

SPARKMAN

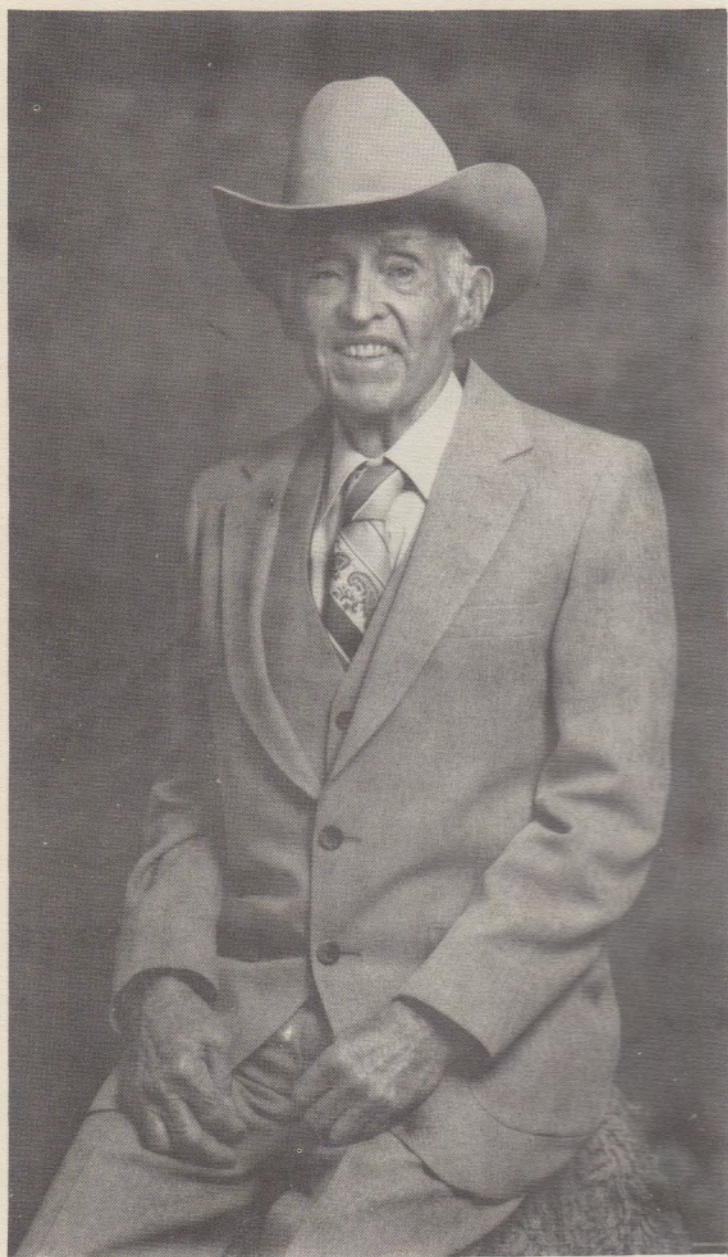
THE PEOPLES HISTORY OF LIVE OAK COUNTY, TEXAS

THE
PEOPLE'S HISTORY
OF
LIVE OAK COUNTY, TEXAS
BY
ERVIN L. SPARKMAN

IDE HOUSE

To my friend
of many years
Johⁿ Stridde

Erwin L Sporkman



The People's History of Live Oak County, Texas

by

Ervin L. Sparkman

Edited by Mary Sparkman Roberts

Mesquite



Ide House

1981

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ervin Leslie Sparkman is a fourth generation Texan. Homie Hargrove was teaching school in her native DeWitt County when she married Tennessee-born Sidney W. Sparkman, a widower with two children. Ervin was born June 12, 1891, and later that year the family moved to what became Greer County, Oklahoma. The Sparkmans homesteaded 320 acres of choice prairie, growing wheat, feedstuff for their livestock, and the first cotton in Greer County. Sidney contracted with a Texas cowman to manage a cowherd for a share of calves, and Ervin, who learned to ride a horse almost before he could walk, often rode behind his father's saddle to help read the brands. During roundup and branding time, farm boys came from miles around to share the excitement.

Three other children were born in Oklahoma, but Homie's health began to fail. Hoping a warmer climate would improve her health, the family moved back to South Texas. Ervin, who was nine years old, drove the eight mules and horses during the month-long, seven hundred mile journey. Seventy-two years later, Ervin returned, with his son, to the Greer County homestead, following the road he remembered from his childhood. Only an old well pipe marked the homesite. In the community cemetery, he located the tombstone he had watched his father carve for his baby sister in 1898. The memory that led him back to his old home has served him well in recording the history of the county which has been his home since the beginning of the twentieth century.

It was on Christmas day of 1900 that the Sparkman family moved into their new home on a fifteen-hundred

acre ranch in Live Oak County, near the Bee County community of Salt Branch. Homie died two years later, and Sidney drowned in 1913.

On March 4, 1914, Ervin Sparkman and Ola Cox were married, and a house was built on the land he had inherited. Despite business school training, Ervin loved the outdoors, and has spent his life farming and raising cattle. With Ola's death in 1971, he added housework to the farm chores.

His son Sidney now lives on his part of the farm, and helps with the heavier work. They have around a hundred head of cattle on the 200 acre farm. Another son, Leslie, is a minister in Lubbock.

On his eighty-sixth birthday, E.L. was seen chopping wood for the fireplace. He claimed to be showing his great-grandson how to split logs, but the demonstration lasted nearly an hour.

His nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren have always enjoyed listening to Grandpa tell about the old days. He has used every kind of transportation from ox-wagons and buggies to jet planes, and he wrote this book so that the story of our local past might be preserved for the children of today and of the future.

Ervin Sparkman has been an active member of the Cadiz Baptist Church for many years. He is a member of the Live Oak County Farm Bureau, the Republican Party, and the Live Oak Historical Society. He has always been interested in American and local history, and has contributed articles to the *Bee Picayune* and several historical publications.

Mary Sparkman Roberts
Garland, Texas

FOREWARD

Although most of the founders of Live Oak County came from Mexico, Ireland, or from more settled areas of our own country, immigrants from many other countries have found a home in Texas. Present-day inhabitants of Live Oak County include descendants of French, German, Jewish, English, Polish, Czech, Norwegian, Dutch, Italian, Canadian, Scotch, Greek, African, Korean, Chinese... and many other peoples. Modern methods of travel have brought people from almost every county in the world to our state—in fact, two of our country's newest citizens are my great-granddaughters, who entered this world as citizens of the Republic of Korea! While our forefathers spent months crossing the ocean by ship, these twin infants flew half-way around the world in twenty-four hours to meet their adoptive parents. Before the age of three, they had lived in the capitals of two countries, in three states, and had visited eleven other states. They are now putting down roots in Texas.

This book was written for them, and for my other grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and for all of our children of today and tomorrow. It contains highlights from the past, and hopefully representative information about the present.

This is the story of Live Oak County--how it was a distant yesterday, and how it became as it is today. The information for this work was gathered from 1974 through 1980, and is in no way complete. Some documents are no longer legible, or have been destroyed. Some information was unavailable because no records

were kept. Some groups and individuals did not respond to requests for information. If at times it seems contradictory, that is because several accounts of the same event sometimes differed greatly. The history of our county could include thousands of pages, and yet still be incomplete; however, a stopping point must be found.

As the title implies, this is a work by the people of Live Oak County, compiled by Ervin L. Sparkman. It would have been impossible to complete this book without the help and encouragement of so many friends. Some of those who have been of special assistance are listed below.

I want to especially thank my nephew, U.S. Army Colonel (ret.) Fred Gremmel and County Commissioner Hilbert Koplin for their encouragement to undertake this work.

Camp Ezell, editor of the *Bee Picayune* for many years, gave counsel and encouragement.

Judge Bill Kendall provided both help and encouragement. Members of the Commissioner's Court, Tom Bomar, Hilbert Kopplin, Clem McKinney, and Lloyd Miller, provided unanimous support. Sheriff Sam Huff aided in several ways. County Clerk Bill Bain helped locate important documents.

Thelma Lindholm furnished some invaluable material.

Long-time reporter Viola Ebel Adlof has done much preserve current events on the country for the future, and her historical research is the basis for some of the information in this volume.

Josephine Dulliham furnished a history of the Catholic churches in the country.

Others who have helped in many ways include Josephine Canfield, Lou Emma Canfield, Holman Cartwright, Gilbert Chapa, Lucille Colle, Lola Bell Coquat, Felix Crawford, Elton Cude (District Clerk,

Bexar County, Texas), Jack Davidson, Dr. E.R. Drozd, Iris Dunn, Lydell Lewis Dunn, Reverend Milton Dunn, Beth Freeborn, Sidney Freeborn, Jim Gallagher, Leo O. (Tommy) Hartman, William Hinnant, former county judge Harry Hinton, Reverend and Mrs. Carroll R. Jones, Joe Rufus Lyne, Mrs. L. McCumber, Mrs. J.R. McGuffin, Alta Maguglin, Marvin Maples, Dr. Ernest Miller of Beeville, county librarian Opal Miller, Jack Montgomery, Pascal Murray, Louise Burch Nolan, Reverend William H. Oberste (author of *Texas Irish Empresarios and Their Colonies*), Dorothy Probst, Reverend Allen Robertson, my sister Vivian Smith, Bill Spross, Doug Strause, Dena Wieding, Lillie Mae Wieding, Alpha Williams, Elmore Williams, and Cecil and Mathilda Wilson.

Thanks also to S.T. (Tige) Brown, Jr., superintendent of the George West schools, and A.F. Cobb, superintendent of the Three Rivers schools, and to the personnel of each of the schools.

Special thanks to Reverend Gregorio Perez, Mrs. Marshall Sanguinet, Mrs. A.E. Johnson, Mrs. Guy McGee, Rocky Reagan, James P. Jungman, Live Oak County Attorney Bill Hardwick, Ross Brown, Margie Kendall, Eugie Edwards, Jill Groves, Three Rivers Mayor Jack Nance, Dan Coker, J.T. Horton, Mrs. Ramiro Garcia, Rip Wallace, Jim Gillett, Ross Harris, Stanley J. Stewart, The Live Oak County Farm Bureau, and my son Sidney Sparkman.

Joelle and Julie Roberts are due special credit for being willing to share their mother's time while she did research and typing on this manuscript, and their father, Joe Roberts, is also due special thanks for allowing his wife to undertake and complete such a project.

Ervin L. Sparkman
Three Rivers, Texas

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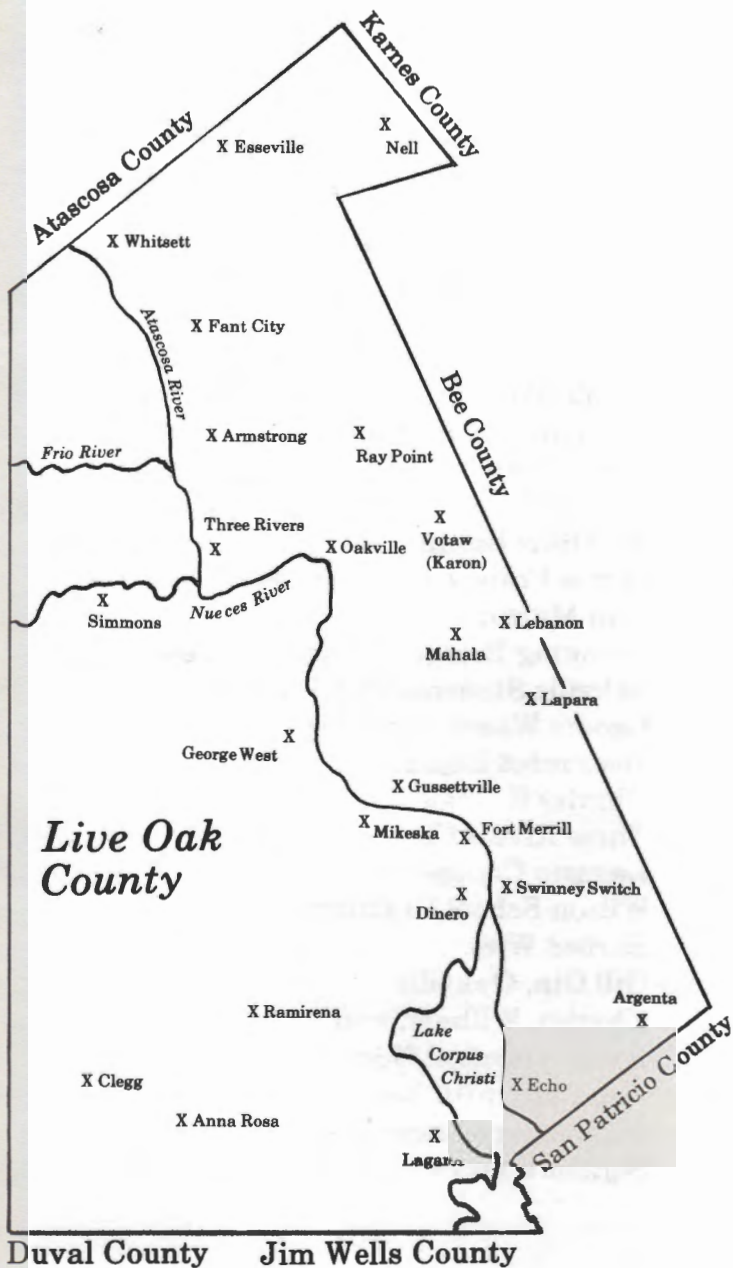
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McMullen County



CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS

The Indians

As early as 9200 B.C. the South Texas area was occupied by small hunting and gathering groups (families or groups of families) whose way of life did not change drastically until the intrusion of the Spanish. Most of these Indians apparently spoke a common language, Coahuiltecan. Many of the groups came together in the summer to harvest the fruit of the prickly pear and in the winter to gather pecans; the rest of the year they camped up and down the streams (where plant and animal food was available), staying at each location from a few weeks to a few months.

She probably was clothed when they laid her on her side in the small pit with her feet bound to her thighs and her wrists tied across her chest. Near her face, they put a container filled with objects she might need—arrow points and other stone tools, shells for jewelry and bits of red ocher. Before they filled the pit with dirt, they sprinkled ocher powder over parts of her body. As a final tribute, they kindled a fire on top of her grave.

Based on a preliminary analysis of evidence from an archaeological excavation near Three Rivers, Texas, in Live Oak County, a Polish physical anthropologist is able, with some confidence, to reconstruct a burial ritual that took place some 3,000 years ago.

Dr. Maciej Henneberg has been working with an archaeological team of the Texas Department of

Highways and Public Transportation interpreting the evidence from thirty identifiable skeletons found at the site....Dr. Henneberg said the concentration of burials indicates the slightly elevated mound was used as a cemetery over a period of decades and that perhaps 100 to 200 burials will be recovered by the time the excavation is complete.

The site was discovered by the state highway department when it surveyed the area for relevant cultural information, as federal law provides when an area is threatened by government construction projects....The caches appear to be "tool kits"—implements used in everyday life that were important to the survival of individuals....The site, so far, is unique for South Texas archeology because of the concentrated burials in association with the tools and other grave goods.¹

More than 1500 years ago Coahuiltecan Indians built their campfires atop a bluff overlooking the Frio River. The spot became an important gathering place for generation after generation of small bands of Indians to conduct their hunting or plant food collecting activities.

The archaeologists have found two distinct occupational levels. The upper level, or floor, represents the late prehistoric period. Pottery tools, and Perdiz arrow points from that period were found. Similar artifacts found in other parts of South Texas have been radiocarbonated to between 1200 and 1300 A.D.

The older lower levels has artifacts representative of the late archaic period, dating to the beginning of the Christian era. The two levels were separated in time by hundreds of years, but the arrangement of the burned rock clusters is similar. These may have been hearths for cooking or processing food, such as prickly pear cactus.

