The first settlers invariably chose sandy land upon which to locate.

Several of the early families found these three things at a place near Dresden which was called Raleigh. Augustus Barry was one of the first men to locate in this settlement and among other early families who lived around Raleigh were the Strouds, Keys, Crosslands, Tadlocks, Terrys, some members of the French family, and Dr. Reese and family.

There was a post office, blacksmith shop, church, school and grist mill at Raleigh. It is still a prosperous community.

### TAOS OR PORTER'S BLUFF

In any new country first settlements were always made along the routes of transportation and this was



## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

true of frontier Texas as well as other places. The Trinity River was the first artery of commerce over which man and merchandise might be transported into Central and North Texas. The old town of Jefferson on Caddo Lake was the point farthest inland to which boats of much capacity might ascend and the early settlers of Texas came by boat to this point and penetrating the interior to where Navarro County is now located meant a trip of one or two months by wagon.

Since it appeared that the Trinity might become an important artery of commerce Col. Robert H. Porter conceived the idea of establishing a city on a tract of ground which he had received on the Trinity River in exchange for his services in the Texas Revolution. The river flowed directly through this grant of land and with the assistance of his friend, John H. Reagan, who was a surveyor, Col. Porter had a town surveyed in 1848 and streets laid off and gave to it the name of Taos. A ferry was established here and records indicate that among the first ferrymen was David Flint. Lots in Taos seemed to be in demand, a twenty room hotel was built, houses soon sprang up and before long Taos was a thriving village of blacksmith shops, stores, saw mill and records indicate that for some time it was one of the most important towns of Navarro County. A road East and West passed through Taos and it was an important settlement for a number of years. Taos was located approximately seventeen miles Northeast of Corsicana. Small steamboats, known as packets, came up the Trinity River

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

as far as Taos bringing coffee, tobacco and supplies which were needed. The arrival of every steamboat with its cargo and with newspapers from the outside world was something of a holiday and people came by wagon, horse back and on foot to greet the boat's arrival.

After the influx of settlers began, navigation of the Trinity River in small boats was pushed farther and farther North until in 1836 the "Scioto Bell" came up the Trinity approximately as far as the present location of Dallas. In 1842 the "Ellen Franklin" also made a trip of several hundred miles up the Trinity. Until about the year 1860 the lower reaches of the Trinity were constantly used by steamboats and as far North as Taos. The "Mary Clifton," a vessel large enough to hold 2500 bales of cotton, made several trips up the Trinity. Records indicate, however, this vessel only came as far North as Taos on one occasion. Among the smaller packets which navigated the Trinity at regular intervals the "Guadaloupe," the "Kate," the "Early Bird," the "Vesta" and "Belle of Texas."

In 1868 a steamboat known as Job Boat No. 1, under the command of Capt. James McGarvey, came up the Trinity to Taos and then ascended the river to what was then a thriving little village known as Dallas. The avowed purpose of this trip was to interest the public in making the Trinity more navigable. Charles N. Eley represented to some interested parties that between the years 1865 and 1872 thirty-five steamboats were operating more or less regularly on the Trinity

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

River. On December 17, 1868, the "Sally Haynes" violated precedent by coming down the river on her maiden voyage. This boat was built in Dallas and launched amidst greatest enthusiasm. The "Sally Haynes" made several trips up and down the river until it struck a snag and sank.

Records on file show the rate charged by the ferry at Taos for six horses or three yoke of oxen and a wagon for transportation across the river to have been \$1, sheep or hogs 2½c per head, a man on horseback was charged 50c, while a two horse buggy or hack cost \$2.50 although a one horse buggy was only \$2.00 These prices were in effect when the river was low but if the river happened to be high the tarriff was increased in proportion. When the time came to decide upon a capitol of Texas, Taos was one of the towns seeking the location for the state house and, incidentally, this trading post came within a few votes of being made the capitol of Texas.

Among those who lived in or near Taos were John Hamilton and his brother, James Hamilton, both of whom owned several slaves. William Lancford, Berry Lancford, Harris De Armand, W. L. and Franklin Browning, Eli and Thomas Smith, Ridley Thomas, Joseph, Benjamin, George and Alfred Bragg, the Lees, Poitevauts, Bartletts, C. B. Roberts, James Clark, Reuben Guinn, J. A. Johnson, John W. and Calvin Caldwell, J. B. Anthony, Frederick Seibert, J. C. Jeffers and Lewis Cadwell. Geo. and William Hogan also lived in Taos and when a road was opened from Chatfield to

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

the South side of Chambers Creek they built a bridge crossing the stream. The bridge at this point is still known as Hogan's Bridge.

The history of Taos or Porter's Bluff as it was later called, might have been entirely different had not the H. & T. C. railroad extended its line from Bryan into Corsicana in the year 1871. The various river projects were started from 1853 to 1866 when the Texas Legislature passed an act incorporating the Trinity River Slack Water Navigation Company. About the time this occurred, however, the H. & T. C. railroad began vigorous extension of its line and the river project was doomed.

In view of the recent agitation for navigation of the Trinity River it is rather interesting to note that, at the insistence of residents of Taos, Federal aid was asked of the government and in 1853 Lieut. H. C. Whiting, an army engineer, informed Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War during the administration of President Pierce, that the Trinity River was the deepest and least obstructed river in Texas and handed his report in with a favorable recommendation that the government take steps to develop this waterway. Nothing was ever done about it. The coming of the railroad meant disaster to all of these towns living upon the river traffic since the railroad carried freight at such low rates that the steamboats soon gave up the unequal competition. After the steamboats were out of operation the rate of a bale of cotton from Dallas to Houston jumped from \$1.05 per bale to \$2.45 per bale.

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

In 1866 a very destructive flood washed away much of the town of Taos and since the approaching steel rails of the H. & T. C. railroad dampened the ardor of those who lived on and by the river it gradually disintegrated.

A bridge was also built at Dallas which took much of the business away from the ferry in high water times and in the Eighties a bridge was built at Porter's Bluff displacing the ferry entirely. There is at this time no sign of the thriving town which eighty or ninety years ago flourished as the packets plied up and down the river. The only visible remains are scattered chimneys and some old cable rusting near the river at the point where the ferry formerly crossed. In 1920 the Federal government ordered the bridge which spanned the Trinity to be removed and now it is impossible to cross the river at the point where once traffic was so brisk. The Trinity River Canal Association, now at work on securing Governmental aid, has as president, John W. Carpenter, who was born and grew to manhood in Navarro County.

Taos was threatened with a competitor in 1848 and in Book "A," Page 314, in the Court House Records of Corsicana a town plot of 110 blocks was laid off and all provisions were made for a town several miles South of Taos. Several lots were sold, one of them to Stephen M. Riggs, who paid \$50 for his parcel of ground and made provisions for a mill. Blacksmith shops and other forerunners of frontier settlements were also plan-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ned but this settlement did not long survive. It was called Trinity City.

### CHATFIELD

The story of the location of the town of Chatfield is very interesting. About the year 1848, shortly after the settlement of Taos, an old man named Chatfield pitched his tent near a spring a few miles West of Taos on the road to Corsicana and from this "base of supply" he peddled tinware and household articles to the early settlers. However, after each trip to the settlements he would return to his spring and once more erect his tent and display his wares to those passing along the road. In a short time after this itinerant merchant made the spring his headquarters another man by the name of Kincaid settled near the spring and soon a community sprang up which took the name of the old peddler, Chatfield.

Some of the early settlers around this spring, in the midst of which the town grew, were Captain Robert Hodge, and Josiah Hodge, his brother. R. L. Hodge, son of Capt. Hodge, was born and lived near Chatfield for 72 years.

Chatfield was a very important community about the time of the Civil War and is particularly remembered for one man who contributed his share to the Confederate Army. This man was B. F. Lisman who operated a blacksmith shop at Chatfield and he made such excellent sabres for the Confederate soldiers that his

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

daughter, Mrs. Joe Clayton, can today show a letter from the quartermaster saying that the Lisman sabres were the best he had seen. Mr. Lisman was postmaster at Chatfield during the Civil War, at which time the post office was called Mesquite and during the period of the Confederate government. The name was later resumed as Chatfield.

Chatfield had excellent subscription schools for many years. One of the teachers there for several years, around 1854, was John Ballew. He also taught at Raleigh—and other places—and in his later years served as district clerk in Corsicana.

Chatfield also had an excellent artisan in the person of Bailey Crofford who made furniture of oak and walnut in Trinity bottom. It still excels most furniture of modern times. His furniture was made without nail or screw and that which can be seen today indicates the excellence of his craft.

Some of the descendants of the early pioneers of Chatfield who still live near this community are the following families: Robert Witherspoon, John and Will Finch, J. P. Thorp, George Meredith, Will Mizell, Nail McMullen, Ford Marchbanks, and some of the Braggs, Jeffers, Harpers, and Montforts. Many of the early residents of Chatfield still live in Navarro County and the names signed to a petition asking that because of his usefulness Mr. Lisman, be exempted from army duty, which is given herewith, will indicate some of these families: B. G. Scogin, W. B. Rose, N. (Nicholas) Graham, W. S. Hodge, J. R.

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Cooksey, J. R. Ransom, Wm. A. Neal, Zeke Beasley, Reuben Jones, B. Lile, Z. Westbrook, Henry Brown, James Lowry, J. G. Vaughn, W. Kerr, John P. Miller, Benjamin Kilgore, Henry Griggs, M. L. French, Dr. A. J. Cage (from Tennessee), D. M. Brown, J. A. Clayton, W. A. Lockhart, J. A. Farmer, J. G. Neal, B. J. Chambers and E. G. Sessions.

### WADEVILLE

Wadeville also was one of the first towns in Navarro County. Records indicate that by the year 1850 quite a settlement had grown up Southeast of the present town of Kerens and was designated by the name of Wadeville when a post office was established in Mack Wade's store in 1866.

Col. E. H. Root located in Wadeville in 1851 and was followed between the years 1854 and 1856 by Capt. F. M. Martin, Rush Walker, J. T. Person, David Sherrill, Josiah Daniel, Allen Smith, Elias Carrol, Squire Coffey and the above mentioned Mack Wade. George and William Noble also moved into this settlement and Nelson and Frank Owen lived nearby.

Capt. Martin had a trading post on his farm prior to the Civil War but when the post office was established Capt. Martin moved his store from the farm to the center of the settlement. T. S. Daniel clerked in Wade's Store and was appointed postmaster and held the office of postmaster until his father and he formed a business under the name of Josiah Daniel and Son, at which time Col. S. P. Day succeeded Mr.



## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Daniel as postmaster, also occupying the same position when the Wadeville settlement merged into the present town of Kerens. Before there was a post office at Wadeville mail was brought into J. T. Person's store, which is about four miles West of Wadeville, and handed out over the counter along with the sugar and coffee. Among others who had stores at Wadeville from time to time were George Noble, Preston Owen and a Mr. Williams. J. H. Southworth and Mr. Spivey also operated trading posts in Wadeville for a short time.

About 1856 David Sherrill built a gin to take care of the cotton which was grown by the early settlers and after the Civil War both Capt. Martin and Pope Hassell operated cotton gins. The lint was the only item considered of any value and during the ginning season the cotton seed was piled and burned, the smoke and smoldering flames giving an eerie appearance to the mellow fall nights. It was some time before the early Texans learned the value of cotton seed as a food for cattle.

Mrs. S. P. Day seems to have been one of the first educators in the Wadeville community, having taught a private school. Capt. A. J. Fowler was one of the instructors. Teachers who later assisted in the education of the youth of Wadeville were J. W. Hornbeak, J. A. Melear and a Mr. Bishop.

There was no church in Wadeville, the nearest being adjacent to the Jameson graveyard, where religious services were attended by the residents of Wade-

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ville. Services were also held later in the school house and records indicate that some of the early ministers were Dr. J. C. Ward, Rev. Beasley, W. J. Lackey, W. B. Preston and J. W. Hornbeak also preached from time to time.

The physical well-being of the community was looked after by Dr. John Selman who answered calls from the residents of Wadeville regardless of whether it might have been in the heat of summer or the chill of winter.

An interesting side light on life around Wadeville in the early days is given by a Mrs. Ambercrombie who wrote the following reminiscences of frontier life in the Swisher Magazine:

“Col. Root relates an interesting incident which occurred in a rabbit chase upon the prairies, as was quite customary in our County. We often indulged in the delightfully wild sport of chasing the mule-eared rabbit. On one occasion I remember an unusually large party collected near my home at Wadeville. At least eighty persons were equipped for the chase with twenty or thirty fine blooded Spanish hounds eagerly awaiting the signal for action. We lost no time but were soon engaged in a glorious pursuit. The dogs ran splendidly and our fleetest horses were left in the distance. Foremost and conspicuous in the chase were two young men, Willie Day and

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Tommy Branburg, while Miss Ellie Ruffin, a fine equestrian, was equal to the emergency. The contest between the rabbits and hounds grew momentarily more exciting and everyone was wild with enthusiasm, but alas! this pleasure was suddenly and sadly abridged. The two young men and Miss Ruffin still held the front when, as if by magic, the trail was changed and of course the followers had to turn abruptly. These three persons collided with a most distressing result. The horses struck each other skull to skull, throwing all three riders to the ground. Upon examination it was found that Day was dead, Branburg seemed dying and Miss Ruffin was in a senseless condition. Being miles away from water we conveyed them to the creek but no restoratives could revive poor Day. We buried him sadly next day. Branburg eventually recovered and Miss Ruffin's injuries were slight. The sport of rabbit chasing went on and there were other amusements, such as candy pullings, weddings and Christmas dinners, dances, spelling-bees and house raising. When a man wanted to build a house, often he would hew his logs, clear a place and on a certain day his neighbors would help him "raise" it; getting it up and partially covered in one day. Neighbors were kind and helpful in sickness or misfortune. They were most free and thoughtful in their kindness, sitting up all night,

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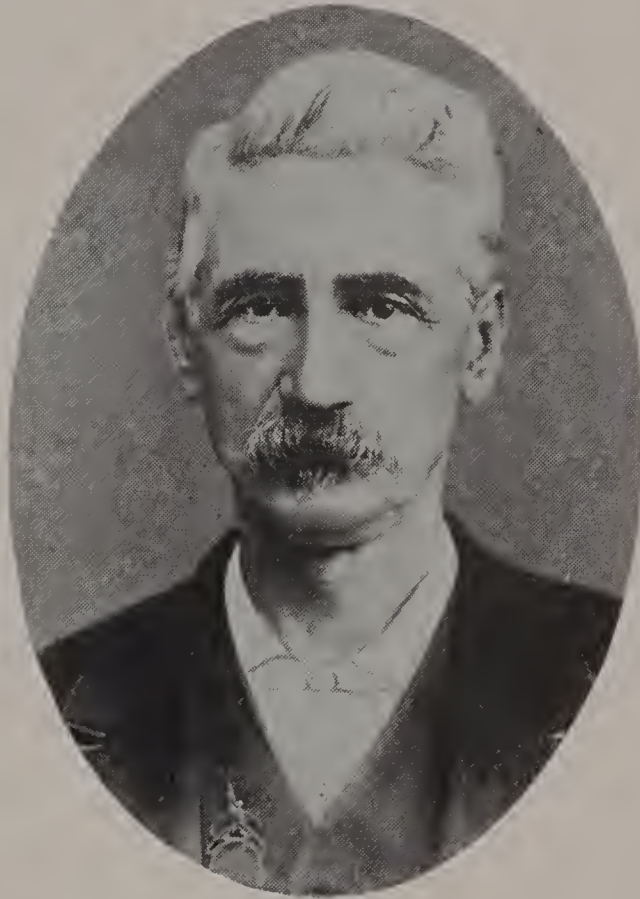
sometimes for weeks, to minister to some one suffering and without a thought of pay; cooking and sending food.”

