

# The History Of The City Of Brenham

By BETTY PLUMMER

## INTRODUCTION

As the one hundred sixty-fourth anniversary of Texas' Independence approaches, it seems quite fitting that tribute be paid to individual Texans -- those who gave of their efforts, energies, and lives during the early days in Texas. We cannot repay them, in kind. We can remember their names and deeds.

A distinct parallel exists between the history of Texas and the history of Brenham; for the builders of Brenham are, in reality, the builders of Texas. It is to these many sung and unsung heroes this story is dedicated.

The story of Brenham, the town, strives to recreate the atmosphere of Texas during periods before the creation of the town, as well as after its development. This history is primarily concerned with people who settled the lands, built the town, and sustained its growth. The people are the history; the historical facts are relevant because of the people.

Richard Fox Brenham's story is based on his life, deeds, and most interesting family. He is one of the early patriots who gave so much to Texas, and who deserves to be remembered by so many.

Most names and facts presented are based, primarily, on the records of the City of Brenham, Washington County, Texas and Spanish Archives, interviews with residents, and memoirs of former residents. General information is derived from source books relating to Texas history.

It is the sincere wish of the author that names appearing in the history be remembered as those belonging to men and women who felt the courage of their convictions strongly enough to persevere; and, in so doing built a Town, a Republic, and a State.

## (CHAPTER I)

### Land of Texas Founders

Few cities -- still flourishing since the days of the Republic -- have so colorful a heritage as Brenham. Located in the heart of the Stephen F.

Austin colony, many first settlers of Texas are numbered among the early settlers of Brenham. Into this area, at an early date, came the builders of Texas; and, here built their first homes. . . the Austin colonists, soldiers of the Texas Army, early religious leaders and educators, statesmen of the Republic, and later immigrants who brought Old World traditions to the State of Texas.

Brenham stands upon the lands of Texas' founders. Even the name itself typifies the courageous and dedicated type of Texan who chose to live among the tranquil, rolling hills of Brenham. To this Mecca in the Texas wilderness came men whose names and deeds are legend. Within a twelve mile circle of Brenham once lived, or labored, such notable personalities as

\* Dr. Richard Fox Brenham, frontier doctor who sacrificed his life for the Republic of Texas

\* William Barrett Travis, commander of the Alamo; his son, Charles Edward Travis, and his daughter Susan Travis Grissett

\* Moses Austin Bryan, grandson of Moses Austin, and the young boy who translated General Santa Anna's surrender speech, following the Battle of San Jacinto

\* Nestor and Tacitus Clay, nephews of the great Kentucky statesman Henry Clay, and statesmen-scholars in their own rights

\* Marcus Amster, a native of Switzerland, who came with the first German settlement in Texas.

\* James L. Dallas, nephew of Vice-President of the United States, George R. Dallas

\* Henry Lee Graves, first president of Baylor College

\* David Ayers, dedicated layman who brought the first consignment of Bibles into the Mexican-controlled state of Texas

\* Gideon Lincolem, early Texas practitioner of both English and Indian healing methods

\* Judge Abner S. Lipscomb, one of the first Chief Justices of the supreme Court of Texas

\* Horatio Chriesman, surveyor-general for the Stephen F. Austin colony

\* James G. Swisher, signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence.

\* R. B. Wells, first publisher of the Christian Advocate, (published now as the "The SERIES.

Texas Methodist).

\* Thomas Affleck, noted early Texas horticulturist - author-planter

\* Captain Leander Mc-Nelley, Texas Ranger who tamed the Nueces strip

\* Reverend Homer Thrall, early Methodist preacher - author and historian of both religion and Texas

\* Edward Fontaine, early teacher - preacher, and great-grandson of Patrick Henry

\* Miss Lydia McHenry, school-mistress of the early Montville Boarding School, located near Brenham in 1835-36

\* Reverend Robert Alexander, one of the first Methodist missionaries to arrive in the Texas territory west of the Brazos

\* Judge Williamson S. Oldham, Texas Senator to the Confederate Congress during the War Between the States

\* George Washington Barnett, signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence

\* Judge John P. Coles, first Alcalde of the Austin colony, and personal advisor to the Empresario Stephen F. Austin

\* John James Giddings, surveyor of the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Route, which linked the first mail stages for sea-to-sea delivery

\* General Sam Houston, soldier, statesman and President of the Republic of Texas

### Early Explorers

The real prelude to the founding of Brenham, however, began two hundred eighty-three years before Stephen F. Austin's colonists arrived, when the first civilized human being traversed Texas. At this time Alvar Nunez (Cabeza de Vaca) established Spanish claim to the vast territory, and returned to tell of impressive natural resources found in the area. Later the explorer Coronado echoes these praises,

Frenchmen were not to be outdone by their Spanish enemies; so, in 1684, the nobleman explorer La Salle was dispatched to the New World for the purpose of establishing a colony in the Texas territory. After building Fort St. Louis, near Matagorda, La Salle moved inland. Three years of map making and exploration merited La Salle only a bullet in the head, the result of arguments over spoiled corn and buffalo meat. During the course of his wanderings, La Salle explored within a few miles of the future townsite of Brenham. Maps made by La Salle show waterways identifiable as New Year's Creek, located just outside Brenham's limits, and



# Montville & Chappell Hill

By BETTY PLUMMER

## Montville

In 1832, David Ayers traveled from New York to the Austin colony seeking land. He found a choice location six miles north and a bit west of the future townsite of Brenham. Ayers built on his beautiful hilltop site a stone house which he named "Montville."

After completing "Montville" David Ayers returned to his home in Ithica, New York. So certain was he that the new Texas home would become permanent, Ayers sold his Ithica, New York property. According to family legend Ayers sold his property to the future builders of Cornell University; and, the main campus was built on the Ayers property in later years.

On May 11, 1833, David Ayers, his wife Ann, and their six children boarded the brig Asia for the journey to Texas. On this trip David Ayers carried a particularly precious cargo--the first King James Edition of the Bible to reach America. As David Ayers for years was recognized throughout the eastern states as a dedicated church layman, the newly organized American Bible Society asked him to take the Bibles to Texas for distribution. The Asia encountered several mishaps enroute--being boarded by pirates, running aground, and finally being wrecked near St. Joseph Island off the Texas coast. Upon reaching the shoreline, the Ayers were taken by their rescuers to the San Patricio colony a short distance away; here they remained for several months.

Feeling that the time for distributing the New Bibles had arrived, David Ayers presented them to members of the colony. Apparently the new Biblical translations did not meet with the approval of San Patricio's priest, Father Maloy, as he had the books banned from the colony. After this incident, David Ayers felt the time had arrived to resume the journey to "Montville."

Almost as soon as the family settled in their new home plans were begun for establishing a school. The wife of David Ayers, together with Miss Lydia McHenry (daughter of a pioneer Kentucky preacher), announced the open-

ing of a girls' boarding school at the Ayers' home; one such advertisement appeared in the Telegraph and Texas Register:

Montville Boarding School.  
Miss McHenry respectfully announced to the public her intention of opening a Boarding-school for young ladies and misses, on the first of February next, at Montville.

The scholars will be boarded in the family of David Ayers, where the best care will be taken of their health and morals. For particulars those interested are referred to Rev. J. Kenney, Asa Mitchell, David Ayers at Montville; Ira R. Lewis at Matagorda; George Huff, W. B. Travis at San Felipe.

The Montville Boarding School drew its students from all sections of the Austin colony. Personal friends of the Ayers were pleased to place their children at Montville, also. One child came all the way from Alabama. The nine year old son of William Barrett Travis was brought from his Alabama home, at the father's request, to stay with the Ayers family and attend school. Although the school was primarily for girls, Charles Edward Travis was given special permission to attend. Colonel Travis and David Ayers were close friends, and had worked together as laymen furthering the cause of Methodism in the Brenham-Washington County area.

Colonel Travis stopped on his way to the Alamo for a visit with the Ayers in February, 1836. During the course of the visit, Charles Edward approached his father, drew his head down and whispered something in his ear. Colonel Travis then smiled and asked, "My son, what do you want with four bits?" Charles replied, "I want to buy a bottle of molasses from Mrs. Scott and make some candy." Colonel Travis took the money from his pocket to give the boy, but as the money changed hands it dropped and rolled away. Charles ran after the money, caught it, bought the molasses, and made the candy which he divided among his schoolmates.

A short time later news reached Montville that the Alamo

had fallen, and with it the father of one of the pupils. After receiving the sad news David Ayers, his family, and pupils left Montville seeking refuge from Santa Anna's oncoming army. They all survived the troubled times known as the "runaway scrape," but did not reopen the school.

David Ayers' daughter married Rev. Robert Alexander, one of the first Methodist missionaries in Texas. As his district included the area where Brenham was later located, Rev. Alexander - frequently preached in the First Methodist Church in Brenham, a log building established there in 1844. His grave is today located in Prairie Lea Cemetery at Brenham, having been moved from the original interment site at Chappell Hill. Nearby is his wife, Eliza the

daughter of David Ayers.

Although David Ayers' Montville tract was sold shortly after the Texas Revolution, the Montville area again came into prominence five years later when it was incorporated into the community known as Mount Vernon, the second county seat of Washington County.

## Chappell Hill

On November 2, 1847, Jacob Haller became postmaster of the newly created post office called "Chapel Hill." The center of population in southeastern Washington County had undoubtedly become centered around the community settled by members of the Chappell, Felder, Browning, Keesee, Haller, Charles, Beauchamp, Haynie and Powers families. So extensive did the settlement become that post offices of both Cedar Creek and Jacksonville were discontinued during 1846 - 47, in favor of the new town of "Chapel Hill."

Several local legends the new town's name. One concerns the spelling of the name, which is attributed to a postmaster who felt that repeating the letters "p" and "l" were an unnecessary waste of time. Another story pertains to the naming of the new town. The tale contends that several prominent settlers in the area, seeking a name for the once sprawling community now be-

ing formed into a town, put their names in a hat. The name drawn was to become the settlement's new name. Thus the name of Robert Wooding Chappell became perpetuated.

Early Chappell Hill residents were renowned throughout Texas for their leadership in the fields of education and religion. Methodism quite literally began, survived, and prospered in Texas due to the efforts of early area residents. Two fine schools -- Soule University and Chappell Hill (Female) College -- once drew students from throughout Texas to its academic halls.

Many prominent early Texans at one time lived in the town; such notables as Rev. Homer Thrall, Rev. Robert Alexander, W. W. Browning, one of the guiding forces in bringing railroad transportation west of the Brazos, Thomas Lewis Gilmer whose brother was the well-known author-Governor of Georgia and whose father fought with General Lafayette in the American Revolution, Rev. Haynie, first Chaplain of the Republic of Texas Congress, Swearingens of Virginia, Wallis and Wallace families, the Chadwicks who came to help Texas win Independence from Mexico in 1836, Huberts, Allen

Lewis who helped David Ayers build the Methodist Church at Galveston, the Kings whose relative Rufus played so important a part in early national government, and who were themselves instrumental in building the Washington County Railroad.

Chappell Hill still retains the aura of its early founders, an atmosphere of cultured tranquility amid the rush of modern day living. Perhaps this unique atmosphere retained from bygone days is due to the Chappell Hill residents who believe that through preserving records of the past the future is served.

A most active historical society has indeed preserved, renovated, and kept alive lovely structures and traditions of the past. Of particular interest are the restored buildings along Main Street, the Chappell Hill Library, Applewhite House, Tunstall-Sledge house, Haynie house, Lockhart house, the churches



and cemeteries, Chappell Hill Museum, Munson house, Yan-  
ch house and Haller house.

Both contemporary and early residents of Chappell Hill can be numbered among those who have contributed greatly to the growth and development of Brenham. Present-day relatives of many early Chappell Hill area residents, living today in Brenham, include: W. J. Embrey, E. C. Chadwick, Miss Mary Wallace, Mrs. Bess H. Habekotte, Mrs. A. G. Mercer, Mrs. Delbert Stark, Harry K. Lesser, Abie Lesser, Mrs. Bess Emley, and Henry Hughes.

## West Mill Creek

### CHAPTER II West Mill Creek

In 1848, "a good number of German settlers" established the first European settlement in Washington County, situated twelve miles west of Brenham. Although the location was originally named for a large rock house built by one of the first settlers, the community later was called West Mill Creek. Today, this location is known as Latium, a widespread community extending into Austin County.

The three names by which present-day Latium was heretofore identified were derived from as many sources. The first name, Rock House, designated the area surrounding a large native rock house built by Viktor Witte. During the early 1840's three Witte brothers left Germany for Texas; one brother settled near Shelby, one settled near Winedale, and one "remained in the Carolinas," and did not come to Texas. Viktor Witte had immigrated to Texas due to plans scheduled for a German railroad to build across his lands. Rather than allow this to happen, Witte sold his extensive lands and came to Texas seeking new ones.

One of the descendants of the Wittes, Hugo Brandt, lives in Brenham and recalls many interesting tales told him by his forebears regarding the early settlers. Hugo Brandt and his brothers, Earnest and Otto, are also related to other early settlers of the West Mill Creek-Latium area, the von Biebersteins and Gieseckes. Hugo Brandt recalled that his ancestors came to Texas in 1843. Another Witte, Bernhardt, came to Texas at an even earlier date; he was a member of Stephen F.

Austin's fifth colony and was granted one-quarter league of land February 6, 1836. Bernhardt Witte had studied medicine in Germany, and although did not practice medicine after moving to Texas, his advice was frequently sought by friends and neighbors. A Witte relative and present-day Brenham resident is also a doctor, Dr. Roger Knolle.

The second name of present-day Latium was "West Mill Creek." An article in a Banner-Press issue of 1881, mentioned the West Mill Creek community and one of its notable residents, Rudolph Krug. At this date he was "the oldest school teacher in the county." Professor Krug, as he was called by his pupils, was a native of Danzig, Austria, who became the first teacher of the first European settlement in Washington County.

His ability to speak five languages was undoubtedly an asset, as early settlers in the area came from Austria, Switzerland and Germany. Professor Krug and his wife reared a family of six children in the

West Mill Creek community. One of Professor Krug's descendants who lives in Brenham today, Mrs. William Stuckert, recalled the tragedy which befell his family. On July 4, 1878, while on an outing, four members of the family were drowned when their boat overturned on a lake near Shelby. All four, Kenny Krug, his wife Dora, Mary and Hedwig Krug, were buried together the night of the disaster in the cemetery known today as the Latium Cemetery. Another descendant of Professor Krug, Mrs. Mary Ziesemer, recalled that Professor

Krug later moved to Brenham following the death of his wife; both the Professor and his wife were buried in Prairie Lea Cemetery.

Apparently, the third name given to the first European settlement in Washington County, Latium, was derived from the language and education of the residents. In ancient western Europe the city of Latium was populated with people using the dominant language of western Europe; and, who were also particularly interested in education. They were, through necessity, farmers as well as professional people. The situation was comparable in Washington County's latter day Latium, as most of the settlers were professional people who had received a classical education

and were interested in securing one for their children. Through necessity, they too were farmers; hence, the name Latium, which identified them as "Latin Farmers."