Figurines and a pipe not native to South Texas may have been trade items.

The Indians hunted with spears until around 120

A.D., when the bow and arrow were introduced. After about 1200 A.D. they came to rely heavily for meat upon the large herds of bison (American buffalo) and the pronghorn antelope, which roamed the open grasslands.

In the seventeenth century, the hunting and gathering lifestyle of the Coahuilteicans was disturbed by the intrusion of the Lipan Apaches and by the Spaniards. In the next century raiding parties of Comanche Indians found their way to South Texas.

During the late 1970's, archaeologists from the University of Texas at San Antonio, Texas A & M University, and Texas Tech University conducted studies along the Frio River and its tributary creeks as part of a multitude of studies done prior to the construction of Choke Canyon Reservoir—it was the largest archaeological—historical project ever undertaken in South Texas.² The archaeologists were excavating a site three miles north of Three Rivers that was soon to be covered by IH 37.

The Spaniards

The first white man to enter the area now called Live Oak County was probably Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, treasurer of a Spanish expedition led by Pánfilo de Narváez. When the landing party became stranded in Florida, Narváez and his men built five small boats and attempted to reach Mexico. All of the vessels were lost along the Texas coast, and most of the men succumbed to disease or Indians. Cabeza de Vaca's vessel was wrecked on Galveston Island in November, 1528, and he became a trader of red ocher, hides, flint, hard-canes, and shells. In search of gold and silver, he began a journey in 1534 which took a southwesterly direction from Galveston

through the Coastal Bend, probably crossing what is now Live Oak County, and then turned northwest toward present-day El Paso and into New Mexico.

During the next two centuries the Spaniards established missions (which were accompanied by military forts) throughout Central, East, and South Texas in an attempt to civilize and Christianize the "savage" Indians. The Indians did learn the Spanish language, and early South Texas settlers could converse with most Indians by speaking in Spanish. Some Indians became "civilized" and accepted the Spanish religion and lifestyle; they intermarried with the Spaniards, took Spanish names, and became known as "Mexicans." Others refused the white man's way and were known as "wild Indians."

Chotilapacquen was the Indian name for the river the Spaniards named Nueces (because of the many pecan trees growing along its banks). When the Terán expedition blazed the trail for El Camino Real from Saltillo in Northern Mexico to San Antonio, and on to Natchitoches, Louisiana, in 1691, the Nueces was renamed in honor of two different saints by two different priests, but neither name stuck.

By the early nineteenth century, the Spaniards had established settlements along the west bank of the Nueces River. In 1829 the heirs of Don José Antonio Ramirez and of Don José Victoriano Ramirez entered a plea to the Mexican government for title to eight leagues of grazing land "known as the Rancho de los Jaboncillos, but more commonly known as Ojo de Agua Ramireña."³ According to the plea, the Ramirez brothers had cleared land for fields, built ranch houses and a tanyard, erected corrals, and made other improvements. Although they had no title to the land, they had lived there peacefully until 1813, when all frontier troops were withdrawn as a result of the Mexican uprising against Spain. The few

scattered rancheros in what is now South Texas fell prey to hordes of Indians, and the Ramirez people fled in such haste that they left all their household possessions, as well as large flocks of sheep and herds of horses and cattle. Although the Ramirez heirs filed their claim with both the Spanish and Mexican governments, they never received title to the property.

A century later, author J. Frank Dobie described Old Fort Ramirez, a structure which was located on his father's ranch, and which apparently was built for both fortification and residence. Legend says that treasure was buried near Fort Ramirez, and time and treasure hunters have almost obliterated one of Live Oak County's oldest landmarks.

The Irish

When Spanish and Mexican attempts to settle in Texas failed, Stephen F. Austin and several other United States citizens were given authority to establish colonies in East Texas. The rumor soon spread, however, that the Americans intended to take Texas from Mexico, and the new nation of Mexico became uneasy. Hoping to establish a buffer zone to stop the spread of American settlements, the Mexican government granted contracts to establish colonies in Texas to the partnerships of James Power and James Hewetson, and to John McMullen and James McGloin. The four Irish natives were living in Mexico, and had proven themselves capable and industrious.

Power and Hewetson were to settle two hundred Irish Catholic families in the ten littoral leagues beginning at the left bank of the Nueces River, extending ten leagues from and parallel with the coast to a point on the Trinity River ten leagues from the coast. Some of the land in this

area had already been settled by Mexican citizens, and many disputes arose over land ownership.

McMullen and McGloin's contract was similar—within six years they were to bring two hundred families who were natives of Ireland and of the United States, of the Roman Catholic faith, and “of good moral habits.” Anyone proving undesirable was to be expelled, by force if necessary. Their grant was the area

Beginning on the left bank of the river Nueces, at its intersection with the boundary line of the Ten Coast Border Leagues of the Gulf of Mexico, exempted by the law of 18th August 1824, which must not be encroached upon, thence with the said boundary line to a point, Ten Leagues distant, (Southwardly) from the Presidio de La Bahia, del Espiritu Santo, (Goliad) thence on a straight line to the confluence of the river Medina, with the San Antonio, thence with said river, on its right bank, to the point where it is crossed by the old road, which leads from Bexar to the Presidio of Río Grande, thence with said road to the river Nueces, and thence with said river downward on its left bank, to place of beginning.⁴

This territory included all that part of present-day Live Oak County lying north and east of the Nueces River, as well as parts of San Patricio, Bee, McMullen, LaSalle, Frio, Atascosa, Bexar, Wilson, and Karnes Counties.

The head of each family of colonists was to receive a labor (177.1 acres) of land if cultivation of the soil was to be the only occupation; he would receive a league (4428.4 acres) of land if stock raising was to be the only occupation. Most of the colonists would receive a league and a labor for a combination of farming and ranching practices. Unmarried individuals would receive one-fourth that amount. Foreigners who married natives would be entitled to one-fourth more land.

The McMullen and McGloin Colony

During the summer of 1829, both McMullen and McGloin journeyed to New York City, and probably to other major cities on the Atlantic seaboard, calling upon recent Irish immigrants who were having difficulty making a living in the United States. Through personal interviews and advertisements, a number of families soon agreed to become colonists in Texas.

In October ships bearing McGloin and McMullen's first colonists arrived at the ports of Aransas and Matagorda. Those disembarking at Matagorda immediately went to Nuestra Señora del Refugio Mission, where they were soon greeted by a band of Lipan Apaches who asked the newcomers for gifts. The empresario ordered Captain Kelly, of the speedily organized militia, to fire a cannon found at the mission, and then invited the Indians to watch the militia company at drill. Declining the invitation, the Indians left to find a suitable campsite. Some of the would-be colonists returned to New Orleans, and none was anxious to leave the Refugio area. Another ship carrying thirty-six families from Ireland arrived in December. Only a series of legal protests by Power and Hewetson prevented them from settling at Refugio.

In July, 1830, McGloin went to the Nueces River to explore the territory assigned to him and his partner, and to select a suitable townsite. Some of the colonists moved to the new site in August, taking with them the cannon found at the Refugio mission. A band of Comanche Indians (the cruelest of the coastal tribes) soon appeared, asking for gifts. When McGloin and his men went to great lengths to display the cannon, the Indians assured them of their desire for friendship, and said they were searching for their mortal enemies, the Karankawas. The Comanches camped near the Irish group until their

scouts located a band of Karankawas. Two Karankawas died in the attack, and all their horses were taken. Remembering more civilized conditions in the United States, some colonists resolved to leave Texas.

McMullen and McGloin petitioned the government on December 18, 1830, to appoint a land commissioner to establish the colony and give titles of land ownership to the colonists. On January 29, 1831, José Antonio Saucedo was appointed by the governor of the state to serve as commissioner for the new colony, but months passed before his arrival.

McGloin gathered the colonists at a crossing on the Nueces River known as the Paso de Santa Margarita. On the opposite bank in the state of Tamaulipas lay the old settlement of Santa Margarita, near the present-day town of Bluntzer. On the east bank of the Nueces, alongside the old road, McGloin and McMullen found a high, level spot which was densely covered with live oak trees. Here the colonists waited for the commissioner to establish the town which they had decided to call San Patricio de Hibernia, in honor of Ireland's patron saint. They examined the surrounding area, and each family tentatively selected its portion of land.

When Saucedo arrived in October, 1831, the townsite was immediately established and lands were surveyed. Titles were granted in what became Live Oak County to María Brennan, Juan Carroll, María Brigida Kilvan, Edward McGloin, Patrick McGloin, Santiago McGloin, Denis McGowan, John McMullen, Patrick Nevan, and William O'Docharty. Some questions arose about the legal procedure, and issuance of more titles was withheld pending further interpretation of the law.

The next year Saucedo died, and J. María Balmacedo was appointed to succeed him in March, 1833. Political confusion in Monclova left him little time to worry about Irish colonists at San Patricio. Many of the colonists

became dissatisfied and joined the Refugio colony.

In the summer of 1835, Commissioner Balmacedo finally came to San Patricio, and during the months of June, July, and August, all the colonists received titles to their land. Titles were granted to Thomas Adams, Luis Ayers, Juan Conway, Festus Doyle, Richard Everitt, Patrick Fadden, Bridget Haughy, Juan Haulihan, Stephen Hays, John Hefferman, Michael Hely, Patrick Henry, Thomas Henry, Walter Henry, Elizabeth Jardin, Mark Killely, Francisco Leal, Luis Leal, Juan McGloin, Daniel O'Boyle, Thomas Pew, Simon Ryan, Christopher Scanlan, Edward W.B. Scrugham, and John Turner*. Many of these colonists had been in Texas since 1829, and had occupied their lands since 1830, but other colonists came in 1833 and 1834.

The ship which brought colonists in the summer of 1834 was too large to land in Copano Bay. The immigrants and their two-year supply of provisions were taken the three miles to shore by small boats. Bedding, clothing, food, cooking utensils, arms and ammunition, and farming tools were piled at random on the beach. The newcomers camped about a mile from the water, stretching blankets and quilts as tents for protection from the hot summer sun. Patrick Burke, Jr., was born about an hour after his mother landed with that group of colonists. His father had died of cholera during the Atlantic crossing, and was buried at sea. Mrs. Burke became ill and was unable to nurse the baby, but an Indian squaw heard the infant's cries and took him to her camp, where she nursed him until his mother recovered.

*The early documents contain many discrepancies in the spelling of names. Many of the early settlers could not write their own names, and the names were spelled however the person who wrote them thought proper. Many of the Spanish-sounding names in the land titles reflect the Spanish upbringing of the Mexican authorities who recorded them.

In his old age, Patrick Burke related some of the experiences faced by those early colonists.

These colonists left their homes in Tipperary County, Ireland, under contract with the Mexican government, and were required to come equipped with supplies enough, including arms and ammunition, to last them two years. The Mexican government agreed to furnish the head of each family with ten milch cows, one cart and a yoke of oxen, and a garrison of soldiers to guard and protect the colonists against incursions of hostile Indians. The government did send a lot of peon soldiers and a few makeshifts called carts. The colonists had to use a paste made of cactus root for axle grease to keep the axles of the rickety and screeching old carts from igniting and being consumed by fire. The cowardly soldiers were a nuisance. They lived upon the provisions of the colonists and were afraid to show their heads outside the house when danger from Indian raids seemed imminent.⁵

Why did so many Irish come to Texas? Ireland in the nineteenth century offered little hope for its people. Rebellion after rebellion against English control had failed. The land was owned by foreign landlords who rented small acreages to the landless Irish. The tenant could be utterly destroyed by one crop failure, but if he did too well, the rent was raised, and any objection resulted in eviction.

The plots were too small to support a family, so the tenant farmer planted potatoes in early spring. He then turned his children out to beg, and went to England to search for a job; if none was found, he, too, became a beggar. When autumn came, the family returned to the rented plot and harvested the potatoes. During the winter the family lived in a house of boards and turf, and if they were lucky, the house was shared with a hen or two and a little pig being fattened on potato peelings.

A letter from America would put a whole Irish village

in a state of excitement. For nearly a hundred years, Irish Catholics were forbidden schooling, so someone would have to be found to read the letter. The letter would paint a rosy picture of life in the New World, and some money might be enclosed toward the fare of a brother or mother. Those who had joined the Texas colonists were sure to point out that they now owned more land than the lords of England. The following letter was written in 1835 by two enthusiastic arrivals to the San Patricio colony.

Dear Redmond

Sir, I am to inform you that I arrived here in safety thanks be to God, after a passage both lingering and disagreeable, being nine weeks from New York to N. Orleans and only three days to Matagorda. . . Happy to inform you that, contrary to Mr. John Waters letter to me to Orleans which near had like to reach me, I found this country equal to what was said in the hand bills and better again, do not believe Martin McGloin or any other person who went from here; poor lazy creatures having no inclination to look after any prudence or industry, really I was astonished when I come amongst the colonists to see them all full of comfort, plenty of Corn, bread Mush, Butter Milk and beef and what perhaps those who sent this false report never enjoyed before. As for pigs and fowls they are as numerous as flees. . . Bring some boxes of glass, bars soap, plenty candle wick, bring seeds of every kind, shallots; bring cross cut, whip and frame saws. Let Simon not delay to come as he will find every thing according to your wishes. Bring good guns, and powder and shot of every kind.

This is letter is for both of you-Bring as many cart wheels and cart mountings as you can, Chains for oxen; no timber, as this is the country for timber of every kind. Bring good Ploughs. Carts rate at \$100, here. Bring a supply of sugar coffee and tea and flour for 8 or 9 months; if you have any to spare, you get your price. Gun locks and every thing belonging to locks, screws of

every kind, plates for screws. Your goods both small and large and every little article you can pack. Pots, pans with covers, ovens &c, white muslin both white and brown in pieces. Bring tin cups. Porringers. Any man working 2 days in the week may take his gun and fishing rod the remainder and his horse. Bring your clean english blankets both second hand and new, as you'll get a horse for one fowl. Bring a candle mould. Bring Jerry a good long fowling piece.

Mrs. McMains bring as much tickin as you can, as they wear it in trowses here. Mrs. McMains do not be daunted the prospect here is good. Bring your beds. You'll have no work, your daughters can milk 50 cows for you, and make butter which is 25 cents a lb here, in Matamoras 50 cents. A cow has 2 calves in 10 months a sheep and goat 3 yearlings in 15 months. The healthiest country in the world. The richest land will show like Gentlemens domains in Ireland. Fine wood and water as in any part of the world. As for game and fowl and fish of every kind no man can believe, but those that see. . . .

Give our love to all inquiring friends

Yours until death.
Jemima and Mary Toll

P.S. Bring corn mills, do not bring such a mill as I brought, as it is only a pepper mill. Bring mills with handles, such as you see in chatham square. Show this letter to John Waters. . . you pay \$100 to government and has six years to pay, they take Colony produce, the best laws in the world. The indians are very kind and loving to each other. I was at two parties here we assemble and amuse ourselves.⁶

In November, 1835, increasing differences between the Mexican Supreme Government and Texas colonists resulted in the establishment of a provisional government by the Texans. When the issuing of titles was stopped, titles had been issued for only eighty-four grants of land in the San Patricio colony.

The Texas Revolution

The relationship of the Irish with the Mexican government had probably been more cordial than that of the colonists from the United States, because the empresarios had lived in Mexico and understood the Mexican ways. Their religious faith was in conformity with the law. They had just been given vast tracts of land for homes after much hardship in their native land, and doubtless felt obligated to support the government that had given them such a marvelous opportunity. All of the colonists were loyal to the Federalist Government, but Santa Anna had usurped all governmental authority and declared himself dictator. There were a few Irish at both Refugio and San Patricio who remained loyal to Mexico and took no part in the fight, but most felt that their newfound freedom was at stake, and were ready to fight.