Wadeville continued to be a thriving place until the coming of the railroad to Kerens at which time the inhabitants moved to the railroad and the only remaining indication of the once prosperous community is a few scattered piles of stone which once were the chimneys to the dwellings.

The history of Wadeville would not be complete without mentioning one of Wadeville's prominent citizens. Marion Martin, who was born in Kentucky in 1830, moved into Navarro County in 1853 and made his home near Wadeville. He was elected to the State Senate in 1859 and took a conspicuous part in the political discussions of the era. Senator Martin was opposed to secession, declaring that the grievances of the South should be settled by a more peaceable method. Although he was opposed to secession, when the Civil War broke out Senator Martin enlisted in the Bass Regiment. He was elected Lieutenant Governor in 1882 after having been a member of the 16th and 17th Senates. His widow and son reside in Corsicana.

In 1852 the authority for a road leading from Corsicana to the Wild Cat crossing on Trinity River was approved and this road passed near Wadeville and Rural Shade and, although built eighty years ago, this is still a good road in dry weather.

Wadeville was a prominent stopping point for the



HONORABLE MARION MARTIN

*During his lifetime he was a member  
of the 16th and 17th Legislatures. He  
was Lieutenant Governor*

1882-1884



## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

new settlers enroute to Texas and its tournaments, camp meetings, and political picnics served to keep its prominence alive.

### RURAL SHADE

In 1850 Hugh and Washington Ingram came to Texas from Georgia and settled a few miles Southeast of the Wadeville community. After finding a suitable location they joined some other families and formed a group settlement, calling it Rural Shade. Among these families were the Owens, Austins, Wilsons and Sears and others. A year or two later Richmond and Anderson Ingram joined their relatives in the community.

About the year 1870 James Ingram, one of Hugh Ingram's sons, applied steam to the grist mill and this was a novelty which attracted the attention and patronage of the public for some time. The Ingram family is represented in Navarro County at the present time by Wash Ingram of Kerens. Both Mrs. Bob Coates and Mrs. Bruce Coates are members of this pioneer family. Dr. Green Kerr and Calvin Kerr of Corsicana were related by marriage to this early Rural Shade family.

All of the homes in Rural Shade were built by hand, the slaves doing their part to erect the houses. A post office was established in 1858 and Wash Ingram was the first postmaster. Rural Shade continued as a post office until 1912 when rural free delivery was substituted as more efficient.

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Rural Shade has had two different locations, the former being about a mile South of the present location, to which the settlement was moved in 1883 after much discussion. This move was made to be nearer the road. One of the interesting inhabitants of early Rural Shade was a slave who belonged to Wash Ingram and whose name was Bozzle. The early residents made the claim that there was no blacksmith in Texas who could do as skillful work as this slave and many claim that with modern equipment the present blacksmith could not surpass this early artisan's work. A blacksmith in those days found it necessary to be very versatile because every implement and farm tool was of necessity made entirely by hand.

In order to help get money with which to erect a new school in 1879 "Uncle Phil" Ware played the fiddle at dances free of charge and thus did his part to promote early education in Rural Shade. Col. Floyd was the teacher of this first school which burned in 1883 and had to be rebuilt. Rural Shade now enjoys a good six-teacher school. In addition to the literary establishments during the early days of Rural Shade a singing school was also conducted at intervals by a man named Biddler. Singing was done without the help of an organ, but with a tuning fork, the teacher reading the words from a hymn book, the congregation thereupon singing the song.

Rural Shade is still a prosperous community with three grocery stores as well as garages, blacksmith shops, gin and other business establishments.



## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

The church where the old hymns were sung has grown into a modern institution with an enrollment of nearly two hundred members.

Numbers of negroes who now live near Rural Shade are descendants of slaves owned by the Ingrams and other early settlers. Some of these slaves still live on land belonging to descendants of their former masters.

### RICHLAND

The trail which ran from Corsicana to Old Franklin, by way of Springfield, also went by the settlement around Asa Chambers' Store. Ownership, as well as location, of this store changed a number of times but the mail was always distributed from there. For many years it was the nucleus of a large settlement on Pisgah Ridge, a long, high ridge about 15 miles from Corsicana and separated from it by Richland Creek. Since the earliest settlements in Navarro, its scenic beauty has attracted attention, largely because of its outcroppings of limestone and rich historic interest. In this settlement were some of Navarro's best citizens, and for many years, some very rough citizens. There were many wild horses and many kinds of wild game. Many citizens drove their cattle here during dry summers, coming from other parts of the county, to leave their herds for weeks on the open range near water.

The Bowmans, Tramel, Nashes, Picketts, Carrolls, Andersons, Meadors, Garlicks, Roberts, Ross and Tankersley were some of the early families.

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If Spanish fever cost newcomers some of their cows these pioneers gave them others. Horses were there for the taking.

Eleazar Nash moved to Pisgah Ridge from Massachusetts, in 1844. With one of his two step-sons, Clinton Fouty, he joined the rush to California during the gold excitement. The other step-son remained and took over the head-right to hold it. Mr. Nash later returned to Navarro and remained until his death. Dr. S. A. Ross moved there in 1847 where he reared a large family. The Nash family was also large. Many descendants of both families are still citizens of Navarro County.

When the H. & T. C. Railroad came through, a station was built and the present town of Richland had its beginning, the designation being taken from the nearby creek of that name. After that, at certain times of the year, the railroad was the one way of reaching the county seat because of the overflow of Richland Creek. For many years the country around Richland was engaged principally in stock raising but with the influx of citizens, pastures and ranges were cut up into farms. This was not done without some friction. The loss of free grazing aroused the ire of many. However, this section always has had a sufficient number of law-abiding citizens to keep balance and the "undesirables" gradually drifted out or passed out. Dr. A. N. Brown, who has lived there for fifty years, loves to tell of the change since that time, from a malaria-ridden district to a community of rich farms, healthful homes

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and good schools with their attendant developments of various kinds.

A lime kiln near Pisgah furnished lime to many of the early settlers. In fact there were many such kilns over the county. Many burned their own brick although it was not thought that the clay was good for brick in many places.

Run-away negroes often went to Richland Creek and Chambers Creek bottoms. Patrols and owners often experienced difficulty in recovering them.

With the oil boom of Navarro County Richland received a share, and now being on Highways 75 and 14, with gins, dairies, the rock quarry and other developments, Richland has a bright future.

Some of the present citizens are Mayor H. W. Steppe, superintendent of schools E. P. Gaines, Drs. Edgar and Brown and the families of Swinks, Richards, Hilburns, Elkins, Patricks, Madewells, Healer, Harmand, Lafland, Fluker, Tucker, Middlebrooks and pastors Poteet and Bohanan.

After the Civil War William H. Pursley moved to and settled a place a few miles north of Pisgah Ridge. He owned about twelve hundred acres of land, built a store and secured a post office in Pursley. He was a citizen of prominence. The store is still operated by his son. William Ward and son, John, also lived near there. John Ward's wife was a sister of Harvey Beman's wife. Later Mr. Pursley moved to Corsicana and built a house which was afterward owned by S.

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G. Mullins who reared his family there. Reverend E. W. Mullins, his son, became a brilliant minister and educator in the Baptist Church.

### BLOOMING GROVE

Shortly after the Civil War several families settled a few miles North of Dresden and R. J. Grady and Sam Andrews built a small store and put in a stock of general merchandise. In about a year W. D. Grady bought out Andrew's interest and he and his brother operated the store. This point was called "Gradyville" for some years until Dr. James Davis bought an interest in the store and applied for a post office. When they were casting about for a name the appellation of Blooming Grove was decided upon because of the fact there was a beautiful grove of trees near the location of the town and Dr. Davis had a young son whose name was Blooming Price and they combined part of the name of the boy with that of "grove." The post office was asked for and approved under the name of Blooming Grove.

Numbers of families began to move to the new town and settle within the town or nearby. Dr. H. B. Ransom was one of the early physicians and Rev. G. P. Miller was pastor of the Methodist church which was built in 1869. The Christian church was built in 1874.

When the Cotton Belt railroad was built in 1881 it ran about one mile north of town, but the town grad-

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ually moved to the railroad and Blooming Grove is today a city of some 1500 population with a variety of business institutions of all kinds as well as up-to-date schools, churches and all conveniences that go to make up a thriving city.

Among the early residents of Blooming Grove were the Huffs, Campbells, Hartleys, McSpaddens, Williams, Langstons, Mabrys, Phillips, Whortons, Jones, Gradys, Henrys, Grimmes, Harris, Pruitts, Maggards, Carrolls, Georges, Highs, Loyds, Robinsons, McClanahans, Sewells, Youngs, Coxes, Grants, Gowans, Fagalas and Grifins.

Some members of the business men's luncheon club and leading citizens of Blooming Grove at the present time are T. M. Sewell, mayor; R. B. McCormick, president of luncheon club; C. N. Dillingham, president of Blooming Grove Fair Association; Dr. W. M. Ellis, T. M. George, Jr., banker; Justin McSpadden, banker; L. I. Griffin, C. L. Tillman, John George, G. E. Ramsey, R. L. Harris, J. W. Harris, Dr. C. C. Kelsey, J. I. Saunders and J. E. Walker.

### BAZETTE

Among some other settlements that were contemporary with Taos was Bazette's Crossing, at which point a ferry was operated by an early settler from which the ferry took its name. There was no settlement at the location of the ferry but after the ferry had been in operation some few years a settlement called Bazette grew up a few miles West of the

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crossing. Soon it was found that a school and church were needed and an old fashioned log rolling was held and the house which served as both the seat of education and religious worship was built, being replaced a few years later by a still better edifice which is still known as Prairie Point Church. About 1872 a Mr. Eliston built a store and a post office was established and called Bazette. Parson Hickman, a Hardshell Baptist preacher, lived there and John Street. Two of the early teachers were a Mr. Hook and a Mr. Flowers. In the same building services were conducted for the Cumberland Presbyterians by the Rev. Modrall; for Baptists by Revs. Hines, Puryear, Simmons, Compere, Freeman and Mullins.

This settlement was closely indentified with the Westbrook family which lived near here for several generations, the Popes, Banks, McCluneys, McFaddens were also early settlers. Middleton Westbrook's pasture was known far and near as a sanctuary for wild game for many years.

Early records speak of many herds of cattle going from Bazette Crossing to Shreveport and the Bazette road was the main road East and West at that time.

### CRYER CREEK

The settlement of Cryer Creek is located about three and one-half miles North of the present town of Barry. William Melton is credited with making the first settlement there in the year of 1845.

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Mr. Duren came to Texas and after marrying "Uncle Billy" Melton's daughter, settled in the Cryer Creek community. Later the Maggard, Varnell, Wilson, Pruitt, Weaver, George and Garlington families moved into this community. The Cryer Creek settlement was of considerable importance until the coming of the railroad, which drew traffic and trade away from it and caused it to suffer some decline as a trade and community center but it is still a thriving community with stores, a school and church.

### KERENS

The town of Kerens was laid out in 1881 with the coming of the Cotton Belt railroad and was named for Judge R. C. Kerens of St. Louis.

Two railroad attorneys who lived in Corsicana, Sam R. Frost and Bryan F. Barry, bought the plat and offered lots for sale in 1881 and 1882. Many settlers around Wadeville and surrounding communities bought lots and moved to the new community. Among the first business men in Kerens were T. S. Daniell, R. H. Daniel, W. C. McClung and W. C. Cherry. Within a few years these pioneer business men were followed by W. S. Price, J. W. Mabry, J. T. Joplin, W. B. Parker, G. W. Noble, William Noble, Charles Melear and J. Y. Carroll. The town of Kerens grew very rapidly and is one of the leading cities in Navarro County.

As soon as the railroad was completed work was begun on the depot and as the contractors were driving stakes for the location of the station, T. S. Daniell, for

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a Stetson hat, persuaded the engineer to move the depot to the West side of Sloss Avenue instead of locating it on the East side.

The first newspaper in Kerens was the "Kerens Blade," published by B. H. Davis.

The town of Kerens was incorporated May 10, 1888, with W. P. Noble, mayor; Sam Suggs, marshall; J. W. Waters, T. S. Daniell, W. C. McClung, C. K. Melear and P. Owen as aldermen.

The schools of Kerens have always been of great concern to the citizens there. Some of the high-point students of leading Texas colleges and universities have been graduated from Kerens high school.

The pioneer citizens of Kerens were largely those who formerly resided in Wadeville and other of the settlements. Professor S. C. Scroggs was a prominent early teacher in Kerens. He was educated in Jefferson College, Pennsylvania, and married the daughter of Ezekiel Cherry, a Kerens pioneer. Other pioneer families were those of T. S. and R. H. Daniel, George and William Noble, Preston Owens, Doctors McKinney and Mays, the Kimes, Prices, Andersons, McClungs, Jones, Coats, Melears, Heads, Washburns, Tyus, Carrolls, Merrows and McConnicos.

Kerens has all of the modern city conveniences. It is surrounded by good citizens and rich land and is about 15 miles East of Corsicana.

