

379  
N81  
No. 2261

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF ROBERTSON COUNTY

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the  
North Texas State College in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

by

Ivory Freeman Carson, B. A.

Hearne, Texas

January, 1954

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. TOPOGRAPHY . . . . .	1
Location	
Area and Surface	
Drainage	
Climate	
II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND . . . . .	10
Spanish	
Mexican and Anglo-American	
Creation and Organization	
Boundaries	
County Seats and Courthouses	
III. MILITARY CONTRIBUTION AFTER STATEHOOD . . . . .	29
Civil War	
Spanish-American War	
IV. SOCIAL HISTORY . . . . .	33
Elements of Population	
Churches and Schools	
Health	
Newspapers	
Disasters	
V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT . . . . .	49
Farming	
Brazos Valley Problems	
Pioneer Farm Homes	
Transportation	
VI. EARLY TOWNS . . . . .	62
Franklin	
Benchley	
Calvert	
Hearne	
Wheelock	
New Baden	
Bremond	

Mumford  
Petteway  
Easterly  
Ghost Towns

VII. GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION . . . . .	95
County Commissioners Court	
County Clerk	
District Court	
County Court	
Justice of the Peace	
County Attorney	
Sheriff	
Constable	
Declining Organizations	
A Glance Backward	
VIII. RETROSPECTION AND PROGRESS. . . . .	104
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	107

## CHAPTER I

### TOPOGRAPHY

#### Location

Robertson County, a central-eastern Texas county, one of the two hundred fifty-four counties of the nation's largest state, was named for Sterling Clack Robertson,<sup>1</sup> who, first as agent and later as impresario, worked diligently to secure the grant which he and his associates continued to claim on the basis that the region granted to Austin for his third colony was formerly claimed by the Nashville Company. Law-suits resulted and financial losses occurred within the company.<sup>2</sup>

The county is bounded on the north by Falls and Limestone Counties, on the east by Leon County, on the south by Brazos County, and on the west by Milam and Burleson Counties. The Navasota River forms the natural boundary on the east and the Brazos River winds its way along the western edge. The old San Antonio Road, the most famous route of pioneer and frontier travel, which is older than Texas, and

---

<sup>1</sup>Inventory of the County Archives of Texas, Robertson County (Franklin), No. 198, Robertson County, Texas, 1941, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Eugene C. Barker, The Life of Stephen F. Austin, p. 339.

which was the longitude and latitude to the pioneers, forms almost the entire southern boundary.

Located approximately one hundred fifty miles west of the Louisiana state line, Robertson County is only one hundred forty miles from the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>3</sup>

#### Surface and Area

The county lies wholly within the Gulf Coastal Plain and is on the edge of the East Texas timbered region. About 852 square miles, or 545,000 acres<sup>4</sup> make up one of the oldest settled parts of the state.<sup>5</sup>

A level to rolling terrain, with sand and sandy loam in the uplands, gives way to deep alluvial soils in the river bottoms.<sup>6</sup> About 15 per cent of the area was originally prairie, the balance being timbered with hardwoods, principally post oak, black jack oak, and hickory in the uplands, and pin oak, post oak, elm, hackberry, cottonwood, ash, and pecan in the bottom lands.

The county is divided into highlands and prairies, and the area included between the Navasota and Brazos rivers has a southeasterly slope in the direction of the rivers. A

---

<sup>3</sup> U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Soils, Soil Survey of Robertson County, Texas, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Inventory, op. cit., p. 1.

mixed prairie and timbered belt, largely gently rolling in topography, covers roughly that part of the county north of Mud and North Mineral creeks. A greater part of the upland country is made up of land that forms a gentle slope, although there are portions that are quite flat. Too, in this section there are occasional stretches of flat land and a number of high hills commanding views of the surrounding country. The flat and gently rolling surface of the timbered, sandy belt is dotted with a number of iron-ore-capped knolls and occasional hills, and a number of small prairies.<sup>7</sup>

The most striking topographic features of the area are the occasional prominent hills, like those east of Hayes and south of Bald Prairie. Along the Houston and Texas Central Railroad, which follows along the slope between the Brazos bottom and the general upland, there is a rise in the elevation from 300 feet above sea level at Benchley, on the Southern county line, to 448 feet at Bremond, near the Northern line. Crossing the upland part of the area along the route of the International and Great Northern Railroad, the elevation ranges from 310 feet at Hearne to 445 feet at Franklin, then drops to 340 feet at Easterly and 314 at Lake. Mumford, in the lower Brazos bottom, has an elevation of 265 feet, while Valley Junction, 9 miles up stream, is 283 feet above sea level.<sup>8</sup>

#### Drainage

A number of important streams rising in the rather indistinct divide between the drainage tracts of the Navasota and Brazos rivers have cut deep hollows as they found their way

---

<sup>7</sup>Bureau of Soils, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

to the main water course. This divide crosses the county near the center and passes through Petteway, Grant Prairie, Franklin, and Henry Prairie. The gently rolling and sometimes quite broken country, in the neighborhood of stream courses, is closely related to the valley walls of a number of streams, like Mud, Mineral, and Clear creeks, which are quite steep, rising suddenly to the general upland level. Along the principal creeks are bottoms of rich alluvial soil ranging in width from very narrow strips to strips three fourths of a mile in width. The broad bottom and gentle slope of Steele Creek, which rises in Limestone County, provides hundreds of acres of rich farm land as it flows across the northeast corner of Robertson County. Deep gullies, known as "dugouts," are formed by the upper courses of the streams and carry water only a part of each year, while some streams, like Cedar Creek, are fed by springs and have running water always. Where channels have been obstructed by material washed from the upland, especially in their lower courses, the one-time notable productive bottoms have become subject to regular overflows. This problem has caused Mud and Walnut creeks to bring about a depreciation in value within the last few years. The general drainage of the upland is very good and there is but a small amount of erosion other than a gradual advance of the "dugouts," which, in many instances, benefit, especially, the flat stretches by broadening to the drainage system.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

Water, like air, is always in motion. Much that fell as rain in early days ran off into rivers, doing a vast amount of work. The three rivers of the county, for many, many years, were cutting across the hard rock faster than the land rose, were making flood plains in the bottom lands, and were taking to the sea materials for the sandbars along the coast.

Draining the county are three rivers, the Navasota, the Brazos, and the Little Brazos, which parallels the Brazos at distances never exceeding 3 miles. These streams, flowing through deep ravines in the uplands and issuing upon almost prairie country, are given to sudden rises. Flood waters have again and again dropped rich deposits of black soil in the valleys, until the fertility of the bottom lands as become proverbial. Since flood control methods have been adopted and malarial conditions eliminated, the lowlands between the Brazos and Little Brazos have naturally increased in value. 10

The Navasota bottom is uniformly flat, interrupted by crossing streams and occasional sloughs, and is subject to frequent overflows. The Brazos bottom proper embraces all the territory between the Big and Little Brazos rivers in addition to an irregular strip east of Little Brazos. Near the southern county line the bottom averages about five miles in width, but is considerably narrower toward the northern line. The width of this rich land in Robertson County is very irregular and changes with the meandering course of the Brazos River as it forms the western boundary. Its width is about one-half



mile at one place just west of Hammond, while in the bend where Hardin's Slough meets the Big Brazos the bank has given way and the river reaches within a quarter of a mile of the Little Brazos.<sup>11</sup>

With the exception of occasional, very small, rounded hills and sloughs, the bottoms are almost flat. About midway between the two streams there is a slight and almost imperceptible ridge, which has been formed, as the land gently sloped away from the river.<sup>12</sup>

Just west of Calvert and Wooten Wells the flat country slopes gradually away from the Brazos bottom bluff line to blend in smoothly with the general uplands. Evidently these flat stretches were influenced by the waters of the Brazos in the early stages of the river's development.<sup>13</sup>

#### Climate

Climate was one of the important factors in influencing the early settlers to make their homes in Robertson County. They were able to fit their activities to the pattern of climate, which in many ways determined their modes of living.

The winters are generally mild. Light showers sometimes fall, but zero weather is rather uncommon. The long summers are not so warm as the latitude would indicate by reason of the moderating breeze from the Gulf. The hot season, comprised

<sup>11</sup>Bureau of Soils, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

of June, July, and August, has average monthly temperatures of eighty-two degrees, eighty-five degrees, and eighty-four degrees Fahrenheit, respectively. During the winter and spring, "northers" may be expected at any time. Winds from the north accompany these sudden drops in temperature and continue from two to five days, normally. Many times the "cold snaps," coming with the northers damage the tender  
<sup>14</sup>  
 vegetables and fruit, particularly the peach crop.

The unusually mild winter of 1906-07 caused the peach trees to bud and even bloom as early as January, with the result that subsequent freezes did great damage both to the crop and to the trees. The crop was practically cut off, while the vitality of the trees was so impaired that many died later. Those on the high-lying, and well-drained soils withstood the unfavorable conditions best.

The early spring caused the old cotton stalks to sprout, affording sustenance to early boll weevils. The early planted crop was so injured and retarded by the cold weather of April and May that much replanting had to be done. Corn was not seriously injured. Such unseasonable weather, however, is very rare. <sup>15</sup>

Around February 21 is the average date for the last killing frost in the early spring and about November 17 is the first in the early fall. Crops in general are really not damaged severely by the unexpected frost, but vegetation has been killed as late as the middle of April. Crops are planted a bit earlier in the bottoms than in the uplands, in the sandy uplands in particular. Most of the Irish potato crop is planted in February, and corn may be planted any time

---

<sup>14</sup>  
Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>15</sup>  
Ibid.

from the middle of February to the first of April. Cotton planting is usually done as early as possible in the effort to make a crop before the boll weevil becomes most active. This early planting has become more pronounced since the advent of this pest. Any time from the tenth of April to the middle of May is considered cotton planting time. The normal climatic conditions are well suited to cotton and it very seldom happens that less than a fair crop is made on account of unfavorable weather conditions. By the timely breaking up of the crusts formed by the rains, by keeping the top soil continuously well mulched, and with frequent cultivations, most crop injury can be lessened considerably.<sup>16</sup>

Robertson County has no distinct "wet" and "dry" seasons as a whole. The average tendency is toward heaviest precipitation in the spring with a slight upward turn in the autumn, and with dips in the summer and winter.

The annual rainfall of about thirty-four inches, when distributed uniformly, is adequate to meet the needs of all crops. April and May are considered the months of heaviest precipitation while June and July, although with a fair average rainfall, are counted as a season of uncertain weather and subject to droughts. Corn crops are apt to be cut short when dry weather comes during these months. Irish potatoes, planted in the fall, can not be grown successfully on account of the

---

unevenly distributed rainfall during the season. Gulf clouds are not indicative of good summer rains as the best rains generally come from the northeast.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup>

Ibid.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### Spanish

As the Spanish explorers, soldiers, and missionaries passed through the region between the Navasota and Brazos rivers in 1776, on their way to establish the missions and presidios in East Texas,<sup>1</sup> they came in contact with tribes of Tonkawas and Tawakonis. These friendly, semi-nomadic Indians attached themselves to the Spanish expedition after it had crossed the Brazos, and before it reached the Tejas country to the east. After the expedition crossed the Brazos the travelers turned to the north in order to avoid a network of streams. Thus, they found a course which led them over high ground to the Navasota.<sup>2</sup> The route they followed became the most important path of travel and was called El Camino Real<sup>3</sup> (The King's Highway), which has been in use for almost a century and a half. This route of travel has changed gradually to the north and to the south, beginning in the 1820's when Stephen F. Austin brought his first colonists into Texas from the coast.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Carlos E. Castaneda, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, II (1936), end map.

<sup>2</sup> Inventory, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Castaneda, op. cit., end map.

This portion of their trail now marks the southeast boundary of Robertson County, and is proudly referred to as the Old San Antonio Road.

#### Mexican and Anglo-American

Robertson County was approximately midway between Nacogdoches and the important town of San Antonio de Bexar. Yet, the Spanish Government, seemingly, made little or no effort to develop this region.

Immediately after Mexico won her independence from Spain in 1821, a flood of Anglo-American colonists poured into this new Texas. American colonization met with the approval of the Mexican authorities, but soon ended in a revolt which threw off the Mexican sovereignty.<sup>5</sup>

On April 15, 1825, Robert Leftwich, agent of a Tennessee company, was granted permission to settle 800 families.<sup>6</sup> His settlement was to be located, by contract in Saltillo, in the Brazos River basin and west of the Bexar-Nacogdoches road.<sup>7</sup> The territory now included in Robertson County fell within his grant.<sup>8</sup> After months of bitter wrangling, adjustments within the company were made and Sterling C. Robertson became the impresario of the Texas grant.<sup>9</sup> When Robertson made his first

---

<sup>5</sup> The Texas Almanac for 1939-1940, p. 62.

<sup>6</sup> Barker, op. cit., p. 331.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Inventory, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 336-58.

visit to the region in 1826, he found a squatter named Early. Little is known of Early except that he stubbornly resisted all efforts which affected his removal.<sup>10</sup> Various conditions delayed the colonization and created hard feelings, which were caused by those various differences over the ownership of the grant. The contract was handed back and forth between Austin and Robertson, by the Mexican Government, until the very eve of the Texas Revolution.<sup>11</sup> While the ownership of the grant was being disputed many colonists had settled in the lower continuous stretch which was under debate. This portion later became Robertson County. Groups of four or five families would make the long journey together and would build their houses close together for protection against the Indians.<sup>12</sup> Behind the everlasting qualities of Robertson County today is the story of these same people who suffered untold hardships and bitter disappointments to build up our county. These early Texans were dependent upon their neighbors, and necessity drew the people close together. Families of these "neighborhoods" regularly borrowed meat from each other. At that time the colonists believed that meat could not be cured in this section of the country and seldom tried it. There was a compact that only one family at a time would butcher, and every

---

<sup>10</sup>Eugene C. Barker, ed., The Austin Papers, Part II, p. 1304.

<sup>11</sup>Barker, Life, op. cit., p. 371.

<sup>12</sup>Inventory, op. cit., p. 2.

one in the neighborhood would borrow meat from that family until all the meat was gone. Then a calf was killed by another family, and so on around the borrowing circle.<sup>13</sup> These same neighbors helped build the houses in which the new settlers would live, and in time of sickness or trouble the neighboring colonists were constantly at their side. It was this companionship and friendliness between the colonists that broke the monotony and made life worth living for the early Robertson County settlers.

Between the years of 1829 and 1843, a group of Irish immigrants selected a wooded section for settlement just north of the San Antonio-Nacogdoches road. They chose the wooded land, which was very poor, in preference to the rich black prairie lands on account of the timber which could be used in building homes and fencing their land. The timber also afforded protection from the many roving tribes of unfriendly Indians in this section of the state. This settlement, first known as Staggers Point, and later as Benchley, was the first within the present limits of Robertson County.<sup>14</sup>

In 1830, or 1831, the military post of Tenoxtitlan was established on the Brazos River. It is believed to have been established by convict-soldiers by the Mexican Government to protect the frontier and encourage settlement.