The San Patricio settlement was represented by John McMullen and Lewis Ayers at the General Council of the Provisional Government during the revolution, and McMullen was elected temporary president of the council. John Turner was among those who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence on March 2, 1836. John Ely, John McGloin, Dennis McGowan, and Patrick Nevin died at the Goliad massacre on Palm Sunday, March 27. Michael Haley saw military duty. Thomas Adams fought at the Battle of San Jacinto.

Most of the colonists were driven from their homes and suffered many hardships. When John Hefferman went to help his brother James plant a crop before they joined Fannin's army at Goliad, he was murdered, along with James' family and a cousin, John Ryan, by Mexicans and Indians—the Bee County courthouse now is located in the field where those men were killed.

In June, 1837, the government of the Republic of Texas declared that all empresario contracts had ceased

on the day of the Texas Declaration of Independence, and that all vacant lands were the property of the state.

Many other Irish immigrants settled in Live Oak County after the Texas Revolution, but they either purchased land from the original colonists, or acquired title to state land from the Republic of Texas or the State of Texas. Some of the later Irish settlers were J.I. Clare, P.S. Clare, John Geraghty (first representative from San Patricio County to the new Republic of Texas), Bridget Fadden, John Fadden, W.R. John, John Work, Archibald McDonald, the Dolans, the McWhorters, the McCumbers, the Kids, the McCowans, the McMurrays, James Murray, the McKinneys, the Grovers, the Leaheys, the Gallaghers, and the Murphys.

Land transactions were complicated by the fact that the San Patricio records disappeared during the turmoil of the Texas Revolution. In a court proceeding in 1849, Thomas Pugh declared that, "Between Everett and Juan de la Garza the records of the colony were carried to Mexico."⁷ District Surveyor Jacob Snively in a statement dated July 31, 1847, "declared that the McMullen and McGloin colonial title records were rescued at Matamoros during that year by Francis Hughes, and delivered by him to William O'Docharty, the original surveyor of the San Patricio Colony. These records were deposited in the General Land Office, Austin."⁸

The Republic of Texas

Patrick Burke's autobiography provides a description of postwar conditions experienced by the San Patricio settlers:

Before annexation my mother married Pat Carroll, and they went to New Orleans, but returned to San Patricio

after the battle of San Jacinto. During the time intervening between this battle and annexation this part of Texas was subject to both Mexican and Indian raids, and we returned to a country without supplies. Our homes had been destroyed, and hard times stared us in the face....We soon constructed log houses, made picket fashion, with dirt floors and thatched roofs, clapboards being used to stop the cracks between the pickets. Our pioneer architecture was simple and inexpensive, and did not require the outlay of large sums of money for plans, specifications, material and construction, but doubtless as much peace, contentment and real happiness was found dwelling in our quaint old homes as we now find in the palatial homes in our towns and cities. Our table fare, bread and meat, was also simple....We drank water from the creeks, ponds, barrels, and cow tracks, enjoyed good health and never heard of microbes, germ theories and diseases of modern times.

After we returned to our colonial homes Indian raids were still frequent. They invariably came on the full of every moon during the spring, summer, and autumn months, and oxen coming home with arrows shot in their bodies often admonished us that Indians were lurking in the neighborhood, and ready to surprise us by swooping down on us. They frequently swept the country of saddle ponies, not leaving mounts enough in the community on which the men could pursue them. In making their escape when pursued they always had the advantage of their pursuers. They generally had already stolen the best horses and were returning with a large herd when discovered, and could change mounts whenever the horses they were riding became jaded, while our men usually had to take for mounts such animals as the Indians left behind or had failed to get.

Whenever the Indians succeeded in crossing the Nueces river, about ten miles above Oakville, they were safe from further pursuit. In order to prevent the Indians from stealing our horses, the settlers usually made a thick, high brush fence around their back door, without an entrance except through the house. About the full of the moon, or whenever an Indian raid was anticipated,

the horses, oxen and milk cows were kept in this enclosure....

When a boy I went under the care of Major John Woods, with others in pursuit of the Indians. A man named Mandola, who had been captured when a boy and reared to manhood by the Indians, was our guide. He was trained in all of their arts and cunning, and could even trail them by scent. It was hard sometimes for our men to distinguish between an Indian and a mustang trail, but Mandola was never at a loss to tell one from the other. We traveled that night until 12 o'clock and then slept till daylight. Next morning when we awoke, Mandola arose and sniffing the balmy atmosphere a time or two, he said he smelt the fumes of cooking meat, and that our foes were not far away.

We did not go further than five miles before we came upon and surprised our enemies while they were enjoying their breakfast of horse meat cooked on coals. Immediately a quick and spirited fight ensued. Major Wood kept me with him, the other men separating and taking advantageous positions in the scattering timber. One savage and ferocious old squaw attacked the major and myself. We tried as long as possible to avoid the necessity of shooting her, but she could handle her bow and arrows as well and accurately as a trained warrior, and was hurling the missiles of death at us so rapidly that we were compelled to exchange shots with her in order to save our lives. Major Wood received an arrow wound in the fleshy part of the thigh. This was the last Indian raid and the last fight of this unfortunate squaw warrior....

Our force numbered fourteen. I do not know how many Indians there were. When the battle had ended we were the victors, with seven dead Indians stretched upon the field. A few old sore-back ponies and horses and the bows and arrows of the slain Indians were the spoils of our victory.

Once I went with my stepfather to Long Lake, carrying a jug with which to bring back some fresh drinking water....and while walking leisurely about the lake we discovered the Indians in some timber a short distance

above us cooking meat....Casting our jug aside, we pulled off the prettiest race you ever saw, going back into town, San Patricio, with the old man leading me a neck or two. The skulking "redskins," who always seemed to need good horses in their business, made a call that night at the premises of several of the citizens, who found themselves without mounts and work animals the next morning.

In those days the country was full of deer, panthers, and other kinds of game and wild animals. On one occasion while I was a boy I went with Major Woods, Bill Clark and Martin O'Tool (the last named being a San Jacinto and Mexican War veteran) to cut a road through the bottom. While we were at work the dogs treed a large panther which we killed with an ax.

The country used to be full of wild mustang horses, and it was a sight to see them running when the settlers were trying to catch them. If we could manage to catch one of these old horses, we would tie an imitation man upon him and let him loose. Of course he would make for the herd, which would try to outrun him. This would start every mustang for miles around to running and the noise from these running horses, which sometimes numbered thousands, often sounded like the terrific roar of a passing cyclone. After they had run themselves down we could guide them into the pens with two long wings which we had built for capturing them. It required strength and skill to rope and throw one of these old snorting, jumping, fighting horses. It looked like some of them could squeal, paw, kick, and jump at the same time, and they could never be conquered until they were roped, thrown and tied down. We generally roached their manes and tails and used the hair for making ropes.

After the annexation the United States sent troops to protect us against Indian raids, and though only a boy I drove an ox wagon three years carrying supplies for the troops from Corpus Christi to Fort Merrill. I had to support my mother and my three little half brothers and two little half sisters, as well as my stepbrother, who was nearly blind and could not work. He lost an eye by a

cork which flew from a bottle of English porter while he was opening it.

I made \$30 per month, and that was considered good wages for a boy in those times. When I commenced on this job I was scarcely large enough to put the yoke on the oxen. I wore hickory shirts and red shoes, and it usually took me eight days to make the round trip. Sometimes an axle would break and then I was two weeks making the round trip. There were only two blacksmiths accessible, one being at each end of the route. I made these trips alone, sleeping at night by the side of my wagon. Finally John Ross bought me a good wagon at a government sale, paying \$30 for it. I worked it out.⁹

Patrick Burke, Jr., became a prominent rancher in Bee County, but he also owned land in Live Oak County. He died in 1912 at the age of 78, the last survivor of the San Patricio colony.

The constitution of the new Republic of Texas declared freedom of religion to all its citizens. Settlers from the United States and other foreign countries were welcomed within its territory. The Irish, having recently spilled their blood alongside the Americans at Refugio, Goliad, and San Jacinto, warmly greeted those U.S. citizens who took advantage of the opportunity to acquire a cheap home in the Nueces Valley.

The early settlers sought land adjoining a river or some other permanent watering place, because the only other way to obtain water for man and beast was to dig a well by hand and draw the water up with a bucket—and digging was often futile. The San Patricio colonists had title to land on the east bank of the Nueces, but the land on the west bank was soon claimed. Title to some lands was acquired by Mexicans. Some was given as a bonus to men who had served in the Texas revolutionary army. In 1871 the *Texas Almanac* listed three pensioners of the Texas Revolution living in Live Oak County: Michael

Haley (age 60—one of the original colonists), Elijah Votaw (age 50), and Jesse Robinson (age 70—at the Battle of San Jacinto he fired Santa Anna's cannon at the fleeing Mexican soldiers).

The settlers built their homes by the sweat of their brows, using the simplest of hand tools. Usually a square hut out of logs was built—logs were driven upright into the ground to form the walls, and the roof was made of split logs. Mud and moss were used to stop up the cracks. Fireplaces and chimneys were built to heat the cabin during the winter. The floor was dirt.

Later, log cabins with wooden floors were built, and the corners of the logs were mitered for weatherproofing. Still later, some homes were built of rocks from the caliche hills. The rocks were cut while damp, and then dried in the sun before being used.

With a shovel, a one-horse plow, a garden hoe, and a grubbing hoe, they cultivated the soil and raised a few vegetables (mostly corn for bread and for the livestock). The garden was either fenced with brush or with pickets set into the ground. Salt, sugar, and coffee were brought by oxcarts from Saint Mary's, the principal seaport of South Texas. Salt was also produced in several Texas towns, including Refugio.

Wild game was the main food. Each home had its smokehouse for curing meat. Sometimes meat was hung in the shade, and sometimes it was sliced, rolled in cornmeal and seasoning, and hung on a clothesline to dry in the sun, to become what the white folks called beef jerky, and the Mexicans called taso.

Stock raising was the main occupation, and the area was a stockman's paradise. Most of the range was open grassland, with a few scattered mesquite and live oak trees. Timber along the streams provided building material, as well as shade for man and beast. There were obstacles to overcome, however—rivers and creeks

provided the only water supply, and cattle on the open range had to be watched, because there were no fences.

The First Congress of Texas in December, 1836, set the Nueces River—between the Nueces and the Río Grande, but under Mexican law, Texas was bounded by the Nueces River—between the Nueces and the Río Grande were the states of Tamaulipas and Coahuila. Mexico was reluctant to relinquish Texas, and still claimed the Nueces as the boundary. The area was a “no man’s land” for nearly a decade. There was guerrilla-type warfare between the Mexicans and the Texans. The Indians fought against first one side, then the other, and sometimes both. Mexican armies several times tried to reclaim the lost territory.

NOTES

1. Nancy M. Cripps, “Anthropologist Reconstructs Ancient Burial Ritual,” *Texas Times*, July, 1978, p. 8.

2. Dr. Thomas R. Hester, “Archaeological Teams Are Digging in Choke Canyon Dam Area,” *The Progress of Live Oak and McMullen Counties*, September 21, 1977, p. 1.

3. J. Frank Dobie, *Coronado's Children*, (New York: Grossett and Dunlap, 1930), p. 100.

4. “Contract of McMullen and McGloin,” August 18, 1828, trans. Thomas G. Western, April 8, 1840, *Record of Translations of Empresario Contracts, Coahuila and Texas, 1825-1835*, Spanish Archives, General Land Office, pp. 157-58.

5. From reminiscences of Patrick Burke, Jr., as told to S.M. Lessene. *Beeville Bee*, January 12, 1912. Reprinted in *Bee Picayune*, June 21, 1934, p. 7.

6. David Woodman, Jr., *Guide to Texas Emigrants*, (Boston: M. Hawes, 1835; reprinted by Texian Press, 1974), pp. 168-69.

7. William H. Oberste, *Texas Irish Empresarios and Their Colonies*, (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1973), p. 139, footnote 18.

8. Ibid.

9. Burke, *op. cit.*

CHAPTER II

LIVE OAK COUNTY

Birth of a County

When the United States accepted Texas into the Union in December, 1845, the new state gained a sound economic and political footing, and pioneers began arriving at an accelerated rate. By 1846 the stage line from San Antonio to Corpus Christi made stops at Echo, Gussettville, and the settlement on the Sulphur.

In February, 1850, Fort Merrill was established by Captain S.M. Plummer, First U.S. Infantry, as one of a string of frontier forts established by the U.S. Army to protect the settlers from Indians and marauding Mexicans. It was located about halfway between Barlow's Ferry and Gussettville. (This fort was officially abandoned in December, 1885.)

The citizens in the northern part of San Patricio County tired of making the long, dangerous trip to the county seat of San Patricio to attend to legal business. After a meeting under a huge live oak tree in Gussettville*, the following men petitioned the Legislature to create a new county: Wm. S. Gamble, G.W. Hargrave, John Powell, J.T. James, Henderson Waller, J.W. Mayes, D.R. Reid, John G. King, I.C. Barfield, A.P. Baker, James B. Lewis, Nat Kivilin, J.G. Kildey, Walter Meerman, Joshua Hinton, S.M. McNeil, Joseph Bartlett, H. Batman, George W. Wright, D.L. Wood, N. Gussett, James M. Grover, Thomas A. James, D.D. Robertson,

* The Charter Oak, bearing an historical marker, still stands beside the road leading from the Gussettville Catholic Church to the Nueces River.

J.B. Ammons, and T. Wilborn. On February 2, 1856, the Texas Legislature approved an act creating Live Oak County, and the hot issue of that spring and summer was the selection of a county seat.

When a meeting was held "at the 'sulphur'," N. Gussett stoutly defended his town of Gussettvile, and offered to donate land for the courthouse and townsite. Determined to have his own way, John Powell of the Sulphur community managed an adjournment of the meeting. At the August 18 meeting it was decided to hold meetings "at the 'sulphur'" until a permanent location for county seat was decided upon. J.T. James* was commissioned to go to Port Lavaca to speak with Thomas Wilson, who owned a great deal of land around the Sulphur settlement. Present at that meeting were Chief Justice John Powell, Commissioners Henderson Waller and James B. Lewis, and Clerk A.P. Baker.

On September 8, 1856, the county officials accepted Thomas Wilson's donation of 640 acres of land for a townsite. After some deliberation the name Oakville was chosen.

P.S. Haggy surveyed the land. The courthouse was to be on a square; business lots (50' x 100') facing it on all four sides were to be sold for \$25.00 each. The first public sale of lots (October 20) was advertised in the *Nueces Valley*, *San Antonio Ledger*, *Victoria Advocate*, *Goliad Express*, and *Lavaca Herald*.

That fall a special term of District Court summoned the following men to serve as jurors: Wm. Nichols, J.R. Frances, John Carter, J.W. Raimey, Thomas Pugh, Sam Mapes, Thomas Shannon, W.R. Conner, D.L. Woods, M. O'Haley, G.W. Wright, E.F. Merriman, Z.H. Osborn,

*James was the builder of the old St. James Hotel in Corpus Christi. His tombstone in the Oakville cemetery bears the words, "The Founder of Oakville." The first elections were held in the James home.

Charles Edwards, David Odom, Henry Taylor, James Eades, J.J. Dix, P.T. Shipp, E. Hardy, N. Gussett, Pat Fox, Pat Fadden, Wm. Rix, Jesse Robinson, Juan García, Charles Loomis, E. Powell, J.M. Grover, J. Johnson, John Ryan, Leander Hooker, T. Brennan, John King, Juan Vala, and J.T. James.

On June 24, 1857, Joseph Bartlett's bid of \$7,000 to build the courthouse and jail was accepted. The outer walls were to be 18" thick and the inner walls 14" thick, both of hammered and pointed stone.