Some of the present leading and official citizens of Kerens are Fred Hulan, mayor; aldermen: J. A. Daniel,



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L. S. Garrett, J. L. Whorton, Earl McClung and Hal C. Johnson; P. H. Brister, president of Chamber of Commerce; Henry Ross, secretary of Chamber of Commerce; Joe N. Everheart, president of Lions Club; J. J. Hendricks, superintendent of public schools; G. H. Wilemon, principal of high school; A. S. Pritchard, principal of grammar school; E. E. Nettles, president of Kerens National Bank; W. T. Stockton, president of First National Bank; H. C. Bowman, Methodist pastor; W. A. Corkern, Baptist pastor; Mrs. Homer Carroll, librarian; Mrs. J. B. Coates, president of Pioneer Club; Miss Mary F. Weden, president of Music Club; Mrs. R. P. Walker, president of Garden Club; J. B. Reese, chairman of board of Baptist church; W. B. Talley, chairman of board of stewards of Methodist church; R. H. Daniel, chairman of board of elders of Presbyterian church; Mrs. J. C. Spurger, president of W. M. A., of Baptist church; Mrs. W. B. Talley, president of P. T. A.; Mrs. A. B. Keen, president of W. M. S., of Methodist church; C. E. Smith, postmaster.

### DAWSON

The Cotton Belt railroad reached the present site of Dawson about the year 1881 and Henry and Dave Dawson were living on farms inherited from their father, Britton Dawson. The two Dawson brothers donated land for a station and right of way and in their honor the town was named Dawson. The first dry goods store in the new town was operated by J. S. Dickson, although Goodman and Younger had opened a grocery store a short time prior to the opening of the Dickson

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

establishment. J. M. Johnson moved his business from Spring Hill to Dawson upon the coming of the railroad and Joe Shultz entered the grocery and general merchandise business about 1884.

The first drug store in Dawson was established by Dr. W. H. Kirksey. Three of the earliest doctors were the aforementioned Doctor Kirksey and Doctors Dean and Holcomb, the latter moving there and practicing medicine in the early days.

The first religious services held in Dawson were conducted in a room in a hotel which served as a church. Miss Bell Young organized and taught the first Sunday School class in Dawson and J. S. Dickson did his part by leading in the singing. The first church building erected in Dawson was that of the Cumberland Presbyterians with J. W. Smith as the first pastor. For several years other religious denominations utilized this edifice as a place of worship.

The earliest educational institution in Dawson was conducted by a Mr. Westmoreland but the first organized public school of Dawson was under the direction of Professor E. J. L. Wyrick who was a popular teacher.

Onstott and Clemmons built and operated the first gin at Dawson.

Some of the early settlers in the Dawson community were the Lawrence family and the families of William Walker, Samuel and William Wright, R. D. Bills, the Berry families and the Matthews, Westmore-

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

lands, Wilkes, Gables, Dicksons, Hills, Smiths, Simms and Fullertons.

The population of Dawson has increased to where it is now around 1500 people, with an enrollment in the public school of over 500. A new \$60,000 school building has taken the place of the old school house and there is also a separate school for the colored population.

Those who are interested in historical background can find the monument marking the burial place of members of the surveying party who were killed by the Indians in 1838 about two miles West from town.

One of the early settlers in the Dawson-Spring Hill community was "Uncle" Harve Matthews whose sister was the wife of Dr. George Hill, the founder of Spring Hill. "Uncle" Harve lived as a bachelor in the home which he built until he married Miss Bette Priddy. "Uncle" Harve was responsible for the first steel cages being put in the Corsicana jail during his term as commissioner.

M. M. Dickson, one of Dawson's oldest citizens, who has lived and worked in Dawson since the town came into existence, is still an active and loyal citizen.

The 1932 officers and members of the Dawson chamber of commerce are as follows: V. T. Matthews, president; E. B. Dawson, vice president; H. L. Smith, secretary and treasurer. Members: C. M. Newton, J. F. Smith, C. O. Weaver, J. F. Simpson, Edgar Davis Carlos Berry, J. M. Beasley, J. B. Schwartz, Jim Gar-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ner, Clyde Sims, Jack Fread, Bennie Matthews, W. Y. Cannon, W. M. Nelson, Frank White, N. G. Clark, L. W. Edwards, D. E. McKinney, J. R. Graham, J. H. McCulloch, J. W. McElroy, M. L. Berry, J. M. Sowell, C. A. Willis, J. L. Taylor, Gray Sims, W. W. Wolf, Major Davis, J. L. McCulloch, Guy Davis, Jim Davis, D. D. Sawyer, J. H. Slaughter, J. L. Turner, C. W. Turner, W. P. McMillan, Mike Hogue, Howard Lysles, H. Silbert, Jerry Berry, Horace Berry, Dr. Williamson, Dr. A. B. Worsham, R. B. Rodgers, B. W. Edwards, S. Berry.

Ministers of Dawson are F. O. Waddell, pastor Methodist Church; J. T. Taylor, pastor Baptist Church and Jeff Coates, pastor Church of Christ.

### FROST

About four miles from the present location of Blooming Grove was an early settlement which was called Cross Roads and among the first to settle near here was J. A. Tullos in 1868. Colonel Jones settled near Cross Roads in 1869 and owned approximately 2500 acres of land and about 2500 head of horses. Others were Barney Gleen, Sam and Nathan Hollingsworth, Raleigh Hightower, Bob and Archie Calhoun, Rev. Henry Sears, Rev. H. M. McCord, Jim Sears, W. N. Haines and Rev. J. G. Way.

These pioneers soon made their plans for a church and school and the first building was erected on the Southwest corner of J. G. Way's land in which build-

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ing school was taught for two terms. This building was later moved to the McCord community and another built near the home now owned by P. O. Brinson. A new Baptist church was built near the school house where for several years school was taught by Tom Smith, who was later elected county superintendent of education. In 1875 this building burned and a new building was built at the cross roads, the lower story being used for a school and the upper story for a Masonic Lodge.

Cross Roads soon became a prosperous village with a post office, five stores, a gin, a broom factory, and both Baptist and Methodist churches. In 1881 the railroad was built from Corsicana to Hillsboro and the new station near Cross Roads was called Frost. All of the business houses soon moved to the location around the railroad station hence the town of Frost, is to an extent, an outgrowth of the early village known as Cross Roads.

In 1888 Colonel Henry Jones assisted in establishing a school at which Miss Frankie Long was the first teacher. This school was called the Henry Jones School and was later moved nearer to the center of the district where it now stands.

Wylie N. Jones who came to Navarro County in 1874 was one of the early settlers of Frost, having owned a gin as early as the year 1878 in this community. In 1890 he completed a system of waterworks to supply the town of Frost with water from the adjoining lake and on this lake Mr. Jones built a small steamboat

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

which is one of the few ever operated on inland waters of Central Texas.

In 1930 a very disastrous cyclone struck the business section of Frost, completely destroying everything in its path. Twenty-two people were killed and sixty-odd injured. With the usual courage and determination of the descendants of the early pioneers the citizens of Frost are rebuilding their town and it continues to be a thriving and prosperous little Texas city.

The town of Frost was named in honor of the Honorable Sam R. Frost and his father, W. W. Frost.

Others of the early families who resided in Frost were those of R. J. Sanders, J. H. Galbraith and Dr. R. Knox. J. H. Taylor operated a drug store in Frost. He had the misfortune of being killed by one of the first trains which came into the town after the building of the railroad. The Sheppard family was also one of the pioneer families as were the families of George Smith, Sam Hooser and Tom Meador.

Some others of leading or long-time citizens of Frost are Dick Gaines, mayor; councilmen Will Sims and Aleck Strain; Ed Dickson, marshal; Rev. Cagle, pastor of Baptist Church; Rev. Haynes, pastor of Methodist Church; J. E. Laney, editor of Frost Enterprise; W. H. Harrison, superintendent of schools; Mr. McMicken, principal of schools; Mrs. McMicken, teacher of music; Mrs. J. E. Lattimore, teacher of expression; J. W. Matlock, president of Frost National Bank; H. Arrington, cashier of Frost National Bank; Jerry

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Scott, president of Citizens State Bank; Ben Whaley, cashier of Citizens State Bank; Dr. Matlock, Lindsey Morgan, lumber; Mrs. Lydia Grimes, Sam Jones, D. K. Robinson and wife, Mrs. Mitchell. John Beck was for many years one of Frost's loyal and enterprising citizens.

### BARRY

The town of Barry is about ten miles West of Corsicana and at this time is a very thriving town with churches, schools and modern business establishments.

Barry takes its name from the fact that it was first located on land owned by Bryan T. Barry. The town originally was about one mile South of its present location, moving North upon the coming of the Cotton Belt railroad.

Some of the early merchants of the old town were Sam Taylor, Watson Brothers, E. W. Caldwell, Ross and Gibson and T. A. Hutcheson. In addition to these merchants some of the early settlers in and around Barry were the Woodruffs from Georgia, the Mitchells, Varnells, Browns, Scroggins, Wrights, Geo. Williams and Hodges families.

Records indicate that the first school building in Barry was a frame house 20 feet by 40 feet in size, and Frank Folk, T. A. Thornell and Jim Watson were among the early teachers.

Some of the leading and official citizens of Barry at

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the present time are: Rev. H. B. Prather, pastor of the Baptist Church; Rev. Brice Cox, pastor of Methodist Church; J. C. Watson, superintendent of schools; Dr. Baugh, physician; R. W. Varnell, dry goods store; Bourland Co., groceries; Jim Carroll, groceries and ice; M. Means, druggist; Farmers (Cooperative) Gin.

Women active in civic and school interests are: Mrs. J. C. Watson, president of P. T. A.; Mrs. J. D. Bourland, Mrs. R. A. Varnell (Red Cross); Mrs. L. C. Boswell, Mrs. Ben Freeman, Mrs. C. E. Watson, Mrs. H. J. Reed, Mrs. Walter Mitchell.

### PURDON

Among the first settlers around the place which later became Purdon, were A. J. Tickle, Henry Black, Lige Fuller, Mack Hughes, Jim Curry, A. S. Gill, Billie Woodard, and Wash Cleary. Capt. J. A. Harrison moved to Texas and built his home a few miles South of Raleigh, and called it Belle Point. He was interested in the community and aided in building a school house, which was of logs and the benches were of split logs. E. C. Lee was one of the first teachers. Later a comfortable framed house was built and Gov. W. H. Murray of Oklahoma was one of the teachers there. Belle Point was an important community. The first church was Rehobeth, a Baptist church, and which is still in service.

In 1882, the Cotton Belt railroad was built through. Town lots were laid out and the town was called Pur-



## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

don. The report goes that "Purdom" was the name intended but the mistake in spelling was not corrected, and it remains Purdon. The first school in Purdon was taught in a seed house by Miss Blanch Maddox. This house also served as a church for a time. The first store was kept by O. E. Highsmith, and one of the first physicians was Dr. Wyatt. Dr. J. A. Gillean also practiced there for awhile.

Capt. Abel S. Gill of this community was a member of the Twentieth Legislature, was president of the Farmers Alliance but he did not approve of a Third Party.

Purdon has about four hundred inhabitants, a good brick school house, several stores and blacksmith shop, a lumber yard and two fine gins. There is a bank and post office.

Dr. Bates lived there many years and, being a lover of music and of humanity, he trained classes of children to sing, and was popular among his people.

Some of the present citizens of Purdon, are: C. O. Williams, banker; S. H. French, post master; C. C. Isbell, superintendent of schools; W. R. Russel, physician; H. C. Russel, lumber. Some other citizens of long standing are: the families of J. D. Dowdle, Geo. W. Tickle, R. C. Alexander, Lewis Alderman (whose wife was a daughter of Owen Wallace), the Skinners and Davises, and Frank Johnston. Many other citizens here are descendants of those early settlers.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

### RICE\*

Before the present location of Rice was settled by white people it was inhabited by the Tehuacana and Keechi Indians. This part of the country was on the border line between the woodland and the prairie Indians and was not a safe place for the headquarters of either tribe. The Kickapoos who lived East of the Trinity River occasionally made an excursion into this part of the country. The Woodland Indians were usually friendly, but the prairie Indians were a constant source of annoyance. No settlements were made here until long after the Indians were driven into Oklahoma although there were settlements in other parts of Navarro County.

The first settler came here in the Sixties. At this time Chatfield and Porter's Bluff were important places. Porter's Bluff was an important shipping point. The Trinity River was navigable with flatboats for a part of the year. By 1872 there were about a dozen settlements within four miles of Rice. Messrs. Burl Edmunson, Lucian Lockhart, I. B. Sessions, E. G. Sessions, W. D. Haynie, J. M. Bartlett, Ben Langham and Major Rose each owned large farms.

Cotton was the staple crop then as it has always been. A good many cattle and horses were raised. Fences were not used. All live stock grazed on the open prairie. Prairie grass grew so luxuriantly that when a grass fire started it would sometimes sweep for miles before it could be checked. These fires were

\*Written by Grafton Goodwin, a pupil in the Rice schools.

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

stopped by flat-breaking long stretches of land in advance of the fire.

The few settlers that lived here did their trading in Corsicana. Trips to Corsicana were made in wagons or on horse back. The most interesting and spectacular thing to be seen there was the "Brick" court house.

In 1872 the H. & T. C. railroad was built through here. One of the owners of the railroad, William Marsh Rice, for whom this town was named, gave some land for a church and cemetery.

The same year the first business firm of Rice was established. L. B. Haynie and B. M. Clopton who were in business at Chatfield dissolved partnership as soon as the railroad was built and Mr. Haynie came to Rice. He went into business with Rev. Jerry Ward. They put up a two story wooden structure on the site of the Loop and Walker store. A general store was kept in the lower story and a hotel in the upper story. Ed Taber and wife ran the hotel. Soon afterwards B. M. Clopton came to Rice and went into the drug business. He built his store just across the street from Haynie & Ward. The Rice post office was established October 2, 1872, with L. B. Haynie as postmaster. For a while Rice was a fairly important trading center but in 1875 the Haynie & Ward firm quit business. At about the same time their gin burned. Prospects for a town here then looked very dark. The post office was taken over on November 23, 1875, by William Holmes, who owned a small store just across the street West of Haynie & Ward.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

In the summer of 1875 ten of the citizens of Rice gave money for the erection of a building which was to serve as a church and school house. I. B. Sessions, W. D. Haynie, J. A. Ward, L. B. Haynie, J. A. Clopton, B. M. Clopton, J. M. Bartlett, W. M. Holmes, E. G. Sessions and Jim Mitchem contributed to the fund. The building was constructed on the lot where the First Methodist Church now stands. School was taught in it on week days and church was held in it on Sunday, when there was anyone to preach. Traveling preachers of any denomination were welcomed there.