---

<sup>13</sup>Inventory, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>14</sup>"Origin of Names of Robertson County," Hearne Democrat, April 9, 1936, p. 1.



Mary Austin Holly, an early Texas historian, locates Fort Tenoxtitlan in this way:

Tenoxtitlan is a military post and town established on the right bank of the Brazos River, twelve miles above the upper road leading from San Antonio to Nacogdoches, fifteen miles below the mouth of the San Andres River (Little River) and one hundred miles above San Felipe de Austin. <sup>15</sup>

For all the necessities of life the early settler was completely dependent upon his own resources. Naturally the first concern was the building of a home. These homes were generally simple log cabins. They were built for the most part of logs, hand-sawed planks, or of whatever timber was available. Frequently, the floor was the packed earth, while other cabins were floored with slabs of timber, or pieces of split logs with the faces roughly smoothed. The chimneys were constructed of stones and mud, with mud serving as mortar. Oak pins took the place of nails as they held firmly the timbers of colonists' rude cabins in place. <sup>16</sup>

As a means of better protecting themselves from the Indians the cabins were built, quite often, in a circle or square. Around each cabin the colonists erected a barricade, or outside walls, which were from ten to twelve feet in height and with the roof slanting wholly inward. <sup>17</sup> Almost every settlement had

---

<sup>15</sup> Mattie Austin Hatcher, Letters of an Early American Traveler, Mary Austin Holly, p. 133.

<sup>16</sup> Inventory, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> James T. De Shields, Cynthia Ann Parker, p. 10.

a blockhouse or stockade. Strong houses were constructed by the Dunn and Wheelock families, and Fort Parker, built by the Parkers, was a combination stockade and blockhouse. Later stockades were built at Fort Boggy and on Cobb's Prairie.<sup>18</sup> Parker's Fort was the only blockhouse to be taken, according to the records, but successful raids were made on the outlying cabins. The tragedy which befell Fort Parker was the result of the depopulation of the region during the revolution.<sup>19</sup>

Robertson's colony originated with the Texas Association in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1822. By 1827, the Mexican government had transferred the original contract, and extended the boundaries until the grant was two hundred miles long and one hundred miles wide. This area included all or part of thirty present Texas counties: Bastrop, Bell, Bosque, Brazos, Brown, Burleson, Burnet, Callahan, Comanche, Coryell, Eastland, Erath, Falls, Hamilton, Hill, Hood, Jack, Johnson, Lampasas, Lee, Limestone, McLennan, Milam, Mills, Palo Pinto, Parker, Robertson, Somervell, Stephens, and Williamson. This grant was second in size only to Stephen F. Austin's and part of the two grants adjoining.<sup>20</sup>

It is not definitely known when Robertson's colony was organized, as the Mexican municipality of Viesca, but as early

---

<sup>18</sup>Inventory, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>19</sup>De Shields, op. cit., pp. 12-19.

<sup>20</sup>The Handbook of Texas, pp. 488-489.

as 1830, there was an "ayuntamiento," or the governing board.<sup>21</sup> Various meetings called by the colonists preceded the revolution and delegates from Viesca were seated. In 1832, when the San Felipe Convention met, Jared E. Groce, Joshua Hadly, and William Robinson represented Viesca.<sup>22</sup> At the Consultation of 1835, where the relationship of Texas to Mexico was decided and Provisional Government was created, J. G. W. Pierson, J. L. Hood, Samuel T. Allen, A. G. Perry, J. W. Parker and Alexander Thompson were representatives for Viesca.<sup>23</sup> One of the early acts of the Provisional Government changed the name of the municipality of Viesca to Milam, in honor of Ben Milam who was killed while leading the attack on San Antonio in the latter part of 1835.<sup>24</sup>

On March 1, 1836, the Constitutional Convention met at Washington-on-the-Brazos, located about forty miles from San Felipe and a short distance from the present town of Navasota. Among the fifty-nine delegates who attended the sessions of the convention were, Sterling C. Robertson and George Childress, who represented Milam.<sup>25</sup>

Added to the many hardships connected with the Texas Revolution in 1836, was the dire mass movement from Texas known as the "Runaway Scrape." With the sorrow and consternation

---

<sup>21</sup>H. P. N. Gammel, Laws of Texas, p. 479.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 479.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 1002.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 508.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 824.

which the settlers received the successive announcements of the fall of the Alamo, the retreat of General Houston, and the Goliad Massacre, came the realization that the Mexicans were almost upon them. The helpless women and children began to flee for their lives, abandoning homes with all that they contained.

From Robbin's Ferry, in northeastern Madison County, over the Trinity River, the San Antonio Road was crowded with women and children and all the livestock they could manage, as they fled before the advance of Santa Anna's army.<sup>26</sup> Many sections of the colony in which Robertson had worked unceasingly to combine the talents of soldier, colonizer, and legislator,<sup>27</sup> were almost depopulated.<sup>28</sup> The settlements, weakened by the revolution, were often targets for successful Indian raids. The Battle of San Jacinto practically established the independence of the Lone Star Republic and confirmed the Anglo-American dominance. The families who had fled, and many of whom had despaired of seeing their homes again, and the discharge soldiers, returned to the abandoned area.<sup>29</sup> Although Indian depredations had abated, soon after the Battle of San Jacinto, in May, 1836, the Comanches made their historical raid on Parker's

---

<sup>26</sup> Inventory, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> The Texas Almanac for 1936, p. 124.

<sup>29</sup> Texas Almanac, 1939-40, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

Fort. Most of the inhabitants were massacred and Cynthia Ann Parker was carried away as a prisoner.<sup>30</sup>

One of the little known battles of Texas, history, The Surveyor's Fight, occurred in 1838, near Dawson, Navarro County, which at that time was included in Robertson County. One of the leading participants of the battle was Joseph P. Jones, who was killed in the skirmish. The Jones family had made the trip from Illinois and settled in northeastern Milam County, one of the first permanent settlements in Robertson's colony, on the prairie that bears their name. Sallie Brimberry Jones and her eight children lived to see Texas become a state. When the mother died she was buried at Jones Prairie, far from the lonely grave of her husband who fell while defending the small band of surveyors from the Indians.<sup>31</sup>

#### Creation and Organization

On December 14, 1837, the Second Continental Congress of the Republic of Texas created Robertson County out of Bexar, Milam, and Nacogdoches Counties. Only a part of Robertson's colony, and much land that had been included in his colonial grant was included in the new county named for Sterling C. Robertson. Congress chose the chief justice and directed him to give ten days' public notice of an election for a county

---

<sup>30</sup>De Shields, op. cit., pp. 12-15.

<sup>31</sup>Marjorie Rogers, "Early Texas Surveyors Victims of Massacre in 1838," Groesbeck Journal, December 23, 1926, p. 2.

seat. The county was also attached to the Milam Senatorial District by the same act of creation and set forth that it was entitled to one representative in Congress. A schedule of court terms was established after the county was placed in the third judicial district. County court was to be held on the third Mondays of February, May, August, and November; district court would convene next succeeding fourth Monday in April and October.<sup>32</sup>

There is no record of the first election, but county officials began to file their bonds in March, 1838. Alanson Hardy and Robert Henry were chosen by popular elections as justices of the peace, and Harrison Owen was chosen as county clerk and recorder. The "high sheriff" was John D. Smith, and William C. Watson was named district clerk. Earlier, Congress had chosen the following officers: Francis Slaughter, Chief Justice; A. W. Cooke, County Surveyor; Thomas Dillard, President of the Board of Land Commissioners; A. L. McCoy, Clerk of the Board of Land Commissioners and Register of the Land Office; and Alanson Hardy, Postmaster at Navasota. This was the first post office in Robertson County. In November, 1838, John R. Hardy was appointed by the county court to assess the county for the years of 1838 and 1839.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup>  
Gammel, Laws, I, op. cit., p. 1398.

<sup>33</sup>  
Inventory, op. cit., p. 5.

A frontier company of minute men was organized in 1839. It was the duty of this organization to guard the settlements lying north of the San Antonio-Nacogdoches Road, and between the Brazos and the Navasota rivers. The company had its headquarters at Franklin and was commanded by Eli Chandler. Other units of militia were organized along the frontier at approximately the same time and some new block-houses were erected, among them Fort Boggy, in present Leon County.<sup>34</sup>

The embryonic character of the county administrative bearing and its thorough relation to the community in the spring of 1840, is illustrated by first county clerk, Harrison Owen, when he was unable to issue a license to a couple who wanted to elope, until the cows came home. Owen could not gain access to the courthouse because the key to that building had been used as a clapper in a calf's bell.<sup>35</sup>

#### Boundaries

The first officers of Robertson County had jurisdiction over the vast territory from which all or parts of seventeen other present-day counties have been created. The original boundaries were set forth by Congress:

---

<sup>34</sup>W. D. Wood, "Sketch of the Early Settlement of Leon County, Its Organization, and Some of the Early Settlers," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, IV (1900-1901), 205-206.

<sup>35</sup>Inventory, op. cit., p. 5.

... the line beginning on the Brazos River, at the county line of the County of Washington, and running on that line easterly to the Trinity River; thence due west to the Brazos River; thence down that river to the beginning point. <sup>36</sup>

On January 30, 1841, the first change in the Robertson County boundary came with the creation of the present Brazos County, which was first called Navasota. The creation took away from Robertson County a small portion of land above the San Antonio Road and just east of the Brazos River and fixed the present southern line of Robertson County at that point.<sup>37</sup>

Leon County was created March 17, 1846, and a large section of Robertson County's original territory was removed from the southern part.<sup>38</sup> Three days later Dallas County was created and this took away a large tract from the northeast corner.<sup>39</sup>

Limestone County<sup>40</sup> and Navarro County<sup>41</sup> were created from Robertson County on April 11, 1846, and the present boundaries on that day were fixed as follows:

Beginning on the northeast corner of Brazos County on the Brazos River; thence up said river twenty-five hundred varas, above the northwest corner of a survey made for Jacob Welch, as represented on the county map made for Robertson County; thence down said river to the line of Brazos; and thence with said line to the point of beginning on the Brazos. <sup>42</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Gammel, I, op. cit., p. 1398.

<sup>37</sup>Gammel, II, p. 550.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 1332.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 1438.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 1314.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 1378.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 1366.



## County Seats and Courthouses

Franklin, a site about one and one-half miles southwest of the present town of Franklin and now referred to as Old Franklin, was the choice of the voters in the first election for a county seat.<sup>43</sup> William Love provided the house for a temporary courthouse.<sup>44</sup> Leander Harl was awarded a contract, on June 8, 1838, to build a courthouse;<sup>45</sup> however, in February of the next year the county court ordered that suit be brought against him for failure to carry out the terms of his agreement.<sup>46</sup> The building was completed by George W. Cox because Harl had died,<sup>47</sup> and the county accepted it on August 17, 1839. This two-room structure "of good strong timber," twenty feet wide, twenty-eight feet long, and about eighteen feet high was Robertson County's first courthouse.<sup>48</sup>

On October 5, 1850, by a two-thirds vote of the people the county seat was moved from Franklin to Wheelock. All the

<sup>43</sup> Probate Minutes, Vol. A, p. 5, entry 187.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>45</sup> Bond Book, Vol., 1, p. 38, in Official Bond Record, entry 105.

<sup>46</sup> Probate Minutes, Vol. A, pp. 24-25, entry 187.

<sup>47</sup> Bond Book, Vol. 1, p. 20, entry 105.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

county offices were ordered to move into the new county seat as quickly as possible and Wheelock was the setting for the November term of court.<sup>49</sup> In the summer of 1851, bids for the construction of a courthouse were ordered,<sup>50</sup> and in November the specifications for a two-story, wooden building, with an outside stairway, were approved by the commissioners.<sup>51</sup>

The building plans submitted by A. L. Brigance were not approved until May 1852.<sup>52</sup> Another year rolled along before the courthouse was accepted, on August 15, 1853, almost three years after the county government had been moved to Wheelock. The new building did not meet with the approval of the commissioners so they deducted sixty-five dollars from the contract price, "for failing to place the ballastrade around Said Roof," required the contractor to continue painting the roof and stipulated that should it leak, he was to produce a "good and Substantial" new one.<sup>53</sup> In February 1854, Brigance was ordered to improve the roof. The reason was not given but he had to raise it "in proportion to the size of said Court House."

The construction of a courthouse did not give permanence to the county seat.

<sup>49</sup>County Court Book of County Records, Vol. BC, p. 68 in Commissioners Court Minutes, entry 1.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 250-51.

On the very day that the commissioners entered their order accepting the new courthouse they announced the results of an election held a few days earlier, at which the voters had named the center of the county as their choice for a seat of government.<sup>54</sup>

Four commissioners were appointed by the court to investigate the suitability of the people's choice for a town site. In case it did not meet with the approval of the commissioners, they were to choose one or two other places within five miles of the center and to do what they could toward procuring donations from the landowners. County archives and offices must remain at Wheelock until quarters right for the occasion could be provided elsewhere.<sup>55</sup> The calm attitude of the county fathers evidenced in this last order seems to have been particularly well-advised, for three years passed before the will of the people in the matter of this county seat change was gratified.

The appointed commissioners submitted their report and stated that they had chosen a site on the Francis Slauter headright, and about one and one-half miles southeast of the center of the county, "on the head of Cedar Creek." On November 22, 1853, the county court accepted the report and at the same time declared the site the new county seat, "so soon as the legislature passes an act confirming the same."

---

<sup>54</sup>  
Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>55</sup>  
Ibid., p. 285.

The same commissioners also recommended that the people petition the legislature for such confirmation.<sup>56</sup>

The legislature passed an act on February 13, 1854, "to Locate the Seat of Justice in the County of Robertson." The chief justice was directed to order an election, to declare any place within five miles of the center of the county chosen by the majority of the voters to be the county seat. The new seat must be called Owensville, and as soon as the necessary buildings were erected the county offices and courts must be moved from Wheelock, but not before.<sup>57</sup> In November 1854, the county court directed the chief justice to obtain from the district surveyor of the Robertson Land District a certificate showing the "precise center" of the county. The county court was still meeting at Wheelock but wished to locate the county seat, soon, "permanently." Three commissioners were appointed to select two or more sites within five miles of the center and procure "the best donations they can and report the Same to the Chief Justice Instantly."<sup>58</sup> This report has not been found, but on April 7, 1855, an election was held, and David H. Love donated a site for the county seat "on the Waters of Walnut Creek."<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>57</sup> Gammel, Laws, III, 1553.

<sup>58</sup> County Court Records, op. cit., pp. 302-303.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 332-333.

The commissioners drew up a contract with A. L. Brigance, in November 1855, with the specifications calling for a two-story wooden building with outside stairway. This time the building was to be forty feet square, and "to be set on good sound oak blocks." The doors were to be fitted with "good locks and fastenings," and must be "well painted roof & all." The contract called for the completion of the courthouse by August 1, 1856, and Brigance was to receive as compensation one town lot in Owensville and \$2,750.<sup>60</sup> Brigance met the deadline; the building was accepted on August 5, and orders were given for the county offices to move into their new buildings. The county court held its final meeting at Wheelock on August 19, 1856<sup>61</sup> but held a special term in the new courthouse on August 28.