Among other early settlers, whose relatives later moved to Brenham were the von Bieberstein, Eversberg, and Giesecke families. Carl Eversberg was a teacher in the community, and his son, Dr. C. R. Eversberg, later practiced dentistry in Brenham. Mrs. Florence Drumm, who lives in Brenham, is a granddaughter of Carl Eversberg.

Herman von Bieberstein was a civil engineer who drew surveys of both Brenham and the county. One senior citizen recalled that the von Biebersteins were renowned for their longevity, many of them reaching the ages of ninety and one hundred years. Two other "Latin Farmers" were brothers Carl F. and

George Christian F. Giesecke. Carl, a native of Clausthal, Germany, came to Texas in 1845, a member of the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas. The Giesecke gin, run by the brothers, was in operation over one hundred years ago.

Credits and resources will be given at the conclusion of the series.

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(To Be Continued Friday)



# Berlin, Salem Spring Up

By BETTY PLUMMER  
CHAPTER II  
Berlin-Salem

Although the communities of Berlin and Salem were located five miles apart, church relationships between the two settlements caused early residents to be more closely associated than was usual among neighboring villages. Many present day residents of the two communities still live upon lands settled by their forefathers one hundred twenty-five years ago.

At Berlin, first of the two early German communities to be established, the oldest Lutheran congregation in Washington County was organized on July 1, 1855. Although European settlers had been moving into the area for almost a decade prior to the church's establishment, not until Pastor Johann George Ebinger came to Washington County in 1854, were plans made for formally uniting the church community. Pastor Ebinger sent by Pilgrim's Mission at Basel, Switzerland, had come to the county "in search of Lutheran immigrants" as descendants from Texas' first German settlement at Industry of Lutheran immigrants." As descendants from Texas' first German settlement at Industry as well as new immigrants were moving ever-nearer the Brenham area, Pastor Ebinger found a fertile missionary field.

With the assistance of Valentine Hoffman, one of Berlin's earliest settlers, the first Lutheran Church in the county began in 1855. Both land and labor for the church structure were donated by land owners in the neighborhood. Charter members included: Friedrich Ehlert, Louis Lehmann, K. Mernitz, Ch. Hueske, Frederick Weiss, William Schlottmann, F. W. Schuereberg, William Bohne, J. Kasperik, A. Hahn, Henry Meier, Aug. Mueller, F. Schawe, Frank Spreen, C. Wuerscher, F. Pieper, G. Kollmey, L. F. Hohlt.

Age-wise, the oldest Berlin settlers were Valentine Hoffman, his wife, and Heinrich Benjamin Christ. Valentine, a native of Kleinhain-Hessen-Darmstadt, was born in 1800, and lived until his sev-

enty-first birthday. H. B. Christ, a native of Switzerland, was two years younger than Hoffman. Mrs. Hoffman, however, enjoyed an even longer life. A story, recalled by Donnie Wilder, a young Hoffman descendant, dealt with the advanced years attained by Valentine Hoffman's wife. It seems that during her eighties and nineties, the sight in both eyes decreased until she became blind. However, after

attaining her one hundredth birthday, for some unexplained reason her vision began improving, by her 102nd birthday the sight of both eyes was restored.

In addition to early Berlin settlers mentioned as charter members of the Eben-Ezer church other early residents of the Berlin area included Mrs. Sophia Wiebusch, Mrs. Henrietta Engleage, Mrs. Heinrich Christ, Edward Luedke, George Mulberger, Heinrich Hold, the Muellers, Bodes, Neinasts, Rippenhagens, Fischers, and Nienstedts.

#### Salem Organized

Only one year following the organizing of Eben-Ezer Church, the Salem Lutheran Church was established by Pastor Ebinger. As both congregations were originally gathered together under the Eben-Ezer Church charter, many charter members of the Salem Church were also listed among the Berlin church members. The seventeen charter members of Salem Lutheran included William Bohne, William Schuereberg, Fr. Ehlert, J. Kasperik, P. Hahn, H. Meier, F. F. Spreen, C. W. Wuenscher, Ch. Hueske, F. Weiss, G. Weise, August Mueller, William Schlottmann, F. Schawe, F. Pieper, G. L. Kollmey.

By the year 1860, the church's voting membership had increased to twenty-eight as additional families moved into the settlement. Families living in the area prior to 1866, included Hodde, Winkelmann, Wehmeier, Holle, Thieleman, Loesch, Rogge, Mahlmann, Emshoff, Sommerfeld, Remmert and Bartels.

Even though separate church rules and resolutions governed the two church communi-

ties, one pastor continued to serve the Berlin-Salem area as late as 1940. Luther Utesch, present-day resident of Brenham whose father Pastor William Utesch ministered to Berlin and Salem communicants for over twenty years,

recalled attending services conducted by his father at Salem in the morning, and then driving with him to Berlin for the evening service.

The Salem community, according to local legend, was a refuge for yellow fever victims during the scourge of 1867. A special yellow fever hospital was established in the area; and, William Schlottmann, who came to the Brenham-Washington County area in 1847, devoted much time to "nursing the sick, comforting the living, and helping to bury the many dead."

Although the Weiss, Schawe, Spreen, and Bohne families originally settled at Berlin, they later moved to the Salem community. William Bohne is credited with donating the land on which Salem's first church was built; its location was one-half mile west of the present church. Frederick Weiss helped build the log-hewn Eben-Ezer Church and also later moved to the Salem area. His interest in horticulture brought joy to early area residents, as he generously planted and tended trees and flowers on others' properties with care equal to his own. A Weiss descendant, Mrs. Evelyn Schilling, still lives in the house which he built; and one quarter mile north of the homestead lives Clarence Hodde, also a descendant of Frederick Weiss.

During the passage of years, many relatives of early German pioneers who settled the Berlin and Salem areas have moved into Brenham. Present-day Brenham residents whose forebearers helped establish these early settlements include: Mrs. Donald Wilder, the Schawes, Ehlerts, Meyers, Wehmeyers, the Quebes, Richters, Emshoffs, Hahns, Kempers, Winkelmanns, and Wilhelmsons.



# Washington Comes To Life

By BETTY PLUMMER

## CHAPTER II

### Washington

Only a few months before the Texas Declaration of Independence was signed the new town of Washington was established. Located on the Brazos River, about a mile from the thoroughfare of early Texas -- La Bahia Road -- the townsite quickly became the focal point of attention. After the winning of Texas independence and relocating of the permanent capitol at Austin, Washington's glory faded, almost as quickly as it grew to fame.

On the lands of Andrew Robinson, credited with being the first Stephen F. Austin colonist to permanently settle in the Brenham-Washington County area, the future capitol of Texas was located. Robinson's son-in-law, John W. Hall, bought 640 acres of land for \$1,000, and on a portion of this land the townsite of Washington was planned. The actual platting and selling of town lots came under the auspices of the Washington Townsite Company, composed of Asa Hoxie, Thomas Gay, James B. Miller, Alexander Somervell, and Hall. These men each owned proportionate shares of the townsite land--Hoxie, Gay and Hall owning one-fourth each with Miller and Somervell jointly owning the remaining quarter. Hall, designated general agent for the company, kept three lots of his portion for personal use, while Gay built his dwelling on six lots.

Newspaper advertisements announced the selling of Washington townsite lots to the highest bidders; bidding was to begin on January 8, 1836. The lots were laid out around the two principle streets of Washington -- Main and Ferry streets. On Ferry Street were the properties of David Ayers and Frank Ackerman. According to Dr. John W. Lockhart, on Main Street was located the building used by convention delegates who declared Texas' independence. The building was located "about 500 feet from the bluff," and was the property of Noah Byers and Peter Mercer. Byers, a Baptist preacher by avocation and a gunsmith by trade, planned to use the front

part of the structure for a shop, with living quarters in rooms behind the shop. Mercer was also a dedicated Baptist, whose relatives later helped with Baylor College, and the organizing of Baptist churches in Texas. As he, also, was a smith Mercer and Byers planned to open a business in the newly established town of Washington.

One of the major considerations involved in using Wash-

ington for the Convention town, undoubtedly, was the availability of the Byers-Mercer building. A group of enterprising men had prevailed upon Byers and Mercer to lease their unfinished building to the group. They, in turn, offered the building to the Convention Committee engaged in making arrangements for the meeting. According to Dick Mgebroff, present-day resident of Brenham whose historical collection included the original contract between Byers, Mercer, and the lessees, this document provided for rental of the building at a cost of \$120 for the duration of the Convention. In return, Byers and Mercer obligated themselves to put the unfinished building in shape so it could be used as a convention hall. Windows were to be installed and other finishing touches added. Twenty signatures were affixed to the contract, plus the names of Byers and Mercer. The contract was "made at least one month before March 2nd."

Following the ownership of Byers and Mercer, the building passed to four other owners during 1837 and 1838. It was owned by Moffatt, J.L. Hood and William H. Steel, and Thomas Woodleif. The building, later known as Independence Hall, was probably located in the same block as David Ayers and Frank Ackerman's establishments on Block Number Twelve.

On another street in Washington, a future Brenham hotel manager owned property. D. D. Crumpler bought two lots fronting one-hundred feet on Jackson Street, in December, 1836. Crumpler later moved to Brenham and established the Crumpler Hotel which stood on the present-day corner of Main and Doug-

las.

Jesse Farral, who later relocated on lands which he donated as a townsite for Brenham, also lived in Washington. He worked as a carpenter, together with his helper James Hurt.

Other early property owners of Washington, many of whom later bought property in Brenham, include Samuel Lusk, Thomas J. Heard, J.B. Robeson, A.G. Perry, A. Rice, Amos Gates, E. S. Cabler, J. R. Cummins, M. M Davis, A. Moore, J. H. Jones, W.Y. McFarland, D. R. Peebles and Niles.

Into the new town of Washington crowded delegates, traders, and interested persons, during the latter days of February, 1836. With the exception of Lott's Tavern, accommodations were almost non-existent. One visitor described Washington as being "laid out in the woods," another description said it was "located in a post oak grove," and so recently laid out that post oak stumps had not yet been removed from the main street. Delegates were obliged to seek lodging in one of the "dozen wretched cabins or shanties" in the city or join the thirty-odd people already crowded into Lott's forty by twenty foot establishment.

Uncomfortable physical facilities however, could not dim the dedication of delegates gathering for the convention. No crowded, damp quarters or cold, drafty meeting halls deterred the Texans in their quest for independence from Mexico.

Credits and resources will be given at the conclusion of the series.

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(To Be Continued Tuesday)



# New County Seats Constructed

By BETTY PLUMMER

## New County Seat

After the signing of the Declaration of Independence and establishing of the Republic's government, confusion and controversy became rampant among the new legislators meeting at Washington, new capitol of the Republic of Texas. The controversy centered around decreasing the size of Washington Municipality.

Originally, the area covered by the Washington Municipality encompassed present-day counties of Burleson, Brazos, Lee, Montgomery, Grimes, Madison, Walker, and San Jacinto. The county seat for this widespread area was the town of Washington. Many legislators felt that Washington County should be divided.

In addition to these requests, the petitioners suggested making Montgomery County "territory of Washington County," and, therefore excluding it from all county expenses and from consideration when determining the center of Washington County.

The petitioners concluded by saying they did not see "any good cause why four fifths of the people of Washington County should be unjustly put to so much inconvenience for the accommodation of the remaining when no permanent good can result."

## Fading Glory

The petition apparently convinced Congress to comply with most respects. A commission was appointed to select the new site for the Washington County seat of justice. Although other petitions containing many signatures were sent to Congress requesting the county seat be kept at Washington, a new location was secured and the second Seat of Justice for the county of Washington relocated at a new town called Mount Vernon.

Thus began the decline of Washington. A new capitol being established at Austin coupled with moving the county seat to Mount Vernon put the bustling town temporarily out of the limelight. Washington, however, shortly thereafter again became the destination of travellers, diplomats and statesmen. During 1841, the

new capitol became unsafe for the site of government, when Mexican raiders began a large scale attack to regain Texas. So, the little town on the banks of the Brazos once again became the capitol of Texas, much to the displeasure of Texas officials and the joy of Washington's depressed merchants, residents, and land speculators.

The restored glory of Washington was short, however, for Texas was destined

to become a part of the United States, with the Texas capitol permanently located at Austin. During years between 1841-44 Washington County citizens were again finding their new county seat as inconvenient as its predecessor and pressed Congress for the right to select another site. When the new town of Brenham was established many Washington residents chose to move into the new county seat while others chose towns in Navasota County (later named Brazos County).

Within a few years Washington, having lost its charm, settled down to being merely the "former capital of the Republic of Texas," and herein began a controversy which lasted from 1836 until 1841. During this time numerous petitions were dispatched to the Congress presenting requests for both dividing and not dividing Washington County. One petition, dated Nov. 30, 1837, was against any division unless boundaries set were beginning on the East bank of Brazos River, at the mouth of Pond Creek, on the county line of Austin, and with said County line of Austin East to a point on said line 15 miles East from the said Brazos River, to the San Antonio Road, and fifteen miles from the Brazos River. One hundred eighty-one signatures were affixed to the petition.

Another petition suggested attaching the northern part of Austin County to Washington County so as to make it better balanced. One hundred fifty-five Washington County citizens signed this petition, and five citizens of Austin County also approved the move.

When Congress did relocate the Washington County boundaries, these new lines also became the cause of more petitions directed to the legislators. One such petition was signed by both Montgomery and Washington County residents, suggesting that the new line between the two counties

be readjusted. Another group presented a more detailed and emotional appeal for reestablishing county lines and a new county seat as well. Their complaints were that the county seat was "unjustly kept at Washington," "much injustice has been done us as citizens by compelling many of us to attend as jurors at a distance of forty miles." The petition further said "the Citizens of Washington have had long to groan under the burden of ....renting a courthouse," and "the duties of a public character to be performed by us as legal citizens and the great sacrifice of time and money" which were considered "inexpedient and 'impolitic.'"

The petition suggested excluding both the Brazos and Yegua from country land, letting them serve as northern and eastern boundaries of the county; the southern boundary was to be "Cainey Creek to a point three miles south of R.V. Armstead;" the west line was to be a "ridge between Mill and Cummings Creek." The petition also wanted five commissioners appointed to select a new county site, which was to be within three miles of the county's center.

Credits and resources will be given at the conclusion of the series.

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## History Of Brenham --

## New Swords Of Justice

By BETTY PLUMMER

CHAPTER III

## New Swords of Justice

One lone sentinel of the past stands atop a windswept hill six miles northwest of Brenham. The sentinel is a very old house whose windows still look upon high prairie lands where once stood the second county seat of Washington County - Mount Vernon.