In 1877 John Impson won a contract to make some repairs and improvements on the courthouse and jail. The courtyard was fenced with Florida pine boards nailed to mesquite posts, and turnstiles were put in the east and west entrances. This fence was later replaced with an iron fence and a stile (wooden steps over the



Picture 1

Front view (west side) of the Live Oak County Courthouse in Oakville.

fence) at the entrance on all four sides. To protect the main fence, a large steel cable was run through mesquite posts (which served as public hitching posts) four feet from the main fence, and a turnstile was set at each of its entrances.

In 1881 G.W. (Windmill) Jones was paid \$30 to put in a public water well. A windmill and a large cypress cistern were installed, and watering troughs were placed at the east and west sides. Many Oakville residents turned their milk cows out to graze in the streets until the highway came through the town in 1938.



The Civil War

William J. Davis reported to the state that from June 1, 1859, to June 1, 1860, Live Oak County families reported nine deaths: Mrs. Majara Cruz (30, born Mexico) had died of a fever; James Fallons (75, Georgia-born stockraiser) died of consumption; Mary Fox (age 4) died of unknown causes; William Mapes (5 days) died of hives; Sarah Votaw (age 4) died of influenza of the stomach; James Wilburn (28, born Alabama) and Rhoda Winters (75, born North Carolina) died of typhoid fever; the other death was of a black female, whose name is unknown.

The United States census of 1860 revealed 85 slave inhabitants in Live Oak County, and one fugitive. This list reveals the name of each slaveowner, as well as the age and sex—but not the name—of each slave. Five of the twelve slaveholders only had one slave. At Fort Merrill, slaveowners were George Wright (3) and A. McDonald* (40). Echo listed George Frazier (3), John Donnelson (2), Edward Crow (1), and Robert Johnson (1). Oakville owners were John Chandler (1), John King (5), and William Clannahan* (1). The Atascosa community listed Thomas Wilborn (23), Z.H. Osborn (4), and William Chilton* (1).

On February 1, 1861, the secession convention of Texas voted to secede from the Union, and this action was ratified by the people on February 28, 1861. Live Oak County Chief Justice Gamble called a special election, and voting places were open at Oakville, Pleasant Hill, Gussettville, Echo, and Lagarto. There were 141 votes for secession and 9 against. Following the election, a mass meeting was held in Oakville on July 4, 1861. The following citizens took the Oath of Allegiance to the State of Texas and to the Confederate States of America in accordance with the resolutions passed by the citizens of the county: J.B. Ammons, Cullen Anderson, Oscole Archer, Lorenzo Auller, B.H. Baker, Lusiano Baldosa, John R. Bartlett, Nathan Bartlett, William Bartlett, Sam Beckman, E.C. Blair, Mr. Boyce, Pat Brennan, T.S. Butler, John Cassan, Henry F. Chambliss, McT. Chambliss, T.R. Clanton, Thos. Clark, Alex Coker, Sam Cook, E.D. Crow, J.S. Crump, Lonzo Cueller, M.S. Culver, John T. Curry, J.W. Deakin, G.A. Dilworth, Sterling Dobie, Milton M. Dodson, James Dolan, Thomas Dolan, Wm. Durant (a free Negro), Jas. W. Drury, J.O. Duweese,

*The handwriting leaves this name subject to other interpretations, but this seems the most logical spelling.

Wm. P. Duweese, John Ellis, Edward Evans, Jesse Fatheris, Washington Fatheris, Alexander Flores, E.H. Fooks, S.T. Foster, W.J. Foster, Michael Fox, Pat Fox, John R. Frances, G.W. Frazier, B. Gallagher, Thos. Gallagher, J.J. Green, Jas. M. Grover, Joel Harrison, Thos. R. Harrison, James Hennis, Alfred Hickox, C.T. Hill, J. Hinton, J.T. James, Nathan James, R.B. Johnson, Calvin Jones, Daniel T. Jones, John King, Mathew Kivilin, J.F. Leisering, Richard Lewis, W.S. Lewis, John R. Livesay, Wm. McMurray, S.S. McWorter, S.S. Mapes, Walter Merriman, John Wm. Minter, Benj. Moore, Z.H. Osborn, A.W. Parmceez, Lewis Preston, Bat Pugh, Pat Pugh, Wm. Pugh, G.P. Reagan, W.D. Richards, Ed. Ricks, Wm. Ricks, E.M. Rin, D.D. Robertson, W.R. Robertson, G.G. Sanders, J.S. Sanders, D.C. Shannon, Owen Sheeran, Daniel Shipp, P.F. Shipp, Thos. Sinclair, Lewis Smith, John Smothers, E.H. Spaulding, James Ussez, Domingo Vela, Fernando Vela, Juan Ant. Vela, Adrian Videl, Elijah Votman, Alex. White, J.L. Willborn, Thos. Willborn, H. Williams, G.Z. Wilson, Frank Woltrink, Calvin Wright, George W. Wright, G.T. Wynns, and F.C. Yeateman.¹

Elections were held regularly in Live Oak County for the duration of the war. After the July election, the oath of office taken by county officials included the phrase "so long as the State of Texas shall remain a member of the Confederacy."

The Next Fifty Years

Times were rough both during and after the Civil War. Besides being on the losing side and suffering the reprisals of Reconstruction, there was severe drought. Local people had plenty of meat to eat, but little else. Oakville citizens chose Tim Cude to take a load of cowhides to Corpus Christi to exchange for flour. On the

return trip, as the hot and thirsty oxen pulled the flour-laden wagon near present day Mathis, they suddenly smelled the water of the Nueces. Cude was well-known for his ability to control oxen, but those beasts became so excited that they ran down the bluff and overturned the wagon in the river. "Uncle Tim" recovered two of the oxen, the front wheels, and the wagon tongue, but the wagon was demolished, some of the oxen drowned, and the eagerly awaited flour was a complete loss.

Coffee was mostly unavailable, but the pioneers "made do" with parched okra, corn, rye, beans, or potatoes. The ashes of burned corn cobs were used as a soda substitute. The women carded cotton into fluffy wads, spun it into thread, and wove the thread into a coarse cloth. Dye was made from indigo weeds and copperas. Very infrequently calico was available during the Civil War, but it sold for \$50 a yard in Confederate money. Herbs, roots, and bark were used as medicine. When there were roasting ears to boil, women skimmed off the foam and used it for starch. Soap was made from cattle bones boiled in an ash hopper. Candles were made from tallow mixed with beeswax. Shoes were usually homemade.

W.M. Shannon, whose father was an Oakville blacksmith, reported that, along with deer, panther, lobo wolves, and javelina hogs, the woods held many wild hogs (razorbacks). During the winter he and his grandfather, Joe Bartlett, would hunt the wild hogs with dogs, then shoot the animals and drag them back home to be used for meat and lard.²

The razorbacks were descendants of domestic hogs, but were as mean and almost as dangerous as the native javelina. The hides of javelinas make good leather, and when drought ruined their crops and grass, the settlers hunted the animals for their hides. Javelina hide was an important article of commerce, and the back room of

Oakville stores sometimes was stacked head high with pelts. A hunter sometimes would bring in sixty or seventy hides. The Texas legislature in 1939 added the javelina to the list of protected game animals.

The javelina is seldom seen in Live Oak County these days, but it is present. About 1960 Sidney Sparkman planted oats in a brush surrounded field about ten miles east of George West. The mowing machine surprised a pack of javelinas—perhaps they were trying to attack this strange new animal, but half a dozen javelinas lost their legs to the machine. Tomás and María Rodriquez mixed the meat with the beef and made mouth-watering tamales. Sidney tried to give some of the meat to the dogs, but they refused to even approach it.

A javelina hunt is every bit as exciting as an African game hunt. The squeals of a wounded animal immediately bring the whole pack to the rescue—and to chase the hunter, who had better climb the nearest tree if he values his life. The javelina's teeth are razor sharp.

Wild Russian boars also remain in the less inhabited parts of the county—they are more dangerous than javelinas.

* * * * *

The 1981 census showed Live Oak County with a population of 1,994. The residents of Oakville numbered 250, Lagarto 100, and Dinero and Ramireña each 25.

In 1876 Judge G.W. Jones initiated community schools, with tuition set at 7 1/2¢ a day per student. Eventually there were forty-three such schools in the county.



Picture 2

Public school under a brush arbor in Live Oak County in 1887.
Courtesy Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma
Library.

The September 7, 1939, issue of the *Live Oak County Herald* carried an article entitled "Memories of a Pioneer," by W.J. Stewart, which is reprinted below.

I came to Texas in 1868--landed in Oakville in February, and went to work for Uncle Bob Rix. They lived eighteen miles above Oakville on Sulphur Creek. The first time I ever went to Oakville, Rance Rix and I went after a bunch of horses, swimming the river to get from there to the Henry Rix Ranch. After that I was in and around Oakville all the time.

The first cow hunt I was ever on was with Dan Pace. That year we drove cattle to Padre Island to the packery.

I also worked for W.P. Butler, and the same year drove cattle to Rockport.

Oakville was "wild and wooly," but at the same time there were many good people and we had good times, and we men who were working did not think much about the murders and killings. The church services in Oakville were held in the courthouse. They also used it to dance in. Right here I want to say that some of the best people I ever knew lived in Oakville. All the old settlers were fine people and whenever you went to their homes, you were always welcomed with a hearty meal.

When I first came here, wild game was plentiful, and there were hundreds of wild mustangs. Stock raising was the principal occupation of the county.

There were very few people in Oakville—C.L. Fudge, Sam Bickman, and Joshua Hinton were in business. There was one hotel run by Jim Lankford. W.H. (Bill) Lewis was sheriff, and Tom Ball was county judge. The old courthouse is still there, but has been remodeled—there was but one room that had a floor; the others had gravel, and the mail was in one corner of the courthouse. Bob Nations, Andy Nations, J.F. Lazzaring (a lawyer), the Cavits, Hickey Adams, a Mrs. Foster, Jim Drury, E.M. Reed (a saddler), a blacksmith named Wagner, Dr. Reagan, and the Alexander Coker family were among those living here then. Ab Butler, Wade Odom, John Bartlett, and Cal Jones were living on the Sulphur. John and Chat Boutwell, Henderson Waller, John Curry, and Floyd Powell also lived above Oakville. Those moving to Oakville were Andy Tullis, Woody Tullos, Tim Cude, and Bill Wheelis. The Menter boys had a horse ranch ten miles up the Sulphur.

There was quite a settlement below Oakville known as the "Irish Nation." There was a settlement on the west side of the Nueces, and after the flood of 1869, they all moved to Oakville, and it began to settle up. Tullis and two little girls got hemmed up in a tree and had to stay there all night. Bill Edwards and Bing Ferrel built a boat next day and got them out.

There were many men killed in Oakville, the first two having been killed two years before I came there—they were a man Parr and Jim Minter. The first killing after I came to Oakville was when John Wilson killed Henry Rix. At this time McMullen County was attached to Live Oak for jurisdictional purposes. Dave West was attending court in Oakville and was killed there that night. The next man killed was a man named Taylor, who was killed by Tobe Odem. Pack Augustine was killed by Hince Adams, while sitting in a saloon door. Captain Perkins killed Hedge Williams; John Wilson killed Babe Boutwell in Lawley's store; Bob Rice killed John Wilson. Bill Lewis killed a man by the name of Lawrence on the hotel gallery. As for Mexicans, I will not give their names as they were too numerous to mention. . . . One Mexican was waylaid and killed just below town on the road to Gussettville. There were three men killed in jail one night, and the same night Matt Adams was killed in his bed. They later took three more men out of jail and carried them down to the river near Gussettville and hanged them to a tree. They were Steve Burleson, Bill McIntosh, and a man named Anderson I do not know. Bill Lewis was killed on the Bell Ranch, and was supposedly killed by Bill Young. At this time several men disappeared from the Bell Ranch, Jesse Cole was killed in San Diego, and John Duere was drowned. Boxer White was found dead on the trail leading from Oakville to Lagarto. Up on the Nueces, Henderson Williams killed Si Brown, and up near Calliham, Mart Taylor and a man named Marshall were killed; Jack Hellums and a party from Gonzales killed them. Sam Bell killed McCarthey in the branding pens just below where the town of Kittie West now stands. John Gordon killed George Bocelle up on the Atascosa. A man named Lee Purvis was killed up at the Byler pens on the Weedy; Bill Goynes and Joy Bister were charged with the crime. Stark Robbins killed Turner Young; Butler Votaw was killed by John Wilson—this was an accident as Wilson thought Vowtaw was another man. Harry Hinton, jailor, was knocked in the head with an iron bar and chocked to

prisoners, leaving him covered and hid in a cell. They were caught and hanged. Neil Rix killed Tom Lasater above Oakville. Bing Ferrel killed a man named Gallagher near Lapara.

The Reagan family has played a prominent role in our area since Green Pryor and Alabama (Tip) Reagan moved to Oakville in 1861. Dr. Reagan and his son Dr. Charlie were among the first local physicians. When the old-time doctor rode off in his buggy to help the sick, it was sometimes a week before he returned home. Many Live Oak County citizens today drive to Beeville for treatment by Dr. Charles Reagan's sons Tom, John, and Lawrence.

Until the 1930's or 1940's, the doctor was usually called for only the most serious illnesses or injuries. Most people took care of themselves or called on a helpful relative or friend. Roads were poor, and for many years the horse and buggy was the only way to get a patient to the doctor or—more often—for him to get to the patient. Often the doctor traveled for several days with little sleep or rest, but if he fell asleep in his buggy, his well-trained team of horses would continue down the road.

E.L. Hemphill of Oakville was drilling a water well in McMullen County when a piece of equipment struck his face and split open his lip. He was alone and a day away from Oakville and the doctor, so he got a needle, thread, and a mirror from his wagon. Hemphill sewed up the cut, completed his water well, and then returned home several days later.

Kerosene was probably the most extensively used home remedy. It was applied to cuts, sprains, bruises, and insect bites. A chest cold poultice mixture included kerosene. A severe cough was sometimes relieved by swallowing a teaspoon of sugar mixed with a few drops of

kerosene. The stouthearted sometimes used it as a sore throat gargle. The kerosene today is much more refined than what was used then.

Veterinarians were not available, and livestock received many of the same treatments as their owners.

* * * * *

Besinte Lisano was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to be hung at the Oakville jail on May 27, 1904.³ Oldtimers said this was the first legal hanging in the county, although it was by no means the first hanging.

The December 8, 1905 issue of the *Beeville Bee* reported that 10,200 acres of land in Live Oak County had been purchased by a Japanese firm that intended to settle two hundred families here. " 'We intend to establish a regular Japanese colony in Texas,' said the Japanese gentlemen, 'though it is our purpose to adopt American customs.' " The farmers expected to plant rice and other farm crops. Although the Japanese were taking legal steps toward immigration to this country, there was no more mention of the group. Two years later in March, 1907, a racially slurred article rejoiced at "Japs" having been excluded from immigrating to this country.

In 1907 the county clerk's report to the Census Bureau showed that since 1887, 29 divorce suits had been filed, and 279 marriage licenses granted. The Scholastic Census of Live Oak County for 1907-8 showed 619 scholastics-111 in Oakville Independent School District and 508 in other districts.

In July 28, 1907, the *Beeville Weekly Picayune* carried this suggestion:

Keep your eye on Oakville and Live Oak County. Two new towns being surveyed in the county, and prospects

for a railroad through the county, and prospectors and investors are coming in. If Oakville holds her own, she must get busy.



Picture 3

The Benham County Line School, also known as the Salt Creek School.

On December 6, 1913, an election was held to determine whether the county seat should be removed from Oakville. The results were as follows:

To remain at Oakville	164
For removal to Live Oak	152
For removal to George West	85
 Total votes	 401

Another election regarding changing the county seat could not legally be held for five years.