Owensville remained the county seat until July 12, 1870, when an act of legislature moved the seat to Calvert,<sup>62</sup> and on August 1, of that year, the county court held its first session in the new county seat. For almost ten years the county seat remained at Calvert, but no courthouse was ever built there. For a time offices were rented, and at one time a building was leased by the year for seventy-five dollars

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>61</sup> County Court Records, Vol. D-1, pp. 24-25, 32-36, entry 1.

<sup>62</sup> Gammel, Laws, VI, p. 205.

per month. Finally, a two-story house fronting on Main Street was obtained by the county and came to be known as the Court House Building. The voters, in 1874, considered the possibility of removing the county seat to Englewood, but apparently voted to remain at Calvert, for on June 1, 1875, a contest of the election was dismissed by the county court. The court continued to meet at Calvert until the final meeting, on February 25, 1880,<sup>63</sup> which ended sessions in that county seat.

On December 16, 1879, Calvert lost the county seat to Morgan, through an election. Morgan was a development of the Texas Land Company, on the International and Great Northern Railroad.<sup>64</sup> On February 9, 1880, the court ordered that the plans of the city of Morgan, as presented by the Texas Land Company, be authorized to name the streets. The commissioners appointed Overall, a captain and H. Holdeman as an assistant, on December 29, to make the arrangements for a courthouse at Morgan. This same committee was to receive all donations made to the county; to see that the town was properly laid off; and "report the best means of removing the records of the court to Morgan."<sup>65</sup> In the meanwhile it was discovered that

---

<sup>63</sup>Inventory, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>64</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>  
Ibid.

there was already a post office named Morgan in Texas, so the commissioners renamed the new county seat Franklin.<sup>66</sup> The records were moved, early in March 1880, to a "frame building 25 x 100 feet" in Franklin. On March 8, 1880, the commissioners court held its first meeting at the new site. About one year later the plans of F. E. Ruffini, Austin architect, for a \$30,000.00 courthouse were accepted and J. B. Smith was awarded the contract. On January 7, 1882, the building was accepted and still serves the county, although it has been extensively remodeled.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>  
Ibid.

## CHAPTER III

### MILITARY CONTRIBUTION AFTER STATEHOOD

#### Civil War

The Civil War hurt Texas perhaps less than any other Confederate State. It was farthest from the center of actual fighting; it was the youngest of the seceding states; and it had relatively few slaves. In that day of poorly developed transportation lines, Texas was more truly western than southern.

Although Robertson County, in east-central Texas, was far removed geographically from the area of the most serious fighting of the war, the county, nevertheless, organized and equipped two companies when Texas seceded from the Union. One company was commanded by William P. Townsend, the other by B. Brooks. These two companies were active in many important battles of the Civil War.

In addition to the soldiers and officers furnished by Robertson County to the cause of the South, the county also supplied to the armies of the Confederacy, money, uniforms, and provisions throughout the course of the conflict. At home funds were raised for the support of destitute families of soldiers, and particularly for the widows and orphans of men killed in service. Cotton cards were shipped in, and



home spun jeans were produced locally. Surplus cloth from the State Penitentiary was brought to the county at various times where it was made into clothing. A small factory was set up near Wheelock where coarse clothing was manufactured and furnished to the soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

During the war, and as his own contribution, Samuel B. Wheelock opened his home to the Confederate soldiers for shelter and protection.<sup>2</sup> This, in a manner, was comparable to the present United Service Organization (USO).

Today, December, 1953, Robertson County proudly claims one of the five surviving Civil War veterans. He is Walter G. Williams, Franklin, Texas "First Citizen," who recently celebrated his 111th birthday.

Walter Williams joined Company C of the fifth cavalry, General John B. Hood's Texas Brigade, stationed then at Corinth, Mississippi, when he was twenty-two years old; he became foragemaster and found it particularly hard to supply the troops in the hard pressed Confederacy.<sup>3</sup>

Williams and a group of other soldiers ambushed some Yankees one morning and killed about one hundred. This was the only time he was in battle. Of the Civil War he says:

We quit just five minutes too early. They (the Union) were getting ready to stack arms, and we beat

<sup>1</sup>Inventory, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Jacquelyn Allison Leonard, "Tales of the Runaway Scrape," The Junior Historian, VIII (November, 1947), 5.

<sup>3</sup>"Col. Walter G. Williams is now 111," The Franklin Texan, November 19, 1953, p. 1.

them to it, we didn't get beat, we were just starved out. <sup>4</sup>

Colonel Williams, who received his title from Governor Shivers in a 1950 ceremony, was born November 14, 1842, in Itwamba County, Mississippi.

At 14, he left his dad's farm and struck out to Texas on his own, first settling with friends of the family in Brazos County then moving to his own farm at Franklin. <sup>5</sup>

He now lives with his second wife on a sixty-acre farm where he has lived most of his fifty-eight years of married life. They are living in the original house, which is standing up under the years as well as he.

#### Spanish-American War

The part played by Texas in the Spanish-American War will long be remembered, for the Roosevelt Rough Riders, who contributed no little to the freeing of Cuba, were a hand picked cavalry regiment made up partly of Texas Rangers. Moreover, nearness to Cuba, together with water transportation, made it relatively easy to send soldiers and material supplies.

When war became inevitable, Robertson County, in response to her call to the colors, sent the finest men of that day. Some of the men who went into service were: Dink Adkins,

---

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Winston Bode, "111 Candles on Cake for 'Colonel' Williams!", The Houston Press, November 11, 1953, p. 1.

Phil Teeling, Will Pryor, Albert McNeel, all from Hearne, and from the other parts of the county came Louis Cashmire, R. L. Morris, the father of John Grace and many, many others. Hearne claims less than one half dozen surviving veterans today. J. W. Horlock, originally from Grimes County, has made his home in Hearne for a greater part of the time since he left the service.<sup>6</sup>

The volunteers were mustered in, in Houston and trained for a period of time in Navasota. In their period of service, which lasted approximately one year, the leader of their regiment was a colonel by the name of Boone and their captain was Tom Buffington.

Louis Cashmire, a lieutenant in the Spanish-American War, was captain of the State Militia which was stationed in Calvert for a time after the conflict with Spain. The militia had no trouble in securing men, as the men who were ineligible for service in 1898, because they were too young, were anxious to be in military service.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>  
Fred L. Wood, 405 Brenken Street, Hearne, Texas, personal interview.

<sup>7</sup>  
J. W. Horlock, 308 Brenken Street, Hearne, Texas, personal interview.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOCIAL HISTORY

#### Elements of Population

Comparatively wealthy planters from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, who had brought along their slaves, were numbered along with the Irish immigrants and their families from the frontiers of Arkansas, Tennessee, and Kentucky who followed Sterling C. Robertson into this part of the country soon after the creation of Robertson County.<sup>1</sup> One of the visitors to this region wrote:

Emigration has been immense during the last year, consisting of a highly valuable class of citizens, who not only possess the means of developing the resources of the soil but whose moral worth is happily calculated to make a favorable impression on society.<sup>2</sup>

With the increasing importance of cotton raising, more slaves were imported, and by 1858, there were almost as many Negro residents as white. The outcome was that during the Reconstruction Days there were political difficulties as well as economic. In 1869, 1,169 Negro voters registered in Robertson County, while only 714 white men registered. To keep order, police stations were set up in Franklin, Calvert and Owensville. After the end of the Davis regime and the end of Reconstruction,

---

<sup>1</sup>Bureau of Soils, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup>Inventory, op. cit., p. 14.

most of the Negroes returned to the plantations as tenant farmers. In the meantime, a number of foreigners had come in and set up a system of smaller farms worked by the owners.<sup>3</sup>

By 1887, of the 23,021 residents, 600 were Germans, 465 Poles, and 11,088 Negroes. They had come with the railroads.<sup>4</sup>

For many years Benchley continued to be predominantly Irish. Mexican immigrants who came about 1871 concentrated largely at Hammond.<sup>5</sup> In the latter 1870's most of the Poles established themselves in the town of Bremond on the northern boundary of the county.<sup>6</sup> New Baden was colonized by German immigrants, settled by the Texas Land and Immigration Company, in 1881. Many of the social customs and other characteristics of their respective fatherland have been retained by the residents in these communities.<sup>7</sup>

#### Churches and Schools

The county commissioners, in one of the early acts, set aside land for the establishment of a public school, to be

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> "Origin of Names," op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Inventory, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> "Origin of Names," op. cit., p. 1.

called Franklin Academy.<sup>8</sup> This move followed the Act of the Texas Congress which set apart for each county three leagues of land from the public domain "for the purpose of establishing a primary school or an academy."<sup>9</sup> During the next year an extra league of land was added to each county's school land apportionment by an Act of Congress.<sup>10</sup> The value of the land was very low and the plan failed because of its inability to provide sufficient funds. In the records of the county there is no further mention of the Franklin Academy, or of school districts, or teachers. Probably, the first educators of the county were circuit-riding preachers who led the old "field schools."<sup>11</sup> As late as 1850, it was remarked:

...a very large majority of the rising generation of middle Texas...are entirely destitute of school instruction... in many of our counties, common schools cannot be found. In many neighborhoods the Sabbath school is the only means of instruction afforded.<sup>12</sup>

Robert Crawford, a Methodist from South Carolina who had fought at San Jacinto, was one of the first ministers in Robertson County. The "old Ireland Church," a log structure, built by the Irish settlers of Benchley, who were Presbyterians,

<sup>8</sup>Bond Book, Vol. I, p. 47.

<sup>9</sup>Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, 134.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, p. 320.

<sup>11</sup>Frederick Eby, The Development of Education in Texas, pp. 88-90.

<sup>12</sup>Inventory, op. cit., p. 17.

was probably the first house of worship in the county. The first pastor of this church was named Fullenwider, and of him it is said:

The minister did not only preach but worked wheresoever he was needed, helping to 'clear the land, work the crops, nursing the sick, and burying the dead.' He was a widely known Indian fighter, and once had to whip a man before he could convert him. <sup>13</sup>

The second church built in this community, and possibly in the county, was erected to be used as a schoolhouse, and was called Red Top. In this building teachers "tutored a child as long as he cared to attend school as grades were unknown at that time." <sup>14</sup>

Chief Justice A. L. Brigance was ordered by the commissioners, in 1856 to deed two county lots in Owensville "for school purpose," and a description of the county published in 1858, mentions a "female academy" which was then under construction. <sup>15</sup>

Within a few years after the Civil War there were seven or eight schools in various parts of the county. There were also four churches, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, and Christian. On May 21, 1867, the Quarterly Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, on the Owensville circuit, requested a donation of two lots in Owensville. The request

<sup>13</sup> "Origin of Names," op. cit., p.8.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Inventory, op.citi., p.17.

was granted and the settlers now owned land on which they could erect a church and parsonage. The Hearne Station Baptist Church was organized on April 18, 1869.<sup>16</sup> During the 1870's a number of churches came into being. The commissioners court records mention the White Rock Church, May 27, 1873;<sup>17</sup> the Freedman's Church, March, 1874;<sup>18</sup> Chappel Hill and Mount Vernon Churches, July, 1874;<sup>19</sup> Elm Church, 1876;<sup>20</sup> and Hickory Grove Church, 1877.<sup>21</sup> At this time there were four churches in Calvert.

The Polish parish was organized at Bremond in 1876, by Father Mosiewicz, who, for a time, served the church from Marlin, in Falls County. Later the settlers felt the need of a full-time leader; so they subscribed money to bring Peter Litwora, a priest, from Poland.<sup>22</sup>

By 1880 there were three Protestant churches and a Roman Catholic Church for white residents in Hearne, and three

<sup>17</sup> Commissioners Court Minutes, Day Book, Vol. II, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Commissioners Court Minutes, Day Book, Vol. II, p. 84.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>20</sup> Commissioners Court Minutes, Minutes County Court, Robertson County, Vol. III, p. 95.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>22</sup> Inventory, op. cit., p. 18.



churches for the Negroes. Englewood had one church building, shared by the Baptist and Methodist, and a good school. Hearne had two schools by the early 1880's. A lot in the new county seat was given to the Methodist Episcopal Church on June 22, 1880. The Roman Catholics and the leading Protestant denominations had organized churches and built houses of worship in the county by 1882, and regular religious services were being held by Jewish residents of Calvert.<sup>23</sup>

In the early eighties the State Free School Fund was apportioned to a scholastic population of 3,075 in Robertson County, and public schools were established for white and Negro children in proportion to their numbers. There were a number of private schools of primary grade, and at least one private high school.<sup>24</sup> The office of county school superintendent of public instruction was set up in 1892.<sup>25</sup>

#### Health

When the epidemic of yellow fever was raging through the South in the early 1870's, Calvert was almost depopulated. Most of the settlers left when it was discovered that a traveling painter had died from the disease in a room in the Bailey Building. At this time most of the inhabitants believed the fever to be directly contagious, and the entire town was

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

quarantined. Trains were not allowed to stop and the windows of all coaches were tightly closed until all cars had passed beyond the city limits. Between three and four hundred persons died from yellow fever, since there was no effective remedy or treatment for it.<sup>26</sup>

Soon after this scourge had passed, the development of several mineral springs led to the establishment of the new village of Wooten Wells, three miles west of Bremond, as a health resort. About the same time the waters of the Overall mineral wells at Franklin were being marketed.<sup>27</sup>

The first county physician, a man named McDonnell, was appointed by the county commissioners in 1871. It was his duty "to look after the sick paupers not otherwise provided for."<sup>28</sup>

The river lands, for years, were considered unhealthful, and along the rivers and creeks, in the summer and fall, malarial fever attacks were more or less frequent. These epidemics were not always severe, and in 1909, a survey of the county gave the following report:

---

<sup>26</sup> Rogers, "Calvert," op. cit., p. 583.

<sup>27</sup> Inventory, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>28</sup> Commissioners Court Minutes, 1863 to 1871, Vol. C., pp. 419-420.

Since the greater part has been put under cultivation, the sloughs have largely dried up, and this coupled with the securing of excellent artesian water, has improved the conditions until the bottom land is about as healthful as the upland. 29

#### Newspapers

The Weekly Central Texan at Bremond and The Tribune at Calvert were established in 1870, and were the first newspapers in the county. Although both publications were short-lived, Robertson County has never been without a newspaper since that time. All present-day newspapers are weeklies.<sup>30</sup> They are the Bremond Press, the Calvert Tribune, the Franklin Texan, and the Hearne Democrat.