Although the Town of Mount Vernon was not established until 1841, for almost a generation prior to this date the surrounding area was well known to Austin colonists and Republic of Texas citizens. Only eleven years after the first Stephen F. Austin colonist crossed the Brazos River a few miles northeast of Brenham, David Ayers, a member of Austin's fourth colony, built a home which he named "Montville." In this house Ayers' wife and her sister, Miss Lydia McHenry, established one of the first girls' boarding schools operating in the Austin colonies prior to the Texas Revolution.

Another location in the area was known as "Fuller's," a favorite stopping point for Texas travellers. As one early settler recalled there were "but few of the old settlers who have not stayed all night at Fuller's and received the very best for man and best that the country afforded.

In 1837, the area adjacent to the future townsite of Mount Vernon received Congressional attention. John H. Monroy, San Jacinto veteran and Comptroller of the Texans' Provisional Government, offered 1666 acres of his land as a new location for the permanent capitol of the Republic of Texas.

To residents of Washington County, however, the location became most important when it was selected to re-

place Washington-on-the-Brazos as their County Seat of Justice, in 1841. During the three year period from 1838 to 1841, county residents repeatedly expressed discontent with the town of Washington as the location of their county seat. Numerous petitions were sent to the Congress of the Republic of Texas Requesting a relocation.

Although the town of Washington was well known to all Texans, the location presented Washington Countians with both physical and economic difficulties when they were called to attend court sessions, serve on juries, or conduct business at the county seat. General unrest was also caused by a lack of public buildings for county use. Since the town of Washington had been the county seat of justice inadequate buildings facilities necessitated the renting of a house in which court proceedings could be held.

The almost two-hundred Washington Countians who petitioned their Congressmen for a relocation of the county seat were actually requesting the implementation of a legislative act which was signed into law May 9, 1838, by Sam Houston, President of the Republic of Texas. During this year, Congress had authorized the relocation of county seats of justice. The act further stated that if any seat of justice established at a greater distance than five miles from the center of the county a majority of all the votes shall be sufficient for its removal, provided such removal was related within five miles

from the county's center. The town of Washington was actually located on the edge of Washington County after the removal of a large portion of the original county land in 1836, and, the people wanted a more central location.

Five years later the Republic of Texas bowed to the wishes of Washington Countians by the appointment of five special commissioners. Their instructions were to first determine the exact location of the county's center, select a site not more than three miles from the geographic center, and to see that at least a portion of the lands chosen for the townsite were donated.

The five commissioners appointed to relocate the Seat of Justice for Washington County were men already well recognized throughout the Republic for their efforts in behalf of Texas --

Dr. George W. Barnett, signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence; James Clemmons, Texas Revolution Veteran and early Texas entrepreneur whose mill and tan yard located near the future townsite of Brenham later proved so helpful to the fledgling town's residents; Lindsey P. Rucker, schoolmaster of the Academy near Washington and later Rector of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Brenham; Samuel P. Browne, Austin colonist and surveyor of early Texas land grants for the Empresario; Horatio Chriesman, chief surveyor of land grants awarded the Stephen F. Austin colonists. All five of the appointed commis-

sioners lived within a ten to twelve mile radius of the site destined to become Brenham. Thoughts of a third county seat occupied the minds of Dr. Barnett, Reverend Rucker, Clemmons, Browne, and Chriesman. Their immediate mission was through-provoking with the requirements they meet in selecting the new location for Washington County's second county seat. Although Congressional requirements presented problems to the commissioners. The relocating of the new town in an area which would be pleasing to all factions of the citizenry was even greater concern.

A selection was made by January 1841. The site complied with all the requirements. It was located "three miles from the center thereof and northeast therefrom." When the owner of these lands, then a resident of Brazoria County, heard of the commissioners' decision to locate the new seat of justice upon his recently purchased Washington County land, one hundred acres of land was promptly offered as a townsite for the new seat of justice. The generous patron also offered the commissioners a choice of any one hundred acres from among his recently purchased 1822 acres, with the exception of a timbered area.

Next: Owings of Kentucky

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# Owings Of Kentucky

By BETTY PLUMMER

Mount Vernon was established upon the lands of Colonel Thomas D. Owings, native of Kentucky and former officer in the United States Cavalry. Colonel Owings and his son Robert S. Owings were dedicated to the Texans' fight for independents from Mexico, and both men came to Texas during the struggle.

Robert Owings entered the service of the Republic of Texas on Christmas Day of 1835. On this day several hundred young Kentuckians set sail down the Mississippi River destined to play a large role in the Texas Revolution. The names of many Kentuckians who sailed away, as well as many of those who followed shortly thereafter became heroes to early Texans and were later encribed on the pages of Texas history books. Such men as General Sidney Sherman, Dr. Richard Roman, Captain Burr Duvall, Colonel Charles Harrison, General Felix Huston, General Jerome B. Robertson, Dr. Daniel Rowlett, Dr. Robert Kemp Goodloe (Ohioan who joined the group in Kentucky), and Dr. Richard Fox Brenham.

After reaching Texas soil, the company to which young Owings was assigned, Captain Burr Duvall's group, marched overland to join the command of Colonel James W. Fannin. Shortly after joining the Fannin contingent, the recently arrived Kentucky volunteers found themselves involved with a large Mexican force. On the prairie near Goliad, young Robert Owings and his fellow soldiers were surrounded by Mexican troops. After two days of being fired upon, hopelessly surrounded by the enemy and without water, Captain Fannin was forced to surrender in his troops. This encounter produced one of the most disastrous events of the entire Texas struggle for independence. For, although having surrendered under a flag of truce, the division under the command of Colonel Fannin was massacred by their Mexican captors on March 27, 1836.

According to War Department records, Robert S. Owings was one of the men who "fell with Fannin."

While Robert Owings was enroute to Texas with the Kentucky volunteers, his father was corresponding with Stephen F. Austin on the subject of sending more fighters to Texas. Colonel Owings' offer to raise, arm and equip a body of 500 volunteers for the service of Texas was accepted in the name of the Texas cause by

Colonel Austin. Only three weeks after young Owings sailed away, the Father of Texas wrote Colonel Owings

"we wish to extend the blessings of Civil Liberty over one of the fairest portions of this Continent, and to offer a home upon its fertile soil, to the pious and Industrious of all Religious Denominations."

Colonel Austin further thanked Colonel Owings for his offer to lead a volunteer group to Texas and requested that Owings report to the Governor of Texas or the Commander in Chief of the Army upon arriving on Texas soil.

Undoubtedly, Colonel Owings' ideas coincided with the use of Stephen F. Austin, for the Kentuckian gave unselfishly of his time, money, and military knowledge to aid the new Republic. Following the end of hostilities, Owings remained in Texas where he invested in one of Texas' valuable commodities -- rich soil. One of his daughters, Ann, also later

came to Texas. She and her husband built a fine home adjacent to the townsite of Mount Vernon.

In addition to the many fertile acres which Owings already owned, he purchased an additional 1820 acres near the La Bahia Road in Washington County during January 1841. Almost as soon as the transaction was completed word reached Colonel Owings that his land was located in the area which was being considered as a location of the Seat of Justice for Washington County. Through his neighbor, acting as attorney in fact, Colonel Owings offered to donate land for the townsite. His offer was accepted, and on June 3, 1841, title to the new county seat of Washington County was transferred to the commissioners.

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# Founding Mount Vernon

By BETTY PLUMMER

The town of Mount Vernon was founded on a scenic, breeze-swept hilltop. So high was the hill and so prairie-like the location that the beautiful countryside for miles around could be seen from the townsite.

Although few trees grew within the townsite proper, one very large tree did stand near the middle of the town tract. A small log house stood within the shelter of the tree, which in 1841 was referred to as a "large" tree. According to residents still living in the Mount Vernon area, early settlers had remembered an old courthouse located near a massive live oak tree which still stands, today. Over one hundred twenty-eight years ago this tree sheltered not only the courthouse, but judge and jury as well during the hot summer months. Judge R. E. B. Baylor, District Judge in whose honor Baylor University was named, would frequently hold court under the tree rather than in the swelteringly hot courthouse which he dedicated to Justice, in 1841.

When the first court session convened at the new Seat of Justice for Washington County, county officers included Chief Justice William H. Ewing, whose descendant Edwin D. Mills, Jr. lives 3 miles city limits of Brenham; District Clerk J. D. Giddings, whose granddaughter, Mrs. Louise Tarver Stone; grandnieces, Mrs. Linda Giddings Anderson and Miss Louise Giddings; grandnephews, William Giddings; and descendants, Mrs. Mary Stone Rankin, Miss Pat Giddings, Clinton Anderson, and Dr. Thomas Giddings still live in Brenham; County Clerk John Gray, whose grandson W. J. Embrey served from 1913-1967 as city attorney for Brenham and who still lives in the city which he served for 54 years; Justice of the Peace Ivy McNeese, whose descendant A. G. McNeese of Houston spends much time on his Sandy Creek Farm, four miles west of Brenham, Justices N. A. McFadden, Rufus Charles, Hardin White, Henry R. Cartmell, Prosper Hope, D. B. Madden, and County Surveyor Nathan A. Clappitt.

After the new townsite lots were out platted commissioners Barnett, Rucker, Clemmons, Brown and Chriesman began to sell Mount Vernon property. Many early Mount Vernon residents and property owners became associated with Brenham in later years. One prominent Mount Vernon

resident who later contributed greatly to the growth of Brenham was Asa M. Lewis.

During the fall of 1841, Asa Miles Lewis, his wife Anna and their two children moved to the newly established town of Mount Vernon. Here, Lewis practiced law in the county and district courts for two and one-half years. Then, following Lewis' appointment by

Congress as a commissioner to found the town of Brenham, the family moved to Brenham. Commissioner Lewis is credited with building the first house in Brenham.

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# Mt. Vernon Residents

By BETTY PLUMMER

One of the young Mt. Vernon property owners who later became a prominent Brenham resident was H. C. McIntyre. Although the McIntyre plantation home was located just east of the future townsite of Brenham, Hugh McIntyre owned land adjacent to Mount Vernon. Following the establishment of Brenham the McIntyres purchased city property and built a fine residence on present-day Academy Street. Hugh McIntyre was later elected Mayor of Brenham and served in this capacity during the troublesome times following the Civil War. His descendant, Mrs. Albert Stone, still lives in Brenham, only a few blocks from the original McIntyre home.

Other early Mt. Vernon residents and nearby property owners included Green H. Coleman, William Lockridge, S. B. Hendricks who attended Rutgersville College during the families Mount Vernon residency, A. I. Rippetoe, Asa Mitchell, one of Texas original three hundred settlers, Stephen R. Roberts, Allum B. Williams whose old family mausoleum has been protected through the years by Brenham residents to whom the Williams land was later sold, and James G. Swisher, signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence.

Professional people were also in evidence at Mount Vernon. One of the town physicians was Dr. M. B. Bennett, a young Alabamian whose medical practice began at Mount Vernon. Ministers of the gospel preached regularly at the new county seat. One of these men, Rev. Thomas Nunn, lived nearby and Rev. Orenth Fish-

er, who later became a Brenham property owner, lived a few miles northeast of the town.

The predecessor of Brenham's First Baptist Church was organized in a schoolhouse near Mount Vernon. The church was first named the New Year's Creek Church, but changed the title to the First Baptist Church following its removal to Brenham. First members of the New Year's Creek Baptist Church included Judge R. E. B. Baylor, W. W. Buster, Hosea Garrett, O. A. Fisher, ordained minister, Rebecca and Margaret Fisher, members of the Allcorn, Zimmerman, Clark, Veazey, and Tremmier families. Members of the Allcorn family, which came to the Brenham area as Austin Colonist in the 1820's, lived in Brenham until recent years.

One of the many large farms established near Mount Vernon was the home of Colonel Owings' daughter, Ann. She and her husband, John Mason, came to Texas from Kentucky and built a lovely plantation house which still stands. The old house still radiates through its alterations of the years the special beauty and charm originally bestowed upon the house by its builder, over one hundred twenty-five years ago. The house was built along stately Grecian lines. It was of cypress constructed which, undoubtedly has been the cause of the old house's withstanding the elements through the years. Large logs run the length of the house as supports, with fieldstones serving as the foundation. There are two double fireplaces in the house, each fireplace serving one of the four rooms which flank both sides of the

center hall. At one time a gallery extended across the entire front of the house.

Another plantation located near Mount Vernon was developed by the Stamps family. Judge John Stamps, who is credited with naming the town, and was a man of many activities -- planter, contractor, legislator.

John Stamps came to Texas only a few weeks before the Texas Declaration of Independence was signed. In company with a group of men from his native state of Tennessee, Stamps searched Texas from the Sabine to the San Pedro looking for the best land on which to establish a plantation in Texas. He chose the fertile, well-watered lands of Washington County.



# Stamps Move To Texas

Upon returning to Mississippi, where the Stamps family had lived for the past twelve years, plans were made for moving the extensive Stamps household to Texas. The other members of John Stamps' family were born in Mississippi--his wife, Henrietta, his son, J. C., and daughters Mary Louisiana, Molna and Malvina. Fortune had undoubtedly smiled upon the Stamps during their Mississippi years, if the manner in which their Texas plantation was established could be used as a criteria. For, only two years after arriving in Texas, Stamps owned almost 10,000 acres of Washington County land. In addition to Washington County land he also owned, at varying time, extensive acreage in Jefferson County. A portion of his holdings included the land which became known as "Spindletop," Texas' first big oil

gusher.

Stamps practice was to buy land in large amounts. Deeds were recorded of his having bought one entire league from the relatives of Stephen F. Austin, in addition to one three-quarter tract, and one half-league tract in Washington County.

The Stamps home -- a veritable mansion -- was built on one of the large land purchases made by Stamps shortly after his arrival in Washington County. The house was located approximately eight to ten miles northwest of Brenham. It was a two-story structure, built in the southern colonial manner (reminiscent of Mississippi), and, was reputed to be one of the finest houses in the country. The interior furnishings were as fine as the building itself. Rosewood furniture, linens, china,

old silver, and carpets graced the plantation house. Until recently, a rosewood piano from the house (valued at \$250 in 1860) was still in existence.

Even before John Stamps' acquisition of his multi-acred holdings, his neighbors looked favorably upon the new Texan. So favorably, in fact, that his name was placed as a candidate for Congress in the 1841 Congressional race. Such action was indeed a vote of confidence, for Stamps' opponents were men well known to most Texans since the days of the Austin colony...R. W. Williamson, one of the first Chief Justices of the Texas Supreme Court; Samuel Boggar, whose Bogurt's landing was the Brazos River point of embarkation each year for many bales of Washington County cotton; and two well-known area residents, Wilkinson and Cole.



Mill Creek, which runs five miles west of Brenham.

#### Indians

While French and Spanish explorers sought civilization, drew maps, and planted flags on the soil of Texas, the real first settlers and claimants of the area remained undisputed possession. Indian tribes, which for centuries had roamed the prairies, hills, and river bottoms of Texas were still in complete control-- the music-loving Wacos, the cannibalistic Karankows, the noble Cenís who originally welcomed La Salle, the corn growing Tehas, the fighting Tonkows, the friendly Coushattis, the gentle Lipans, the fierce Comanches and Apaches.