Below is given a sketch written by Mrs. J. A. Lackey about the new school:

“The first Monday in October, 1875, the first school ever taught in Rice was opened in a new wooden frame building, the first ever built in the little new village for that purpose. There were few children living in Rice at that time, and the school drew its patronage from several miles in the country, also some boarding pupils from other towns. Our instructor, Dr. J. A. Ward, a minister of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, a scholarly gentleman with an A.M. degree from a noted university, taught forty-five or fifty pupils, little tots of seven or eight years to young men twenty-two or twenty-three years old until the first public school opened in November of the same year. Then Mrs. Ward, Dr. Ward’s wife, was his able assistant.

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

“Some families from the Northern states had found homes in this county. Also several families from Galveston.

“Town, school house, pupils and teacher were all new. That first day was a day in which we were somewhat busy getting acquainted and adjusting ourselves to new conditions.

“Those were days when girls wore calico dresses and gingham sunbonnets. They were by no means a dull, ignorant class of young people. A number of them with their keen perception and bright intellects were a joy and pride to their teacher. Some of them afterwards attended colleges and universities. Several of the boys made professional men. Dr. Ward inspired his pupils to greater and nobler things. He has long since gone to his reward, but I am sure his good influence still lives.”

Mrs. Lackey is the only person now living in Rice who attended school on the first day.

Rice has the distinction of being one of the few towns that had never had a saloon. A small amount of whiskey was sold in grocery stores until 1876, but there was no regular saloon. In 1876 it was made unlawful to sell intoxicating liquors within three miles of Rice by a petition drawn up by Fletcher Mitchem. A large number of people signed this petition.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Except for one occasion the increase of population in Rice has been very slow and even. In this particular instance the population of Rice was almost doubled in one day. One morning in December, 1877, a train stopped here which carried about a hundred new settlers. They came from New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. They had heard much of the lovely sunshine of Texas and were looking for a good place to settle. Evidently this was the most inviting spot they had seen since they left New York for they stopped here. A number of them stayed for the first few days at the hotel, which was then being run by Haynie and Ward.

On the morning after their arrival the ground was covered with snow. This was a great disappointment to them, especially to one young man of a poetic temperament who was among those staying at the hotel. Early that morning he walked out on the veranda of the hotel to view the landscape. As he pondered weak and shivering on that bleak December morn, probably thinking of his old home up North, suddenly he burst into poetry. He spoke in a desperate and dramatic tone that would have put any tragedian to shame:

“Tell me not in mournful numbers;  
Of this glor-i-i-ious sunny South,  
Verily it doth seem,  
That this is but a dream.”

Most of the settlers left in a few months. Poets do not make good settlers.

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

At this time Rice had two doctors, Dr. McGee and Dr. Melton. Dr. McGee came in 1877 and a Dr. Sloan also moved to Rice in 1884.

In 1890 a new school building was constructed at a cost of \$3,000. Patrons of the school donated enough to pay for it in a short while.

The population of Rice in 1900 was 268. The rural districts were much more thickly populated then than they are now. One Rice merchant, J. A. Lackey, sold ice. There were no refrigerators then and ice was bought in very small quantities. It was sold in three pound chunks for five cents a chunk. The ice had to be shipped from Corsicana by rail.

In May, 1901, about one-third of the business part of Rice was destroyed by fire. Four business houses and the ice house were burned. This represented a loss of about \$12,000.

In 1898 the first Rice newspaper, the "Rice Enterprise" came into existence. This paper was given up after a few months. In August, 1901, the first "Rice Rustler" was edited by Clarence Urbin.

The year 1912 is important for three things in the history of Rice. The Dallas-Corsicana division of the Texas Electric Railway system was completed that year. In the summer the new school building was completed at a cost of \$16,000. On the second day of December, 1912, an election was held in Rice in which a majority of the electors voted to incorporate. Another

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

election was held a short time afterward to elect city officials.

When the United States declared war on Germany in April, 1917, a number of young men of Rice immediately volunteered. They were trained in various camps over the state. Two men enlisted in the Navy. Robert Wasson, who joined the Marine Corps, was the only one who failed to come back. During the four Liberty Loan drives and the Victory Loan drive \$60,000 worth of Liberty Bonds and \$10,000 worth of War Savings Stamps were sold in the banking district including Rice, Chatfield and Tupelo. In the third Liberty Loan drive this district was the first in Navarro County to go "over the top".

The Rice post office was advanced from fourth class to third class on April 1, 1918. Since Williams Holmes became postmaster in 1875, nine persons have held that position to date. James W. Norris, J. B. Slade, W. H. Todd, R. M. Langham, J. W. Holland, Mrs. Verna K. Harper, T. Y. Allen and A. H. Coulter have each served as postmaster for from one to twelve years.

On the night of October 1, 1924, occurred the most destructive fire in the history of Rice. The fire originated in a cafe belonging to Jeff Spencer. The fire spread to the barber shop of R. T. Irwin and to the grocery store of A. R. Jackson. The cafe was between the barber shop and grocery store. The fire caused a loss of more than \$15,000.

At present, the population of Rice is 611. The alder-



## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

manic form of government is used. The churches and school here are very good for a town of this size. There are thirty-three business establishments in Rice. From the center of town gravel roads extend for two miles in each of four directions.

### CURRIE

The present settlement of Currie is a blending of two communities formerly called Center Point and Rabbit Hill. Currie is one town that has the record of having undergone a revival in its business life after having suffered a temporary set-back. The post office at Currie was discontinued once but in 1921 oil caused a revival of activity and Currie again took its place as a full-fledged town and post office although the oil boom, which caused this revival, was not of long duration.

Mr. Billington was one of the early settlers of the Currie community and his son relates that in 1883 there were only two or three farms under fence in the entire community. It is an interesting fact that while the Billington farm was bought for \$12 per acre, at one time \$150 per acre was offered and refused, but now it could not be sold for more than \$30 per acre.

One of the first stores at Currie was operated by Bill Lee who sold out to Mr. Williams in 1902, the latter gentleman disposing of his establishment to Mr. Phipps who, with his son, still operate the business. Currie is about half way between Richland and Wortham on the railroad and Highway 14.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

### POWELL

Before the coming of the Cotton Belt railroad the country where Powell now stands was principally cattle range. Mr. Powell owned several hundred acres, as did the DeArmans, Baltzegars, Burks and Jacksons. Capt. W. J. Towns owned several hundred acres West of where the railroad station now stands. In the days when the Indian roamed the "hog-wallow" black land a Buffalo trail ran through Capt. Town's land, and led on to a crossing of Chambers Creek, where hundreds of buffalo regularly forded the creek. Sam and Trav. Brooks and Judge Miles owned several hundreds of acres in this vicinity.

Powell was named for the pioneer landowner on whose land the station was originally located; however, the depot was moved half mile further East to the farm of a Mr. Ward when the railroad company changed the location of the right-of-way to lessen the grade of the tracks. Within a short time after the station was located on Mr. Ward's land he stepped in front of a train and was killed.

Upon the coming of the railroad ranches were cut up and sold as farms, the land was drained, schools, churches, stores and business houses established and soon the town of Powell became a thriving center. The great Powell oil field was discovered by the bringing in of an oil well drilled by H. W. Warren, who was reared in this community. For a time this was one of the outstanding petroleum fields in America.

For months the drilling of that first well went on.

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The public lost interest, but Henry Warren and his associate, R. K. Blackshear, kept on, often delayed by lack of funds and with other hindrances. Finally the well "came in". Men and money poured in. Powell became the center of as great oil excitement as any place has known.

One well, near the discovery well, came in and for some time ran wild. In the effort to divert the oil into the desired channel, a great disaster was precipitated.

A crowd had collected to see the wonderful sight of a great cloud of black oil flowing high above the surrounding trees in Chambers' Creek bottom. There were at the time twelve or more men on the platform, some working, some watching. Suddenly there was a flash, and those men were hidden in a cloud of smoke and raging fire which enveloped the pool of oil and the gas which surrounded the well. For several days, the fire raged, visible at night for twenty miles. When finally it was quenched, nothing remained of those men except a few charred bones.

Powell shared in the excitement of the first shallow wells, so the "deep" fields helped to give that town a name which will remain in the history of oil in Texas.

T. G. Towns has been station master at Powell for more than thirty years and among the other families of prominence who now live at Powell are those of the Jacksons, Miles, Christians, Lonons, Adams, Killingsworths, Ellets, Johnstons, Austins, Banks, Fergu-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

sons, Ritchies, Newmans, Hanks, Kenners, Prices and Wares.

### MILDRED ON T. & B. V. R. R.

During the oil boom in recent years Mildred became a very prominent town. With the finding of oil, warehouses and shops of all kinds went up overnight and for a few years the inhabitants of Mildred experienced some of the excitement of a metropolis but the oil boom was destined to play out and Mildred resumed its normal existence once more but with a difference—some of its inhabitants had become enriched and moved away while others stayed. A splendid new high school and other improvements remain as evidence of the oil boom.

Some of the early settlers of Mildred were the Garvins, Harrisons, Wrights and the John Ellis family.

### WINKLER

One of the early towns in Navarro County was Winkler, so named in honor of Judge C. M. Winkler, which is situated in the Southeastern part of the county near the Trinity River. For many years Winkler was a thriving place with a post office, stores, blacksmith shops, churches, schools and many families of good standing, among them John and Tom Rouse, the Bonhams, McConnicos, Newmans, Shumates, Lees, Pillans, Andersons and Sweatmons.

Joseph P. Anderson, who was a school teacher, and farmed also near Winkler, was the son-in-law of Shade

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Sweatmon. W. P. Anderson was one of the first merchants in Winkler.

When the railroad came Winkler was left to one side and is now only a village with a historic and romantic past. Some of Winkler's present citizens are: D. W. Clark, W. D. Anderson, C. C. Jeffries, Kit Gregory, J. R. Ferguson, F. L. Lee, J. C. Hagler, E. V. Bingham, Bud Olson.

### COOK'S SCHOOL HOUSE AND CORBET

Cook's School House takes the name from Col. Cook who came to Navarro County at an early date. In 1866 he moved to a farm about six miles West of Corsicana and gave the land for a school and assisted in getting a building erected. In his honor it was named Cook's School House. The community still goes by the same name although the building has been torn down due to a consolidation of school districts and nothing remains of the early school house except a memory. The Corbet school is the descendant of that school.

P. K. Montgomery came to Navarro County shortly after the Civil War, after having graduated from school in Oakland, Mississippi, and in 1868 he married the daughter of Col. Cook. In the Cook home on the hill northeast of the school site Navarro County's outstanding poet, Whitney Montgomery, was born. He is famous for several volumes of poetry possessing much literary merit and for the tremendous interest he has shown in cultural advancement of the Southwest.

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This old home was torn away some few years ago and in its place a tenant house was built. Of all the homes in the old Cook's School House community of fifty years ago only two remain, the old Weaver home and the Wallace home. The Love family, which consisted of J. R. Love and wife and eleven children, were among the early settlers. It is interesting to note that all eleven children are still living, the youngest being past fifty years of age. Jeremiah Crabbe was one of Navarro County's early settlers, having located near the Cook's School House community. Some of the other early settlers around Cook's School House community were Richard Weaver, the Stanley, Marshall, Ballew, Willis, Woodward, Wallace and Waters families. There was a log school house located on the Weaver farm and Mr. Ballew taught a subscription school here for some time. Miss Mary Love also taught school in this old log house after her brother, J. R. Love, moved to the community in 1872. Miss Nora Goodjohn also taught at the Cook's School House for a while. Among the other families whose children attended school at Cook's School House were those of T. W. Carpenter, the Smiths, Lees, Rosses, Bryants, Middletons, and the Rev. Grantham, Gid Taylors, Melvin Weavers, and Billie Weeks.

Col. Henry Jones operated a saw mill, and lumber from this mill was used in several early homes in Corsicana, among them the Halbert's home. Many years later a Mr. Mead operated a saw mill near Cook's School House and in addition to operating a saw mill was a skilled cabinet maker.

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

With the coming of the railroad, a station was built in this community. It was called Corbet. Corbet is just North of the confluence of Richland and Rush creeks. It is surrounded by good land and formerly by many beautiful trees. Just South of Corbet was the plantation home of Col. Henry Jones. His home stood on a hill surrounded by trees and under these trees was the scene of a beautiful wedding of long ago when R. Q. Mills took as his bride Caroline Jones. A reminder of the plantation days is the little spot in the woods which is pointed out as the slaves' graveyard.

Corbet is a live community with a store, gin, church and school.

The railroad station was first called Waters as it was built on the land of Watt Waters. Later the name was changed to Corbet. Members of the Waters family still live in the community, his daughter, Mrs. Meigh Owen, and her family among them.

Some of the present prominent families are the Jim Nokes, the Roman families, that of Jim Dubose, Mrs. Hanks, the Sloans, Rosses, Tuckers, Burnets, Lakes and Bayless.

## RETREAT

The community known as Retreat was first called Beeman's School House. In the early days of Navarro County this community was settled by the Beemans, Hamiltons, Picketts, Bishops, Highnotes, Pettys, Hammonds, Hodges, McElwees, Clarkes, White, Mar-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

tins, Comperes, Simmons and Asa Littles. The school house was located on the Beeman land and it was also used as a church by various denominations on Sunday. For a long time the old log school house was the only church or school near Corsicana to the Southwest. This building was moved, due to shifting of population, two or three miles Southwest of its original location and was later moved back across Harris Branch. Due to these frequent moves someone suggested that the name Retreat would be apropos and this designation has been used until this day.

As the population increased other churches were built by different denominations and the once intact community scattered.

The Cumberland Presbyterians held a meeting at the Beeman School House under the direction of the Rev. Cunningham, organized a Cumberland Presbyterian congregation, and on land donated by Sam Hamilton a church was erected and called Goshen.

This church for a time was used by the Pleasant Grove congregation also until its church was built.