#### Disasters

Between 1870 and 1873, Calvert was several times almost destroyed by fire. The county commissioners, in July, 1873, declared that the furniture and stationery that had been destroyed by fire, must be replaced. And at the same time they voted to pay J. C. Parnell five dollars for his having guarded the county records in the last fire. The commissioners' records for June 1, 1871 to May 27, 1883, have not been found and it is presumed that they were burned in one of the fires, although it is no established fact. After the frame buildings

---

<sup>29</sup> Soil Survey, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> Inventory, op. cit., p. 18.

in Calvert burned, most of them were replaced by brick structures.

In the early 1890's, almost an entire block of Bremond's business section was destroyed by fire. Here, too, brick buildings have replaced the frame structures which burned.

Floods have brought heavy losses to the people of Robertson County, and the study of means of prevention has been a task of growing importance.<sup>31</sup> The Brazos, the largest river in Texas, in 1899, overflowed its banks and brought to the people of the Brazos bottom losses which were almost inestimable.

In the mid-summer when the "flood of '99" did so much damage, there was a period of about ten hours, or from seven o'clock in the evening until five o'clock the next morning, that nine and five-eighths inches of rain fell on the southern part of Robertson County. There was only one life lost, but scores of persons were rescued from the tops of trees, from house tops, gins and other places of safety. The waters of Big Brazos and Little Brazos met and covered the entire valley, with the exception of Mumford, which was located on high ground.

Numerous "near tragedies" occurred as the people attempted rescue work in make-shift boats. In some instances large horse-troughs were used as row-boats.

---

<sup>31</sup> Inventory, op. cit., p. 20.

For a period of thirty days there were no trains into Hearne. The tracks had been washed out and sections were scattered for miles down the river. The little H & B V was practically wiped out, and was never of much more service.

Not only the railroads suffered from the flood, but the uplands to the east of Hearne were filled with deep gorge-like streams and the dirt roads were rendered impassable when most of the bridges went along with the water of the Brazos.

There have been other floods on the Brazos, especially in the early 1900's, but there has never been as much damage to the county as in the "flood of '99."

## CHAPTER V

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### Farming

The first settlers lived in a primitive manner. Situated far from markets, they grew for home use small patches of potatoes, corn, and vegetables, and raised a little stock. There was a tendency to settle in communities for the advantages of mutual protection against the Indians. Generally the most convenient lands were cultivated. The sandy timbered soils were preferred for vegetables, while the 'red lands,' . . . were selected for corn. Prairie land was not so generally sought after, as it was considered harder to cultivate and not so productive. It was soon learned that hogs and cattle could be successfully raised with little attention on the timber ranges and on the prairies, stock raising became the dominant industry among the early settlers. Steers were driven to Houston, where they sold for about \$1 per hundred pounds. Settlers were not slow in recognizing the adaptability of the soils to cotton, and its cultivation began in the late thirties, slave owners being among the first to take it. The establishment of a cotton gin at Wheelock in 1839, properly speaking, marks the beginning agriculture in Robertson County. The production of cotton was quite limited at first, only about 429 bales being produced as late as 1849. The Brazos bottom soils were among the first to be used for cultivation of cotton. The first crops were hauled to the Trinity River and rafted to Galveston. Agriculture made very little headway before 1845, on account of hostilities with Mexico. Oats were introduced in the Wheelock neighborhood about 1845. Wheat was later introduced and made some good yields on the prairies and 'red lands,' but owing to the absence of mills and a general belief that climatic and soil conditions were unsuited to it, the crop has never found much favor. 1

---

1  
Soils Survey, op. cit., p. 20.

The most destructive cotton pest in the history of the county has been the boll weevil. The year 1903 is commonly referred to as the "boll weevil " year, when large fields failed to produce enough to warrant picking. This cotton failure caused a serious depression in the area. This pest compelled farmers to turn their attention to diversification and to better methods of soil management.

During the earlier years of the ravages of the boll weevil the large number of deserted houses gave evidence of the uneasiness that existed.

In the efforts to meet the ravages of the boll weevil the farmers of Robertson County have become imbued with a new spirit and are generally working out better methods and enlarging the scope of agriculture. When it is considered that there is great room for soil improvement and restoration through rotation and the use of vegetable manures, that susceptibility to drought can be appreciably reduced by deeper preparation and shallow cultivation, and that diversified farming is yet in its infancy, it becomes quite evident that there is good opportunity for a much greater agricultural development in this county. Fruit and truck growing, particularly the production of early Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and a great variety of vegetables, can be successfully carried on in conjunction with general farming, and to a certain extent with stock raising, over a large portion of this area. The great variety of soils and the great variety of crops to which these soils are adapted, coupled with the low price of land, makes the county one of the most desirable of the eastern Texas counties to the man of moderate means who desires to engage in diversified farming. It is easy to make a good living here; and there are excellent opportunities to make money. <sup>2</sup>

The farms in Robertson County varied in sizes. Some of the upland farms were small while others contained as many as

---

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid.

2,000 acres, or more. The farms in the Brazos bottom were generally large; many contained more than a thousand acres.

The typical Robertson County land-owner and raiser of crops was a slave-owning planter. Throughout the Brazos bottom the plantation was the great center of labor and industry.

In size, the plantation ranged from a few hundred acres to a thousand or more. The owner lived in the big house, and ruled, in one way or another, all those who lived on his land.

Behind the big house, or along the turn-rows, were the quarters for the slaves who tilled the fields. The quarters consisted of one-room or two-room cabins. Men, women, and children worked in the fields from dawn till twilight. They received no pay, but received food and clothing, and some planters allowed the slaves to cultivate small plots for their own use.

Cotton raising was the inevitable pursuit of the people who came to Robertson County from the deep South. As soon as the development of the rich valley lands became feasible, these hardy pioneers built large plantations and brought in Negro slaves to work and harvest the crops. About 1850, the county had its first gin, and was fundamentally devoted to farming.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>"Origin of Names," op. cit., p. 1.



The only recorded crop failure of the pre-Civil War period was in 1857. This was the year of the severe drought. An old settler and his wife gathered all the corn that grew on his ten-acre field and took it home in his wife's apron to cook as roasting ears. Despite the drought, stock raising continued to be important.<sup>4</sup>

Robertson County, as well as the entire South suffered from the labor problem following the Civil War. During the year after the close of the war it was said of the freedmen:

... there are many doubts regarding their profitability; they perform about two thirds of what they did previous to the emancipation; their wages range from \$8 to \$12 per month, or one third of the crop.<sup>5</sup>

In 1870 there was a general report that:

Freedmen do not improve, but are disposed to be idle and improvident. They usually hire for wages, which are usually \$15 per month in coin for the year and board.<sup>6</sup>

With the coming of the railroad in 1869, cotton production increased tremendously. In one day the trains could easily transport as many bales over the fifty-mile road to the nearest market as one thousand ox-teams could haul in two weeks.<sup>7</sup> In the West, centers for cotton buying grew

---

<sup>4</sup>Inventory, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>The Texas Almanac for 1867, p. 150.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>7</sup>Rogers, "Calvert," op. cit., p. 582.

rapidly, facilitating marketing of cotton grown in Robertson County.<sup>8</sup>

Numerous rains, some resulting in floods,<sup>9</sup> early proved serious setbacks to farming. Early in the twentieth century many acres of excellent farm land along the Brazos River seemed likely to be ruined by frequent inundations. Just before the first World War, levee construction was undertaken along the river banks in Robertson County and much land was reclaimed.<sup>10</sup>

In recent years there have been numerous attempts to obtain an appropriation to clear the channel of the Brazos River. In so doing it would be made navigable again. The Brazos River Conservation and Reclamation District was organized and is considered an important step in this direction.<sup>11</sup>

#### Brazos Valley Problems

Men like Dick White, Buck Watts, Tite Westbrook, and the grand old patriarch, Louis W. Carr, the Astins, Ed and Alf Wilson, following the lead of the Hearnes and the Lewises, have made the Brazos bottom a rival of the Valley of the Nile.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> J. L. Waller, "The Overland Cotton Movement, 1866-1886," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXXV (1931-32), 141-44.

<sup>9</sup> Inventory, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Texas Almanac for 1939-40, p. 136.

<sup>12</sup> Warren A. Wilkerson, "History of Hearne," p. 8.

These bottom farmers had their share of labor troubles. There were always too many acres for too few men. The story of this condition constitutes a very serious chapter in the history of the merchants of Hearne.

In this emergency the farmers made contracts with the State Prison Board for the labor of Negro convicts. There were only a few at first, but as the successful tests were made, most of the bottom farms secured them. The pay-rolls went to the State Prison Department, and many of the supplies came from the same source. For the first time friction arose between the merchants of Hearne and the Brazos bottom farmers.

Petitions from the merchants were sent the State Officials, asking that the practice be stopped. H. L. Lewis, usually a loyal and able worker for his town, announced that he was a candidate for the Legislature. He ran on the platform of "more and cheaper convicts," and was elected. The contracts were renewed for a number of years and the young and struggling town of Hearne languished. Finally, however, the prices for convict labor were raised and since most of the farm owners had cleared all their land, and since there was no method of employment for the convicts between crops, and with a full payment required while the men were in the guard house during inclement weather, the situation cleared itself.

Following the convict era came good times again. After the farmers lost their convict labor other workers had to be secured from some source. Rasche Hearne solved the problem in this way: with one of the managers, he went to North Carolina and recruited a train load of farm laborers. This was continued for several trips with the labor and expenses being prorated among all the farmers.

This was an excellent "set-up" for the Texas end of the route, but a bit disturbing to the people of North Carolina when they found that they were losing their laborers. Rasche Hearne discontinued the practice after members of a vigilance committee walked him out of North Carolina between suns.

Alabama experienced the same practice, until the shortage of labor was overcome in the Brazos bottom. Today if you happen to ask an elderly Negro if he were born in Texas, he will very likely reply, "No, suh, Mr. Hearne fotch me out here from North Calina."

About the turn of the century labor was plentiful, most of the land was under cultivation and heavy crops were being produced. The harvest from the crops and all the farm supplies had to be hauled over roads frequently impassable, which created another problem for the farmers in the bottoms. To solve this problem the merchants and farmers worked together, and with able citizens representing the two classes of settlers the condition was overcome.

In 1893, the Hearne and Brazos Valley Railroad was built from Hearne to Steeles Store in Brazos County, a distance of about sixteen miles. Hearne merchants, headed by men like H. B. Easterwood, R. A. Allen, and John Sailors, paid for their stock in cash, thereby creating a fund that would enable the builders to buy rails, ties, bridge materials, and other needed goods. The farmers paid for their stock with right-of-way, labor and grading with their teams. To avoid the expense of bridging Little Brazos River, an agreement was made with the I & G N for the use of their tracks over the river, as well as for the use of their freight cars, and for the tonnage this road would receive from this H & B V. The H & B V bought and owned outright, one passenger car, one caboose, and one engine. A dispatcher's office was constructed where the new rails began and the conductor was required to act as the dispatcher. The conductor, of course, was the logical one who could clear the I & G N when the tracs were left, and at the same time get orders into Hearne on his return.

The road was a success from the very beginning and as it was locally owned it was also an accommodation route. It made stops at every "turn-row," to mail letters, transact all types of business, carry out the pay-rolls; it did the marketing, and delivered ice. At first a white face was automatically a pass, but this had to stop when the Railroad

Commission discovered the little sixteen-mile railroad and took over. It became the duty of the Commission to regulate discrimination in freight rates and passenger tariffs.

On Saturday mornings when the train pulled into Hearne, colored passengers filled the coach; filled several flat cars to capacity; and often climbed to the top of the coach. On just such an occasion the little train was given a new name, "Nigger Pacific."

The little road filled its well-worth purpose from the very beginning, in 1891, and did much to help develop the lower bottom, especially that region around Steeles Store. Unfortunately for the owners, the Southern Pacific, in 1913, took a fancy to the short road and in a sub rosa manner bought it for an especially arranged price. Soon after it changed ownership, the house in which the small engine was kept was destroyed by fire and the little engine was completely ruined.

#### Pioneer Farm Homes

The bottom lands were largely in timber at this time with poor drainage and malarial conditions generally prevailing. The bottom was considered no place for a white man to live.

Rasche Hearne built his home in a large group of oak trees about five miles from the present town of Hearne and in the community of Sutton. In this typical farm home the

man of the house added much to the natural beauty of his home and grounds by placing imported shrubs at vantage points over his estate. He looked after the yards and displayed much interest in the gardens where all types of fruit trees flourished and every vegetable known to the early settlers grew in abundance. "I have seen Rasche Hearne cut as many as six water melons before getting one to suit him."<sup>13</sup>

Pricilla, Rasche Hearne's wife, while leaving the pigs and cows to her husband, had every kind of fowl. They were distributed over the large yards where there were chickens of several different kinds, ducks, geese, and a large flock of peafowl, plus the always noisy guineas.

Into the making of this home, in the heart of Robertson's colony, Rasche Hearne turned to the timbered lands for his building material. A saw mill was set up on his farm and in this mill he made all his lumber from prime cedar logs. This typical planter's home was a two-story structure with rooms twenty feet square and containing very high ceilings. All windows were of cedar made by the carpenters at the work bench. The walls, ceilings and floors were tongue and grooved and made with home-made planes at the bench. The studding was made from cedar saplings squared on the two sides to receive the sides and ceiling and left in the natural state on the other sides.

---

<sup>13</sup>Warren A. Wilkerson, 808 Magnolia Street, Hearne, Texas, personal interview.

The studs were fitted into the heavy plates and were fastened with ash pins. Every part of the house was cedar, from the ten by ten squared sills to the shingles on the roof.

For many years Rasche Hearne was a regular traveler from his home to his several farms in the bottom and not infrequently he would have his weekly pay-roll in the back of his buggy, and yet he never had a robbery.

After the death of his wife, Rasche Hearne gave up his Sutton home and moved to one of his other farms where he built a fine house. In this second home from an artesian well he developed natural gas which was used in his household. However, the old gentleman lived only a few years after the death of his wife and was never able to forget his Sutton home. His death closed an eventful life and left a large estate.

Ebenezer Hearne made his home in the uplands and was nearer to his farms. He had to cross Little Brazos River to supervise the farm work and to this day the place where he regularly crossed the stream is known as the Ebb Hearne Ford. The Ebenezer Hearne home was not so pretentious as the Rasche Hearne home and was gone a number of years before the Sutton home. Some of the modern homes in Hearne are decorated with bits of wood from the "old Rasche Hearne Home," such as a hand rail for the stairway, or molding.



Today, not a single board from the Ebenezer Hearne house can be found but near the old house site, there surrounded by an iron fence is the old Hearne cemetery where a number of Rasche Hearne's children are buried.

All around the old Ebenezer Hearne homesite there are deep holes that have been made in the red hills by people searching for buried treasures. The story is as follows:

Ebenezer Hearne came to town one day and sold his season's cotton crop and got the money in twenty-dollar gold pieces. He carried the entire amount home with him and when he got there he took down an inch and a quarter auger from the porch plate and went into the timber back of the house. He came back with the auger stained with red soil. Shortly thereafter he fell dead in his lot and carried the secret of his gold deposit with him. Many people with money finders, and some with hunches, have dug up all the hills thereabouts, but the gold, if any, remains safely hidden. <sup>14</sup>

William Hearne, the only son of Ebenezer Hearne, acquired his own farm and made his home on the farm for many years. In the early 1890's he sold out to his uncle, Rasche Hearne, and moved to Wharton. He never returned to live in the bottom.