That same month the citizens passed a bond election which made possible the building of some bridges, as well as the building and maintenance of better roads. Until about 1920, each man was expected to spend five days a year helping maintain the public roads. He could pay someone else \$1 a day to work in his place, but most men chose to save the dollar. A man who took a team of horses with him was considered as being paid \$3 per day. The roads in those days followed the path of least resistance—like a cow trail—and although they continued in the same general direction, there were many twists and turns. Most of the roads were established before land was fenced, but when fences went up, the road did not change—a gate was required to be placed wherever the fenceline crossed a public road.

Travelers winding across the Sidney W. Sparkman ranch had to open from three to five gates—which they did not always close. After living for a few years in Oklahoma, which had open

roads, my father did not like this arrangement. He spoke with his neighbors, and volunteered to pull his fence back fifteen or twenty feet on the east and south sides of his fields. The Lewises, Massengales, and Nelsons did the same, thus opening a road on the east side of the Ray ranch to join the Oakville to Mineral road. The neighbors were so pleased by the straight and clear road that they elected my father as county commissioner in 1910.

In January 1914, the Commissioner's Court voted to hire a County Farm Demonstrator. R.O. Tackett soon had the cooperation of area farmers and began organizing boys corn clubs. Much land was being cleared, and small farms dotted the county, but there was still much land that was untouched by man. In the northeast end of Live Oak County about this time, two small Mexican children started out from their home to go to the field where their father was working. The older child, about five or six, eventually sent the two-year-old toddler back home, but he never made it. Search parties from northern Live Oak and Bee Counties combed the countryside for several days. It was a dry spring, with cool nights—the tracks ranged over a four or five mile area. When the searchers found the tyke a few days later, it was too late.

The last known lynching in Live Oak County took place shortly before Christmas in 1914. Two very young Mexican men in the jail asked deputy Harry Hinton to help them learn to read and write English. One of their friends helped Hinton deliver the evening meal to the prisoners, and was in the cell when he sat down to help them with their studies. The prisoners used an iron bar to kill the deputy, and eventually made their escape. The murder was not discovered until the next afternoon when Mrs. Hinton expected her husband for lunch. Rancher George W. West offered a reward for the murderer's

capture, as did the town of Oakville. The escaped prisoners were soon found, and someone implicated the friend. While officials were questioning the prisoners, they heard some loud noises outside. Peter Lawley went to the window, looked out, and said "Just some kids popping firecrackers." The interrogation continued.

Perhaps the old man's eyesight was becoming dim, for the pops he heard came from guns. The "outside help" had been located, and the local citizens were trying to make him talk. To show they meant business, a rope was tied around his neck and the end slung over a live oak tree limb. The man declared, "I won't tell you a d———thing," so the rope was pulled—again to show they meant business. When the fellow grabbed for the rope to keep from choking, shots rang out as it was pulled higher into the air. Many people could tell just how the lynching happened, but nobody admitted to having been there. When the officials came out of the jail, they found the bullet-riddled body swaying in the breeze, and not a soul around.

On December 31, 1914, Ysedro Gonzales⁴ and Frederico Trovenio Sanches⁵ were convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to be hanged in the Oakville jail on February 1, 1915.

In 1916 some cowhands riding the range on the George W. West ranch noticed a ragged man running from them. They took after him, and someone roped him. The man's only weapon and tool was a knife, which he used to dress the small game he snared and the armadillos he caught by hand. He had used the knife to

dig a hole in the ground for his home, and he kept the narrow entrance covered with two poles.

The stranger was not talkative, so the cowmen turned him over to the sheriff in Oakville, who locked up what he thought he was probably a fugitive from justice. The man seemed very "backward"—he was from Mexico, and was probably an Indian. Mexico was in the midst of a revolution, so perhaps he had sought refuge here. The sheriff found nothing of which to accuse him, so the "wild man" was finally turned loose.

For awhile he seemed content working for Mr. and Mrs. Burten Lutts, who operated a hotel in Three Rivers, but he disappeared one day and was never seen again.

A New County Seat

On December 16, 1918, J.E. Lyne and others presented a petition for another election regarding removal of the courthouse from Oakville; it was signed by a majority of the voters. The January 18 election revealed 312 voted asking for removal of the county seat to George West, while 113 voted for it to remain at Oakville. On January 20, 1919, George West was declared the county seat of Live Oak County.

Part of the argument for moving the county seat was built around the fact that Oakville was more than five miles from the geographical center of the county, while George West fell within five miles of the center.

Until the courthouse and jail could be constructed, the county leased the first floor of the hotel and sample room (adjacent to the hotel) and the upper floor of the school building. The author sat on a jury while court was being held in the school auditorium.

On April 21, 1919, the architectural firm of Alfred

Giles Co. submitted plans for a courthouse and jail which were accepted by the county commissioners. The estimated price was \$175,434. A contract was made with a building firm with an anticipated expense of \$159,356, but at least twenty different prices were quoted by the contractor during the building, so the exact price of the courthouse is uncertain.

On October 22, 1920, upon the completion of the courthouse, George W. West gave the courthouse land to the county, plus \$75,000—however, he withheld \$10,000 until the arrival of the furniture, which had been ordered.

In 1919 the county passed a \$60,000 bond election for the construction and maintenance of graveled or paved roads.

During the second and third decades of this century, county politics seemed to follow religious lines. The Protestant vote was usually divided, and few Protestant candidates were elected. Catholic voters usually voted as a block, so most offices in the county came to be filled by Roman Catholics. The resulting dissention provided a favorable climate for rabid radicals from within the county, aided by outsiders, to organize a Ku Klux Klan. The Klan brought about enough voting unity that Protestant-supported candidates carried every office in the 1922 election.

Some of the local KKK ideals were commendable, but many were not. I knew much of their activity through friends, although I declined the invitation to become a Klansman.

By 1924, Klan members had lost much of their enthusiasm, and by 1928 the Klan had ceased to exist in Live Oak County. The presence of the Ku Klux Klan, however, caused bitter feelings between many who had been friends for years.

In 1926 Harry Leahey induced Dr. Ramsey into Live

Oak County and murdered him. He was convicted of first degree murder and given a fifty-year sentence in November, 1926.⁶ That trial had been held in George West, and Leahey's attorney asked for a change of venue. A new trial was held in Georgetown, Texas, and Leahey was again convicted of first degree murder, but this time he was given the death sentence. He was executed in Huntsville in 1929.

In 1927 a black man, Garret Thomas, was convicted in George West of first degree murder, and on June 8, 1927, he was sentenced to die.⁷ He was later executed in Huntsville.

The next death sentence came twelve years later. On June 24, 1949, Felix Lewis was found guilty of rape, and was sentenced to die at Huntsville.⁸

The 1940 census revealed 9,799 residents in Live Oak County.

By that time the residents of George West and Three Rivers, as well as some of the rural areas, had reliable telephone service available. Soon after moving to Live Oak County in 1881, George W. West had built a private telephone line to Pettus. Oakville firms were invited to tie into the line, and people from Votaw also used it. No more than six telephones could be on one line. In 1908 that line was removed when Mr. West built a new private line to Beeville. For a time there was a telephone line from Beeville to Oakville. In 1918 six families in the Salt Branch community built their own telephone line from west Bee County to Oakville. In 1933 the Oakville telephone exchange was discontinued—those wanting service extended their lines to Three Rivers. In 1934 the Salt Branch line was extended to Three Rivers.

Local "subscribers" in rural areas were responsible in those days for both building and maintaining their own telephone lines. They set the poles, kept the brush off the lines, and had to hunt for the shorts and breaks in the

lines. Tall oilfield equipment frequently brought down the phone lines. This practice was discontinued in the 1940's.

Until the 1950's telephone calls from George West went through Three Rivers, and sometimes it took an hour to get a line out of Three Rivers when making a long distance call. In the 1950's and 1960's General Telephone and Bell Telephone Company began to extend lines all over the county with much better service. Now telephone patrons can dial direct to points in all fifty states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Canada, the Bahamas, and Mexico.

Centennial Reflections

by Mary Sparkman Roberts

The celebration of Live Oak County's Centennial in 1956 gave us all a glimpse of the past and new hopes for the future.

Along with the other Brothers of the Brush, my dad tried growing a beard—but when his chin turned purple after a few days, he opted for a moustache and sideburns; almost overnight he looked like Great-Grandpa Cox at 90! Mother in her borrowed long dress joined the Sulphur Creek Cuties chapter of the Sisters of the Swish. The lovely, lace-trimmed dress that Aunt Vivian (wife of Sheriff Abert Smith) made for me is among my treasures, but the delightful pantaloons have disappeared.

All that spring there was talk of nothing but Centennial, and each Thursday, second Sunday, and fourth Saturday the ladies and girls wore their old-timey outfits. Our family had no television, but we heard that Ann and Harry Hinton had appeared on the 10 p.m. news. Miss Josephine Canfield's piano students usually wore formal attire for the spring recital, but that year we could have passed for children of the nineteenth century. Miss Josephine wrote a special song for the county

celebration.

The official celebration (May 2-5) included historical pageants, spectacular fireworks (which could be seen from our home ten miles away), a rodeo, two parades, museum exhibits, and many special tours, services, and open houses. There was a children's parade at the fairground, and Mary Ann Pawlik's third graders trudged along looking—we hoped—like a group of Indians captured by cowboys. We won third prize, and spent the money on ice cream and drinks for the last day of school.

Of course there was a carnival at the fairgrounds. Daddy rode the ferris wheel with me one night, when something went wrong and the ferris wheel stopped for half an hour. We were next-to-the-top (Steve Lane and his older sister were on the very top), but with Daddy I was not scared. He pointed out the lights of George West and Three Rivers, and of the oil rig on the Eldon Dunn farm behind ours (at least ten miles away).

As we left the Oakville museum, with its display of medical instruments and eyeglasses of the early Reagan doctors, it was an unexpected treat to meet, for the first time, the legendary "Mr. Rocky" Reagan—and he kissed me!

The celebration opened with a parade in George West—the longest and best I'd ever seen. The streets were crowded with bearded men and ladies in long dresses and bonnets. Mary Ann Hinnant, born the same year as the county, reigned as Queen of Live Oak County, and she waved to the cheering crowds as she rode along, though her eyes could not see them. Two days later the parade at Three Rivers was not so well attended, because most people had already seen it, and also because some of the floats had been damaged by—wonder of wonders!—rain.

My parents and I watched the first parade from the sidewalk in front of the old West Hotel. It seemed that just

as the parade was over, the skies let loose all the rain that had been pent up during the longest drought recorded in Texas history...A little boy near us, while sitting on the curb to watch the parade, removed his shoes and put them in the street. During the sudden downpour, the shoes began floating away, and the child ran along crying as he tried to catch up with what was probably his only pair of shoes.

When we got home after the parade, the frogs were singing—a new sound to me—and the two creeks near us were running full—something I had never seen. It was the beginning of the end of the drought!

The drought...Maybe that was why the county's hundredth birthday received so much attention. Live Oak, along with many other Texas counties, had been declared a national disaster area. My parents, Sidney and Voyle Irwin Sparkman, owned and operated a small hatchery and poultry farm, so their business continued more or less as usual, but many farmers sat biting their nails because there was no moisture to grow crops.

Finally it got so dry that even the weeds refused to grow. Almost every mid-afternoon a black cloud would come up from the west, and I would naively hope for rain. The few raindrops that did come invariably heralded another dust storm. Many of the lesser used unpaved roads had to be closed because of sand drifts.

I remember the pain of bare legs being whipped by dirt as we rushed to bring in clothes from the line. The dust stung as much as Daddy's mesquite switch—but the switch could only be in one place at a time. I wondered why Mother even bothered to wash the clothes, because even if they did manage to dry before a whirlwind or duststorm hit, there were other ways for the dust to claim them. You could be sure a duststorm had struck while you slept if the pillow bore a white silhouette against a grey background.

Daddy burned prickly pear for our milk cow, and Grandpa (E.L.) Sparkman was fortunate to escape with "only" a few burns on his face and arms when his pearburner malfunctioned.

Many of the wild animals starved, and the survivors, in their search for food, came closer than usual to man. We had trouble with coyotes, rats, and an occasional skunk or badger who wanted chicken for supper. Because of the bumper crop of rattlesnakes, I was not allowed to roam through the brush that year. At the fairgrounds there seemed to be a contest as to who had caught the rat with the longest tail.

The drought was breaking...The many prayer meetings for rain were to be answered. It rained several times that year, and the careless weeds, ragweed, and goatheads began to grow. The next spring farmers were able to plant crops. When Thanksgiving came in 1957, the front of the Cadiz Baptist Church was filled with grains, vegetables, and fruit that the members had grown. It was the most wonderful Thanksgiving I can remember, for we all shared the joy and realized the privilege of a bountiful harvest.

Local Authors

Live Oak County has produced several authors, and all of them reflect the local area in their writings.

Viola Ebel Adlof was born in Gonzales, Texas, in 1908. She grew up in a large farm family, and attended high school in Gonzales. In 1928, two years after her marriage to Arthur Adlof, she moved to a farm in the Fant community. The Adlofs had two daughters—Dr. Ruth Adlof Haak, a psychologist in Austin, and Dr.

Carolyn M. Adlof, longtime Three Rivers physician. In order for her grandchildren to better understand their roots, Mrs. Adlof had written two delightful books--*Levy's Grandmother Writes* (1972), and *Lisa's Texas Grandma* (1963). She began contributing articles to farm magazines and local newspapers while still a teenager, and she is still at it. She is presently doing a series of articles about various Live Oak County citizens ("We'd Like You to Meet..."). Some of the information in this book is based on articles Mrs. Adlof has written for *The Progress*. The remuneration she receives for her contributions seldom pays for the gas used in compiling the article. Besides an interest in writing, Mrs. Adlof is a member of the Live Oak County Historical Society, and in 1969 she was elected the first woman alderman for the city of Three Rivers.

Wilburn Atwood of the Swinney Switch community has compiled and published a collection of original verses and writings which were copied as penmanship practice by Evans Atwood, as well as a collection of letters which he wrote while a prisoner of war during the Civil War. *Memories and Heritage of Lt. Evans Atwood, M.D.* was published in 1971.

J. Frank Dobie entered this world in 1888 in a three-room, whitewashed rock house on the 7,000 acre Dobie ranch, which was about midway between Ramireña and Lagarto. He has immortalized many of the people who lived in the southern end of Live Oak County at the turn of the century. Richard and Ella Dobie wanted their children to get a college education, so the family moved to Beeville when the oldest was ready for high school. After getting an M.A. from Columbia University, Frank began writing and teaching, mostly at the University of Texas. He became a well-known storyteller and authority on the life and literature of the Southwest. As longtime editor of the Texas Folklore Society he has edited many books

which are not listed below. During the 1940's he participated in an exchange program which found him teaching at Cambridge University in England, and there he won more friends for the United States and Texas than many a paid ambassador. Although he never held a political office, when J. Frank Dobie died in 1964, his body was interred in the state cemetery by proclamation of the governor. He was the author of twenty-one books: *Apache Gold and Yaqui Silver* (1939), *A Texan in England* (1955), *A Vaquero of the Brush Country* (1929), *Coronado's Children* (1930), *Cow People* (1964), *Guide to Life and Literature of the Southwest* (1952), *I'll Tell You a Tale* (1960), *John C. Duvall--First Texas Man of Letters* (1939), *On the Open Range* (1931), *Out of the Old Rock* (posthumous, 1972), *Rattlesnakes* (1925), *Some Part of Myself* (posthumous, 1967), *Tales of Oldtime Texas* (1955), *Tales of the Mustang* (1936), *The Ben Lilly Legend* (1950), *The Flavor of Texas* (1975), *The Longhorns* (1941), *The Mustangs* (1952), *The Voice of the Coyote* (1949), *Tongues of the Monte* (1947), and *Up the Trail from Texas* (1955).