Camp meetings, and protracted meetings, were for years, held at Goshen, and attended by members of all denominations, from Angus, from Cook's School House and from Retreat and Corsicana. But Goshen has passed into history, and only the memory of those days, lingers in the minds of those who were part of those congregations.



## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

### PLEASANT GROVE

The Pleasant Grove Church was built about fifty years ago. Among the first to preach there was the father of James Ferguson, one of the Ex-Governors of Texas. M. K. Little was one of the early pastors. Among the members of that early church, were the Swearingens, F. M. Storys, Megaritys, J. D. Hamiltons, Youngs, Joel Garners, M. M. Dicksons, Ramseys, Holloways, Allsbrooks, Stovers, Littles, and McBrides.

### PETTY'S CHAPEL

The earliest recorded history of Petty's Chapel begins with a camp meeting held by the Cumberland Presbyterians in 1852 on the North bank of Chambers Creek. People from all over the county attended. This camp meeting lasted for ten to fourteen days and was attended by members of all denominations. People came in buggies, wagons, on horseback and on foot great distances and this location attained its importance from having been centrally located to many of the early settlements.

Meador's School was located on the old O. J. Meador farm and was operated as a pay school beginning about the year 1870. After four or five years a second school was located slightly to the Southeast on land given by G. V. Petty and it was from this Mr. Petty that Petty's Chapel took its name.

Originally it was necessary to cross Chambers Creek on a ferry boat and both ferry boat and the store at the crossing were operated by Jim Petty. He

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

sold this business to Mr. Hogan, who will be remembered from previous chapters as the man who built the first bridge over Chambers Creek.

The first church at Petty's Chapel was a Methodist church built on the R. Q. Mills place about 1885. The first pastor of this church was Andrew Davis who was the father of B. L. Davis, a prominent lawyer now living in Corsicana. Rev. Andrew Davis preached over the county at other places—was consecrated and loved by his congregations. After about seven years membership was transferred from Petty's Chapel to Zion Rest. About 1890 land was donated to the Baptist denomination for a church by Mr. Duren and this church was built as it now stands. The first pastor was Rev. Beasley.

On the J. L. Walton land near Petty's Chapel, oil wells were drilled in the year 1894. Of the forty-nine wells drilled, forty-two are still pumping oil, including the discovery well.

One of the first fields of wheat in the entire Navarro County was planted at Petty's Chapel by J. C. Blankenship and P. McCammon in 1873 and was threshed with a machine operated by horsepower.

Petty's Chapel was the scene of many gatherings of old, such as fairs and horse races and one of the horses which competed was "Charlie M", a cow pony that was trained into being a fine track horse and named for Charlie Huskey from whom the horse was bought. When this horse died in 1899 its owner, Mr. Mitten,

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

erected in its honor a large stone monument which still stands on the South side of the road near the creek.

### ROANE

There was a small log school house located about eight miles northeast of Corsicana which was formerly called Post Oak School. Beginning about the year 1866 Rev. Leek, who lived at Chatfield, occasionally preached at this little log school house. As families moved into the vicinity the Rev. Leek organized a Baptist church at this point and his congregation was made up of the Beasley family, which moved into the community as early as 1840, as well as the Connors who settled in this district about the year 1855. Joe and Ben Bragg and the Rascoe and Cohagen families also lived in this community.

Among the early settlers who located around Post Oak School were the Burke family and the families of the Beasleys, Braggs, Connors, Ellis, and Fraziers. Settling of the community increased until, in about 1891, members of the community decided they needed a post office. Various names were offered but the name Roane, as suggested by Will Holland, was adopted and thus the town of Roane originally known as Post Oak School became permanent.

One of the first teachers in the Post Oak School was Professor Flint, who was followed some time later by Professor Johnson. Other educators who taught in Roane were Profs. Ellison, Huggins and Homer Carroll.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

The first store and post office in Roane was run by Mr. Cohagen. Jim Estes and his two sons moved from Bazette and opened a store some two years later and the post office was moved to their establishment. The Estes family still operates the store in Roane although the post office is in the Curry store.

Mr. Master is credited with being the first to build a cotton gin and in 1896 a telephone exchange was built with Miss Annie Ficklin as the first operator.

Among the old homes which have a romantic past is the old Beasley home and springs, about two miles West of Roane. This historical landmark was familiar to travelers in the early days of the county and many a travel-worn immigrant stopped here for fresh water and a few hours' rest.

Before the post office was located mail was distributed from the old Bragg home which was a short distance West of the Beasley home mentioned above.

Ben and Joseph Bragg married sisters who were daughters of the Beasleys. Years later, Will, son of the Connors, married Miss Mary Ella Burke.

Two of the good neighbors of the community who did much to make life more pleasant during the early days of Roane were Mrs. Shade Conner and Mrs. Sallie Frazier who visited the sick and prescribed for them and helped to nurse them.

The Roane community has long been known for its hospitality and the residents of the community are sol-

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

id people whose ancestors helped to carve homes and farms out of the virgin prairie. The old time pioneer home with its wood pile in the front yard, water bucket with a gourd handle projecting, wash basin and roller towel and shelf on the front porch were familiar sights. Saddles and bridles were also a part of the porch furniture and the latch string hung out to all friends.

### EMHOUSE

The town of Emhouse has grown from several surrounding communities, among them being Kelm and King Willow. King Willow was about six miles East of Kelm, which was about three miles West of Emhouse. G. G. Owen was postmaster at Kelm. The first name given to Emhouse was Lyford but when it was discovered there was a town by this name in Texas already, it was seen that no post office would be granted under this designation so the name of Emhouse was then chosen. Emhouse takes its name from Col. E. M. House, who was superintendent of the Brazos Valley railroad at the time the post office was petitioned for.

The original Kelm settlement was made by T. R. Kelm in 1854. Mr. Kelm was a stockman and farmer and owned several slaves. Charles Lockhart, who owned twenty slaves, also settled nearby and farmed in the Kelm community. At this time there were no schools and private teachers were brought in by some families. The Lockharts had a governess or tutor.

From 1854 to 1880 several men moved into the Kelm

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

community, among whom were James Bailey, W. W. Williams, Tom Vyers, Jim Childress, Willis Richards, Van de Water, W. Tinkle and John and Tom Allen. John Maggard moved into the settlement in 1876, followed by Charles Brannon, a Mr. Myles, J. W. Sharpley, C. W. DeRusha and T. T. Reid. Chas. DeLafosse settled there in 1879 and was followed some years later by E. M. Way and Henry Cook. By 1890 school houses and churches were built and the community became thickly populated.

The churches were moved from King Willow and Kelm and rebuilt in Emhouse. A school, a bank, stores and an artesian well were soon added; also a lumber yard. A concrete highway now serves this community.

In 1915 the town was incorporated under the commission form of government with J. M. Parrish, mayor, and V. H. Holmes and G. G. Owens, commissioners.

Emhouse is about ten miles Northwest of Corsicana and has the highest elevation of any town between the upper reaches of the Trinity River and Houston and is the center of a very thriving agricultural community.

### PINKSTON

The first business establishment which belongs properly to Pinkston was a store operated by Calvin Henderson. Later a gin was built which was owned by D. K. McCammon, Tom Garwood and Arthur Huskinson. Pinkston was so named for Lucien Pinkston, a railroad man.

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Among the early settlers in the Pinkston community were the Caldwell, Hunter and Lynch families.

Pinkston was established as a post office about the year 1892. It is a few miles East of Barry in the black prairie land district.

### EUREKA

In the Fifties, a short way South of the present town of Eureka was the early location of a log school house which was called Dunn's School House. Some years later at a grange meeting held in the school house the need for a post office was brought up and the name of Eureka suggested. The post office was secured and located in the home of P. Anderson. Soon a settlement grew up around the Eureka post office. In addition to the teacher who taught in Dunn's School House, Isaac Bird, some other early residents were Ed Drane, M. H. Bird, Robert Walker, R. B. McCarters, James Dunn, for whom the school was named, the Patton families, Jim Jones, Elisha Anderson, and his son, P. Anderson, mentioned above as the first postmaster, the Davidsons and the Montgomerys.

The Dave Johnstons, whose ancestors came from Ireland, also lived in this vicinity. S. S. Johnston married Miss Lily Pulliam and for many years lived in Corsicana.

Dr. J. M. V. Wills lived in this community before coming to Corsicana and Dr. Selman, who lived near Wadeville, extended his practice to include

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Eureka, as did Dr. Ben Blackmon. The Kent family came to Eureka about 1875. Until his death in 1930, Dr. James Hamilton was physician for the Eureka community. Some of the present citizens, J. H. Bonner, A. M. and J. C. Boyd, J. A. Stewart, Mattie Gann, the Johnstons, B. R. Bonner, J. A. Brown, W. C. Montgomery, F. V. and J. W. Fullwood, B. A. Robinson and the Hamilton family. Highway 22 now runs through Eureka.

The Blackmons in Navarro County were early settlers. Dr. B. F. Blackmon came to Texas in 1853 and lived at first near Fairfield. He devoted much of his time to stock raising and farming.

He served during the Civil War, afterward he lived in Navarro County near Eureka, having moved to this county in 1850. In 1874 he was elected to represent his county in the State Legislature. He was popular and loved by his fellow citizens. He died in 1888. His two sons, John T. Blackmon and Walter J. Blackmon, have continued to live in Navarro County. Walter J. Blackmon married Miss Fannie D. Johnston, November 7, 1867, and John T. married Miss Mary H., daughter of Robt. Greenlee and wife.

### NAVARRO

The settlement called Navarro several miles west of Eureka came from an early community designated as Hopewell, taking its name from the Baptist church. The first store was operated by Mr. Re and when the



## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

T. & B. V. railroad was built in 1907 a station called Navarro was located about ten miles south of Corsicana and became a prosperous community upon the opening of the Powell-Mildred oil field.

Some of the early families were the Lovetts, Boyds, Garlics, Puryears, Bressies, McClures, Durhams, Thomases, Stroders and Foutys.

Navarro is still a progressive town. Some of the citizens of the present who have lived there for many years are the families of H. D. Smith, E. H. Harvard, S. F. Harvard, Wade Harvard, Robert Tatum, Tom Jones, T. M. Fouty and P. Goodin.

Some of the business men and women are H. D. Smith, grocer; Robert Marsh, grocer; Mrs. A. B. Marsh, postmistress; Tom Nash, confectioner; Rev. Henry, pastor of Baptist Church; Mrs. Chas. Collins, leader of W. M. U.; W. B. Middlebrook, ginner; Mrs. O. E. Cowsor, president of P. T. A.; and Miss Montgomery, president of Study Club.

### RODNEY

There was an early settlement in Navarro County located on Pin Oak Creek called Rodney. It was about eight miles Southeast of the present town of Dawson. The first postmaster at Rodney was Mr. Payne, the post office being located in his residence. The school house nearby was known as Patterson's School House. Some of the early settlers of the Rodney community

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

were the above Mr. Payne and the Graham, Williams and Trent families.

Patterson's School House was moved after some years and about 1884 a Mr. McClintock built a store one and one-half miles southeast of the Payne home and operated it until disposing of his business to Tom Stone.

Joshua Graham received his farm as a bonus for having fought in the Texas Revolution, receiving a league and a labor of land for his services. A romance that would follow the conventional moving picture style was true of Joshua Graham and Miss Matilda Clemmons. The Graham and Clemmons families met enroute to Texas when Joshua and Matilda fell in love with each other and were married by a Mexican Alcalde in 1834. James Graham, Jr., one of the descendants, still lives in Dawson and owns land inherited from his father and grandfather. This community is called Eldorado—and is Southeast of Dawson.

The Williams and Patterson families in 1882 owned 13,000 acres of land, which since has been divided into farms. J. Frank Williams, now of Corsicana, is a son of the family of that name.

### BRUSHY PRAIRIE

The community a few miles Northwest of Dawson was referred to by the appellation of "Brushy Prairie," so called because of the bunches of cedar elm trees which dotted the prairie landscape.

## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Brushy Prairie was at one time quite a thriving community with a church, a gin, a store and a blacksmith shop.

Possibly the greatest claim which Brushy Prairie has to prominence is that it was the home of the French family, one of the members of which was "Uncle John" whose column in the leading semi-weekly paper was a well known feature for years.

Others of the early settlers in and around Brushy Prairie were the A. M. Pruitt, T. S. Slater, Frank Johnston, Frank and Joe Hagle and Terry families.

### EMMETT

A community called Emmett developed on the extreme Western edge of Navarro County and had a general store, church, gin, blacksmith shop and post office.

This little community thrived as an inland village until the Cotton Belt railroad came through in 1881, leaving Emmett "off the beaten path", whereupon the business houses closed up and the owners moved away until today Emmett is only a rural community peopled by sterling citizens.

Two of the early families who might be mentioned as having helped in the development of Emmett were the Osburns and Goodmans.

### ANGUS

The beginning of the town of Angus dates back to a switch track on the railroad erected in order that Capt.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

A. Angus might load hay which was shipped up and down the new railroad to feed the contractors' teams. Capt. Angus had the first hay press in this part of Texas. He was formerly chief clerk to Mr. Quinlan, vice president of the H. & T. C. railroad, previously having been terminal agent and advancing as the railroad came northward in 1871-72 from Houston. Capt. Angus lived in Corsicana many years and his family was reared here.

One of the early settlers in the Angus community was John Carr who was a brother-in-law of "Uncle Jimmie" Kerr. At this time only a few families lived between Pisgah Ridge and Corsicana, among them the Powells, Williamsons, Tatums, Pettys and Storys.

Cattle and stock raising was originally the means of livelihood of the residents of this community and cotton and grain cultivation began at a later date. There was very little land in cultivation or fenced until after the coming of barbed wire, what fences there were being made of rails. Barbed wire was introduced to this part of Texas by John W. Gates and with its introduction farming increased.

The railroad came to Angus in 1871 and immediately the community began to settle around the station and by 1874 there was a school under the tutelage of Miss Lila Blackmon. This school building was moved from time to time. The present Angus school is an attractive brick building which was built in 1921.

The first church at Angus was called Storey's Cha-



*Captain and Mrs. A. Angus, for whom the town of Angus was named, and who were citizens of Corsicana for many years. Throughout their lives these early citizens of the county did much toward its development.*



## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

pel, built in 1872 about one mile from where it now stands. Five of the early pastors in the church were Revs. Groves, Stepp, Thomson and King.