Although many Indian tribes roamed and hunted over the broad expanse of Stephen F. Austin's future colony, only three tribes called the Brenham-Washington County area home. These were the Tonkows, Wacos, Lipans. The Coushatta tribe living to the northeast, however, apparently made such frequent forays into the lands west of the Brazos that a river crossing several miles north of Brenham, in present-day Washington County, was named the Coushatta crossing.

Of the three tribes located in the future Brenham area, Lipans and Tonkows appeared most peaceful in their dealings with the settlers. The Wacos were more inclined to deal unfairly with Austin colonists. One colonist named Cummins wrote the following letter to Stephen F. Austin in January, 1826

"I wish to inform you that in my absence the Waco Indians came to my house and plundered and carried off the following articles, two sheets, two quilts, and wagon cover and nearly all our wearing clothing and table furniture. It appears from the conduct of those Indians that we cannot settle the frontiers of the Colony unless we can have an understanding with them, for if they are allowed to rob and plunder it will be impossible . . . I am determined to kill the first one that undertakes to rob me again, which will commence a war."

The colonist's complaint, in all probability, was expertly handled by Austin, for his Indian policies were to deal fairly and wisely, as were all the policies of this most unusual man. Due to his handling of Indian affairs, Austin's colony did not experience much trouble with Indians. "In fact," commented Daniel Shipman, one of the original "Old Three Hundred" settlers who later became a Brenham resident, "the sight, or even the fresh track of a Texan was a terror to them." The Empresario was more reserved in his estimate of the Indians' fears; he wrote, in 1824, "The Indians are now beginning to fear us, but we cannot for

sometime yet hope for complete peace with them."

Few conflicts between the settlers and Indians occurred in the area immediately surrounding Brenham. One large battle between tribes did take place in the 1830's just outside the present-day limits of Brenham. Jessie Y. Wallace, whose relatives came to Texas as Austin colonists and later settled east of Brenham, remembered hearing tales of the big Indian battle fought near his home. A few miles east of town, on the banks of a creek, Tonkaway and Waco Indians met in fierce combat. This creek is still shown on maps as Tonkaway Creek. Tributaries of Tonkaway Creek wind around and eventually flow through a smooth, rock-walled natural basin which was a favorite Indian camping ground. Brenham residents, a century later, found the basin area ideal for recreation.

Here, the Indian Basin Club was organized and rapidly be-

came a favorite spot for swimming and picnicing. Miss Louise Giddings, Secretary of the Indian Basin Club and granddaughter of J. J. Giddings, who surveyed the town of Fredericksburg for the German Immigration Company, recalled learning to swim in Indian Basin, as did many present-day senior citizens of Brenham. Today, youngsters finding arrowheads along the creek can recapture, in their imagination, the sights and sounds of savage Indians locked in mortal combat.

Despite recurring Indian depredations, the Spanish government relentlessly tried to establish settlements in Texas. Yet, almost as fast as Spanish missions, forts, villages were established, Indians either annihilated or made living intolerable for the inhabitants. Finally, Spain tried a new type settler; men and women from the Canary Islands were brought to San Antonio. Although most re-

mained in San Antonio, a few families were sent to the frontiers. Again the Indians proved disastrous. Almost three hundred years after Cabaza de Vaca walked across Texas, no civilized settlements or people existed in the Brenham-Washington County area.

#### American Exploration

Actual populating of the area began with the nineteenth century. Following the United States' acquisition of Louisiana, other nations began casting envious eyes toward Spanish Texas, England, France, Germany, and even the United States felt they could successfully colonize where Spain had failed. The Americans had already made several bold attempts at expeditions.

One exploratory attempt was made by Dr. James Long, whose wife, Jane, became known as the Mother of Texas. Dr. Long's expedition penetrated the Brenham-Washington county area where a fort was established by members of Long's expedition. The fort was located on the Brazos River some twenty miles northeast of Brenham, circa 1819. After the Austin colonists arrived a few years later, Jane Long was granted land near the present town of Brenham.

Relatives of Jane Long also found the Brenham area attractive. Her niece and nephew-in-law, Thomas and Anna Affleck, bought 3,500 acres of land seven miles north of Brenham. Here, was established the Glenblythe Plantation, acclaimed one of the finest in Texas.

After repeated attempts by Americans to explore, locate, or trade in the Spanish-Texas area, the government of Spain realized its only recourse was

to populate Texas with colonists loyal to Spain. If the province remained under their control, supervised immigration was Spain's last hope for discouraging foreign explorations.

Thus was the situation when Moses Austin, American businessman and promoter of Texas colonization rode into the Spanish capital at San Antonio two days before Christmas, 1820. Other men seeking grants to colonize Texas were already in San Antonio, as many requests for land had been submitted to the Spanish government. They awarded the contract for colonizing 300 families in Texas to Moses Austin, the one they considered a man of integrity.

Five months after the contract of Texas was issued, Moses Austin died from overexposure and the exerting of his long horseback journey from Missouri to San Antonio and back to Missouri. His dream did not die with him, however, as the son, Stephen Fuller Austin, colonized Texas.

The first permanent Anglo-American settlers crossed the Brazos River almost one year to the day following Moses Austin's arrival in San Antonio de Bexar. The crossing was made approximately sixteen miles northeast of Brenham, near the present site of Washington - on-the-Brazos. Shortly after the first group crossed the river, Stephen F. Austin arrived in the colony. On New Year's Eve, 1821, Austin and a group of colonists camped along the banks of a creek which flows (and frequently overflows) just outside the city limits of Brenham. They named the waters New Year's Creek; it still bears this name.

(To Be Continued on Monday)



# Significant Stamps' Buildings

By BETTY PLUMMER

Although John Stamps' first foray into Texas politics failed, two years later he was successful in being elected to the Eighth Congress of the Republic of Texas. When Congress convened at Washington in 1843, John Stamps presented his credentials and took the oath of office as a member of the House of Representatives. He was appointed to the committee which authorized the Association of Physicians of

the Republic of Texas.

While Judge John Stamps, served Texas in legislative ways, his son, John Stamps, served Texas as a fighting man. Although only seventeen years of age, young John volunteered his services, "mounted, armed and equipped himself" during the Vasquez Campaign of 1842.

After Texas joined the Union three years later, Judge John Stamps retired from political life and turned his at-

tention to farming and building. During his building career Stamps was credited with erecting the first brick building in Galveston, the first brick-concrete courthouse in Brenham, the first brick penal institution in Texas (which according to his descendants is still standing), and aiding in the construction of two Texas railroads. A member of the Stamps family recalled hearing that when the Washington County Courthouse, which John Stamps built in 1855 was later torn down to make way for a new building, the structure had been so firmly built of brick and concrete that demolishers had to dynamite parts of the building.

John Stamps was also dedicated to the perpetuation of his religious ideas. In 1843, he bought a plot of land adjacent to the town of Independence for the purpose of building "a place of Christian worship". This land was bought in the name of the Trustees for the Christian Church of Independence, L. B. Giles and John Stamps. Another member of the Stamps family was also dedicated to the perpetuation of her religious beliefs. In the will of Jane Stamps, widow of John Stamps, a specific bequest directed that \$500 in books be purchased for the benefit of the citizens of Brenham. The books were to be "on spiritu-

alism," a religious philosophy which was being considered by many people of the period.

Although knowledge of John Stamps' plantation home appears to have been lost with the passing of years, one very old Stamps home does still stand. It is located about ten miles north of Brenham, near the village of Long Point. The house is still known as the Stamps-Campbell House by those who live in the community.

The Stamps-Campbell House was the home of the J. W. Campbell and his wife Moina Stamps, John Stamps' daughter. Campbell, in 1866, owned a hardware and mercantile store in Brenham located on the corner of Alamo and St. Charles, directly across the street from the courthouse which his father-in-law built. J. W. Campbell also maintained a mercantile store one-quarter mile from his home according to family legend, the store was a stopping point for trail drivers taking their herds down the Chisholm Trail. A portion of the famous trail came through Washington County about ten miles north of Brenham, and passed near the Stamps-Campbell House.

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# Stamps-Campbell House Delightful

By BETTY PLUMMER

The delightfully old Stamps-Campbell house was built of solid cedar construction. It was first built as a two-story log house, then later covered with cedar siding. The kitchen, separate from the house, was connected by a long patio-type walkway, so that regardless of the weather, food brought from the kitchen to the house could arrive in palatable condition.

The landscaping which surrounded the house was most interesting. The pattern consisted of three large lakes, and in the middle of the largest lake was an island. Mrs.

Mrs. Stamps Campbell, whose husband was reared in the house, recalled hearing about the parties and outings which were frequently held on the island. She also remembered the fish which would "follow Mrs. Campbell" around the edges of the lake as she fed them. These fish were, it appears, examples of the first white perch introduced into Texas. Members of the Stamps and Campbell families were credited with bringing the first such species into Texas, and stocking the three lakes surrounding the house with white perch.

Nearer the house was a rose garden where many unusual varieties of roses were grown, as the house's occupants were quite interested in horticulture. Many large trees grew around the lakes and near the house; and, the honeysuckle which mingled with Spanish moss hanging from the trees complimented the natural beauty of the landscapes.

Today, Judge John Stamps and the immediate members of his family rest in Brenham's Prairie Lea Cemetery.

The passing of time has brought many changes to the countryside they knew. All trace of the Chisholm Trail in the area disappeared, the town of Mount Vernon became a ghost town and ultimately a plowed field, the first plantation home of Judge John Stamps no longer stands, the courthouse which he built was replaced, the railroads which he helped build were discontinued. These tangible accomplishments of one of Texas' early settlers have disappeared from the countryside.

The remembrance of these accomplishments, however, has not disappeared. It will remain alive as long as the past efforts of men who helped fashion the face of America remain a significant part of each successive generation's heritage.

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# Decline Of Mt. Vernon

By BETTY PLUMMER

The town of Mount Vernon did not prosper and grow. One major reason was the unsettled condition of Texas during the early 1840's. Although the Texans had won freedom from Mexico, their former enemies continued to make raids along the Texas-Mexico frontier, and threaten to march across the Republic as they had done in 1836.

During the summer of 1842, Mount Vernon became the designated place of muster for volunteers who marched off to protect Texas' frontier settlements from both Indian and Mexican depredations. On Aug. 3rd, 1842, one hundred thirty men mustered for inspection at Mount Vernon, at the request of Memucan Hunt, Acting Inspector General for the county. The Washington contingent was composed of sixty-six cavalrymen and sixty-four infantrymen.

The wheels of activity almost came to standstill at the Washington County Seat of Justice, during 1842. So many county men had volunteered for frontier duty that it was impossible to conduct co-

unity business. Even the fall District Court session of that year was postponed due to the "many citizens of this county being absent on our western frontiers on account of late invasion of the Mexican army."

Although activities did resume later in the year at Mount Vernon, courts reconvened, and property continued to be sold in and near the town the construction of permanent buildings was very slow. As many of the town lots sold were financed through notes taken by the commissioners, insufficient revenue was coming into the county treasury to allow the construction of county buildings. Such a lack of public buildings had caused county residents, only a short while earlier, to petition for the removal and relocation of the county seat. Now, it appeared the same issue would again become a source of grievance to Washington Counties.

The last Grand Jury, meeting at Washington in 1841, had recommended that one of the first actions taken by officials at the new Seat of Justice should be the erection of county buildings.

"The Sword of Justice is as necessary as her scales," had

entoned the Grand Jury foreman.

To see that the "Sword of Justice" was properly administered in the new county seat, the Grand Jury recommended: First, that a suitable jail be built as speedily as possible as there was no place to commit those accused of violations of the law. The jury observed that offenders who realized the county's inability to enforce penalties would repeat their crimes. "There is no point," said the jurors, "in sentencing if there is no punishment."

The second recommendation dealt with accessibility to the new county seat. In order for county facilities to be utilized by the citizens, the jury recommended that all obstacles be removed from the roads leading to the new town, and that the creeks be properly bridged. A new road was also laid out from Washington to Mount Vernon, which paralleled the old La Bahia Road and was located about one and one-half miles south of the old Texas trail.

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# Efforts Made To Re-Locate

By BETTY PLUMMER

Although Washington County residents held high hopes for the prosperity and permanence of Mount Vernon as the Seat of Justice, acceptability by the majority of Washington Countians did not materialize. Thus, petitions requesting a relocation of the county seat once more began to circulate.

Several reasons were cited in the new petitions. One petition addressed to the "Honorable Congress of the Republic of Texas" claimed that Mount Vernon was "remote from the most populous portions of the county, and extremely inconvenient to a large mass of the population."

Another reason for requesting a change of county seat was the fact that the erection of a jail and other public buildings had still not been accomplished. And, as sufficient revenue could not be derived from sale of Mount Vernon property, the county could not build the structures in the foreseeable future. Three hundred thirteen signatures were affixed to this petition.

Not all the residents of Washington County, however, looked favorably upon relocating the county seat. One group petitioned the Congress to "cease considering legislation on the removal of Washington County's Seat of Justice from Mount Vernon." The petition contended that "as long as an excitement can be kept up on the subject the people will fear ever to build a respectable Court House and jail." They partially blamed Congress for the lack of development at Mount Vernon, due to their constant willingness to consider a relocation of the county seat. The twenty-one voters who signed this petition further st-

ated that they were quite pleased with the town's location "at a high, eligible and healthy place, with good water, and tolerable timber for building purposes."

After many hundreds of words had been written and spoken on the subject of again relocating the county seat, a bill was introduced into the congress in January, 1844, by the Representative from Washington County, Judge Stamps. This bill proposed moving the county seat from Mount Vernon to Independence, one of the county's oldest towns. In answer to the Stamps bill, one hundred eighty-seven petitioners informed Congress that the town of Independence was within two miles of the county line, and therefore did not comply with the geographic location law; nor, did Independence offer better timber and water facilities.

From the tone of the residents' petitions it would appear that a completely new location was the wish of the majority. Although Judge Stamps' bill was rejected, another special bill was read to members of the Congress of the Republic of Texas at three o'clock on Jan. 18, 1844. The bill provided for "Removing and Fixing the Seat of Justice for the County of Washington."

As legislative custom decreed, the bill was presented to the Congress for consideration two more times. Following the third reading of the special bill, Congress approved the relocation of a new Seat of Justice for Washington County. This new site became the town of Brenham.

Credits and resources will be given at the conclusion of this series.

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# Jesse Farral's Lands

By BETTY PLUMMER

Although approval by the Congress of the Republic of Texas had been secured for the relocation of a new county seat, founding of the town could not begin until the sanction of county officials was obtained. The Chief Justice of Washington County must give the final approval for location of a new site upon specific lands.