Cora Kitchen Jones is the author of *What God Hath Wrought: A History of Blanco Baptist Association 1873-1973* (1973), which gives the history of Southern Baptist work in this area, and includes many local churches. Cora and Carroll Jones met and married while they were students at Baylor University. Mrs. Jones later received a degree from the University of Corpus Christi, which she and her husband were instrumental in founding. Although she taught school for thirty-two years, Cora Jones managed to play a very active role in her husband's rural ministry. She is presently at work on another book about the life of a country preacher's wife. Both Reverend and Mrs. Jones's families were important in Texas Baptist pioneer work, and many of their family heirlooms are now on display at the museum and the

Texas Collection at Baylor University.

During the 1940's Alta (Mrs. Dee) Maguglin wrote a weekly column for the *Live Oak County Herald*. It told the day-to-day events of the Karon/Votaw community, and made such interesting reading that the articles were eventually collected and published as *Excerpts from "Our Community News"* (1950).

Although Dr. G.P. Reagan, who owned a thousand acres east of Sulphur Creek, was against his sons becoming ranchers, his youngest child, Rocky, was given a calf on the day of his birth in 1883. For the next 91 years—until his death in 1975—Rocky Reagan was actively engaged in the cattle business. At one time he controlled 125,000 acres of grazing land stocked with 4,000 head of cattle, 1,500 Spanish goats, and about 60 saddle horses. "Mr. Rocky" just naturally liked people—he made friends wherever he went, and he remembered their names. An article about him which appeared in a national magazine was aptly entitled, "Sure! We All Know Rocky Reagan."⁹ He was a Presbyterian church elder for sixty years, and for many years was Sunday School superintendent. He was a Mason and wrote a history of the Evergreen Masonic Lodge No. 325 (Oakville/Three Rivers). For over twenty years he and his sons and daughters staged rodeos throughout South Texas. He judged in cutting horse shows, and was a director of the San Antonio Exposition and Livestock Show and of the South Texas Livestock Show. Rocky Reagan had a knack for storytelling, and many of his yarns are included in the books of his friend J. Frank Dobie. In his last two decades, Mr. Rocky finally slowed down enough to author three books—*G.P. Reagan, Country Doctor* (1963), *Rocky's Chuck Wagon Stories* (1968), and *Rocky's Yarns* (1973).

Mary Sullivan, daughter of Peter and Anna Mikeska, was married in 1907 to Jim H. Sullivan, who

was then postmaster and merchant at Cadiz. The Sullivans later moved to George West and opened a store there. For many years the Sullivan house stood across the street from the courthouse. Mary E. Sullivan was a correspondent for the *San Antonio Light*, *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, and *Live Oak County Herald*, as well as a contributor to magazines. Her novel *Crooked Rows* was published in 1955.

On November 19, 1955, Opal Miller first opened the door of the Live Oak County Library, which was housed in a small room on the second floor of the courthouse. When spring came, Mrs. Miller held her breath many times, while school children leaned out the high open windows. Later the library moved downstairs to larger quarters. In April, 1977, the library moved to a new building on main street, behind the primary school.

The Twentieth Century Club, which started the library with \$500 worth of books, continues to provide support for the library. Other support has come from the county and state, and from other local civic organizations. Mrs. Miller is still the librarian.

Sports and Recreation

Live Oak County offers many opportunities for hunters to enjoy their sport. In 1973, fifty landowners obtained permits to lease 88,615 acres to hunters either by the day or for the season. While many hunters obtain their licenses before coming to the county, 446 permits were issued here that year. Of the 658,890 acres in Live Oak County, deer range on as estimated 462,529 acres.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission estimates the deer population at 15,710. Deer hunters pay \$200-300 per gun for a lease of up to ten years.



Picture 4

Anne Churchhill killed this pair of ten-point bucks southwest of Simmons. From *The Progress*, December 10, 1975.

In 1973 there was an estimated kill of 2,580 deer, 236 turkeys, 40,217 mourning doves, and 33,210 quail, plus some javelinas and wild Russian boars, and an occasional panther. The \$12.50 or more per day sportsmen pay for the privilege of hunting birds is a source of considerable revenue to landowners.

There are ample opportunities for boating and fishing. Three rivers flow into the county—the Atascosa and Frio unite just above Three Rivers, and a short distance below the town the Frio flows into the Nueces. A dam on the Nueces River southwest of Mathis backs the 14,188 acres of Lake Corpus Christi to within a few miles

of George West. Landowners along the waters often lease spaces for campsites, mobile homes, or campers.

The December 14, 1977, *Progress* reported that Texas was in fourth place (behind California, Florida, and New York) for the nation's travel industry. A national study commissioned by the Texas Tourist Development Agency disclosed that in 1976 Live Oak County received \$2,096,200 of the state's \$6,075,052,000 travel receipts. That same year Live Oak County had 81 of the state's 227,258 travel-related jobs, with an annual payroll of \$418,200. It is estimated that in 1976 county visitors paid \$83,400 in state and \$17,700 in local taxes.

Facts and Figures

In 1973 the County Auditor's report showed the following assessed valuation for the county:

Land Values and City Property	\$15,728,796
Personal Property	2,102,985
Railroads and Transportation	395,920
Public Utilities	2,297,945
Banks	60,143
Total Assessed Valuation	\$20,585,789

Live Oak County includes 1,055 square miles. Altitude ranges from 70 to 400 feet above sea level. Average annual rainfall is 25.6". January temperature (minimum) averages 45 degrees F, and July temperature (maximum) averages 97 degrees F. The growing season is 289 days.

Live Oak County is in the Fifteenth Congressional District, the Twenty-First State Senatorial District, and the Forty-Seventh State Representative District. It is in Administrative Judicial District 4, State District Courts

36 and 156, U.S. Judicial District S-CC, and Court of Civil Appeals 13.

The 1978 *Texas Almanac* reported that 1977 U.S. expenditures for Live Oak County were \$10,371,000. Total county income was \$19,218,000. The wages paid to 1,119 employed citizens amounted to \$8,452,728. The tax value was \$46,548,637. Oil and agribusiness dominate the economy. Mineral income was \$32,000,000 from the annual production of gas, oil, uranium, sand, and gravel. The yearly income from agriculture was \$12,000,000, two-thirds of it from beef cattle, hogs, and crops which included sorghums, corn, and flax. There were 3,021 registered automobiles.

James Jungman, a George West resident, makes his living as Fire Marshall for Chase Field Naval Air Station near Beeville, but since 1971 he has been actively engaged in improving local firefighting. He has organized eleven new volunteer fire departments in Live Oak and McMullen Counties. George West and Three Rivers have long had volunteer fire departments, but now the communities of Lagarto, Swinney Switch, Argenta, Oakville, and Whitsett also have firefighting equipment and trained volunteer firemen. Jungman is actively trying to improve and educate volunteer fire departments throughout the Coastal Bend area.

In October, 1974, Charles Victor Sanne and Doyle Edward Skillern met state narcotics agent Patrick Allen Randel in Beeville. His body was later found at a roadside park in Live Oak County. They were tried in George West before Judge John Miller's 36th District

Court. Skillern was given the death penalty, because the jury felt he deliberately caused the death of Randel and was a menace to society in the future (three years prior to this time Skillern had killed his own brother). The jury sentenced Sanne to life imprisonment. A new trial and a change of venue was granted. In 1978 the case was tried in Rockport before Judge Miller. The Rockport jury recommended the death penalty for both, and Judge Miller sentenced both Sanne and Skillern to death. At this writing both are imprisoned in Huntsville awaiting the final ruling on the case by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

In October, 1974, the Nueces River Project was authorized for the development of a dependable water supply for municipal and industrial use of the Coastal Bend.

Choke Canyon Dam is a rolled earthfill structure with a concrete spillway now under construction on the Frio River, about four miles west of Three Rivers. The reservoir will be located in both Live Oak and McMullen Counties, and is expected to cover 26,000 acres, extending upstream a distance of thirty-four miles. Maximum width will be about five miles.

It is estimated that about 37,000 acres of land will be acquired in fee title and flowage easement for the dam, reservoir, and construction areas. The plan involves the use of approximately 2,360 acres of land for sport fishing and recreational purposes.

The community of Calliham is planning to re-establish a new Calliham townsite south of the existing town.

Dam construction costs are expected to total \$36,769,000.



Picture 5

Live Oak County Courthouse, George West, Texas, 1980

NOTES

1. Most of the above information was furnished by Thelma Pugh Lindholm, who copied it from the original records before they were destroyed by flooding of the courthouse basement in the late 1960's. A copy of those taking the oath of allegiance to the Confederacy was found on the back pages of Marriage Record, Volume I, County Clerk's Office.

2. J. Marvin Hunter, ed., *The Trail Drivers of Texas, Vol. II*, (New York: Argosy-Antiquarian Ltd., 1963), pp. 604-7.

3. Case 1051, District Court Docket, Volume 4, p. 104.

4. Case 1184, District Court Docket, Volume 4, p. 266.

5. Case 1185, District Court Docket, Volume 4, p. 266.

6. Case 1280, District Court Docket, Volume 5, p. 277.

7. Case 1285, District Court Docket, Volume 5, p. 336.
8. Case 1588, District Court Docket, Volume 8, p. 449.
9. Harold Severson, "Sure! We All Know Rocky Reagan," *The Cattleman*, Vol. XXIX, No. 2 (July 1942), pp. 15-18.

CHAPTER III

ELECTED OFFICIALS

County Judge

The office of Live Oak County Judge has been held by John Powell (1856), J.T. James (1857), S.T. Foster (1860), William Gamble (1862), P.S. Hagy (1866), Tom Ball (1869), and W.A. Butler (1869). Between September, 1871, and April, 1876, there was no County Judge. During Reconstruction, Police Court, followed by Justice Court (over which the Justice of the Peace of Precinct 1 presided) was held. Other judges were G.W. Jones (1876), J.W. Rainey (1885), C.C. Cox (1887), W.A. Hill (1899), F.H. Church (1913), W.W. Caves (1915), T.H. Miller (1919), E.L. Riser (1923), C.B. Beard (1929), H.M. Wilder (1947), A.M. Edwards (1951), J.E. Curlee (1956), Harry L. Hinton (1963), and Bill Kendall (1971).

County Sheriff

Live Oak County Sheriffs have been J.W. Mayes (1856), William Bartlett (1857), Uriah G. Hollins (1857), G.W. Hargrove (1858), Samuel Cook (1859), W.C. Vanmeter (1860), Samuel Cook (1861), J.L. Sanders (1863), C.S. Boutwell (1863), Alexander Coker (1864), C.S. Boutwell (1865), W.N. Hadden (1867), W.J. Lewis (1869), Sanders Pearce (1870), John D. Edwards (1873), A. Coker (1874), J.F. Goodwin (1889), E.G. Reagan (1896), W.H. Lewis (1897), C.L. Tullis (1909), Eugene Key (1923), W.A. Smith (1927), Bob Reagan (1965), Sam Huff (1968), and Larry Busby (1981).



Picture 6

W. Albert Smith, Sheriff of Live Oak County from 1927-65.

W. Albert Smith served as Sheriff of Live Oak County for thirty-eight consecutive years, and became a legend in his own time.

The Smith family moved to Live Oak County from Oklahoma in 1899, when Albert was six years old. After his parents' death, while living with his sister Linnie, he fell in love with her sister-in-law, schoolteacher Vivian Sparkman. They were married just before he went off to fight the Kaiser.

When World War I ended, Albert and Vivian settled on the land she had inherited, and set about improving the place. Albert's hard work paid off in good crops, and he bought the piece of land next to theirs. That winter he went to Three Rivers and bought a large bunch of cattle.

It was late in the day, but still warm when they got home, so he dipped the cattle. That night it came a hard freeze, and when the Smiths went out into the pasture the next morning, they found piles of dead cattle. Albert skinned them and sold the hides. That was one deal that left him "in the hole," but Smith came to be respected as a good and honorable businessman. If he could find anything at a bargain, he would buy it, and then sell it at a profit. While still a teenager, he had bought horses and cattle here, and then taken them to Oklahoma to sell.

One day while Albert was in town he came upon his boyhood friend, Gene Key, stretched out on the ground by four toughs. Gene, who was sheriff and even then wearing a gun, called out to Albert for help. Big Albert knocked the young men off his friend, and right there he was appointed deputy sheriff.

A month or so later, word got out that a certain rough character was coming to Three Rivers. A warrant was out for his arrest. The fellow told his friends, "That little deputy can't arrest me!" But when Deputy Smith said, "Come with me or I'll kill you," the arrest was made with no trouble. Albert Smith's reputation as a tough lawman was beginning—perhaps because of that reputation he never had to kill anyone.

Sheriff Key could not handle "roughnecks," and although he was re-elected, he soon resigned and asked that Albert Smith be appointed sheriff. In February, 1927, Smith became Sheriff of Live Oak County.

Word got out that crime did not pay in Live Oak County. Smith was persistent, and if he wanted to make an arrest, he would find that person if it took years. During his term as sheriff, not one major crime went unsolved in the county. The case that Smith considered most interesting took twenty-five years to complete.

On April 1, 1933, just south of Oakville, Clyde Harris and another man halted their truck in order to help a lady

in distress. Dorothy Renthro distracted them long enough for Elzie Tunnell and Howard Newcomer to jump from a ditch and relieve Harris of \$200. The men were tied, the truck driven into the brush, and the wires pulled. The robbers headed toward Beeville.

Newcomer, arrested about two weeks later, was tried and sentenced to prison. For the next twenty-five years, Sheriff Smith searched for Tunnell and periodically asked the FBI to run a check. Finally, in 1958, the FBI reported that an Elzie Tunnell had made a job application in California in 1942. The sheriff there reported that Tunnell had moved to Reno, Nevada.

Sheriff Smith telephoned the Reno sheriff, personally offered a \$100 reward for Tunnell's arrest, and wired a warrant for the arrest. He went to Nevada armed with a request for extradition from Texas Governor Price Daniel.

On April 17, 1958, an extradition hearing was held before Nevada Governor Charles H. Russell. Smith presented evidence connecting Elzie Tunnell to the crime. His picture, along with that of the deceased Dorothy Renthro Tunnell, had been identified by Harris. Tunnell presented a confusing and somewhat conflicting story.

At the end of the testimony, Governor Russell said, "The act was 25 years ago; it had been shown that he has, if an error was made—and I do not say that an error was made—that he has completely rehabilitated himself and has been a useful citizen. He has had no arrest since that time, and under the circumstances, I will not sign the extradition."

When Sheriff Smith made an arrest in the county, he often carried a teenage boy or two with him. This probably kept many a young man out of trouble. A now-prominent county official recalled driving across the rickety old Nueces River bridge near George West not long after he acquired a driver's license. A board popped

up and damaged his "new" car. He and his friend decided the best way to spare other motorists from having similar troubles would be to burn the old bridge, so they started a fire. They laughed all the way back to town, but when he got home, he was startled by this thought, "Now, when Sheriff Smith finds out about that fire, he's gonna wonder who would have a grudge against that old bridge, and when he finds out that I had car trouble out there, it's not gonna take him long to figure out who did it!" He raced out to the bridge and put out the fire, which had made little headway.

County Clerk

The office of Live Oak County Clerk has been filled by A.T. Baker (1856), A.J. Manning (1856), D.R. Reid (1857), John S. Givens (1857), S.B. McMillion (1858), John S. Givens (1858), S.T. Foster (1858), D.D. Robertson (1858), F.M. Reid (1860), George Parr (1862), J.W. Drury (1868), M.W.C. Frazier (1871), J.C. Howell (1872), M.W.C. Frazier (1872), Daniel Haynie (1873), F.H. Church (1876), C.O. Orrick (1889), T.M. Church (1897), G.C. Robinson (1899), C.F. Allen (1907), E.L. Riser (1911), H.G. Goodwin (1921), J.M. Johnson (1923), O.F. Lewis (1931), C.W. Kendall (1943), L.R. Hoskins (1951), Bill Huff (1955), Mrs. Bill Huff (1974), and Bill Bain (1975).