Some of the early settlers in Angus were the Stor-  
eys, Pughs, Lattas, Whites, Meadors, Dunns, Peacocks,  
Powells, Campbells, Soapes, Tiltens, Stewarts, High-  
notes and Knotts.

The first physician in Angus was Dr. Dave Black-  
mon and the first gin was owned by another member  
of the Blackmon family.

The names of the Angus postmasters in order of  
their service are as follow: P. P. Powell, Thomas  
Soape, Lee Stewart, Thomas Soape again and the pres-  
ent postmaster, Thomas Ware.

The Kent-Middleton Refinery was erected in Angus  
about 1908 and in 1931 is still in operation under the  
superintendance of Herbert Soape.

In the early days the territory south of Angus along  
Pisgah Ridge was the habitat of a group of the most  
notorious cattle rustlers in central Texas. The Edens  
family lead in trying to get positive evidence of their  
malefactions and exterminate these cattle rustlers.  
Due to the great number of cattle roaming the unfenc-  
ed plains it was difficult to get actual proof of their  
cattle rustling. Until they were caught with some  
of the hides and heads from several muley cows,  
which were known to have belonged to Capt.  
Angus, positive evidence had not been secured. But

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

upon finding this evidence, when they were caught red-handed, they were either killed or driven from the country, never to return.

Jesse Pugh was one of the early settlers in the community which is now Pleasant Grove. His two sons married daughters of Daniel Story, and for many years lived near Angus. A daughter of Jesse Pugh married Thomas Soape, and they also lived most of their lives in Angus. Many descendants of these families are now citizens of Navarro County.

### POPULAR NAVARRO COMMUNITIES

There are several thriving communities in Navarro County which have been the outgrowth of settlements made at favorable points through the years.

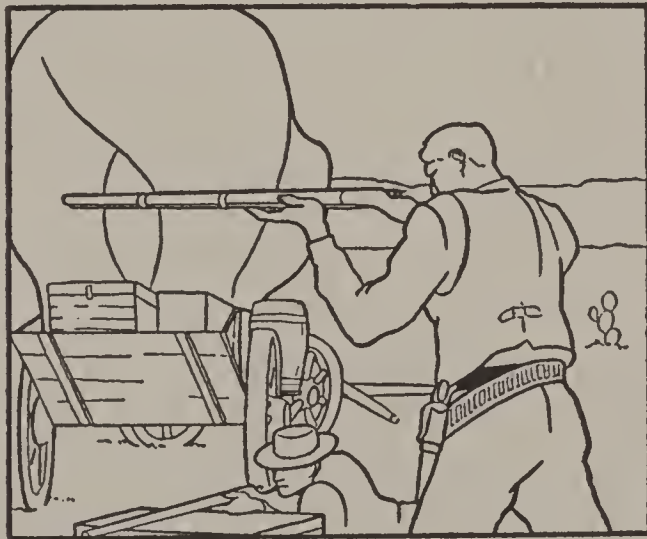
There are two communities in the Southeastern part of the county known as Round Prairie and Long Prairie which have merged into a unit since the consolidated school was located about half way between them. There is no post office to serve this community but there are stores and gins and the excellent soil and a good citizenry make this one of the substantial parts of Navarro County.

For many years picnics and various kinds of public gatherings have been held at Alligator School House and along the banks of Alligator Creek. Many of the pioneer settlers of Navarro County are buried in the cemetery which is near the school house and church.



## TOWNS OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Among other prosperous communities in the county having stores, gins, schools and churches are Black Hills, Farmers, Buffalo, Cade, Birdston, Montfort, Picket, Eldorado, Jester, St. Elmo, White's Chapel, Drane, Hester, Tupelo, Pursley, Brown's Valley, Neil's Valley and Rushing.



## CHAPTER VIII

### PIONEER FAMILIES

**I**T would be impossible to enumerate and cover in detail all of the many pioneer families who helped to make Navarro County the thriving, pleasant and liveable community which it is at the present time. So only a few of the representative families of the different periods of the county's history may be given.

Thomas I. Smith was among the first settlers of Corsicana and donated to the Baptist, Cumberland Presbyterian and Methodist churches a half block of land each which was to be used in erecting houses of worship. Cumberland Presbyterians built on their lot first after having used the old academy and court house for two or three years. Funds were subscribed by all the denominations with the understanding that the church was to be used alternately and the Sunday School was to be attended by all faiths. This arrangement worked out to the satisfaction of all concerned, and when the Civil War came on sewing and knitting was done here for the soldiers.

Thos. I. Smith came to Navarro County the year before it was organized and later married Mary Louisa Neil, a widowed daughter of J. L. Bartlett who made

## PIONEER FAMILIES

his home at Taos for some years. A little son of Thomas I. Smith, who died, was buried just north of the school, on what is now First Avenue in Corsicana and his grave has been located by William Elliott, county surveyor.

Thos I. Smith was a Texas Ranger in command of a company and helped to protect the frontier from Indians and also helped survey many of the tracts of land in Navarro County. He died in Austin and Mrs. Smith later married C. M. Winkler, a young lawyer of Corsicana. Two daughters were born of this latter union, one of whom became the wife of Judge Sam R. Frost.

Daniel Story moved to Texas and bought land near Corsicana in 1845. His tract of land extended from the vicinity of Pleasant Grove almost to the brick yards. For some years he lived near where Edgar Young's home now stands, later buying a farm near Angus and remaining there until his death. He and his wife reared a large family of sons and daughters. Many of their descendants still live in Navarro County.

The widow Hamilton and her family of five sons and two daughters came to Navarro County in 1846. Until they could find a suitable location they camped in the yard of Harvey Beeman and one morning William, the eldest son, rode a horse to water in the Beeman pasture. Upon reaching the tall grass around the creek, a bear rose up, frightened the horse, which threw William Hamilton and broke his leg. From this accident he limped the remainder of his life. The

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Story and Hamilton families intermarried and these two families are intertwined into much of the early history of Navarro County. The Hamilton farm was a few miles Southwest of town, and is still owned by members of that family.

Clinton McKamy Winkler, born in North Carolina in 1820, came to Navarro County to live in 1847, and made his home at the McKinney Inn. In 1848 he was married to Mrs. Mary Louisa Smith, widow of Thos. I. Smith. He was elected as a member of the Second Legislature of Texas and assisted in organization of Navarro County. He served in the Civil War, was promoted for bravery and service. Returning to Navarro County he became Judge of the 13th District in 1866, and in 1876, was a judge in the Court of Appeals. Judge Winkler was a Mason and a member of the Methodist Episcopal church. His wife died in 1861, and in 1864, he was married to Miss Angelina V. Smith. He was the father of three children by his first wife, and six by his second. Judge Winkler was a successful and distinguished lawyer, vital in his acceptance of life's vicissitudes.

Judge Winkler died in 1882, and his body was buried in Oakwood, a part of the original one hundred acres deeded to the city.

John R. Ransom arrived in Navarro County about 1862, making his home near Chatfield for a while. He engaged in stock raising and farming until he moved to Corsicana during his later years. Here his family of eight children grew up, two of his sons, S. M. and

## PIONEER FAMILIES

William A. being in business in Corsicana for many years. The Ransom grocery business in Corsicana for forty years is still represented by members of that family and name.

Judge Walton came to Corsicana in 1866, living the remainder of his life here. He was elected justice of the peace in 1878 and the records indicate that he performed almost one thousand marriages. His son, Charles C. Walton, who is a stockman and farmer, still resides in Corsicana.

R. N. White, from Alabama, settled first near Wm. R. Howe, later moving to Corsicana to become first county clerk. Cyrus, his son, is said to have been the first white child born in what is now Corsicana although the son of W. F. Henderson, surveyor and Indian fighter, was born here about the same time. Fifth Avenue was originally called White Street in honor of Mr. White. He was county clerk for eight years, assisted in securing a railroad for Corsicana, and later was a member of the shoe firm of Bates and White.

Chas. H. Allyn came to Texas in 1868, the same year he had married Miss Angela Aldritch. He engaged in the mercantile business and besides being engaged in many other developments in Corsicana in the succeeding years—he was deeply interested in the schools, library and Orphan's Home. Many remember his kindness and sympathy to those who were struggling to better their condition. His wife and two daughters, Mrs. Harry Johnson and Mrs. R. L. Hamilton live in Corsicana.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

William Bright, an early resident of Kentucky, settled Southeast of Corsicana and married Miss Eleanor Crabb Drane. His son, J. M. Bright, married Miss Jane Storey in 1855. He operated a store on what is now Second Avenue and Thirteenth Street, carrying a full line of general merchandise. His home was about two blocks away in a beautiful grove of oaks, some of which are still standing. This house was moved to First Avenue and Eighteenth Street where it stands today. His children were Alice, Florence, Elizabeth and Thomas.

Mrs. Elizabeth Story, a widow, moved to Corsicana in 1851. In addition to two boys, Harry and William Preston, who never married, she had two daughters, Elvira, who became Mrs. John McCuiston, and Clementine, who married Jubilee McKinney.

Among the early settlers in Corsicana was William Croft who began practicing law in 1850. Some of the early residents remember Mr. Croft and recall his having mentioned the fact that one of the few cases tried at the first term of court at Corsicana was a charge against a young man for stealing a bridle at a camp meeting. Fortunately for the young man the case was dismissed.

Attorney Croft first married Miss Roxana Eliot, daughter of Col. Jacob Eliot, but she lived only a few months after their wedding and Mr. Croft later married Miss Rebecca Lockhart. Mr. Croft lived for years at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Twelfth Street where the W. E. Pugh home is now located. When it was built, the Croft home was one of the best in town.

## PIONEER FAMILIES

In fifty years of legal practice Judge Croft left behind the reputation of rarely losing a case, fighting them through the courts until they were finally decided in favor of his clients.

Adam Byars has the credit of being the first merchant in Corsicana. He hauled his stock of goods overland from Houston. In 1859 he moved to Mount Pisgah, bought a tract of farm land and on it erected a store. This store was the beginning of Richland although it had changed hands several times and was moved once or twice. During the early days Mr. Byars had considerable trouble with the rough element and his store was broken into from time to time and burned on one occasion.

J. E. Byars, the son of Adam Byars mentioned above, served through the Civil War and returned to Navarro County in 1865. He married Miss Mary Nash and ten children were born to this union. J. E. Byars operated a store at Wortham for some years in addition to owning a stock farm.

One of the early settlers of Navarro County was Major Alexander Beaton who was born in Inverness, Scotland, in 1820. Major Beaton moved to America in 1843 and settled in Navarro County on March 16, 1850. Corsicana was then a village of about one hundred inhabitants.

Major Beaton was intensely pleased with the appearance of Navarro County and immediately settled here to make this his permanent home. He first worked in

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

the county clerk's office under R. N. White, continuing his law studies at night and in his spare time. Later Major Beaton was admitted to the bar and he and R. Q. Mills were law partners.

In 1852 Major Beaton married Miss Elizabeth J. McKinney and they had three children, Ralph, Kate (Mrs. S. W. Johnson), and Thomas Ruffin.

He was very fond of his home South of town, called Gem Hill, his library and his collection of minerals. He also had a large collection of arrow heads, all of which were found on his own farm.

During his entire lifetime Major Beaton worked untiringly toward furthering the success of Corsicana. In appreciation of his efforts toward securing the railroad the principal street in Corsicana is named in his honor.

Both Major Beaton and his good wife are buried in Oakwood Cemetery amid beautiful surroundings he loved so well.

Samuel R. Frost was born in Montgomery County in 1846 and his family moved to Navarro County in the same year. Mr. Frost grew up on his father's farm in the Dresden-Raleigh community and went to school until he joined the Confederate Army at the age of seventeen. After returning from the War in 1869 he began reading law and was admitted to the bar. He was appointed county attorney of Navarro County and elected county judge in 1876. In addition



## PIONEER FAMILIES

to holding local offices he was also district judge and a member of the Legislature.

Judge Frost married Mary L. Winkler and they lived for many years on Third Avenue where the Tatum and Eden homes now stand. As the town of Corsicana grew Judge Frost moved to the Southwest edge of town and built a new and finer home and planted trees and shrubs which he so much loved.

A. N. Justiss and George E. Jester are each a son-in-law of Judge Frost and the other sons-in-law are Max Almond, R. L. Calkins and Guy Gibson.

The John S. Gibson family was among the prominent early settlers of Corsicana and Miss Mollie Gibson, the only one surviving, who still lives in the old Gibson home, retains the traditions of her family.

J. L. Halbert was one of the pioneer lawyers in Corsicana, coming to Texas after his graduation from the University of Mississippi about the year 1858. He was captain of a company during the Civil War and after returning was also a partner of R. Q. Mills until Col. Mills was elected to Congress in 1872. Capt. Halbert enjoyed a large practice and in 1873 was voted the most popular man in Navarro County and given a gold-headed cane.

Judge Halbert is survived by three daughters, Mrs. Groce of Waxahachie, Mrs. Roseborough of Marshall and Mrs. J. K. Parr of Hillsboro as well as one son, J. L. Halbert, Jr. (Josh Halbert died in 1930). His son followed in his father's footsteps, being not only an out-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

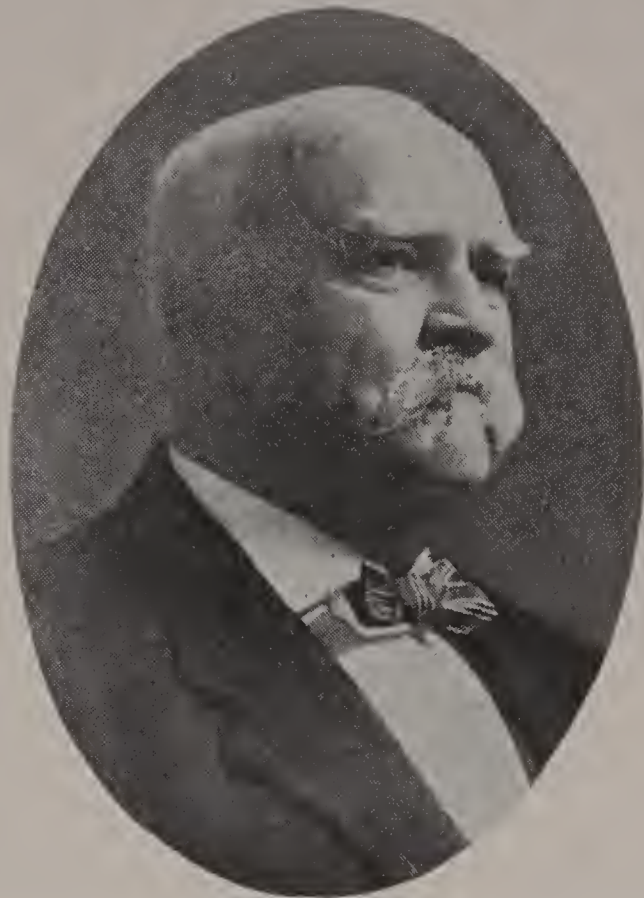
standing lawyer but highly respected citizen of the community.