Several petitions, identically worded, were written and sent to the four corners of the county for signing by citizens. All of these petitions suggested that the new site of Washington County's Seat of Justice be "the lands of Jesse Farral."

The petition which located Brenham upon the lands of Jesse Farral over one hundred twenty-six years ago, . . . and where the town of Brenham still stands today . . . read as follows:

Republic of Texas  
County of Washington  
To the Hon. Chief Justice  
of the County aforesaid

Your petitioners would respectfully represent to your honor that owing to the irremedial scarcity of wood and water, adjacent to the Town of Mount Vernon, the present county seat; and further, owing to its distance from the centre of the population of the county aforesaid, and many other local and contingent disadvantages which exist in regard to the Town aforesaid as a county site for the county aforesaid,

and believing that a situation might be selected and obtained, at or near, the centre of the population aforesaid, combining all or many of the advantages to be sought for in the selection of a county site, and that too, with in any wise prejudicing the general interest of the country:

They would therefore pray your honor that as early a period as may be practicable you would in accordance with an act entitled "An Act for the Removal of the Seats of Justice" order an election to be holden for the purposes of ch-

osing by ballot a location for the Seat of Justice for Washington County, and they would further represent to your Honor that the Land of Jesse Farral, on which he now resides, would in the opinion of your petitioners be an eligible situation for said location, and they would further pray your Honor that in the wait for election the site last mentioned may be put in nomination, and as in duty bound will ever pray.

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# Founding Of Brenham

By BETTY PLUMMER  
CHAPTER IV

## Founding of Brenham

The founders of Brenham were the founders of Texas. Men, who less than a decade earlier had carved a new civilization from the Mexican State of Texas now established a new town in the heart of Stephen F. Austin's colony.

Among the Washington Countians who signed the petition which ultimately created the town of Brenham were many of the first "Old Three Hundred Settlers" of Texas, members of Austin's four other colonies, settlers introduced into the area by Empresarios DeWitt and Robertson, signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence, heroes of the Battle of San Jacinto, soldiers of the Texas Revolution, volunteers from the United States to the Texas Army, veterans of fierce Indian frontier battles, members of the Santa Fe and Mier expeditions, early religious leaders, pioneer doctors, educators, and statesmen of the Republic of Texas

Standing tall among the many sturdy men of Texas was Jesse Farral, the young man who generously gave of his material possessions so that the town of Brenham could be established. Contemporaries of Farral, who knew him at various times during his forty-six year life span, were loud in praise of his character and industry.

One early Brenham resident, F. J. Cooke, called Jesse Farral an "active, intelligent man," who was "hard working, industrious, energetic, and thrifty." Cooke's brother, William J. Cooke, accompanied Dr. Richard Fox Brenham on the Mier Expedition as one of the three special commissioners appointed by President Mirabeau B. Lamar. William Cooke was also a Brenham property owner.

George Horton, young Georgia lawyer who witnessed the land transaction between David Houston, Austin colonist from Tennessee, and Farral for a large portion of the land which he later donated as the Brenham townsite, described Farral as a "hard working man," and one whose honest efforts had made him "comfortably fixed." Members of the Horton family settled in Brenham at a very early date in the town's history and became prominent citizens. A street in the present-day city still retains the Horton name, in honor of these early Brenham citizens.

Years before the town of Brenham was founded or such a town was even envisioned, members of Jesse Farral's family were settled on lands of the Austin colony. The Farrals were natives of Virginia, and had wended their way westward through Tennessee arriving in the Washington area prior to 1838. At this date members of the Farral family included James, the father, and his four children Robert, Jesse Elizabeth, and Edmund.

During the summer of 1838, grief visited the Farral home. On July 14th, the father became ill. Summoned to his bedside was Dr. Jerome B. Robertson, physician-soldier of the Texas Revolution and later commanding general of Hood's Texas Brigade during the Civil War. For six weeks Dr. Robertson treated James Farral with such medications as quinine, calomel, Epsom salts, and Dovers powders during the doctor's frequent visits to his patient.

James Farral, however, succumbed to his illness on August 26th. His son, Jesse, was named administrator of his father's estate, which at the time of his death contained "considerable property." The elder Farral had loaned money to many people during his Texas residency, as many outstanding notes were due the estate at the date of his death. He was also possessed of "considerable" personal property. Notations made during the administration of the estate show that the two younger children, Elizabeth and Edmund, "were probably" re-

turned to the United States shortly after the elder Farral's death, while Robert and Jesse remained in Texas.

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# Farral And Hurt

By BETTY PLUMMER

During the latter years of the 1830s, Jesse Farral lived in the town of Washington where he owned "much property." He was also, it seems, a man of much activity. In addition to practicing his building trade, he also "kept a grocery." Early Washington lawyer and property owner, W. Y. McFarland, recalled that Farral owned "a house plot in Washington" where he kept his grocery; McFarland also referred to Farral as owning "other properties."

Jesse Farral was a man who assumed proper responsibility for civic duties, as well, serving as jurymen during the 1840 District Court session at Washington. A descendant of one of these jurymen lives in Brenham, today, and is also well known for his civic activities. He is Edgar Matchett.

One of Farral's close building associates, and one with whom he worked in building the first substantial Washington County Courthouse, apparently chose to not cast his lot permanently with the Texans. He was James Hurt, who shortly after helping build the courthouse returned to his home in the United States. Hurt had lived with Jesse Farral "occasionally" during his Washington residency. According to William McCrea, early Washington County settler, the two men were "partners in business for some time prior to 1840." This partnership was dissolved prior to Farral's purchase of his new lands on the Arabella Harrington league.

James Hurt was a native of Tennessee. It appears, from his war record, that he was one of the adventurous young men who left their homes to help the Texans' fight for independence. Hurt served as a Corporal in the Army of the Republic of Texas from October 1, 1836 until June 1, 1837.

For military service during his last seven months' duty, Hurt received \$37.32. Joshua R. Franklin, one of Washington County's notable early settlers and also a Tennessean, once remarked that he had been "acquainted" with Hurt since 1833. Hurt, undoubtedly, also enjoyed the respect of many others for Hurt served as Washington Constable in 1839.

Following Farral's relocation on Harrington league lands, near the future townsite of Brenham, he and James Hurt worked together as builders. He, apparently however, did not devote his entire time to working with Farral nor did Hurt make his home at Farral's home. Hurt was described, by one of his contemporaries, as "a house carpenter" who lived at Farral's house, intermittently, until December 19, 1844, the date of Hurt's return to Tennessee.

During August of 1841, Jesse Farral bought three tracts of land in the Arabella Harrington league. On a portion of these tracts the town of Brenham was founded three years later.

The new Farral homestead was located in an area referred to as the Mill Creek Voting Precinct, and was the scene of a special election held Saturday, September 23, 1843, for the purpose of electing a magistrate and one constable.

The Farral house, it appears, was most conveniently located. Early settlers recalled that Jesse Farral's "place" was a gathering spot for area residents. It was also a boarding house, according to early Brenham resident Francis Cooke, who once spoke of Farral having servants about his house and a number of boarders. It was here that George Horton frequently entertained friends and neighbors with his singing of two popular

songs of the time, "Old Dan Tucker" and "Rosin the Bow." A few years after Farral established his residency on the Arabella Harrington League, his house became quite an important landmark when the Washington County Commissioners laid out a new road which would link the Colorado and Brazos Rivers. This road, passed directly in front of Farral's house.

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# Generosity Of Farral

By BETTY PLUMMER

Activity and business accelerated greatly for Jesse Farral and his neighbors during the early months of 1844. The outcome of a special election caused the county seat of Washington County to be established almost in Farral's backyard. The new town was founded on one hundred acres of land which Farral, in April, donated to the county as a townsite for the Seat of Justice. Commissioners were appointed and given authority to sell lots in the new townsite. Through the efforts of the new town's benefactor "streets and alleys were laid off by him for the benefit of the public."

In accordance with Congressional authority further granted the town Commissioners of Brenham, Jesse Farral and his helper James Hurt were engaged by the Commissioners to erect and build a courthouse in Brenham. The two builders were to receive \$2,000 for building the courthouse; and, they were to supply the lumber, which they cut from timberland near the townsite. However, as money was still a scarce commodity in the Republic of Texas, compensation was given the courthouse builders in the form of lots within the new townsite

and the notes of individuals who bought Brenham lots.

The fortunes of Jesse Farral, however, did not continue to climb. Expenses relative to the management of his father's estate plus the care of his younger brother and sister brought frequent financial difficulties upon the founding father of Brenham. Such financial reverses, however, still did not dim his spirit of giving. For apparently deeply embued within his character was a desire to give of his material possessions to worthy causes.

One of Farral's earliest gifts -- made two years before his donation of townsite lands -- was a gift to the Trustees of the Hickory Grove Academy. In 1842, the land on which the Hickory Grove School house was located, plus enough land to comprise two acres, was deeded to the Trustees. According to Farral, this gift was made in order "to establish on a permanent basis and aid in maintaining and continuing a school constantly" in the area which later became Brenham.

Four years after the founding of Brenham, Jesse Farral turned his generous attentions to the Methodist Church of Brenham. This church, the

earliest Brenham church, was deeded one acre of land, including the "houses, woods and water ways thereon." The land encompassed the plot where the Christian Church now stands; in fact, the first Methodist Church structure built on the property deeded by Farral was built upon the actual site of the present-day Christian Church. The structure, which will be described later, burned during the 1880's.

Trustees of the Methodist Church who accepted the generous gift, included a publisher, a lawyer, two Austin colonists, two ministers and teachers, mill operator, and planter James Clemmons, Prosper Hope, John W. Kenney, Robert B. Wells, J. D. Giddings, James G. Heffington, and E.D. Tarver accepted the property with the stipulation that "they shall build a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South."

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# Farral's Lasting Efforts

By BETTY PLUMMER

Although records indicate that Jesse Farral was not located in Texas during the fighting of 1836, he was most assuredly involved in later fighting for Texas. When the campaign of General Alexander Sommerville was announced, Farral promptly answered the call. Together with many other men who were shortly to become known as Brenham residents, Farral marched away to help secure Texas' frontiers.

Eleven years following his participation in the Sommerville campaign, Jesse Farral was paid the sum of sixty-seven dollars and fifty cents by the auditor and comptroller of Texas. This sum was the amount due Farral for his services. As he was among the troops ordered by General Sommerville to return to Austin, rather than cross into Mexico, Farral was spared the imprisonment and subsequent death which befell these men who did go into Mexico... one of whom was Dr. Richard Fox Brenham.

Just how long Jesse Farral lived near the town which he helped establish, had not been determined. He was still living in Washington County in 1850; however, the Washington County of that date encompassed areas which today are identified as separate counties. As no record has yet been found which indicates he remained other than a bachelor, there is a reasonable possibility that he left his Harrington League homestead toward the latter part of the 1840's to make his home with either his nephew, Robert S. Farral or niece Eliza McCowan.

On October 13, 1857, Jesse Farral died, approximately nineteen miles southeast of Brenham. At his death over 357 acres of Harrington League lands were still in his possession, plus additional acreage adjoining this league. The friends whom Farral had appointed to bring final settlement to the land upon which the city of Brenham now stands were men

whose names were well-known among their contemporaries-- R. R. Peebles, Texas Revolution veteran and early Washington resident, James M. McDade, Washington County landowner and prominent Brenham lawyer, and

J. B. Wilkin, early Brenham Merchant and property owner who arrived in Brenham just

as the town became the county seat.

To Jesse Farral -- a man of generosity, integrity, conscience, and dedication -- is due appropriate recognition as founder of Brenham.

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## History Of Brenham--

## Judge Names Site

By BETTY PLUMMER

Fine though the lands of Jesse Farral were this location did not appeal to many Washington Countians as the proper location for the new Seat of Justice. This controversy did not end with the county judge's special election proclamation. Although the places known as Mount Vernon, Turkey Creek and Independence were defeated by Brenham the Mount Vernon advocates contested the propriety of Brenham's new distinction.

The argument against Brenham as the new county seat was based on a law which had been in existence since the inception of the Stephen F. Austin colony. This law required that public buildings must be established before the relocation of such a town. Public buildings were required, such as a jail, place of storage for records, and a place where court sessions could be held. This problem of storing records had been a problem since the early settlers arrival in Texas.

Stephen F. Austin spoke of storage and maintenance difficulties in a letter which he addressed to a friend, in 1829. Austin said, "the records are now kept in a log cabin, in danger of being destroyed by fire, and are daily being defaced by wet and exposure....it was intended to build a fire proof room of brick merely large enough for the objects....and... to serve as a courthouse or office for the Alcande." He further mentioned the law required that there should also be a jail.

As no such buildings existed within the newly located townsite of Brenham during the early months of 1844, those who favored retaining the town of Mount Vernon (regardless of the election outcome) felt they had a valid argument.

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The case was presented to District Judge R.E.B. Baylor, who listened to lengthy arguments on the subjects. It was his decision that "Farral's place had been chosen at the late election," and was therefore the new Seat of Justice for Washington County.

According to an early Texas newspaper the lack of building in the new townsite did not prove a total deterrent to Brenham's first court session. The court did convene. However, "as the judge was not disposed to dispense justice in the open air or under a tree, except for capital offenses, the Court was adjourned until the fall term."

The first court session in Brenham was held under the skies on April 1, 1844. Short

though the session was, it permanently established the town of Brenham. Members of the first court included: Judge Baylor, presiding. Terrell J. Jackson, foreman, Jacob C. Gregory, Joseph C. Bartlett, Moses Baine, James McLaughlin, John W. Middleton, James Williams, William Hackworth, Joseph Irvin, James R. Wills, Armistead W. Moore, Nathan A. Clampit, Nathan A. McFaddin, John A. Harrel, and James Tom.



# Austin's Colony Furnished 1st Settlers

By BETTY PLUMMER

## CHAPTER II

### Settlers and Settlements

Although the town of Brenham was officially established in 1844, residents of the town began arriving in the Brenham area twenty-three years earlier. Many first Austin colony settlers later became the first settlers of Brenham. Several of their descendants still live on or near lands settled by three intrepid first settlers of Texas.

Members of Austin's first three hundred settlers whose relatives still live in the Brenham-Washington County area include Pennington, Burnham, Wallace, Walker, Kerr, Newman, Gray, Wills, Jameison, Coles, Clay, Holland, Petty Sjourner, Allen. From Austin's four other colonies are Bryans, Ayers, Devers, Jacks, Lees, Woodwards.

The land upon which Brenham now stands was granted "for services as colonist" to Arabella Harrington, Prosper and Adolphus Hope, Philip Coe and James Walker. The larger portion of Brenham is located on the Harrington League, granted to the widow Harrington five years after her arrival in the Austin colony.

To become a colonist required specific qualifications. Each applicant submitted a letter to Stephen F. Austin requesting land, stating reasons for desiring land, applicant's profession, members of the family, their ages, marital status, and place of birth.