#### Transportation

In nothing has there been a greater change in the last one hundred years than in the means of travel. The nineteenth century brought the river steamer, the ocean steamer, the trains, and the beginning of the interest in the horseless carriage.

---

<sup>14</sup>Wilkerson, op. cit., p. 5.

In the early days of Robertson County, pioneer travel by land was in the old-fashioned stagecoach, on horseback, or afoot. The roads were usually execrable. Many of the towns were wholly without roads, being connected with their neighbors by trails beaten out by the moccasined feet of the Indians and Indian traders who traveled these primitive trails with packs of furs and trading goods on their backs.

A favorite mode of travel was on horseback. The Robertson County farmer, in many cases, went to church astride a horse with his wife sitting behind him on a cushion, called a pillion; while the young people walked, often stopping to change their shoes before reaching the meeting-house. Great quantities of grain and other farm products were brought from the settlements in the remote parts of the county on pack horses, winding their way through the lonely region, by Indian trails.

The great highways of those pioneers were those that nature had furnished--the rivers and bays. Without these and the Indian trails the people of the different settlements in Robertson's colony would have been isolated indeed, and would scarcely have known of the existence of one another. Even as it was, only a few ever traveled far from home; the majority of the common people lived and died in the neighborhood in which they settled.

The scarcity and poorness of the roads may have been either the cause or the effect of the slow resort to wheel

transportation. Such roads as existed during the early days of our county were little more than trails, barely wide enough to permit two horses to walk abreast. The stumps of the trees that had been cut away were often just low enough to clear the axles.

Throughout the days of its early history, Robertson County was located not only on the principal route from San Antonio to the East Texas settlement, but also on the course traveled from the gulf coast to the rich river bottoms in east-central Texas. Ox-carts and covered wagons, on their way to markets, or bringing families to the new frontier, labored along the streets of Old Franklin and Sterling.<sup>15</sup> For convenience, the population centered along the roads as the county developed. Old Franklin, established as the county seat because the site was near the center of the county, surrendered the courthouse to Wheelock, which was on the San Antonio Road. Over the level prairies to Sterling (Calvert) the farmers carted their produce and there sold it to teamsters who hauled it to San Antonio in wagon trains.<sup>16</sup> Benchley, then called Staggers Point, was on the San Antonio Road, and by 1850, it had become an important community.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup>Inventory, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>16</sup>Foster, "Sterling," op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>17</sup>"Origin of Names," op. cit., p. 1.

When the first train of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad came into Robertson County it brought with it, among other things, an official name for Staggers Point, the temporary terminus. The Irish settlers agreed that the conductor's name should be adopted as the name of the station. The conductor was a man by the name of Benchley, so in his honor the village is still known by that name.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the fact that the residents had eagerly awaited the coming of the railroad, when the first train rolled in horses wheeled and ran, and many farmers did likewise. W. S. Allen, pioneer business man of Calvert, relates the following experience:

It was between Hearne and Bryan that I saw my first railroad train. I had seen long wagon trains coming through Port Sullivan enroute to Houston....All produce was sold in Houston because it was the nearest market, and the best. It sounded wonderful to think that a locomotive could cover a distance of fifty miles and carry loads that a thousand ox-teams could not take in two weeks. The inhabitants of our county had been compelled to drag their produce over the level prairies with sixteen yoke of oxen. Many times the prairies and bottoms were submerged in water. It was a slow, difficult, uncertain and expensive method of carriage. Naturally we were all watching with interest the laying of the tracks. I was riding my pony the day I saw my first train. I heard this terrible puffing and blowing noise and it frightened me and my horse. He squatted as if ready to make a wild jump and run away. I put the quirt to him and got him away from the scene as fast as I could. It was a construction train. The first trains that came through Calvert burned wood in the engines, and traveled twenty miles an hour. One engine did not pull over

twenty cars. I can remember when passenger trains did not run on Sunday as people in those days did not believe in desecrating the Sabbath by riding on the train.<sup>19</sup>

The people of the rural community recognized its advantages, but the railroad did not affect their everyday lives for some time. For years the settlers rode the trains and shipped their goods during week-days, only.

The towns followed the railroads and resulted in a general redistribution of population. The entire town of Sterling moved to meet the railroad, and even took on the new name of Calvert to honor Judge Robert Calvert, who had been instrumental in getting the railroads to come into the county.<sup>20</sup> As the terminus of the rails, Calvert was a busy, thriving town. In 1870, it became the county seat.

Its main street was lined with saloons, cowboys, cotton wagons; and stacks of gold were a common sight on the tables of the famous gambling houses. This village was one of the greatest trading points of the county. <sup>21</sup>

The early 1870's saw the birth of three towns along the right-of-way of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad: Hearne, Hammond, and Bremond. The International and Great Northern gave new life to Franklin, and in 1879, it was voted the permanent county seat.  
<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Rogers, "Calvert," op. cit., p. 582.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 581.

<sup>21</sup> Foster, "Sterling," op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> Robers, "Calvert," op. cit., p. 581.

The Old San Antonio Road which forms the southern border of Robertson County is now a modern highway. State Highway 6, which connects Benchley and Bremond, by a route that passes through Hearne, forms the main course of north and south motor travel. From northeast to southwest runs State Highway 43, linking Easterly, Franklin, and Hearne.

The first vehicle of inland water transportation was, of course, the Indian canoe. The coming of the white man supplemented, but did not replace, the canoe by the introduction of the row boat, keel boat, and barge, or flatboat. The keel boat and sometimes flat boats were, at times, propelled by sails and oars, but more commonly the boatman used long poles, with which they pushed along against the bottom of the stream. The canoe had the advantage of lightness and being easily portaged from stream to stream, but its carrying capacity was small. Therefore, it was not adapted to carrying bulky goods of low value.

Most of the hauling was in carts or wagons drawn by oxen, but horses and mules were sometimes used for this work. Where navigable, the rivers provided a satisfactory means of travel and communication, even before the revolution steamboats were sometimes seen on the lower courses of the Brazos, Colorado, and other Texas rivers.

The "trip of the Washington" was made in the winter of 1850-51. At the time, the father of J. W. McCown was engaged in business in Cameron. After a particularly heavy rain, when

Little River was considerably swollen and gave promise of remaining up for several days, he began preparation for the ascent up the river. He hastily constructed a skiff and put out for the Brazos country in search of a steamer to make the attempt. At Washington, he secured the steamer "Washington," owned by John Woods, and commanded by Hatfield, the captain. After a bonus of \$500 and a guaranteed amount of freight at stipulated rates, the trip was undertaken with a cargo of merchandise, comprised of groceries, provisions, and whiskey. The "Washington" did not excite much interest along the Brazos, but when Little River was reached the sound of a steam whistle, never before heard in these parts, instantly attracted attention. Curiosity quickened into interest and interest grew into excitement, widespread and prolonged, when it became known that a real steamer, duly equipped and fully loaded with merchandise was in the river making its way to Cameron. Word passing rapidly from house to house sent people flocking to the river banks from all directions. Curiosity seekers, men, women, and children, all ages, sexes, and conditions, in all stages of dress, and undress, came pouring from the settlements.<sup>23</sup>

As the Washington puffed and wriggled along the winding stream, dodging a lot of drift-wood here and clearing a sharp angle there, knots of sight-seers

---

<sup>23</sup>

Rogers, "Calvert," *op. cit.*, p. 584.

would greet it with a great profusion of shouts and hurrahs, and much waving of wool hats and calico bonnets and aprons. Passengers were taken at each stop, anyone being at liberty to ride, and when stops were not made some of the more ambitious swam out into the river on horseback and climbed on the steamer while in motion. In this way the boat rapidly filled up until it came to be a mass of surging, shouting, rollicking humanity. It stopped when it reached the shoals, about two miles and a half from Cameron, was made fast to a tree, and in accordance with instructions the decks were cleared and a general jubilee of feasting and dancing set in. For two days and nights this went on until all were surfeited with fun and frolic, then the captain cleared away the debris, turned the nozzle of the Washington down stream and glided back to the waters of the Brazos. The event left a lasting impression on the settlers and its incidents afforded topics for conversation for a long time afterward. 24

---

24

Ibid.



## CHAPTER VI

### EARLY TOWNS

#### Franklin

Franklin, the present county seat of Robertson County, was established in 1871, when the International and Great Northern Railroad surveyed its route across the country. At that time the struggling little settlement was known as Morgan. For several years Morgan continued to grow, and in 1879, following an election, the county seat was moved from Calvert to this new village. The settlers then felt that their county seat must have a post office and an application was made. Before the application form was filled out it was learned that Texas already had a post office by that name and another name must be chosen. The settlers then considered and re-named the little town <sup>1</sup>Franklin.

In 1882, a stone courthouse replaced the wooden structure and by 1885 the town had two steam gristmills, a church, a school, and a harness and saddle shop.<sup>2</sup> A small wooden building, located on what is now the back street, served as the

---

<sup>1</sup>  
The Handbook of Texas, Vol. I, p. 641.

<sup>2</sup>  
Mrs. Emmett Rohde, 305 Barton Street, Hearne, Texas, personal interview.

office and saddle shop. Elias Reynolds, the first postmaster, operated the saddle shop in conjunction with his duties in the post office.

Isaac R. Overall's mineral springs, which had its beginning in 1890, attracted visitors from many sections of the state who enjoyed, along with the medicinal value of the water, the gay, social life of the growing village.

The resort hotel was a long wooden structure built, not too much for comfort, but to accommodate the people who came "to be made well." The large garden that joined the hotel was a favorite walk for the early evening strollers and the fragrance of the many tuberose filled the air as the young people walked and talked of things to come. Croquet was the favorite recreation on the lawn of the hotel and was enjoyed by visitors and villagers alike.

The Mitchell Hotel, not as large, and certainly not as popular as the Overall House, was the principal meeting place for the men who had time on their hands. Death often stalked the streets of this early village, and at one time a white man was shot and killed by another white man who concealed himself behind a door of this hotel.<sup>3</sup>

The social life of this early county seat seemed to be woven around the courthouse. The lawn around this new stone building was the center for the almost regular entertainment

---

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

and ice cream suppers. This form of entertainment provided funds for civic improvement and also gave the community an added social hour. The pretty village girls would spend as much as an entire afternoon working on a fancy apron to wear while serving ice cream at the supper.

A very large community Christmas tree, decorated with home-made ornaments and candles, stood in the largest room of the courthouse. The tree was the highlight of the season of Christmas for there the old were able to forget the frontier troubles for a time and the young thought only of the present.

In this same large room was the setting for the masked balls. Each lady spent many hours in making her dress to wear at the ball. Often it was decorated with tiny ornaments. The dancing, to the soft music, lasted well into the morning.

The first school house was a small one-room house located in the eastern part of the present town. This small building served the village a few years, then a two-story structure was built on a hill in the northwestern part of the town.

The schoolhouse had two stories, but there were no partitions to form the room divisions. There were only two rooms, one upstairs and one downstairs. At one time school turned out so all the pupils could witness a hanging on the courthouse square. The memory of the hood being slipped over the white man's head, the noose fastened on the neck and the fall from the scaffold have been stamped on my mind all these years. It was terrible, and certainly not a program for school children.

---

<sup>4</sup>  
Ibid.

Franklin could not supply the settlers with enough good water to meet the town's needs. It was quite a common sight to see the water wagons hauling water from Race Track Prairie to the people and selling it for five cents per bucketful.

The earliest newspaper, The Franklin Weekly, was published by J. A. Keigewin. Among the first business houses was the Decker and Mitchel General Store which served the little community for many years.

The songs of the Civil War had gradually died away to plaintive whispers; literature, full of adventure and lightheartedness helped to mend the scarred tissues of men's hearts and minds; the danger of Indian attacks had passed into the annals of history; and in the young struggling county seat many pioneers cast their lots with the destiny of Franklin, some to fail and some to succeed.

#### Benchley

In the years between 1829 and 1834, immigrants, mostly of Irish descent, settled west of the present town of Benchley.<sup>5</sup> They selected the poor wooded land rather than the rich acres of the black prairie lands for several reasons. In the dense wooded sections they had easy access to the timber which enabled them to construct homes and make rails for fencing their small farms. There were many roving tribes of

---

<sup>5</sup> "Origin of Names," op. cit., p. 1.

unfriendly Indians in this section of the state, so the woods afforded the settlers more safety. These same woods were well stocked with bear, deer, wild turkey and other game that furnished meat.

Neighbors were many miles apart and little visiting or social affairs were had among the immigrants. Wives and mothers looked after the home and reared large families of children (unusually large numbers of children are reported to have been reared in this immediate section by these immigrants; most all the families had in excess of twelve children). The men folk of the colony were engaged in looking after their patches of corn and peas and scouting for Indians. The women folks were also trained to take care of themselves and were expert shots with the rifle which proved a great advantage in later years as bands of horse thieves would make raids on the farms and steal the stock of the colonists. Many interesting and tragic stories are told of these raids. Especially is noted the perseverance of the women colonists during the War for Independence with Mexico when most of the men and boys were called to join the troops. They stayed in their homes and carried on the farm work (and one old settler remarked that they kept on raising children). Benchley lies in the extreme southern part of Robertson County, only a few hundred yards north of the Brazos and Robertson County line and one of the 'ear marks' of the town is the Old San Antonio Road, which natives now humorously call 'our prized possession.' At the beginning of the colony, the town was originally called Staggers Point, and was located about two miles northeast of the present townsite. The first store was a general merchandise store, owned and operated by a man named Wallace who sold groceries, dry goods and all kinds of whiskeys and wines. One of the outstanding things of the old town was the race track and gun club. This was something unusual in Texas at this time and was probably a custom of the colonists in their former homes. It is said that many fine horses ran on this track and the betting became the talk of the state. This naturally drew much of the rough element, and caused much horse stealing in this section. A story is told that the leader of a band of horse thieves came in the guise of a minister of the Gospel. He preached to the people while his band of men would raid the homes. The band was hidden at Mumford in a dense thicket. A battle between

the natives and the thieves broke the band up after several members of the band of thieves were killed and the remainder of them fled to the eastern states.<sup>6</sup>

In 1850, Robert Henry built the first horse-power type cotton gin. It was run by steam and was built near the old homestead. A saddle tree shop, owned by P. O. Jones used the trademark of "P.P." A man by the name of Tallie ran a packing house, pickling beeves for which he paid \$3.00 per head for four-year-old steers. These beeves were supplied to the packers by Columbus Seale, who had a contract to deliver the cattle dead, but not dressed. At that time the railroad was being pushed along in this direction so the pickled meat was carried south and sold to the railroad crew.<sup>7</sup>

The Ireland Church, a log structure, was the first church to be built and stood near the Haggard home. This name seemed to fit the members as well as the settlers because they were all Irish, and were Presbyterians. A Presbyterian minister named Fullenwider was the first minister in the colony. He was followed by James Wilson, who served the colonists for the next forty years. "Red Top," as the second church was called, was built for a school house. Many different religious organizations were born in this school house as it served as a meeting place for many years.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>"Origin of Names," op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

Fannie Reese Pugh, Geanie Chatam, Kitty Barnes and Bertha Cook were listed as some of the first teachers in Benchley. So long as a child cared to attend the school these teachers worked. At that time grades were not known or recognized by the teachers.