One of the well-known pioneer citizens of Navarro County was Merit Drane who settled on 640 acres of land seven miles West of the town in 1860. Mr. Drane was one of the first to successfully cultivate the black, waxy soil. He moved into Corsicana in 1874 and operated a hardware and implement store known as Drane & Gibson until S. J. T. Johnson bought out the Gibson interest. Mr. Johnson retired in 1885 and the business was carried on by Merit Drane and his son, F. N. Drane under the designation of Drane & Son.

Mr. Drane, Sr., was active in helping to establish the State Orphans' Home, cotton compress, city waterworks and the Texas Flour Mill, as well as being instrumental in fostering the present efficient school system of Corsicana.

The business qualifications of Merit Drane seem to have been inherited by his son, Frank N. Drane, who has since that time been concerned with much of the welfare of Corsicana and the county. Mrs. Florence Drane, wife of F. N. Drane was prominent in civic, religious and educational affairs—and when she died in 1932, was a member of the board of trustees of Technological College at Lubbock, Texas. Their daughter, Dorothy, lives in Corsicana.

Roger Q. Mills, was one of the outstanding citizens of Corsicana for two generations. Col. Mills began the practice of law in Corsicana in 1856. In



*—Photo Courtesy Tessie Dickeson Studio.*



*Top: Honorable Roger Q. Mills, one of the outstanding men of Texas during his lifetime.*

*Bottom: The R. Q. Mills Home on Second Avenue, now the home of Major C. H. Mills.*



## PIONEER FAMILIES

1853 acted as overseer in opening up a road from Corsicana to Waxahachie. One position of honor after another was bestowed upon R. Q. Mills, and he filled all of these with distinction and ability. In 1859 he was elected a member of the Legislature and from a private in the Civil War he rose by sheer bravery and efficiency to the post of colonel in command. Col. Mills returned to Corsicana and resumed his practice of law and in 1872 was elected to the United States Senate. He was for ten years a member of the Ways and Means Committee and a bill which he promulgated in 1888 greatly enhanced his reputation.

Col. R. Q. Mills married Miss Caroline R. Jones in 1858. Mrs. Mills died in 1907 and four years later, September 2, 1911, Col. Mills was laid to rest beside his companion of fifty years.

Col. Mills was a great lover of nature, very fond of good books and throughout his life loved his fellow men.

Major Charles Mills, the son of Col. Roger Q. Mills, lives in the Mills home which is preserved as his father planned it many years ago.

The Jester family is closely interwoven with the social and economic life of Navarro County. The first member of this outstanding family was Mrs. Diadema Jester, the widow of Levi Jester, who came to Texas with her children in a covered wagon about 1858. Her father, Hampton McKinney, with his family, settled in Navarro County some years before Mrs. Jester arrived.

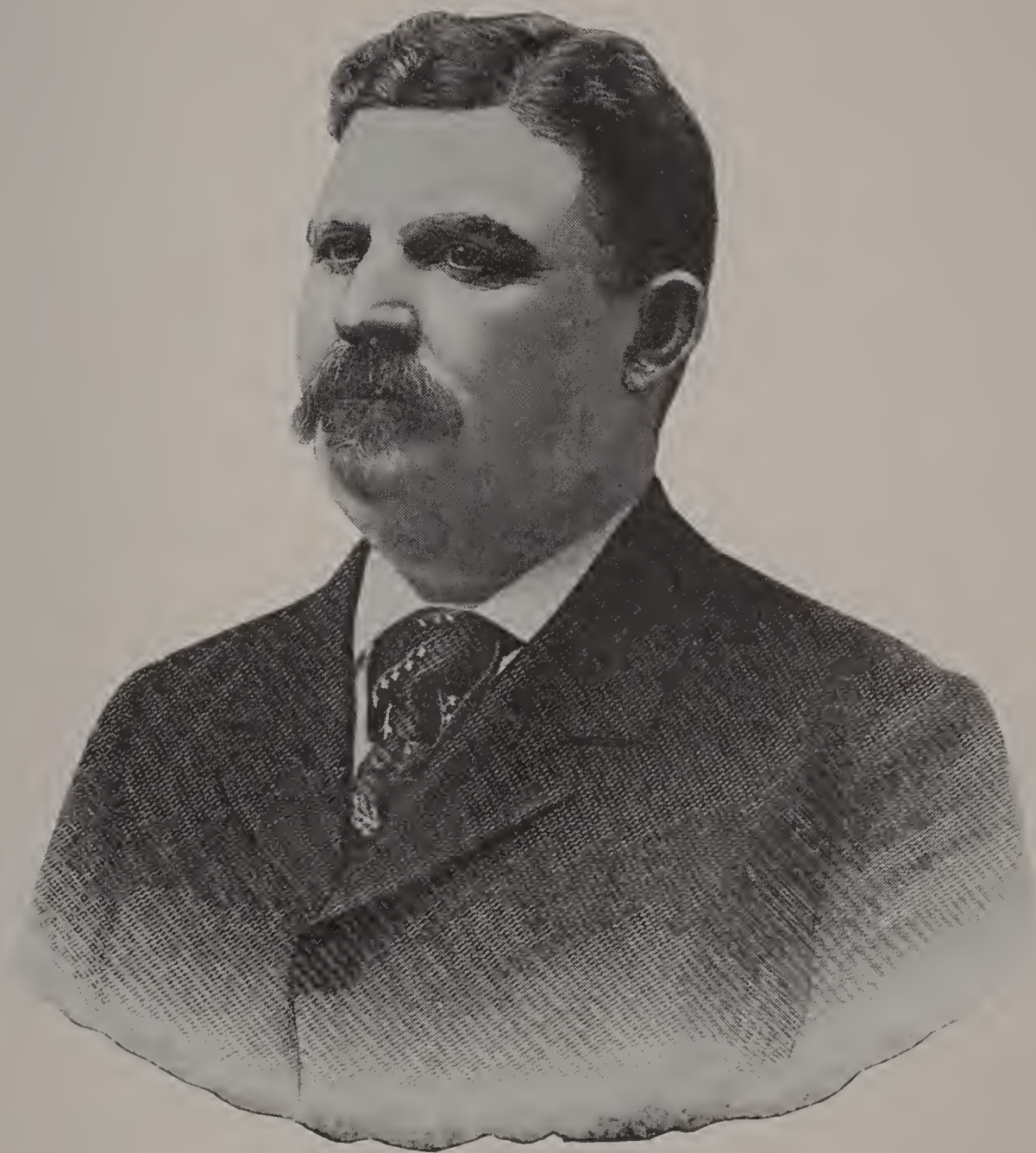
## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

Shortly after the arrival of Mrs. Jester her two oldest sons, Charles and George, began hauling brick with which the first brick court house was erected. Records indicate the two boys earned 50c a day each for their labor. Besides the three sons there were two daughters, Vina (Mrs. Robt. Bates), Mary (Mrs. J. D. Hamilton). The Jester family for a time lived near where the telephone building now stands and across the street from what was then the R. N. White home. A short distance East of their home was a beautiful grove of oak and persimmon trees which was a favorite place for gatherings of all kinds. Sam Houston spoke in this grove and around the Jester home many warm discussions on topics of the day occurred. By strange coincidence temperance was then one of the foremost topics of political debate and from that time until the present has continued to be so.

The two Jester boys, who helped erect the court house, entered business, Charles buying out the Jernigan Saddle Shop and George T. Jester entering the world of finance. His wife, Frances Gordon Jester, and son, Beauford Jester, and family, live in Jester Place, Corsicana.

C. W. Jester was for years a leading member of the business and religious life of Corsicana and helped erect the first Methodist Church which was built in 1871. The early records of this church are still treasured by Judge C. L. Jester, his son.

George E. Jester, banker, C. L. Jester, a prominent Corsicana lawyer, Dr. Homer Jester and Hugh Jester



*Honorable George T. Jester (Deceased) Lieutenant Governor  
of Texas 1895-99*





## PIONEER FAMILIES

are descendants of this pioneer family, as are Mrs. Josh Halbert and Mrs. Lowry Martin.

The Kerr family began with James and Nancy Ross Kerr who came to Corsicana December 24, 1851. James Kerr, Jr., married when he reached Texas and built a home on fourteen acres of land, lying on what is now West Second Avenue. This home was built of lumber hauled from East Texas by ox wagons.

The elder James Kerr died about 1859 and Mrs. Kerr, Sr., died in 1865. James Kerr, Jr., moved to the corner of Fifteenth Street, which was then called Church Street and Third Avenue, which was formerly known as Jefferson Street, and resided at this location until his death in 1901. He was one of the committee to labor for months to secure the H. & T. C. railroad for Corsicana. His son, T. P. Kerr, lives in Corsicana.

Dr. William Kerr, Judge S. H. Kerr, Dr. Green Kerr and C. P. Kerr came to Corsicana in November, 1852, operating a general merchandise store on the Southeast corner of the square until the Civil War. T. P. Kerr and Hawkins Roberts' store was formerly located on the corner of Collins and Beaton Streets and this institution was housed in the first brick store building on Beaton Street, located at the point now occupied by the State National Bank Building. Hawk Roberts married James Kerr's daughter, America.

William Kerr, of another family of Kerrs, was given a league of land near Chatfield for his serv-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ices in guarding the baggage at the Battle of San Jacinto.

The members of the Kerr family and their descendants are now and have been since the earliest days an integral part of the life of Navarro County.

Wm. A. Polk, with his father, Thos. M. Polk and family, moved to Texas at the close of the Civil War, and located four miles South of Dresden. In 1866, Wm. A. Polk went to Hernando, Miss., and returned with his bride, Miss Mattie Mosely. The concert grand piano, a part of her dowry, was brought also, and afforded much pleasure to her family and friends, for she was an accomplished musician.

Mr. Polk was elected as one of the first Master Masons at Dresden, and was prominent in the community while at Dresden and also after he moved to Corsicana, where he spent many years of his life, and where his family of four sons and three daughters grew up. The sons were Emmett, Ed M., Arthur and Louis. The daughters Iza (died in youth), Ressa (Mrs. Henry Miller) and Daisy (Mrs. J. S. Murchison).

N. H. Butler moved from Georgia to Robertson County in 1845 and lived first in a log house located on land falling within the confines of Corsicana when this town was settled. Mr. Butler built wagons and buggies and his business prospered during the years.

Of his seven children four of them still live in Corsicana, these being John Butler, J. E. Butler, Mrs. Ora Ivey and Mrs. C. T. Banister. One of his daughters

## PIONEER FAMILIES

now resides in Kerens. The youngest daughter, Mrs. Banister, was voted the most beautiful girl in Corsicana and a park near the railroad station was named in her honor. It is now called Allyn Park.

Jessie Walton and his family came to Corsicana from Tennessee in 1845. Mr. Walton was sheriff of Navarro County from 1854 to 1858, moving to Glen Rose some few years later and remaining at this place until his death in 1890.

J. L. Walton, who was the son of the above mentioned pioneer, followed in his father's footsteps by being elected sheriff and serving in this capacity from 1884 until 1886. He lived about four miles Northeast of Corsicana and now lies in the private family cemetery on his farm.

T. J. Walton, who is a grandson of Jesse, and son of J. L. Walton, is in the furniture business in Corsicana at the present time and has been for 24 years.

The Petty family came to Navarro County about 1846, and their farm still belongs to members of this pioneer family.

The first road to Dallas went by the Petty farm and many of the early travelers stopped there for a cooling drink or to rest their horses on the journey. National Highway No. 75 now passes through the Petty farm and today it is a matter of an hour's ride to cover what once required one or more days of arduous travel.

P. F. Wood came to Navarro County from Washing-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

ton County soon after the Civil War and was appointed county judge. The family of Judge P. F. Wood has been prominent in the affairs of Navarro County since the early days. The five daughters were Mrs. Alice (Mrs. W. H.) Matchett, Mrs. Ellen Read, Mrs. Fannie Rous, Mrs. Maggie (Mrs. J. B.) Stiteler and Mrs. Lena Rice, wife of Judge John H. Rice, F. P. Wood, a son, died a few years ago. James Wood, who married a daughter of R. Q. Mills, and Percy Wood both left Corsicana many years ago.

F. W. Caruthers came to Corsicana with the coming of the H. & T. C. railroad and engaged in the lumber, hardware and implement business. His home was one of the first brick houses in Corsicana and it has now been made into the electric freight office. The story of Mr. Caruthers is intertwined with that of another pioneer, J. E. Whiteselle. Mr. Caruthers noticed from time to time the neat and efficient manner in which bills of lumber were rendered from a mill at Neches, Texas, and upon inquiry found that the man responsible for this excellent workmanship was J. E. Whiteselle, who was then a young man in the employ of the Ezell Lumber Mills. Mr. Caruthers offered Mr. Whiteselle employment and in 1875 J. E. Whiteselle joined the Caruthers Lumber Company. After some years Mr. Whiteselle bought out this lumber business and operated it until his death. Mr. Whiteselle married Miss Katie Huey in 1882 and Mrs. Whiteselle still retains her interest in social, civic, and educational affairs in Corsicana.

## PIONEER FAMILIES

Judge J. E. Simkins, a native of South Carolina, served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War and came to Corsicana in 1871, engaging in the practice of law until he was appointed district attorney in 1872. In 1882 he was appointed regent of the University of Texas and was twice reappointed to this post of responsibility. In 1886 Judge Simkins was elected to the 20th Legislature and was re-elected to the 21st. In 1892 he was appointed by Governor Hogg as a member of the Court of Appeals. Mrs. Simkins was formerly Miss Ella Trescott, also of South Carolina, and of the five children reared in Corsicana only one son, Joe Simkins, has resided here continuously. The old Simkins home is a landmark on Second Avenue until this day.