Of prime importance to Austin was the character of his colonists. Before he accepted a person into the colony, character references from two witnesses were required. When the land grant was eventually made great pains were taken to insure that the character of each colonist met standards set by the Empresario. The original land grant of Arabella Harrington, showing the emphasis on character, follows.

Established by the State of Coahuila and Texas for the Biennial Term of 1828 and 29, 30 and 31

Sn. Felipe de Austin,  
March 2, 1831

To the Agent of Citizen Empresario Austin in order that he may be pleased to report

concerning this petition, and whether the land is vacant and outside of the ten littoral leagues.

Arciniega.

(rubric)

Williams

(Rubric)

Hon. Commissioner:

I, Arabella Harrington, a native of the United States of the North and one of the Colonists introduced by Hon. Empresario Austin, in your presence with the greatest respect

make known: That mystification is that of a widow; that, in the year 1826, I entered this country in order to acquire lands for my maintenances; and having, with the previous approval of Hon. Empresario Austin, selected one league of land which is situated on the waters of New Years Creek and adjoining lands of Walker, Hope and Allcorn; for which reason I represent myself to you in order that, as Commissioner, you may be pleased to admit me and put me in possession of said league of land with the understanding that I offer to settle and cultivate it as prescribed by law and to comply with the other obligations prescribed by same. Therefore I beg you to be pleased to do as I have asked, for therein I shall receive favor.

Town of Austin, March 2nd,  
1831

Arabella Harrington

(rubric)

Mr. Commissioner: --

In obedience to your foregoing decree, I must say that set forth by the petitioner is true; that she is a widow, much respected, and belongs to the contracts of Hon. Empresario Austin; and because of her merits I consider her entitled to the favor which she solicits. The land is vacant and outside of the ten littoral leagues.

Town of Austin, March 3,  
1831

Samuel M. Williams

(rubric)

In view of that set forth by Citizen Samuel M. Williams, Agent of Citizen Empresario Stephen F. Austin, and in conformity with the law, I admit this petition and I order that the land indicated therein be surveyed by

## By Mrs. A. Q.

## 'Betty' Plummer

Surveyor Horatio Chriesman so that the corresponding title may be issued to the interested party.

Town of Austin, March 4,  
1831

Migl. Arciniega

(rubric)

During the 1820's, people throughout the United States held meetings, wrote letters, and pondered the possibility of immigrating to the new Texas colony. One such letter received by Stephen F. Austin from an Alabama resident of 1825, said "Your country is spoken of here and much more in Tennessee and Kentucky." From the home county of Richard Fox Brenham came a letter stating "there is to be a large meeting of citizens at Versailles, Woodford County, on the subject of going to your settlement." From Nashville, Tennessee, Austin received a letter telling him "such is the mania for immigrating to your country that nothing but a positive prohibition from the government will stop them."

Ultimately, a "positive prohibition" from the Mexican government did attempt to halt the tide of immigration into Texas. The floodgates had been opened, however, and there was no stopping the settling of lands west of the Brazos. The Americans' manifest destiny became a reality as Austin colonists settled permanently in the Brenham-Washington County area, with later pioneers using the settlements as springboards to push further westward.

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## History Of Brenham --

# The Townsite Of Brenham

By BETTY PLUMMER

The townsite of Brenham was determined, surveyed, and recorded. It was bounded, generally, by the present-day streets of Market, Germania, Austin, and Academy.

The tract began "at the northwest corner of the First Baptist Church, thence with east line of Market Street to the northwest corner of the Germania lot; then, west with the street from Germania to West Street; then, with West Street north to a point running a parallel line with the south line of 100 acres."

Brenham was laid out according to the ancient pattern for plotting towns -- a practice for plotting towns which had been followed since biblical days. The same general pattern, though more generous in acreage, was also followed by Spanish settlers, and the later Mexicans who developed towns on Texas soil. Their practices decreed that each new town should have, as its center, the square (or plaza), and townlands should extend for a distance of one league to each wind. This meant that each town should be given minimum lands extending one league to the north, one to the east, one to the south, and one to the west.

However, it appears that one hundred acres proved adequate for the Anglo-American colonizers, as this was generally the original acreage plotted for most early towns. The new Brenham town tracts sold quite readily, but as always happens with development of new centers, many of the Brenham lots were bought with an eye to future, rather than immediate, occupancy by the buyers.

The original town tract was

laid out on a northwesterly pattern, with the courthouse square facing approximately 20 degrees west of north. Ninety seven lots were plotted within the town limits, with small fifty and sixty foot lots near the courthouse square. The lots graduated upward in size as distance from the courthouse square increased. The largest lots on the north and south town limits included five acres.

According to early town residents, no buildings existed within the actual townsite. And, although within a five to ten mile radius of Brenham the population had increased rapidly during the years of the Republic, few permanent structures actually had been built.

Six structures did stand closely adjacent to the Brenham townsite in April of 1844, it appears. Quite possibly these six structures could have been the houses of Jesse Farral, J. D. Giddings, Henry Higgins, and the mill of James Clemmons, the Hickory Grove Academy, and Joseph Ralston's store. Reminiscences of early residents recalled that all of these structures were in existence when Brenham became the new seat of Justice for Washington County.

Although the buildings of Farral, Giddings, Higgins, Ralston, Clemmons, and the Academy were located outside the original town tract, the properties on which the early structure were located eventually became incorporated limits of Brenham, as the town grew. It, therefore, seems appropriate to include descriptions of these first Brenham structures and sketches of their owners.



## History Of Brenham --

# House Of J. D. Giddings

By BETTY PLUMMER

Of the six possible structures, located adjacent to the original Brenham town tract of 1844, one building still stands. It is a most interesting, weathered, two-story cypress house whose construction was begun in 1843.

The house is truly an historic structure, significant both architecturally and historically. It is one of the few remaining examples of the water reservoir house, which early Texas settlers built for both safety and convenience. It is also one of the oldest known houses still standing today in Brenham.

The house was built by a man whose brother died as a result of wounds sustained in the Battle of San Jacinto. As the eldest of six sons, Jabez Deming Giddings journeyed from Pennsylvania to Texas in order to pay homage to

his brother, Giles.

After arriving in the Washington County area, J. D. Giddings found the area to be all the travel books had proclaimed -- healthful, scenic, and a mecca of opportunities for a young lawyer. In 1837, Giddings invested in a small tract of land near the future townsite of Brenham; he was, at the time of the purchase, living on the land. It was on a portion of his early land purchase the house which he later built was located... the house in present-day Brenham known as 805 Crockett Street.

As teachers were needed for the several schools which began in the Washington County area during the early years of the Republic, J. D. Giddings lent his efforts toward that field. Having recently completed his studies, the twenty-three year old teacher found ample positions,

and knowledgeable school trustees who appreciated the talents of the young lawyer-teacher. Washington Countians, from almost the beginning of the Austin colony settlement, were deeply concerned with education of both an academic and spiritual nature.

After serving the Independence Academy located in the town of Independence, J. D. Giddings' training as a lawyer prompted him to accept the office of Deputy District Clerk, in 1841, a position which he held until 1844. During this year he was appointed County Treasurer by the Washington County Commissioner's Court. An interest fact recorded by the Commissioner of Revenues was the court expenditure for the spring term of 1841. Following the session, Deputy Giddings submitted a bill of \$94.22, which covered expenses incurred for station-

ery, candles, furniture, and court costs.

In addition to teaching, clerking, and hanging out his law shingle, Giddings also served as agent for the early day Texas newspaper, the Telegraph and Texas Register, which was at the time of his agencyship published in Houston. It was Giddings' responsibility to see that subscribers received their Register, regardless of flood or mud; and, frequently due to the condition of early Texas roads mud proved an almost overwhelming barrier.

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Franklin Pierce was the only U.S. president to retain the same Cabinet for four years without any changes.



## History Of Brenham--

# Brenham Founder

By BETTY PLUMMER

County historians have credited J. D. Giddings with being the vocal force which helped Brenham become the permanent Seat of Justice for Washington County. According to Mrs. Penning, the young lawyer rode to all the communities of Washington County making speeches in favor of the new site.

Following the county seat election and Judge Baylor's decision to move the court records to Brenham, Giddings was delegated to provide storage for them. As his house was still under construction, and the irreplaceable records had to be kept in a place where they would be safe from the elements, yet accessible to those who needed to consult them, a small log cabin near Giddings' house was chosen as the depository for District and County records. Here, they remained until the courthouse was completed toward the end of 1844.

During the same year, Ann M. Tarver became the bride of J. D. Giddings. The Tarver family, natives of Virginia, had come to Texas by way of Alabama and Tennessee arriving in the Republic before 1840. A dining room table brought by covered wagon on the Tennessee to Texas journey is still a prized family possession. The family settled between the present-day towns of new Gay Hill and Independence; and, was among the first members of the Methodist Church of Brenham. This church was established, alth-

ough through the efforts of J. D. Giddings, the same year of Brenham's founding.

The Giddings lived in their home, located adjacent to the original town tract of Brenham, until 1870, when another house quite similar in construction was built south of town. James Sloan Giddings, whose father was massacred by Indians while on his way to seek peace treaties with the Apaches so the San Antonio and San Diego Stage Line which was established and operated by the Giddings brothers could continue mail delivery, recalled both houses quite vividly. Young James Sloan, who was living with his uncle during the yellow fever epidemic of 1867, recalled that his uncle built a new house atop a very high hill as a result of the terrible epidemic. J. D. Giddings noticed that those who lived in elevated areas had not been as susceptible to the dread disease, as had those who lived near creeks and rivers. This house also still stands, and according to Mrs. Louise Tarver Stone, J. D. Giddings' granddaughter who still lives in the lovely, mellowed, yellow-brick house, this house was also originally built as a water reservoir house. However, subsequent storms caused the roof to become unsafe, and the structure's roof had to be reconstructed.

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# History of Windows

BY BETTY PLUMMER

The Giddings-Wilkin House, which had watched from its vantage point the platting of Brenham's original townsite twenty-eight years earlier, was sold by the house's builder to John Bush Wilkin, a former Ohioan who contributed greatly to the growth of Brenham. The house remained in the care of members of the Wilkin and Wilkins families until 1945, when the property was sold to the present owners--the Robert Geislars -- who still live in the house.

Through the years the lovely, old cypress house has been both an active and passive spectator to the development of Brenham. It could most assuredly be said that the windows of the old house have looked upon the significant episodes of Brenham's historic and colorful history -- the very beginning of Brenham as a town; the activities of important early Texans who lived in the town and frequently visited the community, such as General Sam Houston, commander of the Texas Army, Moses Austin Bryan, grandson of Moses Austin who first acquired the right from Mexico to settle colonists in Texas, Charles Edward Travis, the son of Alamo hero William Barret Travis, Anthony Butler who was Mexican consul of Brenham, and Frederick Ernst, credited with being the first German settler in Texas.

The old house has been witness to events in Brenham's history which were significant to the state and nation as a whole. One of these was the settling of members of the first German families in Texas. As early as 1833, they were coming into the area. The Brazos Courier, early Texas newspaper, noted in 1839 that "upwards of 100 families of German immigrants who intend settling in the upper country" had landed at Galveston. The "upper country" in 1839 included the Brenham-Washington County area.

Many German and Swiss settlers were later encouraged to leave their European lands for Texas, by the uncle of Queen Victoria of Great Britain, Prince Charles of Solms and Lord of Braunfels. The Prince, personally, brought German and Swiss settlers to Texas. Many of their descendants still live in Brenham--members of the Zeiss family, the Amsler and Seidel families, the Fuchs family, and the Roehling family.

Robert Kleberg, one of the first German settlers to arrive in Texas even prior to Prince Braunfels' colonization, wrote in his journal that

William Bartels was among the settlers who came to the Brenham area during the early 1830. Another writer listed Peter Pieper as being among the earliest settlers. Memoirs of Fredericks Ernst, whose articles lauding the new settler's appreciation for Texas appeared in the Telegraph and Texas Register during the 18-40's, listed Grossmeyers, Bigegels, Wolters, Schneiders, Heinickes as being among the first German settlers in the southwestern part of the United States. These early pioneers developed lands in the area which later became Brenham. Many of their descendants have watched the town of Brenham grow from a village

of less than one hundred to a city of almost ten thousand residents.

To these early European settlers -- who took such an interest in Brenham's development at such an early period in the town's history -- present-day Brenham residents most assuredly owe a vote of appreciation. This dedication to civic pride and development is still, most assuredly, carried on by the many descendants of Texas' earliest European settlers who still live in Brenham.

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# First Store Belonged To Jos

By BETTY PLUMMER

On the eastern boundary of Brenham's townsite, located about one half mile southeast of the Giddings-Wilkin House was the store of Joseph Ralston. It was the first store in the settlement which Congressional approval decreed would become the new county seat of Washington County, in 1844.

The store of Joseph Ralston was located on land which today is bounded by East Main, North Market, Sycamore, and Ross Streets. The store was outside the limits of Brenham's original platted townsite; today, the site is located in the heart of Brenham.

Although the Ralston store was located in the immediate

Hickory Grove area, the lands upon which Joseph Ralston settled were three miles east of the future townsite of Brenham. When he settled on Washington County land, Joseph Ralston was barely out of his teens. His business interest, however, resulted in his establishing both a store and a ferry. This ferry became very important to the early economy of Brenham cotton.

The lands of Washington County were well suited for the raising of cotton. Before the Civil War both the rolling hillsides and flat, fertile river bottoms of the county were clothed in fleecy, white cotton during the late summer and fall months. Many large plan-

tations were established on Brenham area lands -- these lands which the Father of Texas, Stephen F. Austin, had selected from among the thousands of Texas lands offered him by the Mexican government. Thus, the Ralston Ferry was of prime importance to the Brenham area planters as a means of getting their cotton to market.

The business talents of Joseph Ralston were also frequently sought by the county commissioners of Washington County who fought a never ending battle to maintain roads. With the establishing of the new town of Brenham, new and more effective roads became an immediate necessity --

particularly roads leading from Brenham to the Brazos River.

In 1846, a decision was made to straighten a road leading from Brenham to Ralston's Ferry. Those appointed to map out plans for the project were Joseph Ralston, overseer, Lewis G. Dupree, early Brenham property owner, John A. Haney, early Brenham resident and relative of Judge W. J. Embrey, Nathan A. McFadden, Sanford Woodward, in whose home Dr. R. F. Brenham lived during the early part of his residency near Brenham, E. D. Little, and William Keesee, Trustee of the Cedar Creek Methodist Church at Chappell Hill.



# Special Rates Set For Ferry Boats

By BETTY PLUMMER  
Just as today special rates  
are set for toll roads, during

earlier years special rates  
were set for ferries. In 1847,  
Washington County officials

set official ferry rates which applied not only to the Ralston Ferry, but to all ferries under the jurisdiction of the county. When compared with the ferry rates mentioned in an earlier chapter, quite an economic difference is reflected. To cross on Ralston's Ferry in 1847, cost \$1.00 for a loaded wagon; with four yoke oxen, six horses or mules and an empty wagon the cost was 75¢, with an additional ten cent charge for each additional yoke of oxen or mules; a loaded wagon with no yoke of oxen but one pair of horses or mules could cross on the ferry, with a loaded wagon, for 50¢; the charge for all carriages was 50¢; for a man and a horse to cross the cost was 20¢; a single horse or footman was charged 10¢; the cost for cattle was 5¢ per head; and 25¢ for sheep or hogs.