In 1869, the Houston and Texas Central, later nicknamed by the old settlers as "Hellon Texas," reached Benchley. In a small wooden structure ten feet by twelve feet, the telegraph station, and the telegraph equipment was installed. The first operator was a man named Squires who was also the station master. After the station was built it had no name, so as the first freight train pulled in the conductor, Benchley, a very likeable man, was to be honored by having the town carry his name.<sup>9</sup>

A pump station which was supplied by water from a "dug well," with a large wooden tank was installed and operated for several years. Many years ago the railroad company gave up as useless the station and water service. Now, only a telephone booth marks the station at this place.<sup>10</sup>

On October 16, 1835, William Henry, the first white child born in Robertson County, was born in Benchley, The spot is now being made into a park which will bear his name.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>  
Ibid.

## Calvert

Back in the ante-bellum days when the Brazos bottom was a free range and the wild cattle roamed the prairies; when school-houses were considered a novelty in Texas, and the settlers were scattered sparingly over the hunter's paradise; when the chief business in Central Texas was that of driving beef cattle from the interior of Texas to New Orleans and other markets only a few years after Robertson County had been sliced off Milam Land District, Judge Robert Calvert and his wife, Mary Keesee, settled in Robertson County.<sup>12</sup>

Sterling was one of the most interesting and aristocratic of the pre-Civil War settlements in Texas. Glowing accounts of this new land of promise, its healthful climate, fertile soil and abundance of game were given by the settlers as they wrote to their friends in the States. The lure of the land spread rapidly and the planters in Mississippi, Louisiana, and other states were anxious to dispose of their property and seek their fortunes in the new country.<sup>13</sup> One of these eager planters writes:

I am winding up my affairs with reference to coming out to your wonderful land of sunshine and flowers.... I have sold my farm, and I sold Bill Carter for \$1,200 as he could not find a woman to

---

<sup>12</sup> Rogers, "Calvert," op. cit., p. 582.

<sup>13</sup> Foster, "Sterling," op. cit., p. 10.



suit him for a wife so I concluded to let him go. I feel that you planters in Texas would do well to invest less in Negroes and more in cattle, for I foresee trouble ahead for our country if a Black Republican is elected, as he is sure to be. I am planning to take the new railroad cars to New Orleans, and thence set sail for Galveston, Viesca, or Indianola.<sup>14</sup>

Many years before and during the Civil War a prosperous, refined and independent community life was established. In 1869, the eagerly awaited Texas Central pushed up from its terminus at Millican and the village threw aside its dignity and moved in a group to meet the railroad. The village was renamed for Robert Calvert, a judge, who was one of its promoters.<sup>15</sup>

Robert Calvert was a direct descendant of Cecil Calvert (Lord Baltimore), and with the same view into the future that prompted him to settle in the Brazos bottom he worked for the extension of the Houston and Texas Central Railway through his county. He served as contractor in connection with William Davis and William Hanna. In this capacity he graded several miles of that road.<sup>16</sup>

The wife of J. W. Doremus, of Dallas and Calvert, still owns and operates the old Calvert plantation at the original site of the village; her title is in the form of a land grant

<sup>14</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>  
Rogers, "Calvert," op. cit., p. 583.

from the Spanish Government in 1825. She is the great-granddaughter of Robert Calvert.

Included in the list of prominent Texans who lived in Calvert, or in the nearby Brazos bottom on the plantations were the Hearne and Aldrich families, now living in Dallas, C. P. Salters, J. M. Herndon, and the late Jesse McLendon of Waco, who with Foster, a doctor, established the first bank in Calvert in 1869.<sup>17</sup>

Ox-drawn wagon trains plied regularly from Sterling to San Antonio by way of Wheelock and El Camino Real and to Houston and Galveston with consignments of cotton, returning with a year's supply of sugar, flour, coffee, and bagging and rope for cotton.<sup>18</sup>

The one and only street of Calvert boasted several thriving merchandising stores, a Masonic Lodge--one of the first in Texas--and Old Man Reed's <sup>19</sup> saloon was a popular gathering place for the citizenry.

On July 5, 1869, an election for the incorporation of Calvert was defeated, but in the ordered election of July 24, 1869, the returns showed a majority for incorporation. After considering the matter Ellison, the County Judge, ordered the town incorporated August 13, 1869.

The sanitary conditions were very bad in the early days of Calvert. The hogs bedded under the stores and the cattle roamed at will over the town.

<sup>17</sup> Foster, "Sterling," op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Scott Fields, in recalling the early days, remembers that Calvert had the distinction of having the largest cotton gin in the world. John H. Gibson built the gin in 1876. Later his sons took the business in charge and enlarged it. It had twenty-one stands and an oil mill in connection with the gin. Farmers from all parts of the Brazos bottom brought their cotton to be ginned and sold. In 1882 there were 32,000<sup>20</sup> bales received.

The people of Robertson County found it no easy matter to locate a county seat. Franklin was chosen in 1838, after the county was organized. By the time the courthouse and jail had been completed an election was held and Wheelock was designated to be the seat of the county government. In 1854, Robert Calvert was one of the commissioners appointed to obtain, from the District Surveyor, a certificate giving the the exact center of the county. The same commissioners selected two or more places within five miles of the center of Robertson County for another seat. Owensville was chosen and a courthouse and jail were built. In 1870, the county seat was moved to Calvert where it remained for about ten years, or until an election was held and the people of the county voted to move the county seat to Morgan.

---

20

Robers, "Calvert," op. cit., p. 582.

In 1871, a man by the name of Conitz left his home in Germany and settled in Calvert. He established the first shop and sold the fancy boots of French calf with quilted Morocco tops to the cowboys who paid fifteen and twenty dollars per pair for them.

This peaceful little village was the greatest trading point in this section of the state and was given a great setback when yellow fever almost wiped out the entire settlement.

The cattle industry passed, the Indians left the vicinity of Calvert, and the pioneers have left their ranks to be filled by their children and grand-children. In the space of a few years the strange and wonderful stories of pioneer days will be heard no more from those true builders of civilization. Robert Calvert's town lived on while Owensville and Wheelock perished. When Calvert died in 1867, he left his name for a guiding light of courage, vision, and progress.<sup>21</sup>

#### Hearne

Few Hearne citizens who reside in the fertile, highly improved section of the great state of Texas today, realize that a stirring saga of pioneer times may be recounted in the early days of Hearne.

The first seed for the present town was sown sometime in the 1830's when a stage coach line, operating from the

---

<sup>21</sup>

Rogers, "Calvert," op. cit., p. 584.

site of the present city of Houston, ran through this section to North Texas. For the convenience of the passengers of this stage line an inn was opened by an early settler by the name of Code Brown. This inn was built at Brown Springs in the present city limits of Hearne and was known as Brown's Tavern.

Hearne had its beginning in a queer way. The original Hearnese acquired probably 10,000 acres of bottom land and as they brought more and more of it under cultivation the moving of the crops and the getting of supplies became a great handicap, and kept teams on the road from Houston continuously. So, when the rumor of an intended railroad from South Texas to North Texas seemed substantial, C. C. Hearne went to Houston to see the Houston and Texas Central promoters. He informed them that if they would give him a shipping station, anywhere between Wheelock and Port Sullivan, he would donate all the land that was needed.

His offer was accepted and he was given the promise of not only the shipping point, but that a townsite would be located and would bear the name of Hearne. So, Hearne as a theory came into existence, but as a reality, nothing resulted for many years. The Houston and Texas Central did really begin to build but after reaching Millican, in Brazos County, was stopped at the outbreak of the Civil War and for a few years thereafter.

During this time C. C. Hearne had died but his wife, Mary Ellen Hearne, made good her husband's agreement with the railroad and deeded to the company about seven hundred acres for the townsite.

With definite plans for the construction of the railroad toward the proposed town, settlers began to locate near the site and several businesses got in on the ground floor.

Frances Hearne, who had married her cousin, Wash Hearne, lived in the early days in Hearne, where they owned the first hotel to be erected in the town. Wash Hearne was a great hunter and the following story was told by an old citizen:

In the first of the railroad days this man's family moved into the new town, shipping their household goods by rail. On arrival the family found a housing shortage and the railroad agent permitted them to occupy the car which contained their effects. The narrator, a young man at that time, was awakened very early next morning by a pack of hounds in full cry. From the top of his car he saw a big buck come bounding out of the timber, with the dogs close at his heels, and a rider following. The chase headed for one of the stores which was just opening for the day, and with no time to spare to make a turn, the buck bolted into the front door of the store and out at the back door. In a very few minutes the buck was the hunter's meat, and the hunter was Wash Hearne, procuring the main staple for his hotel menu.<sup>22</sup>

Wash Hearne, his wife and her sister, Adeline Lewis, are the only members of the Hearne families to be buried in the city's Norwood cemetery.

Charles Lewis and his son opened up a general store and Adams and Leonard, sons-in-law of Rasche and Ebenezer Hearne, opened a private bank. Later they followed the railroad up the line to Dallas. Gideon Wilkerson, with Greenwood Brown, a local landowner, established the general supply firm of Brown and Wilkerson. This firm was very active in business as well as in civic life in the infancy of this community.

Gideon Wilkerson brought his young wife to Hearne on the first train that passed through Calvert. To this couple, later was born the first child to claim Hearne nativity. This son was given the name of Lorenzo Wilkerson.

Just before, and during the Civil War a meat packery of considerable size operated a few miles south of the present town of Hearne. In this packery as many as three hundred beeves were handled daily. The finished product was pickled beef, packed in brine. Evidently, there was a miscarriage in the formula, for one large cargo bound for Europe, and which had been smuggled out of Galveston, went bad on the high seas and had to be jettisoned. This loss proved too much for the packery and it had to cease operation.

With the coming of the railroad more farm land was opened up and industries, in a small way, began to come into the frontier town. The construction of the railroad brought many working men into town and a bit of a boom appeared to be on. Practically all the railroad workmen were "Irish

Paddies," and were of the Catholic faith. The Catholic settlers, in the interest of their fellow churchmen established a hospital on what is now the east side of town, and arranged for church services for those of that faith.

The other scattered denominations raised a fund and erected a union church in the southern part of town. If that building were standing today it would occupy the site of the Boguskie home on the corner of Brenken and Post Oak streets. The building was used for a number of years by the churches, with the second story affording a meeting place for the Masonic Lodge. As the town moved north to afford the conveniences of the railroads the union church building was moved to the present location, on the corner of Magholia and Davis streets. This same building was also used as the school-house as the little settlement grew and prospered.

When the railroad trustees accepted the townsite grant their titles were on the same basis as were those of the early Hearnes and other purchasers; therefore, years passed before a long series of suits involving the trustees, along with the others, were definitely settled.

The planning of the town of Hearne was in charge of the New York and Texas Land Company and shortly after the townsite was laid out two lots were donated to each church denomination. The members of each church were granted the privilege of choosing the location upon which they would erect their



house of worship. The company also donated a cemetery site of approximately ten acres and which at the present time is known as Norwood Cemetery. The Episcopalians were the first to erect their building, with the other churches building shortly thereafter. One of the early Methodist pastors, Seth Ward, was later named bishop of his church.

After the completion of the railroad and the workmen had moved elsewhere, there was little need for the railroad hospital. To fulfill a greater need it was converted into a church for the Negroes. At about this time there was a mass migration of the Negroes into Kansas. Thousands made the trek, and many died because they could not live through the bitter cold weather. The need for this church arose when a group of Negroes from Grimes County reached this little village before learning of the cold weather on the other end of their journey. They decided against continuing the trip and found work in the vicinity of Hearne. It seems quite natural that they should all remain together; so their church became known as "The Little Flock Church." What remains of the original building now is a small church located on the opposite side of town from the first site. It was moved twice before its present location and is still known as "The Little Flock Church."

About 1870, another railroad began negotiations for land grants to come into this territory and Charles Lewis, acting

for himself and other land holders, deeded a tract of seven hundred acres to the International and Great Northern Railroad Company, under the conditions that the company would have trains operating over the deeded land by January 1, 1872.

The acceptance of the grant involved the new company in as many title complications as that of the Houston and Texas Central; therefore, the two railroads combined the forces of their attorneys, who did an enormous amount of work to make their jobs a success by bringing about a compromise, and practically fixed all the titles.

The two railroad companies then formed the New York and Texas Land Company, exchanging deeds for their grants. In making a survey for the addition to the Houston and Texas Central townsite, the surveyors "got off a bit" with their instruments and from this error resulted irregular streets.

On Davis Street where the townsites meet, the north and south fail to coincide by about 50 feet. This makes a very dangerous 'jog' in this automobile age. 23

With the advent of the new railroad, Hearne appeared to take on new life. This new road crossed the Houston and Texas Central about one mile north of the original depot and business location. It now seemed wise to move the business section near the crossing. It was well for that is the location of the business part of the town today.

---

<sup>23</sup>  
Ibid., p. 8.

Time was short for the agreed construction of the International roadway. And again they used the friendly services of the Houston and Texas Central trains which brought in needed supplies and aided in the pushing of the building both ways from Hearne.

The heavy pay rolls brought in a horde of camp followers, who brought with them their own ideas of ethics. Hearne was a roaring wide open town. One of the early settlers tells the following incident:

My father was away from home about this time and a letter from his office tells him that yesterday was pay-day for both roads, and the boys whooped it up. When the sun rose this morning there were four dead men on the streets. <sup>24</sup>

As the town grew there was a demand for telephones, and again Charles Lewis was instrumental in helping the people of his town advance another step forward. J. B. Covington began making plans for the installation of a telephone system and was advised that he was about to make a bad move and that he would be able to count his customers on the fingers of his two hands. He did not take the advice but continued his project and within a few years he received an offer which amounted to \$10,000.00 in exchange for the telephone system. He refused the offer at that time.

Education was at a very low ebb at the time Hearne was struggling with "growing pains," and little can be said along

---

this line. The first permanent school building was a small two-room brick structure located immediately back of the present Methodist Church. Later a large frame two-story building was erected on the plot that is now occupied by the Elementary School Building. John J. Jennings was the first teacher in Hearne, and the first schools were all private schools. The Negro Academy, with H. M. Williams as principal, was one of the early schools of the county. This institution was built in Hearne very early, but as the need arose the academy grew and was finally moved to a location northeast of town where it grew in importance and was attended by the Negro students from almost all sections of the state. It burned to the ground in the 1930's and has never been rebuilt.