District Clerk

The office of District Clerk has been filled by T.A. James (1857), W.H. Stewart (1858), Thomas Wilson (1858), J.F. Seisering (1860), E.M. Reid (1865), Alexander Coker (1866), James W. Drury (1870), L.G. Butler (1872), Daniel Haynie (1872), M.W.C. Frazier (1873), Daniel Haynie (1873), F.H. Church (1876), C.O. Orrick (1889), T.M. Church (1897), G.C. Robinson (1899), C.F. Allen (1907), E.L. Riser

(1911), H.G. Goodwin (1921), J.M. Johnson (1923), C.E. Key (1933), R.C. Peebles (1936), Roger Umphres (1941), C.L. Lemley (1953), and Ellen Jane McCarly (1977).

County Treasurer

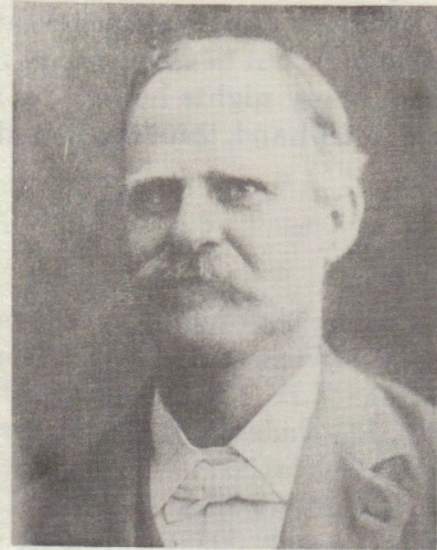
Live Oak County Treasurers have been Mathew Kivilin (1856), Joshua Hinton (1857), W.N. Hadden (1869), J.S. Nolloway (1871), E. Lawley (1872), L.P. Lawley (1876), J.S. Campbell (1889), Alex Coker (1891), C.F. Bryer (1899), Ira Hinton (1901), W.H. Ford (1911), C.B. Lutts (1913), W.A. Tullis (1915), W.E. Cunningham (1923), W.D. Trimble (1933), E.C. Probst (1941), Dorothy Probst (1953), and LaVona Stainthorpe (1975).

County Tax Assessor and Collector

Until April, 1876, the office of County Tax Assessor and Collector were combined. Those holding office were Walter Merriman (1856), Curtis Herring (1860), J.W. Raimy (1864), L.C. Fudge (1866), W.H. Lewis (1869), Sanders Pearce (1871), C.C. Lewis (1873), and S.G. Miller (1874). In 1937 this office was again combined, and it has been filled by the Live Oak County Sheriff since that time. The position has been held by W. Albert Smith (1937), Bob Reagan (1965), Sam Huff (1968), and Larry Busby (1981).

Between April, 1876, and January, 1937, the office of County Tax Assessor was filled by Curtis Herring (1876), T.M. Church (1880), R.W. Johnson (1893), J.F. Goodwin (1900), Henry McMurray (1905), L.C. New (1913), Nellie New (1923), H.K. Martin (1927), and G.W. Givens (1931). The office of County Tax Collector was filled by A. Coker (1876), J.F. Goodwin (1889), E.G. Reagan (1896), W.H. Lewis (1897), C.L. Tullis (1909), Eugene Key (1923), and W.A. Smith (1927)—these men were also County Sheriff at

the same time.



Picture 7

James Francis Goodwin, Sr., was County Sheriff from 1889 to 1896, County Tax Collector from 1889 to 1896, and County Tax Assessor from 1900 to 1905.

James Francis Goodwin, Sr., was the first county sheriff to strike fear into the hearts of outlaws. In his job as tax collector, he had to ride to every home in the county to collect taxes that had not been paid in town. Later he again had to make the rounds in his job as tax assessor. When Jim Goodwin was in the Votaw/Salt Branch community each year, he made it a point to reach the Sidney Sparkman home by nightfall. He knew he would find room and food for himself and his horse there. He and my father would talk half the night, and I stayed awake listening until they retired. Goodwin was an

honorable man, highly regarded by the law-abiding community. Many of the lawless element finally left the county, but not without a fight. At least one ambush was set for Sheriff Goodwin, but he happened to return from another direction. Many nights he rode by a stump or post with a pistol in his hand, thinking it might be a man waiting for him.

County Attorney

Live Oak County Attorneys have been William Chilton (1857), J.S. Givens (1863), J.F. Seisering (1867), J.C. Cade (1876), T.H. O'Callaghan (1886), F.G. Chambliss (1890), J.C. Cade (1893), R.L. Miller (1895), C.R. Evans (1897), W.W. Caves (1899), C.R. Evans (1905), W.W. Caves (1907), T.H. Miller (1913), F.H. Church (1917), F.W. Smith (1921), F.H. Church (1923), A.F. Cox (1925), L.A. Rizer (1930), Harry J. Schulz (1936), H.M. Wilder (1941), R.E. Schneider (1943), and Bill Hardwick (1961).

County Commissioners

The first Live Oak County Commissioners were James B. Lewis, H. Waller, W. Gamble, and J.T. James (1856); John King and J.B. Talbot (1857); T.B. Ammons and Thomas Wilborn (1858); J.M. Grover (1859); H. Old, J.O. Duweese, J.R. Francis, T.B. Ammons, and A. Hickox (1860); A.B. Dodson (1861); Z.H. Osborn and E. Votaw (1862); C.C. Cox and G.M. Wright (1865); P.S. Hagy, James W. Drury, C.O. Reiley, and T.B. Ammons (1866); H. Waller (1867); A.B. Butler, S.W. Lewis, and W. Goodwin (1869).

Precinct 1 Commissioners have been C.M. Cope (1876), G.Z. Wilson (1879), R.H. Brown (1881), G.Z. Wilson (1883), Milam Gill (1889), J.M. Brown (1894), J.W. Bartlett (1899), Milam Gill (1903), C.F. Bryer (1905), T.A. Coker

(1905), S.W. Sparkman (1911), J.L. Wilborn (1913), Pat Grover (1917), J.L. Wilborn (1919), R.C. Lyne (1923), L.L. Huff (1927), J.F. Goodwin (1933), R.Y. Williams (1943), Jeff Gregory (1947), M.O. Walker (1951), Lee Troell (1961), and Clem McKinney (1973).

Precinct 2 Commissioners have been R.B. Johnson (1876), Pat Pugh (1879), J.W. Timon (1883), Pat Sheeran (1887), E.F. McGloin (1891), J.H. Shipp (1893), W.H. Lewis (1895), Ben Freasier (1897), O.B. Shipp (1898), S.B. Caldwell (1901), Ben Freasier (1901), O.J. Sheeran (1905), D.C. Johnson (1909), J.L. Sinor (1911), J.F. Goodwin (1915), T.J. Lewis (1918), J.F. Goodwin (1927), N.R. Campbell (1933), Tom Copeland (1949), Elmer House (1962), and Hilbert Kopplin (1973).

Precinct 3 Commissioners have been G.Z. Wilson (1876), J.W. Rainey (1879), A.J. Kay (1883), C.C. Cox (1885), T.P. McNeill (1885), H.M. Hinnant (1887), S.S. Cox (1891), R.J. Dobie (1892), H.T. Staples (1895), J.R. Chandler (1897), R.J. Dobie (1899), L.K. Foster (1901), A.A. Dinn (1905), H.T. Staples (1907), W.F. McWhorter (1918), S.F. Beall (1921), J.E. Curlee (1923), W.A. Coffin (1965), Tom Bomar (1969), and Bill Goodwin (1981).

Precinct 4 Commissioners have been Z.H. Osborn (1876), R.H. Lowrey (1879), L. Jacob (1882), J.C. Horst (1884), C. Herring (1889), D. Odom (1891), L.J. Harkey (1893), C. Herring (1893), W.A.F. Bobo (1899), John Casey (1909), H.H. Whitworth (1911), John Casey (1913), H.D. House (1923), A.W. Houseton (1929), W.J. Harris (1933), J.T. Harris (1933), C.W. Tabor (1939), A.T. Secrest (1945), C.F. Doeblbler (1949), and Lloyd Miller (1966).

In 1919 Allen T. Secrest bought a farm in Live Oak County. He cleared six acres in time to plant cotton the next year, and made six bales of cotton. He started stock farming after that. During the Depression, Secrest worked as tick inspector for the Texas Livestock Sanitary Commission. In 1934 he appraised cotton for the federal

government's plow-up campaign, when 50% of the cotton was plowed under. As Precinct 4 Commissioner for 1944 through 1948, he constructed the first hard-surface road in Live Oak County west of highway 281—the eleven miles from the Frio bridge at Three Rivers to the McMullen County line. He also demolished the old Frio River bridge and combined the old material with steel to build a bridge across the Atascosa at Good Hope. Although retired, Mr. Secrest still raises some cattle.

Other Elected Officials

County Surveyors have been P.S. Hagy (1856), Robert H. Brown (1873), J.W. Kinney (1879), T.I. Gilmore (1880), M.K. Mahoney (1903), T.I. Gilmore (1905), E.B. Brown (1911), W.H. Striebeck (1927), M.H. Redwood (1944), and Earl A. Dillon (1949).

Until 1929 the county judge also was superintendent of the county schools. Since 1929 County School Superintendents have been Lydell Lewis (1929), Alice Grossett (1933), A.E. Bay (1939), E.M. Bailey (1947), and Mrs. G.W. Givens (1949). The office was abolished in 1965.

Justices of the Peace in 1979 were Paul Hanus (Precinct 1), Charles F. Huegler (Precinct 2), R.R. Stricklen (Precinct 3), Benny Ham (Precinct 4), and Henry New (Precinct 5).

Constables in 1981 were Lester Davis (Precinct 1), Tommy Brosig (Precinct 2), Carter Younts (Precinct 3), David Pullin (Precinct 4), and John DuPont (Precinct 5).

Since 1977, District 47 has been represented in the Texas House of Representatives by one of Live Oak County's own—Tom Martin. Born in 1935 to Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Martin, Tom graduated from George West High School. In college he met and married Jean Jones; they are parents of a son and a daughter.

Tom and Jeff Martin own the 10,000 acre Campana

ranch in Live Oak and McMullen counties. A movie about the camel experiment in Texas a century ago prompted Tom to trade a Santa Gertrudis bull for a dromedary. Since 1976, Ahab has called the Martin ranch home, but he still seems to have difficulty relating to the cattle.



Picture 8

Tom Martin, District 47 Representative to Texas House of Representatives, 1977 to 1980.

For fifteen years Tom had taught a Sunday School class at First Baptist Church, George West, and the Martins' ranch home has been the site of many youth parties and wiener roasts. He and Jean are active in Lay Witness Missions. He is a trustee of the South Texas Children's Home, and is a director of Agricultural Missions Foundations, Ltd., a Christian organization

involved in agricultural improvement in underdeveloped nations. Tom is past lieutenant governor of Kiwanis International, and an executive board member of the Gulf Coast Council, Boy Scouts of America. He has been president of the Alamo Santa Gertrudis Association and an officer of the South Texas Santa Gertrudis Breeders Association.

Despite no previous political experience, Tom Martin defeated the incumbent in the 1976 race for state representative. In the 66th Session he was active on the House Agriculture and Livestock committees. Mrs. Martha Wilson has been secretary of his district office in George West since its opening in 1977.

CHAPTER IV MILITARY VETERANS

Although other Live Oak County residents have served in the military forces during this century, we list below those whose discharges have been recorded in this county:

Soldiers Discharge Record Volume I (Primarily World War I)

Clarence S. Armantrout	Thomas E. Dunn
Francisco Baldobi	Andrew J. Edwards
Marcellous Bartlett	Oscar Edwards
Donald D. Baucom	Frank English
Fred H. Bradshaw	Morris Franklin
Gonzage Brizano	Andrew Freasier
Henry C. Brown	Ben L. Freasier
Frank W. Buck	Howard S. Frederick
Guadalupe Cabrera	James J. Gallagher
Rudolph Cervenka	Andrew F. Gerhard
Thomas A. Chandler	Otto A. Goebel
Ovid V. Claunch	Walter W. Goebel
Jerome K. Cook	Hilario Gonzales
Heber L. Cumby	Rafael Gonzales
Dock L. Cummings	Santiago Guajardo
Mike Davidson	Leslie B. Guthrie
Chester L. Decou	Gus Hahn
Jesse L. Dowd	Ben C. Ham
Leslie Dowd	Ephriam R. Harris
Frank Duncan	William M. Harrison
George E. Dunn	Byron E. Herring

Leon A. Hicks
Roger L. Hill
Richard F. Hindman
Cheatum L. Holmes
William T. Huddler
Dewitt C. Johnson
Lurtice R. Johnson
Robert M. Johnson
Edwin J. Jones
Henry A. Jones
William R. King
Max Kolacek
Herbert H. Krietsch
Arthur Krueger
Jesse C. Landers
Earl H. Lasiter, Jr.
Lewis E. Latham
Charles Ledwig
Clifton R. Lewis
Oran F. Lewis
Albert Lichtenberg
Grover J. Lindholm
William J. Liska
José Love
Reagan McCowen
John A. McCumber
Calvin L. McMahon
DeWitt C. Martin
June T. Martin
Ismael Martinez
Willie D. Miller
Otis Montgomery

Florentino Muñoz
Wayne Nance
Gerhard C. Ohlendorf
James S. Parker
August Pavelka
Albert Peebles
Floren A. Ploch
Arthur E. Probst
Charles E. Pugh
John C. Reddick
Douglas W. Rhodes
Jesse G. Riser
Hiram F. Roberson
Arthur H. Russell
Otto W. Schindler
Arnold E. Schindler
August Seiffert
Benjamin H. Shannon
Andrew F. Stewart
Leonard C. Stewart
Elmer M. Tate
Jason T. Tate
John T. Thurmond
William D. Trimble
Charles L. Tullis
Roy L. Turner
Francisco Valdahe
Buzz Walker
Erwin S. Wernli
Arthur L. White
Willis B. Wilson

Soldiers Discharge Record Volume II
 (Primarily World War II)

Leonardo M. Acosta	William E. Bryan ³
Melvin Adams	Larry H. Bryce ³
John F. Adian	Alvin Brysch ³
Frank Aguirre	Raymond I. Brysch ³
James B. Akers ³	Walter J. Buchanan ³
Oma F. Akers, Jr. ^{3R}	Francis W. Buck
Atlee E. Alegria ^{3R}	Louis E. Buck
Robert B. Allen	Elde W. Buetow
Otis L. Anthony	Halbert E. Burrell
Paul W. Armstrong ³	Harry W. Burrell
Theo L. Armstrong ³	Herman F. Burrell
Hershall A. Arnett	Martin Bustamante ³
Carl C. Arnold	August M. Byler
Winfred A. Arnold	Andrés G. Caballero
Edward M. Bailey	Enrique F. Caballero
Willie G. Bain	Etanislado G. Caballero
William C. Barnes	Chano C. Cabrera
Weldon G. Barnett ³	Enez G. Cabrera
George L. Barrow ³	Manuel Cadena
Wayland A. Barrow ³	Charlie W. Calliham
Harold W. Bartlett ³	Jack S. Campbell
Charley V. Bernal	Lou Emma Canfield ³
Pablo M. Bernal	Noberto Carbajal
George W. Blackmon	August E. Caron
Daniel B. Bodden	Owen M. Carpenter
Royce H. Bomar ^{3R}	Aubrey N. Carroll ³
Andy E. Boyle	Chester G. Carroll ³
Otis E. Bradshaw ³	Melvin O. Carroll ³
Homer R. Braswell	Wiley G. Carroll, Jr. ³
Elo C. Braune ³	William M. Carter
Roy B. Brister ³	Manual G. Castaneda