Through the lands which the builder of Ralston's Ferry first settled still runs a creek which bears his name. Just a short distance from the creek, on a high hill, is a very old cemetery. Buried here are some of Texas' first colonists, one of whom is Arabella Harrington, the colonist who was originally granted by the Mexican government, the land on which Brenham now stands. Buried beside her is William Dever, her son, who was also an Austin colonist, and one of the early Washington County settlers. Members of the Walker family, Austin colonists and original grantees of the land on which the "burying ground" was located are buried there. Nearby is the first home of the Walkers, a two story log house which still bears, through the sheer fact of its survival, a testimonial to the sturdiness and stability of the founding fathers of Texas, Washington County and Brenham.

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# The Clemmons Mill -

By BETTY PLUMMER

In early Texas, a mill was most important to the lifeblood of a community. So necessary to the establishing of pioneer settlements and their development were mills that colonists who established such conveniences were handsomely rewarded by Empresario Austin for their erection of mills.

John P. Coles, who ultimately owned eight leagues of land in the Austin Colony received large tracts of land due to his development of mills, blacksmith facilities, and services to the colony. Jared Groce, whose lovely old plantation home known as "Linedo" still stands near Hempstead, was awarded large grants of land

for similar efforts.

Located within a one mile radius of Brenham's future townsite were two mills and a tan yard. These facilities were established before the town of Brenham was founded, and later proved to be sheer luxury for the town residents due to their proximity.

The mill of James Clemmons, early resident of Washington County, was established in the spring of 1843, when he bought the one hundred acre homestead of John Power. The Powers family was instrumental in developing what became known as the Irish Colony of San Patricio. Members of the family lived in Washington County, and at one time lived in Brenham, according to J. D. Bassel of Brenham, a Power relative. A member of the Power family married Antoinette, daughter of General Sam Houston. The Bassels still possess mementoes which belonged to Antoinette Houston Power; several of these are now on exhibition at the Star of the Republic Museum at Old Washington.

The mill James Clemmons was in operation by November, 1843. It was located on a branch which still runs through Brenham, and was known then, just as it is today, as "Hog Branch, one of the waters of New Years Creek."

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## History Of Brenham--

# The Texas Patriots

By Betty Plummer

So, at fifty-two years of age, James Clemmons, who helped locate the second county seat of Washington County, known as Mount Vernon, began operating a mill which was to prove so helpful to residents of the third and permanent county seat -- Brenham.

James Clemmons was a true patriot of Texas. Leaving his native Missouri, Clemmons came to Texas as an Austin colonist. When the fighting started between Texans and

Mexicans, Clemmons joined the Army of Texas in the fall of 1835. He served in Captain James Swishers' Company, Colonel Edward Burleson's Regiment until "the taking of the Alamo in San Antonio by the Texas forces in 1836." Together with his wife Nancy and their six children, Clemmons engaged in farming, milling, and tanning. He undoubtedly also enjoyed life in the healthful Brenham atmosphere, for James Clemmons attained the age of eighty years, an advanced age for the period in which he lived.

The waters of Hog Branch and New Years Creek, it would appear, must have contained minerals which were beneficial to early residents. Arabella Harrington, the Austin colonist on whose land the town of Brenham was established, lived within a stone's throw of Hog Branch. Mrs. Harrington lived well into her ninety-second year.

The mill of James Clemmons actually included more than just mill facilities. The worth and Clemmons Tan Yard was also located nearby.

Another Clemmons, Lewis C., made the Clemmons name

famous for his activity at the Battle of San Jacinto. As a member of Captain Phillip Coe's Rangers (Coe lied three miles east of Brenham), Captain Clemmons served in this capacity from the time of his arrival in Texas during 1835. Captain Clemmons lived in the town of Brenham until his death in 1892.

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## The Doctor, Millwright

By BETTY PLUMMER

Another prominent early Washington County resident also operated a mill. The mill ground both corn and grist, when Dr. Alvah Payne, the operator, "wasn't practicing medicine," or attending to duties as Telegraph and Texas Register agent for the county communities of Oak Grove and Cedar Creek.

The Paynes had been in the Republic of Texas since its inception. In compensation for early services to the Republic, Dr. Payne was awarded 1280 acres of land in Washington County. In addition to these acres, Dr. Payne also purchased almost one-half of Arabella's Harrington's league of land, on Nov. 19, 1836, at a cost of \$200.

When the town commissioners began to sell Brenham pr-

operty, Dr. Payne added to his acreage by the purchase of a five acre town lot in Brenham during December, 1847. These five acres encompassed land located near St. Mary's Catholic Church; the land was bought for \$45.50.

Dr. Payne served as a member of the Washington County Commissioners Court, prior to the fall of 1848. By this date the doctor was living in Brazos County. Shortly after moving from the Brenham area, Dr. Payne sold his five acre Brenham town lot for a twenty-one dollar profit.

The approximate location of Payne's Mill, during the years of Dr. Payne's ownership, was southeast of the present-day Brenham streets which intersect at Pecan and Chappell Hill Streets.

## The Henry Higgins Homestead

By BETTY PLUMMER

In 1838, Henry Higgins and his wife, Jane, immigrated to Texas. During the next twenty-three years the seven children of Jane and Henry Higgins grew to maturity on lands enjoyed today by all the children of Brenham -- Fireman's Park.

The Higgins family was an excellent example of the far-sighted American family of the 1820's and 1830's. As did many of their contemporaries, the Higgins wended their way from the Atlantic coast ever westward, seeking lands in the new area called Texas. Higgins was a native of North Carolina; his wife, Jane, was a

native of South Carolina.

When Henry Higgins settled on his ninety-eight acre homestead tract in the Harrington League, the Republic of Texas was three years old. The town of Brenham was not yet even a dream. The Higgins house was located north of the branch which still runs through Fireman's Park. This branch has been known at various times as both Harrington Branch and Higgins Branch.

By 1850, Higgins was one of the wealthy men of Washington County, due to his efforts as a planter. He farmed both his homestead tract, and other

acreage which he acquired in nearby counties. The family also acquired an admirable library. The collection was, undoubtedly a source of pride to them, and could serve, today, as a sample of early Brenham residents' reading habits. Included among the volumes were many classics as well as popular writings by contemporary authors.

The eldest Higgins son, William A., became one of Brenham's earliest lawyers. He also, in 1853, served as Chief Justice of the county in which his father had settled during the early days of the Republic.

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By BETTY PLUMMER

Concerned parents, living in the Hickory Grove settlement during the early 1840's, organized a school for the education of their children. The school was named the Hickory Grove Academy. The original structure was replaced in 1848 with a "cedar box" building and renamed the Masonic Academy. Influences of these schools' excellent academic and moral curriculum are still felt in present-day Brenham.

The establishment of an academy, located in a small settlement, was indicative of the interest taken in education by early settlers who chose to rear their children in the Brenham area. So as to insure continued education for the Hickory Grove settlement youngsters, Jesse Farral, owner of lands on which the Academy was located, conveyed as a

"Deed of Gift to the Trustees of Hickory Grove Academy" the land on which the school stood, plus enough extra land surrounding the building to number two acres.

The Hickory Grove Academy was "situated on the road leading directly from Farral's resident to James Clemmons' mill." The school tract, today, is bounded by East Academy, Ross, Crockett and Independence Street.

In deed the land to the Trus-

## History Of Brenham

# The Hickory Grove Academy

tees on May 27, 1842, Farral stated most specifically, that his reason for giving the land was "to permanently establish a school and to aid in maintaining and continuing the school as an institution of learning for children in the community." Trustees accepting the gift were all men who only a few years later had become prominent citizens of the new town of Brenham. They were H. C. McIntyre, Henry Higgins, William Norris, B. F. Rucker, Joshua Graham, William Tom, Cary and Gary.

In 1848-49, Graham Lodge #20 of Brenham bought the property and built a new school house which became known as the Masonic Academy. Until 1875, when the first free public school established in Texas

began operation in Brenham the Masons of the city maintained the school in true academy style. This system included tuition based on the subjects taken by each student. Matriculation in Ancient Language or Math cost \$4.00, Elementary English was \$2.00, Ordinary English cost \$3.00. The Academy proclaimed that their "course of

instruction consists of all the branches of learning usually taught in the best academies and high schools of the country."

Two generations of Brenham youths received instruction in Brenham's first school. The earliest students read their lessons in a schoolhouse furnished with log benches - no desks. They received their first lessons from James Mitchell, who came to the county before 1837. In 1845, Hickory

Grove students were instructed by John Sayles, the notable early Brenham Lawyer who annotated the Statutes of Texas which is still today considered the bible of Texas lawyers. Rev. Lindsay P. Rucker, who taught at an academy in Washington and later became minister of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Brenham, also instructed at the academy.

Following the erection of Brenham's first free public school, the academy property

became owned by J. B. Wilkin, whose civic activities in Brenham spanned the years from the early days well into the twentieth century. The structure remained on its original site until the fall of 1880, when it was destroyed by fire "about nine o'clock on Sunday evening." The Brenham Daily Banner later described the school as being "well remembered by many of our staid citizens who in their youthful days were whipped by the ped-

agogues who taught them."

Brenham's first school was located one hundred yards south of the Giddings-Wilkin House, which was erected during the school's early days and still stands today.

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To be continued later with Chapter V, The Story of Richard Fox Brenham.



# Early Settlers Arrive

By BETTY PLUMMER

## Settlers Arrive

Early settlers arrived in the Brenham-Washington County area by many different routes. Perhaps the most popular overland route used by settlers coming from Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky and Arkansas was Trammell's Trace. The Trace wound through Conway, Ark., across the Red River to Nacogdoches, and on the La Bahia Road to the Brazos River. The first group of Austin colonists who came down the Trace and located on lands near Brenham were members of four families related through marriage - the Robinsons, Gates, Boatrights, Kuykendalls from Arkansas. Other families not related to the aforementioned groups, yet arriving at about the same time, were the McNeeses of North Carolina and Allcorns from Georgia.

A short while later the James Walker family of Kentucky crossed the river into Austin's colony, and settled on lands now inside the limits of Brenham. A direct descendant of the Walkers and the Jameisons (of Austin's second colony) is a resident of Brenham - Edgar Matchett. Before the death of his father, Thomas Matchett, the elder Matchett made provisions for recording, and care of the Walker Cemetery, located on James Walker's originally settled league of land. Several Austin colonists are buried in the historic old cemetery; one grave is that of Arabella Harrington, on whose land grant the original townsite of Brenham was established.

Although several members of the first permanent Anglo-American colony in Texas settled near Brenham, most of the area settlers arrived in the second colony, beginning in the summer of 1825. Among second colonists who took up lands near Brenham were Arabella Harrington, her son William Dever, B.F. Armstrong, David Ayers, Alexander Bailey, Horatio Chriesman, the Clarkes, Robert Clokey, Philip Coe, John Cole, Joseph Davis, Mary Anna Earley, Joshua Fletcher, Elizabeth Gordon, Joseph Harbour, The Hope Brothers, Harmon Hensley,

Issac Jackson, Isaac Jameison, the Lawrences, Isaac Lee and his son Hiram Lee, Sandford Woodward, James Schrier, Nelson Smith, Ashley R. Stevens. Land was granted to most of these colonists thirteen years before Brenham was established.

## Some by Sea

While most colonists chose to make the journey overland, some did come by water. The

boats were primarily public conveyances, however, some were privately chartered. The best known privately chartered craft was the first boat scheduled to bring colonists in to Texas. The "Lively" was outfitted by Joseph Hawkins, wealthy brother of Stephen F. Austin's classmate at Transylvania College. Littleberry Hawkins later came to Texas, and chose Brenham for their home. The "Lively" left New Orleans on Nov. 20, 1821. Several versions are told as to the location of Austin's anticipated rendezvous with the boat. One version tells of the Empresario waiting at the mouth of New Year's Creek, where eighteen years later the Brazos River town of Warren flourished, twelve miles east of Brenham. The ill-fated "Lively" never reached its rendezvous point.

The schooner "Only Son" was chartered by Horatio Chriesman, in 1821, to bring his family from New Orleans to the Austin colony. One year later, William (Buck) Pettus aboard the schooner "Revenge," to take up lands on Mill Creek. In 1833, David Ayers and his family were shipwrecked off the Texas coast. To the Texas wilderness had come Ayers helping foster religious worship in new lands, as his ancestors, John and Priscilla Alden, had also come to the New World two centuries ago.

After applying for a grant of Texas land, the head of a family would frequently come to the Austin colony, seek out land, have it surveyed, and build a house. As more set-

tlers arrived in the colony, lands surrounding Brenham were speedily chosen. These lands were described by early Texas travellers as the finest in Texas. Frequently, the serious intent of a settler to actually cultivate and live upon his land was questioned. Such questions were usually laid to rest by a ceremony which required the land grantee to throw rocks, pull up grass, turn over the soil, and chop down trees, thus signifying his intent to settle and cultivate, himself. Land speculation by of wealth in the States was the cause of questioning a settler's intentions.

One notable early settler who located Texas land and then returned for his family was Samuel Seward. In 1832, he found a beautiful hillside on which was located a spring. Seward returned with his family, overland by caravan, and settled near Coles' Settlement in the house built on Seward's first Texas trip. A larger house which he started building in 1833, still stands atop the original hillside selected long ago. Members of the Seward family later moved to Brenham and built houses. One quaint house built by Oscar Seward still stands in Brenham. The settler, Samuel Seward was a cousin of Secretary of State William H. Seward of Abraham Lincoln's cabinet.

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# Robinsons 1st To Arrive

## CHAPTER II Passport to Texas

According to Guy M. Bryan, brother of the noted early Brenham lawyer Beauregard Bryan and both great-nephews of Stephen F. Austin, Andrew Robinson was the first settler in the Brenham-Washington County area. Thirty-one year old Robinson, wife Nancy (Gates), and son Andrew Jr., came to the colony in the fall of 1821 and settled approximately fifteen miles northeast of Brenham. Robinson later built a ferry boat, and judging from prices charged for ferrage in the early days, must have made a comfortable living. To cross the Brazos during the early 1830's, it cost \$1 for wagon, 75¢ for buggy with two horses, 50¢ for buggy with one horse, 25¢ for a man on horseback, and 10¢ for school children on ponies. Around this ferry the town of "Labadie," (Anglicized pronunciation of La Bahia) developed where Robinson opened a hotel in 1830.