Hearne maintained a steady growth through the latter part of the nineteenth century, and was a typical "rip-snorting frontier town." Unfortunately the pace set at this time prevailed for too many years and fitted Hearne into the classification of "Hearne, Hempstead, and Hell." Some of the scars may remain, but it is gratifying to know the town has lived over, and outlived, such a record.

The town was incorporated in 1871, and in the following years has had many ups and downs, but has always been able to "up the downs." Some of the downs came when the Brazos River flooded the bottoms bringing about great destruction; and others when the cotton pests, at times, inched the faithful Hearnites nearer the poorhouse. Yet, the people lived and prospered.

Much of the credit of the steady development of Hearne in the early days is due to the splendid pioneer leaders of that time. Many descendants of the early day Hearne citizens are prominent townsmen of the little city today.

### Wheelock

In 1833, E. L. R. Wheelock and his family crossed the wilds of unclaimed territory to settle in the central part of Texas. Wheelock received a land grant from the Nashville Company in Sterling C. Robertson's colony and settled his claim on Wheelock Prairie, which was named for those hardy pioneers. He laid out the town and built a blockhouse for protection against the Indians, who continued to raid the settlements until 1843.

Other families followed the example of the Wheelocks and within a few years there were several families living in the little community. The children of the settlement grew up under many hardships, including the constant fear of Indians and the tyranny of the Mexican government which was in control of Texas at that time.

After Texas began to fight for her independence and after Santa Anna seemed to have all the advantages, the people packed their few possessions and fled the path of the oncoming Mexican invaders. Annette Wheelock was one of the four children of the Wheelock founder, and was eighteen years of age when she and

her family joined those who were fleeing toward Louisiana. This famous incident has since been known as the "Runaway Scrape."

Before the Wheelocks left on this journey a Negro servant buried a large trunk containing all the family's valuables. The mother and daughter carefully packed away all the gold, silver, and china, and even the rich linens which would some day belong to Annette. There was no room in the covered wagon for the trunk where space was so valuable.

In their haste to leave Wheelock, the family had neglected to mark the location where they had hidden their valuables. After Santa Anna's defeat they returned to their home and searched and searched for the buried treasure, but their efforts were futile. In spite of their great misfortune they were able to rejoice with all Texas.

Annette Wheelock experienced more in a few short years than most people do in a life time. When she was eighteen she married an elderly Virginian who lived only a few weeks. In a few years she married again for she was still young and lovely. This marriage lasted about one year as her husband, named Powell, was mortally wounded when he and a small band of settlers were ambushed by the Indians between Calvert and Marlin. He was buried on the banks of the Brazos River near the present town of Marlin.

Annette later married Samuel B. Killough, a wealthy young man, who in a few years became a member of the Texas

Legislature. In 1876, Annette became a widow for the third time when Sam Killough died. She lived a long and useful life and died at the age of eighty-nine.<sup>25</sup>

Under the leadership of Wheelock and other sturdy men of Robertson County, Wheelock grew and served as the county seat from 1850 through 1854. The courthouse was not built until 1851; therefore, the court had to meet under an oak tree until its completion. In 1847, a postoffice was established and by 1850, the Wheelock Academy was in operation. By 1885, the little settlement had a population of seventy-nine, a store, a gristmill, and a cotton gin. By the time the next five years had passed the population had grown to eighty-five and there were three churches. The mail was received by stage from Hearne and a bank had been established by 1915.<sup>26</sup>

Into this rural settlement in Robertson County came the Hearnese, under the leadership of Christopher Columbus Hearne. They came bringing with them their household goods, farming equipment, livestock and a goodly number of Negro slaves. The leader of the Alabama Hearnese, C. C. Hearne, purchased land in the vicinity of Wheelock and with his Negro slaves made and burned the bricks that went into the construction of a commodious home. This home became the headquarters for the

---

<sup>25</sup> Leonard, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Handbook, II, op. cit., p. 893.

entire Hearne family while the members were searching for suitable locations.

The Hearnese were real farmers and knew that this section of the state held the land that they wished to own. Through C. C. Hearne they acquired a large acreage of the Ruiz bottom land from the Rhody Kenneday heirs. They were aware of the conflict that had existed among the other purchasers and protected themselves as well as possible by contracts instead of deeds.

C. C. Hearne lived and died at his home in Wheelock, but Rasche and Ebenezer, while owning large holdings in the bottom, built their homes in the uplands east of the Brazos River.

#### New Baden

The colony of New Baden was organized in 1881, as a station when the International and Great Northern Railroad moved slowly through Robertson County. This community was settled by German immigrants who were brought in by the Texas Land Company. There is no record of how or why the town was called New Baden, but it is generally supposed to have been named for a town or province in Germany where some of the colonists had lived. The first business house in this community was owned and operated by Paul Schultz and his mother.

When the colonists were first settled in New Baden they all lived in the "Immigrant House." As farms were located and homes were built the colonists would leave the "House" for



their new homes. The population numbered only forty in 1885, and by 1915 there were only one hundred seventy-five. The post office was discontinued in 1900, and was not re-established until more than twenty years later.

#### Bremond

Bremond, in the northeastern part of the county, was so named in honor of Paul Bremond, an official of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad which reached the little village in 1869. In 1870, the town became the junction point for the Waco Tap Railroad. In the late 1870's Bremond became the headquarters for extensive Polish immigration which accounts for the fact that today the town is predominantly Polish.

By 1885 the town had four churches, three schools, four mills and gins, and one bank. The first postmaster to serve the people in Bremond was O. C. Morehead.

The population began to fall and in 1890 numbered only three hundred eighty-seven, but had risen to six hundred fifty in the next ten years.

In 1912, the Bremond Enterprise was published by S. P. Forrest.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> "Origin of Names," op. cit., p. 1.

## Mumford

In the heart of the Brazos Valley and in the southeast corner, Mumford is firmly settled. This village was established in 1867 and named for Jesse Mumford.

In 1885 there were only fifty people in the community which consisted of a post office, with William Bailey as the first postmaster, a gin and a general store.<sup>28</sup>

## Petteway

In the early 1880's, M. Petteway settled in northeastern Robertson County and opened a general store. Around this store a community grew up. S. Bartokowiak erected the first gin, and soon there were three churches, and a school, which was a small two-story building with only two rooms. The community cemetery is today one of the few in the rural communities that has continued to remain there in the church yard. Many descendants of the early Petteway settlers bury their loved ones in the well-kept cemetery.

In 1900 Petteway was granted the right to have a post office. Until that time all the mail was received from Franklin.

## Easterly

Easterly, located in the east central part of the county was named for Dan Easterly who owned the entire townsite and

---

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

who operated the only store in the settlement. In April, 1902, John Fulbright surveyed the townsite on the International and Great Northern Railroad.

In 1900, the population numbered twenty-five, but after a land boom in the early 1900's there were around seven hundred people in the community. Today, there are four businesses, a school, a church, and a population of approximately two hundred fifty.<sup>29</sup>

#### Ghost Towns

Wooten Wells.--Over seventy years ago the flowing mineral water resort town in the northwest corner of Robertson County attracted throngs of patients and celebrities from over the entire South. Today, this ghost town of Wooten Wells has vanished without a trace and has left no place, even for the ghosts.

Where the 2 and 3-story hotels, the cottages, the general stores, the billiard hall, and the canopied mineral wells, which brought on the boom, once stood is today another of the endless pieces of level farmland.<sup>30</sup>

About 1879, a farmer drilled a water well. After he discovered the water had a peculiar taste he had it analyzed and was advised that it probably contained medicinal qualities.

<sup>29</sup> Handbook, I, op. cit., p. 537.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Turner, "Early Health Resort Lives Only in Memory," Dallas Morning News, February 17, 1948, p. 6.

A modest advertising campaign followed and as no one seemed to get excited about the strange-tasting water, progress was slow. In 1881 only one house stood on the two hundred acre site, which later became the popular meeting place for the sick and well alike. By 1883, the resort had been named Wooten Wells after F. M. Wooten, one of the founders.

Probably the state's first big real estate boom began as the tale of the new spring spread. Almost over night it became a sprawling city with three large hotels, a narrow-gauge mule drawn railway, Western Union and Wells Fargo offices, bath houses, dry goods and drug stores, dance pavilions and dozens of cottages.

The new Jackson Hotel was the largest of the three hotels in Robertson County's vanished resort town. It had fashionable gables on all four roofs, and the daughters of James Hogg, Ima and Ura, always stayed in this big hotel when they were on one of their many visits to the wells. The Wooten Hotel was a two-story L-shaped, rambling building and the third was the Walker Hotel.

At the boom's peak, Wooten Wells was a gay social center, complete with elaborate dances and balls, and a Mexican string orchestra that played soft music as it paraded through the many wooded parks. Coal oil lamps, in heavy glass protectors, decorated the street corners. 31

Samuel L. Hornbeck, the school principal, was one of the boom town's first leaders. Edward McGlaun started the first grist mill and gin; Charles E. Mays was the resort town's doctor and R. S. Sloan and George W. Jackson operated the hotels. William Goodman was wagon maker for the noted spa and T. W. Wade was manager for the Wells Fargo Company. C. W. Higginbotham owned the billiard hall and Alonzo Walker operated a general store, and another man whose name was Walker was keeper of one of the saloons. Willis Martin, at one time assistant postmaster at the resort postoffice, helped drive the railway mule in the spring and summer when the business was rushing. Many old settlers can remember when thousands of people came each season to bathe in the icy waters or to camp near the park.

As a new well was being drilled to supplement the four main wells, traces of oil were found. At that time oil was cheap--ten cents per barrel--and when Wade, who was manager of the mineral water company, saw visions of the cheap oil flowing under the houses and becoming a fire hazard, and spoiling all the flowers, he had the well closed.

There were two things that led to the doom of the resort. First, fire destroyed one of the main hotels and continued to plague the settlement, which had practically no fire-fighting facilities. Second, mineral water of a different type, which was claimed to be better, was found at Marlin

in 1890. Marlin's water had a psychological advantage; it was hot while the water at Wooten Wells was so cold that it had to be set aside to warm after it had been drawn from the well which was eighty feet deep.

Wooten Wells, the noted spa of Robertson County, slowly dwindled away until only a few ramshackle buildings remained. These slowly disappeared too, and as late as 1923 a bottling firm tried to revive the springs for use in soft drinks but the venture was not successful. The building, which had been erected for this project burned later.

Not a single board of the million-dollar resort, which once sealed up a possible oil well to save the mineral water business, is left, except in the memories of some of the old-timers around Bremond. 32

Bald Prairie.--This early settlement, located on a prairie between Duck and Steele Creeks, and twelve miles east of the present town of Bremond was established in 1865. The location of the settlement readily gave it the name and by 1885, there was a population of one hundred. It listed a steam cotton gin and gristmill, two churches, a school, a store, and a postoffice with J. C. Jennings as the first postmaster. With the growth of the towns along the railroads, this little village grew less in value. In the early 1940's there was a postoffice, a store, and a population of about twenty-five.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Handbook, I, op. cit., p. 102.

Hammond.--This ghost community and discontinued post office in northwestern Robertson County was named for F. B. Hammond. The town was small and had only a few stores and business houses, and the small jail, which seemed to be an important part of the town, is still standing today. As the Houston and Texas Central Railroad gradually pushed farther north the little town became an important shipping point. F. A. Rice, W. J. Hudson, and A. Groesbeck were the first trustees to function in the small farming district school.<sup>34</sup>

Headsville.--In the late 1870's Headsville was established and by 1880 had received a postoffice. In 1885, J. S. Adams opened his general store and served as postmaster at the same time. At that time the population was only thirty.<sup>35</sup>

In 1910, the postoffice was discontinued and the mail was sent first to Kosse, and later to Bald Prairie. The first school in the settlement was taught by a young man by the name of Smith.

Sarahville de Viesca.--Viesca was the capital of Robertson's colony in 1834. By 1836, the Brazos River had changed its course and this settlement at the falls of the river had three hundred inhabitants. During the Texas Revolution Viesca was almost deserted because the fear of the Mexicans

---

<sup>34</sup> Handbook, I, op. cit., p. 790.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

was so great, and too, there was the constant danger from the Indians. Later efforts were made to restore, or to re-settle the town but the effort was in vain and abandoned shortly.<sup>36</sup>

Owensville.--A legislative act, in 1854, established this settlement as the county seat of Robertson County. The little town on Walnut Creek, and not far from Franklin remained the center of the county's government until 1870, when the railroad came through the county and the people decided that the county seat should be moved to Calvert, on the railroad.

The county's first county seat was named for Harrison Owen, the first county clerk. A townsite was surveyed and a two-story courthouse was built and remained in use until the records were moved to Calvert in 1870, to the new county seat. The courthouse was sold and moved from the spot on which it was located and in 1860, the postoffice was discontinued.

Today, some of the lots that were staked off when the town was laid out can be found, but nothing else.

Nashville.--In 1835 a group of settlers bound for Robertson's colony settled about three miles below the mouth of the Little River, on the Brazos River, in Milam County. In 1837 Nashville was the county seat and principal town. When the

---

<sup>36</sup>

Texas Almanac for 1936, op. cit., p. 124.



county seat was established at Cameron, by an act of the legislature in 1846, Nashville declined.<sup>37</sup>

Many of the settlers who came into Robertson County were among those who settled at Old Nashville and was at that time of the settlement called Robertson County.

Hayes.--In northern Robertson County and sixteen miles northeast of Calvert, Hayes was established in 1872.

The village was named for the first postmaster, A. A. Hayes. By 1880 the population was only thirty, but in 1885 it had grown in population and had built three churches, a school, a gristmill and a cotton gin. After the railroad missed the settlement the village seemed to die out, for, by 1900, the population had decreased to twenty. After the postoffice was discontinued the mail was sent to Franklin.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup>  
Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>38</sup>  
Handbook, I, p. 788.

## CHAPTER VII

### GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Robertson County was created in 1837,<sup>1</sup> and organized in 1838,<sup>2</sup> with the county commissioners court, consisting of a county judge and four commissioners, forming the essential principle of its government structure. Each commissioner represented one of four commissioners' precincts into which the county was divided.<sup>3</sup> Of the many diverse functions of the court, the most important is dealing with finance, taxation, welfare, public improvements, contracts and elections. The interrelationship of the various county offices revolving around the court can be fully revealed by brief examinations of each.

#### County Commissioners Court

The commissioners court was designated as the custodian of the county's funds, which may be classified according to source of origin. The first class is set up by the Constitution,<sup>4</sup> the second by statutes,<sup>5</sup> and the third by order of the

---

<sup>1</sup>Gammel, Laws, I, p. 1398.

<sup>2</sup>Probate Minutes, Vol. A, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Constitution of 1876, Art. V, Sec. 18.

<sup>4</sup>Vernon Texas Statutes, Centennial Edition, 1936, Art.1628.