R. M. Collins, who came to Navarro County in 1867, was a pioneer business man of Corsicana. He first resided twenty miles South of the town but moved to Corsicana in 1874, entering the grocery business on this date. Mr. Collins assisted in organizing the First National Bank, the cotton oil mill, the street railway, the flour mill and other industries. Mrs. Collins was formerly Miss Josephine Owen, a daughter of Francis Owen, who was an early settler in Navarro County.

Alf Milligan and D. J. Gilbert were both engaged in stock raising from an early date in Navarro County. Mr. Milligan married Deniza, a daughter of Mr. Gilbert. Both were well known cattle men during the days when this was the major industry, in Navarro County. Mr. Milligan is also well known as a business man and bank director in Corsicana.

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

The two Edens brothers, J. W. and N. B., were also pioneer cattlemen, coming to Texas from Kentucky in 1867. The Edens brothers married sisters, daughters of Sheriff E. E. Dunn, who held this office eight years. He had six pretty daughters. All except one married Corsicana men. J. W. Edens was appointed deputy sheriff in 1876 under his father-in-law and was later elected tax collector. Worthy successors are their sons, J. W., now mayor of Corsicana, Allen, a grocer, and J. N., known to his friends as "Pole" and whose wisdom as a banker is widely known.

David Clary received a land grant on Richland Creek in 1830. It was settled by three of his sons, Mish, Jesse, and Frank. The cedar-log home built by Mish Clary is now part of the M. M. Dickson home. Part of the original grant was bought by T. W. Carpenter, son-in-law of M. M. Dickson.

T. W. Carpenter and his wife came to Texas from Tennessee soon after he finished serving throughout the Civil War. They reared their family of five daughters and two sons on the farm purchased from Clary. Until he died in 1901, T. W. Carpenter was a man of vital energy and in his daily life put into practice the principles in which he believed.

M. M. Burgess was a pioneer school teacher in Navarro County, having formerly resided in Hill County. After his return from the Civil War he and his wife, who was Miss Ellen Sparks, taught school in Raleigh, near Dresden, and had among their pupils Sam R. Frost, Bryan T. Barry and James Robinson. Mr. Bur-



MR. AND MRS. THOMAS W. CARPENTER





## PIONEER FAMILIES

gess was the father of Mrs. P. C. Townsend, one of Corsicana's best loved singers. Mr. Burgess was prominent in business circles of Corsicana for many years.

Preston M. Lea came to Corsicana in 1870. Mr. Lea has been engaged in ginning and farming for a generation and was in public life as deputy sheriff for two years. His wife was Lida M. Garner, a daughter of Joel Garner, a pioneer Navarro County settler.

H. G. Damon came to Corsicana in 1873, opening a dry goods store. Business reverses, due to the yellow fever epidemic, caused him to discontinue the dry goods business and form a partnership with W. R. Bright. This firm was called the Texas Loan Agency and was one of the first of its kind incorporated in Texas. Mr. Damon's wife was Miss Maggie Rogers, the daughter of Col. W. P. Rogers, and his partner married Miss Helen Simonton, who still resides in Corsicana. Mr. Bright's daughter, Mrs. Eli Fox, has for several years been assistant county superintendent.

One of the pioneers in Navarro County was Joseph Huey, who came to Texas from Pennsylvania in 1851, moving to Corsicana in 1871 and with Capt. Garitty organized a private bank in 1886, which later became the First National Bank. Mr. Huey also went into partnership with Simon Philp and he and his partner established a wholesale and retail hardware business in Dallas in 1872. This business still enjoys a deserved success. Mr. Huey was connected with various enterprises all of which are a successful monument to his business sagacity. Of the three daughters of the Huey

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family, including Mrs. Hughes and Mrs. A. V. Lane, only Mrs. J. E. Whiteselle continues to reside in Corsicana.

Capt. James Garitty's name has been intimately connected with so many Corsicana and Navarro County enterprises that it would require an entire chapter to delineate all of them. He was, as mentioned above, one of the organizers of the First National Bank, connected with the cotton oil mill, the street railway and other outstanding enterprises. In his will a bequest was left to the poor of Navarro County and the interest of this fund is distributed annually. The family of Nick Garitty, a brother of Capt. James Garitty, still lives in Corsicana and is prominent in all enterprises which concern the town.

Among the pioneer families was an early sheriff of Navarro County whose very name was a terror to evil doers although his physique did not indicate his prowess. This man, affectionately known as "Little Bob" Cubley, came to Texas in 1857 and to Navarro County in 1872. His first position in Corsicana was as a teacher in Professor J. C. Mimm's school but his record for law enforcement soon became known and he was tendered a position on the police force, which he accepted. Mr. Cubley served as constable and deputy sheriff and was elected sheriff in 1890. He had about him none of the swagger or false bravado and although small in stature he was absolutely fearless and it was said of him that he would "fight a circle saw with no gloves on".

## PIONEER FAMILIES

William H. Neblett and family moved to Texas from Virginia about 1834, removing to Corsicana about 1852. Mr. Neblett was one of the editors of the old "Navarro Express". Mr. Neblett joined the Confederate Army and during the Civil War his family returned to their early home in Grimes County. R. S. Neblett, son of William H. Neblett, was prominent in Corsicana life from January 1, 1877, when he entered the practice of law here, until his death in 1918. He was a distinguished lawyer, an earnest student and lover of nature. His two daughters, Mrs. Molloy and Mrs. Hagar, both live in Corsicana.

J. M. McCammon and wife, with his parents, moved from Alabama to Corsicana on November 21, 1871. They entered Corsicana on the first passenger train which came into the town when boarding houses were crowded and, while their welcome was warm, the climate was bitterly cold, since an early norther had brought snow and cold weather in its wake. Mr. McCammon entered partnership with W. A. Lang in 1892 and until 1930 the McCammon and Lang Lumber Company was an outstanding enterprise in Navarro County. Mr. McCammon died in 1911 and his son, W. P. McCammon, succeeded him operating the lumber company until it was sold to the Cameron Lumber Company. Mrs. C. W. Taylor and Mrs. Ab Douglas are daughters of this pioneer business man.

For fifty years S. A. Pace was one of the outstanding citizens of Corsicana in both business and civic life. The S. A. Pace Wholesale Grocery Company was one of the largest and most successful firms in its line in the

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

entire region. Mr. Pace married Miss Achsa Eugenia Maddox, of Fairfield, in 1870, and of their five children two still live in Corsicana, these two being Homer E. Pace and Mrs. Frank King.

Judge J. M. Blanding moved from South Carolina to Corsicana in 1873 and began the practice of law. Judge Blanding has been associated with three other outstanding barristers; Judge Croft, Judge Frost and Judge Neblett. He was made president of the Navarro Bar Association in 1908 and held this post for many years. Mrs. Blanding was formerly Miss Cora Palmer, marrying Judge Blanding in 1880. After her death Judge Blanding relinquished the active practice of law and now makes his home with his daughter, Mrs. K. G. Stroud, who resides in Italy, Texas.

Another outstanding member of the legal profession of Corsicana is Judge Rufus Hardy who began the practice of law in 1878 and was elected county attorney two years later. Judge Hardy was made district judge, which post he held for eight years, and in 1906 was elected to the United States Congress, continuing in this post of honor until 1923. Upon his resignation, in 1923, he was succeeded by Luther Johnson who was born and reared in Navarro County. Mrs. Hardy was formerly Miss Felicia Peck, daughter of Capt. William M. Peck. Mr. and Mrs. Hardy were married in 1882 and reared a family of six children, of whom two, Mrs. R. N. Holloway and Mrs. J. Pierce, still live in Corsicana.

Before the industries occupied the major portion of

## PIONEER FAMILIES

that part of Corsicana lying East of the railroad tracks many citizens built their homes there, among them Capt. Martin and John S. Gibson, the Pinkston and McCammon families as well as the Curtis, Burnert, Anderson, Dunn, Clark, Johnson and Scales families. Only a few of these families still reside in their original location. Among them is Emil Frey, for many years a photographer in Corsicana, band leader and musician. His wife was a Miss Bunert, and her sister, Mrs. Casey, lives across the street.

Bunert's Grove, on Seventh Avenue, was, in the Eighties, often the scene of picnics and band concerts.

The J. T. Sullivan family occupied a prominent place in Corsicana in the Eighties and Nineties, Sullivans' Shoe Store was a large one for the times. Shoes were made as well as sold. Mrs. Sullivan, although a delicate woman, was a leader in church and social and civic affairs. Their family, one son and three daughters, was brought up in Corsicana.

Among the loyal pioneer citizens of Corsicana, have been several Jewish families, besides those already mentioned were: David Deutchner and family, the Levi families, the Schwartz family, whose home was on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Main street, where the Navarro Hotel now stands. Also there were the Jarets, long an important family in Corsicana, the Marks here for more than thirty years, the Rosenbergs, Goldbergs, the Freedman family of long standing here, K. Wolens, now celebrating their thirty-fifth year in business here, the Simon Daniels, a large family, all in Cor-

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

sicana, the Drebens, Cerf and Raphael, among the best of the town's citizens. Most of these old families are represented by descendants still living here.

Luther Johnson, although still a young man, has attained success as a lawyer. He is a member of Congress, having succeeded Judge Hardy. His wife, an able helpmate, was Miss Turner Read, daughter of Dr. M. S. Read, for many years a prominent dentist here.

G. A. Rakestraw, a native of Georgia, came to Texas in 1851 and for several years taught school. He was admitted to the bar later. He served as a soldier during the Civil War. Later he and his wife moved to Grape Creek, about 20 miles South of Corsicana, and reared their family, one son and six daughters, two of whom, Mrs. B. L. Davis and Mrs. C. W. Jester were Corsicana citizens. Mrs. Jester died some years ago.

George Elliott and his family also lived near Grape Creek which, in the Nineties, was a popular community, a Methodist Church and camp ground being the center.

W. H. McElwee operated a general merchandise store on the South side of the square during the early days. He sold general merchandise and queensware, as china was then called. He moved his store to Beaton Street upon the coming of the railroad and the McElwee home on Fourth Avenue, which was built about fifty years ago, stands as a typical home of the period. The Collin Street Bakery, which is operated by descendants of this pioneer, is known far and wide for the quality of its products.

## PIONEER FAMILIES

One of the early families of Navarro County was that of Judge John H. Rice. Judge Rice was a law partner of Judge McKie from 1878 to 1884 and this family is represented by Neil Rice and Misses Fannie, Porter and Lacy Rice.

Col. Riggs was a prominent citizen in Corsicana in early days. He had a part in most of his county's activities for many years. His home was on Jefferson Street, now Third Avenue, where his daughter, Mrs. Gus Teas, still lives. Another daughter was the wife of Dr. Robinson of Dresden, while a third, married Wynder Kenner. Many of Col. Riggs' descendants still make Navarro County their home.

Among the men who filled important places in Corsicana in the Seventies and Eighties were M. Z. Collum and his five sons, who came to Corsicana and built a large flour mill and elevator. Many of the farmers, at that time, raised their own wheat and ate their own bread. As conditions changed, with the years, the mills were discontinued, and now, people buy in packages, even meal and chicken feed.

Mrs. S. C. Collum, wife of one of the sons, has lived here since that time. She died this year (1932). Her daughter, Mrs. Sid Story and family occupy the old Collum home.

Among the many men who have called Corsicana and Navarro County, home, no one was more loyal or energetic than Abe Mulkey. His work was constructive, practical, vital and although there is no way of

## HISTORY OF NAVARRO COUNTY

measuring, or accounting such things by a material standard, there are many who will assert that by his constant and earnest preaching and assistance, his work stands out. By fearlessly advocating truth and honesty and faithfulness he has been, through it all, a material benefit to his fellow citizens.

Mr. Mulkey was born in Center Point, Arkansas, April 5th, 1850. His father was a minister, possessing some of the characteristics noticeable in the life of his son. His parents moved to Waxahachie about 1860, where Abe lived until he was about eighteen. He and Louisa Kerr, daughter of Harris Kerr, were married in Corsicana, Dec. 13th, 1869, when he was nineteen, and she was seventeen. He was in business, altogether, twenty years. He preached almost twenty years after his conversion. His method of preaching was unique and very effective. He aided a great many churches in paying off their indebtedness. He helped to secure money with which to build churches. But his main theme was honesty at all times, in all places. It was said he could raise more money in a shorter time than any preacher in his time. He was an evangelist and preached in many other states and in Mexico. His energy was unflagging and he wasted no time. His home was built on the location where his wife's father had built a home for his family in the early days of Corsicana. Mr. Mulkey's home was of the period of the Nineties, and is still a handsome house. Mrs. Mulkey still makes it her home. Mr. Mulkey died during 1919. He was buried in Oakwood Cemetery where their only son was buried some years before.



## PIONEER FAMILIES

Mrs. Mulkey went with her husband in his travels, and assisted in the services. One of his chief desires was to aid the orphanage at Waco and his assistance there was incalculable. He was also greatly interested in the superannuated preachers and did much toward providing for their old age.

J. M. Scales moved to Springhill in 1856 and lived there until about 1875 when he moved to Corsicana, and reared his family. The Scales families were identified with social and business circles in the Eighties and Nineties.

Dr. George Washington Bryan came to Navarro County from Missouri shortly after the Civil War and built his home West of Corsicana near Taylor's Grove where he practiced medicine for almost fifty years. The settlement of Drane, nearby, gradually formed and it still is a thriving community.

The Tatum family, since the early days, has been a part of the business, social and religious life of the county. S. L. Tatum was in the hardware and tinner business on the square, and that business has been almost continuous until the present. W. M. Tatum spent his life in the town and watched his hardware business expand to wholesale and retail. His wife, Georgia Cunningham, was a sister of J. D. and C. C. Cunningham and still lives here with her three sons and one daughter. John and Claude Cunningham were identified also with the hardware business. They have been Corsicana citizens for more than forty years.

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The first florist in Corsicana was Wm. Clowe. He and his wife came from England and settled in Corsicana in 1885. From that time until they died (Mrs. Clowe in 1923 and Mr. Clowe in 1926) they were successful with their nursery, supplying growing and cut flowers to Navarro County people. Their children have continued the work and, as their parents, were good citizens.

Many Navarro County citizens have done important work — in business and art — in literature and in statesmanship.

Navarro County has known many changes in many ways and there is cause for gratitude that the majority of the citizenry has been for justice, truth and right living.

In all times of trial in the past the spirit of right has prevailed. There have been trials and there will be again but thus far the true American spirit is in command.



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