Early colonists, entering and leaving Texas were required to have passports. Although most were issued by the Mexican government, Stephen F. Austin issued passports for several of his colonists. One such passport was issued to William Gates, father of Nancy Robinson. It was granted on Dec. 27, 1821, and signed by Austin as "civil and military commander of the colony forming on the Brazos and Colorado Rivers, in the province of Texas, under the government of New Spain."

Other families soon arrived in the colony. Toward the end of 1821, came the Kuykendalls and Allcorns; members of both families later became Brenham residents. In the Kuykendall group came the head of the clan, Adam, and his sons Abner, Peter, Joseph, and Robert. The Kuykendalls had originally come to the United States from Holland, and later settled in Arkansas, where they became acquainted with the plans of Moses Austin. At one time he owned and cultivated a large piece of land near Little Rock, Ark. The

Kuykendalls, after coming to the Austin colony west of the Brazos, settled at several locations, and ultimately received grants of four leagues in present day Washington County. In 1834, the eldest son, Abner, died from tetanus as a result of knife wounds received during a fight at San Felipe. His killer was reported to be the first man legally executed in the colony for murder. The son of Abner Kuykendall, Jonathan Hampton was later engaged by William Barrett Travis as his helper, only two years before Travis met death at the Alamo.

Six miles north of the courthouse in Brenham, the Allcorns settled -- Elijah, wife Nancy, sons James, William, John, Thomas, Elliott and daughter Mary Ann. Elliott Allcorn later moved within three miles of Brenham, where he was killed Dec. 20, 1866. His older brother, Thomas, moved into the town of Brenham, and was still a resident of the city in 1873. Mary Ann married Parrott McNeese, son of John McNeese of North Carolina. Members of the McNeese family held offices in

the county, and later city positions after Brenham was established. Mrs. Charles Danheim, a Brenham resident, is related, by marriage, to the McNeeses of Austin's colony. Mrs. Danheim still recalls events told her about the early settlers.

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(To Be Continued Thursday)



# Ferry At Brazos Opened

By BETTY PLUMMER

## CHAPTER II

### Colonial Conditions

After a ferry at the Brazos River-La Bahia Road crossing was established, settlers could more easily bring families, equipment, and workers into the Austin colony. During the early days almost everyone was a farmer. He farmed as a means of sustenance for his family. Then, as farming operations increased and became easier, the farmer's activities became more diversified. He became, also, a store keeper, blacksmith, mill operator, and gin operator, until eventually he found himself operating a self-sufficient plantation. In time, the area surrounding Brenham developed into large farms, and plantations such as those operated by the Affecks, Felders, Lipscombs, Clays, Brownings, Coles, Stamps, McNeeses, Franklins, Chappells, and Jacksons.

Most of the colonists who settled near Brenham were from southern states. As colonists established homesteads, and built houses, they attempted to recapture some of the flavor of their former homes. Although most early houses began as one or one and one-half story cedar log structures, the houses were expanded and renovated as the family grew in number and affluency. Remodeling processes invariably brought the houses to more closely resemble southern-style plantation houses of the older states. Galleries, or porches, were used when possible; and, the houses were always built facing south or in a southerly direction so as to take advantage of the breeze. When second stories were added, second floor galleries were almost automatically added, too.

Many houses built by early settlers are still standing in and around Brenham. Although most have been remodeled to keep pace with so-called progress, lines of early architecture are still delightfully visible. Frequently, a house began as a single room log cabin, and through numerous additions eventually reached ample proportions. The usual interior style, with wide comfortable center hall and

square shaped rooms flanking each side of the hall, has been retained by most early-house owners, even though the exterior has undergone external remodeling. Several of the oldest houses in Texas, built by Austin colonists, and early citizens of the Republic of Texas still grace the town of Brenham and surrounding countryside.

To a large extent conditions

in the countryside determined the sites upon which early colonists located their homes. As with all pioneers, the availability of water, hostility of Indians, type of soil, abundance of game, and healthful surroundings were considerations. The Austin colonists were fortunate, however, for conditions in the Brenham area were ideal for settlers.

Water was abundant, for in addition to the Brazos River large streams with many tributaries generously laced the lands. The water itself was exceptionally good, so good, in fact that one early traveler remarked, "Texans ascribe the salubrity of the country to the water, which they think contains some medical virtue."

Indian problems were limited, as compared to other parts of the colony. Thieving Indians indeed, was a problem but certainly not comparable to the Indian atrocities along the coast, and north of San Antonio. Actual incidences of people killed by Indians in the Brenham area were few, excepting the Gougher family and Nestor Clay. Clay attacked on his own land near a creek which still bears his name, outran the Indians, but died from wounds shortly after reaching his home. Among all the settlers there was, of course an ever eminent danger from roving bands of Karankows who occasionally wandered inland from the coast, or Comanches coming down the Brazos from lands further north. It was these possibilities, rather than probabilities, which prompted early settlers to build their houses

under a hill. Several houses of the Austin colonists, still on their original sites, attest to the selectivity with which homes were located. One house built in 1824, and still standing on its original site, is located between a creek and the crest of a hill, just far enough from the creek to escape frequent overflow, and beneath the crest of the hill so as to escape detection. Warmth was also a factor in such locations. Some early houses of particular interest in and near Brenham, which still stand include the Coles House, Seaward house, Mill Creek Farm, Giddings house, Pennington House, Pampell-Day house, Lauraine house, Hosea house, Kerr House, Dawson house.

Timber was abundant in the present day Brenham area. Cedar forests grew thick, and large oaks and pecans were found along the streams. The large amount of cedar in the area undoubtedly prompted

early settlers to build their entire houses of cedar, and it is certainly the reason many very old structures have withstood the usual fate of rot and termites. Large live oaks also added beauty as well as wood supply to the landscape of Brenham and the surrounding hills.

Wild game abounded in the lands west of the Brazos-- wild turkeys, quail, wild cattle, Mexican hogs and deer were prevalent. So were predatory animals. Daniel Shipman, who crossed the Brazos in 1822, and later lived in Brenham adjacent to the first railroad station, noted in his memoirs "spotted leopards" in the Brazos bottoms, panthers, wildcats, and the black bears which were "very bad." Rivers, creeks, and streams were infested with alligators. Noah Smithwick, the early colonist and fighter who left an important message pinned to a tree near Brenham telling of the massacre at Goliad and the Alamo, recalled the alligators' habit of crawling up banks of the Brazos and attacking people camped for the night.



# New Settlements Made

By BETTY PLUMMER

## CHAPTER II

### The Settlements

As additional colonists crossed the Brazos new settlements mushroomed in the Brenham area. One early Texas traveller remarked that a twenty mile radius, extending from Washington to below Chappell Hill, included the settlements which brought civilization and culture to Texas. When Brenham was established the townsite was located almost in the center of this twenty-mile radius; and, from these settlements surrounding Brenham came its early population.

Communities developed rapidly during the 1820's and 1830's. By the year 1844, Washington County hillsides were dotted with both small and large settlements. When an act of the Congress of the Republic of Texas established Brenham, many county residents affiliated themselves with the new seat of Justice for Washington County. Some bought lots in the new townsite and moved immediately into Brenham, while others continued to live on their homesteads yet practice their professions within the townsite. Faint traces of many early villages still remain, however, as an affinity for tradition runs deep among the citizenry of Brenham and the county.

Early settlement frequently acquired the name of a first settler or a prominent person living in the area; Some villages were also identified by distinguishing geographic features. Towns named for individuals were Coles' Settlement, Kerr's Settlement, Gay Hill, Walker's, Burton, Fuller's, Jacksonville, Chappell Hill, Doddville, Hidalgo, Harrisburg. For geographic features were Turkey Creek, Hickory Point, Montville, Tiger Point (for both people and topography) La Bahia, Cedar Creek, Oak Grove, Hickory Grove, Vine Grove. Names which had special significance to those living in the area included Berlin, Union Hill, Mount Vernon, Evergreen, Mustang Trading Post, Washington, Independence.

### Hidalgo

In 1836, the settlement of Hidalgo was suggested as a possible site for the capitol of Texas. Although Hidalgo was not selected the area still remained populated with many of Texas early statesmen and large land owners.

Located on the bluffs of the Brazos River, the area known as Hidalgo could well date back to the days of Spanish explorations in Texas. Time has dimmed the area's early history,

while not completely eliminating physical evidence which appeared to be linked with Spanish soldiers and early missionaries.

Exception Indian tribes who used the area for camping and burial grounds, the first known permanent residents of the Hidalgo bluff area was Ezekiel Clampitt, a member of Stephen F. Austin's second colony. Clampitt arrived before 1827, and was granted a league of land four years later. This league could possibly have once been the site of a Spanish fort or mission, for on the land structures were built which resembled no other Anglo-American settler's houses. The location, also, was ideal for a fort or mission, as the unusually built structures are situated on a bluff 275 feet high where the river turns from a westerly to northerly course. An "everlasting spring" was nearby and about one hundred yards south of the buildings was the La Bahia Road. From such a wonderful vantage point, the countryside for miles around was visible and defensible; crafts coming either up or down the river could be seen miles before they reached Hidalgo.

The largest structure on the bluff was converted into a residence one and a quarter centuries ago. Renovations through the years, by members of the Blue, Roehling, and Gindorf families, have created a lovely southern plantation-style house with wide galleries. The underlying structure of the house, however, does not resemble Anglo construction; it is quite indicative of Spanish building practices. Walls of the house, both

upstairs and downstairs, are twenty-two inches thick and built of solid rock slabs. According to the O. C. Gindorf, whose relatives have owned and occupied the property since 1868, rock slabs removed during remodeling were found to be five inches thick. Some of the rock slabs "still have big mussel shells in them," according to Gindorf.

A few hundred yards west of the Gindorf home is another structure whose style and construction is equally suggestive of Spanish builders. This building is the property of Fred Sommer, whose family settled on the bluff over one hundred years ago. The Sommer structure is particularly unique for it is partially underground and very heavy timbers support the ceiling and the walls are quite thick.

During the 1830's, a town was laid out on the adjacent league by members of the Reynolds family, developers

of Hidalgo Plantation. This tract is still referred to as the Hidalgo league, which was to have been the name of the new town. The townsite was set up to contain ten large tracts, running from the Brazos River back toward the La Bahia Road. During pre-Texas Revolution days many such towns were laid out in the midst of plantations. As one relative of Stephen F. Austin remarked in 1835, "the rage now is for making towns." These towns were laid out in plots, and then advertised in newspapers. Three such plantation towns were laid out in Brazoria County in 1835 and 1836. Allen Reynolds, one of the few eleven league owners of early Texas, received credit for laying out the town.

Several other families developed large farms and plantations in the area. These planters later became affiliated with Brenham, as river traffic ceased and the railroad came to Brenham. Early residents included Carnes, Booker, Crosby, Spann, Cummins, Rainey, Toler, Allen, Roehling and Sommer.



# Tiger Point, Jacksonville Develop

By BETTY PLUMMER  
CHAPTER II  
Tiger Point

In distance many of the early communities were "terribly big;" in population, however, the areas were relatively small. Tiger Point, located four to five miles west of Brenham, spread over quite a wide area. The village, itself, sat atop a high hill with the school and saloon adjacent to one another. The location today includes the homesites of the Tiemans and Hoddes.

Two legends account for the unusual name Tiger Point. One story credits Philip Coe, member of Stephen F. Austin's second colony, with naming the village. Captain Coe was a distinguished colonial resident, representing the Washington District at the Consultation of 1835, then later commanding a group of area residents during the Texas Revolution. Coe was also one of the men selected to guard the irreplaceable baggage and supplies of General Sam Houston's men which were stored at Harrisburg as the advanced army toward the Battle of San Jacinto.

According to Captain Coe, the name Tiger Point was given the community because its settlers "were real tigers and led such fast and furious lives." Coe undoubtedly participated in some of the frontier-type fast living himself as the duel fought at Tiger point between Captain Coe and Jack Watson is still recalled.

Local historian Harold Rudloff, credits the naming of Tiger Point (sometimes called Tiger Town) to the fact that a store clerk in the settlement was nicknamed Tiger; and, as he was quite popular with the area residents, the community became identified with Tiger, the clerk.

Among the early "tigers" were Armstead, Armstrong, Clemens, Lehmann, Petty, Harris, Mundine, Richards, Weiss, Lipscomb, Spreen, Pipkin. Present day "tigers" include Hodde, Tieman, Wehmeyer, Sommerfeld, Wiesepape, Saeger, Yoakum, and other residents of the Salem community.

## Turkey Creek

A community which came into prominence in 1844, was the "town" of Turkey Creek. Since the early days of the Austin Colony, settlers had favored the area located between Kuykendall and New Year's Creeks. Prior to 1835, colonists living in the area were the Earlys, Harbours, Halls, Gees, Millers; and later, the Guytons, Meyers, Kalbows, Wiedes and Zeisses families.

The name Turkey Creek was derived from Turkey Spring, a large spring on the Guyton's

land which flowed so freely it created a creek.

When Congress favored a petition of Washington County residents requesting a new location for the "seat of justice," Turkey Creek was one of the four names submitted for consideration. Apparently, the majority of county voters did not look favorably on Turkey Creek as a county seat, as it was defeated. Such defeat, however, in no way dampened the popularity of Turkey Creek, as two communities today embrace the settlement which vied with Brenham for county recognition--The Wiedeville and Earlywine communities.

## Jacksonville

Approximately six miles due east of Brenham once stood the largest town in Washington County. During the early years of Brenham's development, Jacksonville reigned as queen of commerce along the Brazos. One of the main roads leading from Brenham to the river passed through Jacksonville; it was a wide avenue which ran through the center of town and on to a steamboat landing, opposite the town of Courtney.

Several Jackson men came to Austin's colony at early dates--Isaac, Elisha D. William, Terrell, and Gilbert. According to local history the town was named for Terrell Jackson. Three leagues of land in Washington County were granted to Jackson as a member of both first and second Austin colonies. The town, however, was not located on a Jackson league, but on the land of William Munson, also a member of Austin's second

colony.

To the enterprising Jackson brothers -- William, Terrell, and Gilbert -- has been credited construction of the first saw mill in Washington County. Commonplace though a saw mill might appear today, it did not so appear to the early settlers. The saw mill was a real milestone in man's living standards during 1839-40.

Another honor was bestowed upon the Jackson brothers, when William was appointed a special commissioner by order of the Congress of the Republic of Texas. His instructions were to help select and lay out the townsite of Brenham. Relatives of William, Terrell and Gilbert living today in Brenham include Mercer Rogers and Robert Rogers.

One interesting story concerning the use of barter in early Jacksonville was recalled by Mrs. B. L. Spain of Chappell Hill. The incident, taken from a detailed diary kept by one of the Jackson girls, told of a man coming to the Jacksonville Post Office to claim a registered letter. Postage due amounted to twenty-five cents, an amount exceeding the man's current finances. As security for the letter, the man left his horse with the postmaster and caught a ride home. He returned next day with the required twenty-five cents and reclaimed his horse.

Credits and resources will be given at the conclusion of the series.

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(To Be Continued Wednesday)