<sup>5</sup>Constitution of 1876, Art. VIII, Sec. 9.

court.<sup>6</sup> It may transfer money from the statutory funds of various classifications;<sup>7</sup> it directs the treasurer to make disbursements;<sup>8</sup> it may, for certain purposes, issue non-negotiable interest-bearing county warrants, independently of the voter's approval; it must approve claims against the county;<sup>9</sup> it supervises the finance ledger;<sup>10</sup> it receives reports of collection and financial condition of the county;<sup>11</sup> and it may use public accountants "to audit all or part of the books, records, or accounts" of the county.<sup>12</sup>

#### County Clerk

One of the first offices in the group which composes Robertson County's first governmental organization was the county clerk. During a six-year period this office was discontinued in 1869, by the Constitution, and the district clerks were the recorders of Texas counties;<sup>13</sup> with this exception, the county clerk has always served in that capacity.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Art. 1629.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Art., 1630.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Art. 1709.

<sup>9</sup> Vernon's Texas Statutes, Art. 2351.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Art. 1607.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Art. 1665.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Art. 1641.

<sup>13</sup> Constitution of 1869, Art. V, Sec. 9.

### District Court

A district court was established in Robertson County when it was created in 1837,<sup>15</sup> and the minutes date from October 1, 1838. The district courts in Texas have always been the superior of general original jurisdiction.<sup>16</sup>

The district court of the 85th judicial district is presided over by a district judge elected for a term of four years, by the voters of the district--Robertson and Brazos Counties.<sup>17</sup> Other offices of the court are the district clerk, who is elected by the voters of the district at each biennial general election,<sup>18</sup> the sheriff,<sup>19</sup> and the county attorney.

### County Court

An inferior trial court called the county court was established in Robertson County when it was organized in 1838.<sup>20</sup> With the exception of two brief periods when this tribunal was discontinued by general law during the first two years of statehood, 1846-1848, jurisdiction in probate matters was<sup>21</sup> vested in a special probate court.

---

<sup>15</sup>Acts 1837, Gammel, Laws of Texas, I, p. 1398.

<sup>16</sup>Constitution of 1836, Art. IV, Sec. 3.

<sup>17</sup>Vernon's Texas Statutes, Art. 199.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., Arts. 2022, 2333, 6873. <sup>19</sup>Ibid., Art. 322.

<sup>20</sup>Constitution of 1836, Art. IV., Sec. 10.

<sup>21</sup>Acts 1846, Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, p. 1614.

The county is served by the county judge, who, in turn, is aided by the sheriff, the clerk of the court, and the county attorney.

#### Justice of the Peace

Since the organization of Robertson County in 1838, justices of the peace have held offices in their respective precincts.<sup>22</sup>

The justice, a public officer of the township, was elected in each precinct. The early justice of the peace was endowed with judicial powers for the purpose of preventing breaches of the peace and bringing to punishment those who violated minor laws.

#### County Attorney

Robertson County's first county attorney was appointed by the governing board in February, 1867.<sup>23</sup> In 1871, the office was abolished by the board but was re-established as an elective one in 1876, and Robertson County's first elected county attorney took office in April of that year.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Constitution of 1836, Art. IV, Sec. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Constitution of 1866, Art. IV., Sec. 16.

<sup>24</sup> Commissioners Court Minutes, Vol. III, p. 13.

### Sheriff

The office of sheriff has been filled continuously since the creation of that office in Robertson County's first governmental organization that was worked out.<sup>25</sup>

Specifically, the sheriff was charged with the safe keeping of prisoners and juries, and with the prevention of the breaches of peace. He attended courts as chief administrative officer and executed their judgment. When a warrant attachment was issued it was his duty to seize the property attached. If judgment was rendered against a debtor the sheriff was the officer empowered to seize his property and sell it to satisfy claims of the creditors. He could perform these duties in person or through an authorized deputy sheriff.

The sheriff was the county's chief conserver of the peace and process officer, the custodian of the jail, and of the courthouse.<sup>26</sup>

### Constable

A constable qualified in Robertson County in April, 1838,<sup>27</sup> and the office has been filled in each precinct since

<sup>25</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>

Vernon's Texas Statutes, Arts. 2022, 2333, 2346, 2400, 2401, 6873.

<sup>27</sup>

Constitution of 1836, Art. IV, Sec. 12.

the creation of the office.<sup>28</sup> The early constable not only enforced the laws, made arrests and imprisonments, but had the right of search and authority to execute processes. There was no uniformity in the duties of the constable, but in the early days of the county the office was of high importance.

#### Declining Organizations

County board of school trustees.--In 1840, an act was passed granting lands from public domain to the several counties for educational purposes. Texas' first school law placed the public free school under the governmental supervision of the chief justice and the two associate justices, as a board of commissioners.<sup>29</sup> The management of the county schools became the responsibility of the governing court in 1845,<sup>30</sup> and so remained until 1873, when it passed to a separate board of school directors.<sup>31</sup> The board of directors was abolished in 1876, and until 1911, duties involved in the supervision of county schools were divided between the county judge and the commissioners court.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Constitution of 1845, Art. IV, Sec. 19.

<sup>29</sup> Acts of 1840, Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, p. 320.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 1156.

<sup>31</sup> Acts of 1873, Gammel, Laws of Texas, VII, p. 540.

<sup>32</sup> Acts of 1876, Gammel, Laws of Texas, VIII, p. 1935.

County school superintendent.--When the president of the board of school directors became ex-officio superintendent in 1873, the county provided for the count school superintendent.<sup>33</sup>

The board was abolished in 1876, and the county judge became ex-officio school superintendent.<sup>34</sup> Robertson County's first full-time superintendent took office in 1891, under provisions of an act of 1887, authorizing the commissioners court to call an election to fill the office, at its discretion.<sup>35</sup> His function varied from supervision of local authorities in the majority of cases to actual authority over a centralized county school system.

Coroner.--The office of coroner was created in 1836 by an act which required the election in each county of one coroner to hold office for two years. It was the duty of the coroner to hold inquests in all cases of violent and sudden death in the county which came to his knowledge. When there was a vacancy in the office of the sheriff, or when the sheriff was disqualified to act in a particular case, the coroner could perform the duties of the sheriff. Coroners were usually paid by fees rather than by fixed salaries, and

---

<sup>33</sup> Acts of 1873, Gammel, Laws of Texas, VII, p. 540.

<sup>34</sup> Acts of 1876, Gammel, Laws of Texas, VIII, p. 1035.

<sup>35</sup> Acts of 1836, Gammel, Laws of Texas, I, pp. 1243-45.



in many cases they had no knowledge of medicine which would qualify them to determine the cause of death. This office was discontinued in 1869 when the justice of the peace became the ex-officio coroner.<sup>36</sup>

Inspector of hides and animals.--In 1871, a law was passed for the protection of stock raisers and designed to prevent the illegal slaughter, sale or removal of livestock from the county. It was amended in 1876, and made each county an inspection district.<sup>37</sup> The office was abolished in 1933.

County surveyor.--The office of county surveyor was created in 1837,<sup>38</sup> and was made elective in 1840.<sup>39</sup> On February 6, 1838, a county surveyor qualified in Robertson County, and records of service extend as far back as March 25, 1838.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Constitution of 1869, Art. V, Sec. 20.

<sup>37</sup> Acts of 1871, Gammel, Laws of Texas, VI, p. 1014; Acts of 1876, Gammel, Laws of Texas, VIII, p. 1131.

<sup>38</sup> Acts of 1837, Gammel, Laws of Texas, I, p. 1406.

<sup>39</sup> Acts of 1840, Gammel, Laws of Texas, II, p. 437.

<sup>40</sup> Bond Book, Vol. I, p. 1.

### A Glance Backward

County government today, with its expanding activities and its antiquated organization, is like a rapidly growing animal confined in a rigid shell. The outgrown form, which successfully met the needs of our forefathers now hampers and thwarts it at every turn. Today, one of the major problems of the local government is the revamping and streamlining of the county in order to make it an effective instrument for meeting human needs.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RETROSPECTION AND PROGRESS

Into this New Republic came hardy, courageous settlers, with perhaps little education and training and little money, but with high moral standards, great hopes, and determination to make good. They came into a land where only a few years before the red man roamed at will, unthwarted by the white man, taking whatever suited his fancy, and leaving little or no imprint of his life, only relics of his warrior days.

It was no journey for the weak, for in the early days it was a long and weary trek, with disease, outlaw attacks, and other hardships threatening daily. Only the brave would attempt the migration and only the strong could hope to survive. Such sturdy manhood and womanhood made up the early pioneers of Robertson County.

In the succeeding years of this very old county, many changes have taken place. The old pioneers who developed this section of the country, both farmers and merchants, have faded from the picture, and in this seemingly short space of time the county has witnessed their places being filled by a new generation. In the Brazos bottom, the younger generation, evidently, lacked the "know-how" of their progenitors. Too, conditions have changed as the years have passed, bringing

into focus some new and extravagant practices. Gradually the old plantations, containing from 600 to 3,500 acres, began to change hands and the old names began to disappear from the tax rolls. The remnants of many old families began to move to other parts seeking employment in order that they might earn their daily bread. The story seems tragic as the fine old homes gradually disappear, by fire, by decay and by wrecking.

The changes have worked to an advantage for the towns. The plantations of yesterday have been reduced to farms. Many of the old homes have been replaced by neat bungalows and are housing farmers, who diversify their crops, farm with tractors and other mechanical implements instead of heavy Missouri mules, use and pay day laborers, and are retiring the "third and fourth" share croppers whose settlements, according to the colored idea were: "Ought is ought and figger is figger,<sup>1</sup> all for the white and none for the Nigger."

There is a long chapter of adversities behind the people of Robertson County, and it would be well if much could be forgotten. The future of the county is promising, with diversified farming, alfalfa--the new money crop--cattle, and modern farming methods. The most important element in the minds of the people in the western section of the county is,

---

<sup>1</sup>  
Wilkerson, op. cit., p. 5.

that the Brazos River, controlled to remain in its banks, will just "keep rolling along." This very part of the county is now the outlet for the modern "Valley of the Nile." It has all the many fine facilities which could easily make Sterling C. Robertson feel justly proud of the development of his timely creation.

It was into this land that the sturdy settlers planted the seeds in the early 1830's. They came to erect homes, plant crops and build a new civilization. They built well, for today can be seen the evidence of their efforts in the well developed farms, improved highways, modern institutions, and thriving towns.

In the early development of Robertson County there were many romantic episodes, colorful incidents, and stories of real heroism which have left their marks on the lives of the people. The influences were so diverse that it is almost impossible to generalize on the characteristics of the heroic pioneers who left to the succeeding generations a timely thought from the lips of an old settler. "A good county in which to live and not a bad place in which to die."

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

- Barker, Eugene C., Editor, The Austin Papers, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1924.
- Barker, Eugene C., Life of Stephen F. Austin, Founder of Texas, 1763-1836, Nashville, Cokesbury Press, 1925.
- Castaneda, Carlos E., Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, Vol. II, Austin, Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1936.
- De Shields, James T., Cynthia Ann Parker, San Antonio, Naylor Company, 1934.
- Eby, Frederick, The Development of Education in Texas, Macmillan Company, 1925.
- Gammel, H. P. N., Laws of Texas, 2 Vols., Austin, Gammel Book Company, 1898.
- The Handbook of Texas, 2 Vols., Austin, The State Historical Association, 1952.
- Hatcher, Mattie Austin, Letters of an Early American Traveler, Mary Austin Holly, Dallas, Southwest Press, 1933.
- The Texas Almanac for 1857, Galveston, Richardson and Company, 1856.
- The Texas Almanac for 1871, Galveston, Richardson and Company, 1871.
- The Texas Almanac for 1936, Dallas, A. H. Belo Corporation, 1936.
- The Texas Almanac for 1939-40, Dallas, A. H. Belo Corporation, 1939.

Vernon's Texas Statutes, Centennial Edition, 1936, Kansas City, Mo., Vernon Law Book Company, 1936.

#### Articles

Rogers, Marjorie, "The Town of Calvert," Frontier Times Magazine, (October, 1931), 581-584.

"Texas Towns of Historic Interest That Have Been Abandoned or Remain Small Towns Today," The Texas Almanac for 1936, Dallas, A. H. Belo Corporation, 1936.

Waller, J. L., "The Overland Movement of Cotton, 1866-1886," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXXV (1931-32), 137-145.

Wood, W. D., "Sketch of the Early Settlement of Leon County, Its Organization and Some Early Settlers," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, IV (1900-1901), 203-217.

#### Newspapers

Bode, Winston, "111 Candles on Cake for 'Colonel' Williams!" The Houston Press, November 11, 1953.

"Col. Walter Williams is Now 111," The Franklin Texan, November 19, 1953.

Foster, May, "Picturesque and Aristocratic Old Sterling Once Was Dream Spot of Settlers," Dallas Morning News, August 18, 1935.

McLendon, J. P., "Pioneer Citizen Writes of Early Robertson County History," Hearne Democrat, October 2, 1936.

"Origin of Names of Robertson County," Hearne Democrat, April 9, 1936.

Rogers, Majorie, "Early Texas Surveyors Victims of Massacre in 1838," Groesbeck Journal, December 23, 1926.

"70 Years Behind Hearne's Baptist Church," Hearne Democrat, February 17, 1939.

Turner, Thomas, "Early Health Resort Lives Only in Memory," Dallas Morning News, February 17, 1948.

### Constitutions of Texas

- Republic, 1836, in Gammel, H. P. N., Laws of Texas, 10 vols., Austin, Gammel Book Company, I (1898), 1069-1085.
- State, 1845, in Gammel, H. P. N., Laws of Texas, 10 vols., Austin, Gammel Book Company, II, (1898), 1277-1302.
- State, 1866, in Gammel, H. P. N., Laws of Texas, 10 vols., Austin, Gammel Book Company, V (1898), 856-886.
- State, 1869, in Gammel, H. P. N., Laws of Texas, 10 vols., Austin, Gammel Book Company, VII (1898), 340-393.
- State, 1876, with amendments to date, Vernon's Annotated Constitution of the State of Texas, 2 parts, Kansas City, Mo., 1927.

### Public Documents

- Inventory of the County Archives of Texas, Robertson County (Franklin), No. 198, Robertson County, Texas.
- U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Soils, Soil Survey of Robertson County, Texas, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1909.

### County Records

- Commissioners Court Minutes, 14 vols., (BC, DI, C, 2, 3, A-I).
- Official Bond Record, 6 vols., (I, two unlabeled, C, E).
- Probate Minutes, 36 vols., (A, C-M, O, Q-T, V, W, I, J, M, 1-14).

### Unpublished Material

- Wilkerson, Warren A., "History of the Town of Hearne," Paper read before the meeting of the Junior Historian Club, Hearne High School, Hearne, Texas, December 2, 1953.



Personal Interviews

Horlock, J. W., 308 Brenken Street, Hearne, Texas.

Rohde, Mrs. Emmett, 305 Barton Street, Hearne, Texas.

Wilkerson, Warren A., 808 Magnolia Street, Hearne, Texas.

Wood, Fred L., 405 Brenken Street, Hearne, Texas.