Edward L. Chandler	Jose Díaz
Ernest Chapa	Octavio G. Díaz
René L. Chapa	José Díos
Eracleo C. Chavez	Thomas P. Dixon
Jack K. Churchill 3	Richard B. Dobie 3
James T. Churchill 3	Ambrose D. Doebbler 3
John C. Churchill 3	James V. Donoho 3R
Leonard Clark	Louie J. Donoho 3R
Melvin D. Cobb 3	Bryant M. Dove 3
Warren K. Coker 3	William L. Dove 3
David C. Conner, Jr.	Charles E. Dowd
Robert L. Cook	Charles F. Drake
Charlie R. Copeland 3	Lonnie J. Ducote
G.T. Copeland 3	Peter A. Dworaczyk
James O. Coquat 3R	Howard W. Elliott
Joseph M. Coquat, Jr. 3R	Hugo C. Engler
Joseph A. Coquat 3R	Roland F. Engler
Thomas A. Coquat 3R	Henry A. Estes 3
James R. Corley	Victor T. Fernandez
Howard F. Crawford 3	George M. Flores
Desiderio Cuevas, Jr.	William E. Ford
James M. Cunningham 3R	Matt T. Forehand 3R
John T. Cunningham 3R	Oren W. Forehand 3R
Richard R. Curd 3	Eugene D. Foster 3
Gholston Curry 3	Lester G. Foster 3
James K. Custer 3	Elton R. Franke 3
Willie Davidson	Austin T. Freasier
David W. Davis	Paul W. Freasier
Frank R. Davis	James F. Frederick
Corbin A. Dean	Robert L. Frederick
Cecil L. DeBorde	Allen E. Fredrick
Juan D. DeLeon 3R	"A" Allison Freeman 3
Marcos DeLeon	Frederick J. Frerich
Antonio M. DeLuna	Andrew A. Fritz
Felipe M. DeLuna	Marvin D. Fritz
Cosme G. Díaz	José M. Galvan

Doyle C. Gann	Ventura G. Guerrero
Enrique J. García	Espirition G. Gutierrez
Inez R. García	David H. Hadamek
José García	Frank P. Hadamek
Longino García, Jr.	Joe A. Hadamek
Ramiro P. García ^{3R}	Mankins Haley
Teodoso García	Harold B. Ham
Francisco R. Garza	Jesse G. Hamrick
Martin S. Garza	Jack C. Hardwick
Cleopis G. Garza	Ecil J. Harris ³
John R. Gaskill	Edwin D. Harris ³
Alvin L. Gawlik	Issac E. Harris ^{3R}
August B. Geffert ³	Daniel Harrod
Marvin L. Geffert ³	Robert W. Hartlep
Clifton J. Gibson	Elmo J. Hartman ^{3R}
Clyde T. Giles	Thomas C. Hartman ^{3R}
Alton T. Gill ³	Frank W. Heffnarn
James M. Gill ³	James M. Heffnarn
Jerel D. Gilmore ^{3R}	Albert S. Hendrick
James D. Givens	Ben J. Henicke, Jr.
Agapito C. Gonzales	Carlos L. Hernandez
Benjamin Gonzales	Charles H. Herring ^{3R}
Richard N. Goodwin	Euell O. Herring
Patrick H. Goynes	Jesse V. Herring
William E. Grant	Richard F. Hindman
Jessy F. Gray, Jr. ³	Euel A. Hines
Raymond P. Greenwood	Jacinto L. Hinojosa, Jr.
Jeff Gregory	Harry L. Hinton
Ross A. Griffin	Billy J. Holbrook ^{3R}
Erwin O. Gross	Alva J. Holland ^{3R}
Lewis M. Grover	Guy C. Holland ^{3R}
Rosalie P. Grover	Robert R. Holland ^{3R}
Ernesto Guerra	William T. Holland ^{3R}
Guadalupe G. Guerra	Love W. Horton
Manual P. Guerra	Henry Houdmann
Belisario Guerrero	Harold D. House ^{3R}

Claude V. Howard
 Jewel M. Hudson *3R*
 William E. Hudson *3R*
 Henry C. Huebothor
 Albert E. Huegler *3R*
 Sam L. Huff *3R*
 Claude B. Huggins *3*
 Melton E. Huggins *3*
 Charley B. Johnson
 James F. James
 Thomas R. James
 Aaron E. Johnson
 Floyd C. Johnson
 Edward F. Jones *3R*
 Elmer K. Jones *3R*
 Joseph N. Jones *3R*
 Oren R. Jones *3R*
 R.L. Jones *3R*
 Gus A. Kaase
 Wilbert J. Kaspar
 Edward L. Kasper
 Urban F. Katzfey
 Thomas A. Kendall
 William S. Kendall
 William J. Kidd
 Marlyn L. King *3*
 Marvin O. Koerth
 Mike Korczynski
 Willie F. Korczynski
 Robert W. Krepps
 Herbert H. Krietsch
 Raymond R. Krietsch
 Roland W. Krietsch
 Albert Kugerl
 Verbie Z. LaGrange
 James R. Lamm

Virginia L. Lamm
 Floyd C. Latham
 David E. Lauderback, Jr.
 James C. Lauderback
 John T. Lazenby
 Elmer J. Lee *3R*
 Billy H. Leggett
 J.W. Leggitt, Jr.
 Ernest A. Lehmberg
 Simon Leija
 Albert B. Lemley
 Louie E. Lewis
 John F. Light
 Royal B. Light
 Charles W. Lindholm *3R*
 Harry A. Linney
 ★ Elmer R. Looney *3*
 Emil Lukasik
 John Lukasik
 Max Lukasik
 Dick R. Luthringer
 James C. McBride
 Stafford R. McCumber
 Don J. McEachern
 Fitzhugh McFarland
 Thomas C. McGriff
 James R. McGuffin, Jr.
 Elmo McKinney
 Wiley C. McKinney
 William D. McKinney
 Johnnie R. McNease *3*
 Verlon Maguglin *3R*
 Garvin A. Malone
 John J. Malone
 Robert F. Mapes
 Alfred A. Martin *3R*

Staton A. Martin ^{3R}	Antonio Nerios
Amador Martinez	Blas Nerios
Pedro G. Martinez	José Nerios
Lewis A. Matheaus	Nicholas B. Nerios
Reagan R. Matkin ³	Charles E. Nichols ³
Jack Matthews	Cayetano Nieto
Carl W. Matthijetz ³	Elmer L. Nolen
John H. Matthijetz ³	Rufus F. Nolen
Ezequiel A. Mendez	Warren Norris
Elmer D. Miekán	Wayne Norris
Archie B. Miller	Ysabel P. Ochoa
Carroll G. Miller	Joe W. Odom ³
John A. Miller	John A. Odom ³
Roger Q. Mills, Jr.	Benancio Olivares
Ranulfo P. Molina	Claro Olivarez
Manuel Montelongo	Abel Ortíz
Francisco W. Moreno ^{3R}	Hugo H. Otto ³
Jesús Moreno ^{3R}	Thomas E. Oxford ³
J.D. Morris ^{3R}	Leroy T. Parish
Jacobo C. Mosqueda	Joel D. Parker
José S. Mosqueda	Wylie R. Parker
Sabas G. Mosqueda	Howard E. Patton
Jesse B. Mote	Cruz M. Peña
E.D. Moulder	Jesús Peña
Manuel S. Munoz	Rogue Peña
Ray F. Mussmann	Benjamin J. Pennington ³
Louis Mutina	George C. Pennington ³
Andrew S. Nance ^{3R}	Felis Perez
Dan O. Nance ^{3R}	Manuel L. Perez
Felix A. Nance ^{3R}	Oscar S. Petrie
James L. Nance ^{3R}	Hugo F. Pfau ³
Thomas F. Nance, Jr. ^{3R}	Lee E. Pickett, Jr.
Elmer A. Neatherlin	Alfred G. Pieper
Jesse W. Neathlin	Alvin A. Ploch ³
Freeman L. Nelson ³	Stanley F. Ploch ³
James E. Nelson	Victor Ponce ^{3R}

Leslie C. Pullin ^{3R}
 Marvin F. Pullin ^{3R}
 Domingo Quintanilla
 Pedro E. Quintanilla
 George D. Rackley
 James R. Rackley, Jr.
 William R. Rackley
 Ryan G. Ramsower
 Vernon Raney
 Cristobal Ramon
 Julian A. Ramon
 Miguel Ramon
 Lloyd E. Rathke
 Raymond R. Redd
 Albert V. Redding
 Robert L. Redding
 Hubert T. Redwood
 Joe M. Repka
 Israel Reyes
 Pedro M. Reyes
 Severo Reyes
 Jack Rice
 Arthur H. Richter
 Leon J. Richter
 Raymond P. Richter
 Rufus Richter
 William P. Riley
 Eugene L. Riser
 Clarence A. Robbins
 Jackson A. Roberds
 Mack T. Roberson
 Carl L. Roberts
 John M. Roberts
 Roy E. Roberts
 Clarence R. Robinson
 Felix V. Robinson ³
 David Robles

Henry H. Rosebrock ³
 Terrel O. Rosebrock ³
 Ramon Ruiz
 Daniel Saenz ^{3R}
 José Saenz ^{3R}
 Ruben Saenz ^{3R}
 Thomas Saenz, Jr. ^{3R}
 Johnnie G. Salas
 George W. Samford
 Lindon N. Samford
 Billy W. Saunders
 Richard R. Schilling
 Ervin W. Schulte
 Lee R. Secrest
 August L. Seiffert
 Fred Seiffert
 Fritz H. Senne
 Jesús N. Sepeda
 Morris Shepherd
 Robert C. Shipp
 Lee V. Shives
 D.J. Shumate
 Oliver H. Simmons
 James H. Sinor
 John F. Sinor
 James W. Skidmore ³
 Francis H. Smith
 Harold C. Smith
 Lynn A. Smith
 Milton L. Smith
 W.A. Smith
 William E. Smith
 Hijinio G. Sotelo
 Polisarpio G. Sotelo
 Emil A. Spacek
 J.D. Sprott

Willie P. Stallings	Oscar Vela
Harvey J. Steadman	Seferino N. Verastigi
Woodrow W. Stendebach ^{3R}	Alton E. Vickery
Arnie W. Stewart	Henry C. Vivian
Earl D. Stewart ^{3R}	Clarence E. Voges ³
Merlin E. Stewart ^{3R}	Chester V. Voges ³
Reuben W. Storch ³	Clinton H. Walker ^{3R}
Ewell D. Strause	George A. Walker ^{3R}
Thomas L. Strause	Cecil E. Walton
Oscar A. Stridde	Jasper B. Walton
Raymond R. Stridde	Thomas E. Wasser
Jonas I. Striebeck	Darwin C. Weathersby
William H. Striebeck, III	Gerald H. Weathersby
Morris S. Strong	Rex A. Welty, Jr.
Douglas R. Stuart	Charles E. West ^{3R}
Gordon D. Stuart	Hugh K. West
Herbert M. Symm ³	Tommy T. Wheeler
Apolinar Tabarez	Carrol E. White
Willie R. Talley ³	Doyle L. Williams
Pedro Tanguma, Jr.	Mark L. Williams
Benjamin C. Tardy, Jr. ³	Cecil H. Williams
Andrew S. Tate	Cecil P. Wilson
Gordon E. Taylor	Charles W. Wilson ³
Henry R. Tieken	James W. Wilson
Alvis M. Tindol	Woodrow Wilson
Daniel J. Tindol, Jr.	Margueritte Winkler
Davis R. Tindol	Albert J. Witt
Edward T. Tindol	Louis F. Wojtasczyk
Thaddeus D. Tindol	Bill Womac
Samuel L. Treviño	Herschel D. Womac
Pablo Treviño	James F. Womac
Lloyd C. Trimble	Owen T. Wood
Henry A. Tullis ^{3R}	Raymond R. Wood
Eulalio Ureste	Gharold N. Woods
Anastacio R. Urias	Thomas E. Word
Nicholas M. Velasquez	Jetty W. Work

William A. Work
 Carroll L. Wright
 Nerice L. Wright
 Abelardo Ybañez
 Emilio Ybañez
 Felix Ybañez
 Francisco B. Ybañez
 Gilberto Ybañez

Jesús G. Ybañez
 Rudolfo Ybañez
 Arnold A. Zamzow³
 Melvin O. Zamzow³
 Oscar W. Zamzow³
 Eugenio Zapata
 Sylvestre R. Zepeda
 Miguel R. Zepedo

Soldiers Discharge Record Volume III

(Primarily Korean Conflict)

Alfred N. Adian
 Roland A. Albrecht
 George M. Armstrong
 Phillip M. Armstrong
 James E. Barrington
 Ivis G. Barrow
 Dudley W. Bellows
 Richard C. Bellows
 James A. Benham
 Lamon L. Bennett, Jr.
 Calvin G. Blaschke
 Edward J. Bludau
 William R. Bomar
 Garland R. Bramblett
 Virgil T. Brown, Jr.
 Billy W. Bruce
 Joe L. Bustamante
 Lewis E. Butler
 Melvin J. Buxkemper
 George W. Callicoatt
 Charles C. Campbell
 Santiago D. Cantu
 August E. Caron

Charles H. Caron
 Estel H. Caron
 Doctor J. Carroll, Jr.
 James L. Casey
 Obidio Chapa
 Benjamin G. Clevenger
 John K. Coffin
 Dalton K. Coker
 Travis A. Cole
 Erbie M. Conley
 Robert B. Conn
 Edward D. Cooper
 Donald G. Coquat
 Ernan A. Cortez, Jr.
 George E. Crawford, Jr.
 Victor Cuevas
 Edward C. Davidson
 Jack Davidson
 Aubrey L. Davis
 Doyle E. Davis
 Franklin D. Davis
 Horace A. Davis
 Marcos DeLeon
 Martin DeLeon

Charles A. Doeblbler	George Hahn
Alvin H. Dortch	Victor Hahn
Robert Dougherty	Elisha B. Haley
Tommie R. Elliott	Harlin J. Haley
James D. Epperson	Jim M. Ham
James E. Esse	William L. Hardwick
Sidney A. Fischer, Jr.	Ecil J. Harris
Phillip H. Flood	Emmet S. Harris
Nasario Flores	Lendsy W. Harris
Herman B. Franke	Morris R. Harris
Billy D. Forehand	Thomas C. Hartman
Jose L. Fuentes	George F. Hawelka
Bobby G. Funderburgh	James L. Hedrick
Zeb Furr, Jr.	Kenneth H. Hedrick
Alejandro C. García	Silas P. Hedrick
Daniel García	Frank G. Henicke
Gilbert G. García	Raymond W. Henicke
Juan C. García	Casemiro Hernandez
Raul García	Curtis D. Hicks
Authuro R. Garza	James W. Hines
Cristel L. Garza	Leslie H. Hobbs
John E. Gay	Eugene T. Holland
Andrew F. Gerhard, Jr.	Lee R. Hoskins
George C. Gillett, Jr.	Edgar L. James
Edward L. Ginn	Edwin T. James
Cary D. Gipson, Jr.	Dale O. Jennings
Robert L. Glocar	James M. Johnson, III
Earl L. Glover, Jr.	Tempel Johnson
Otto A. Goebel	Bill M. Jones
Joel A. Gomillion	Robert H. Jones
Jose' Gonzales, Jr.	Earl B. Joyce
Tommy M. Gregorcyk	Q.T. Kaatz
Huey P. Griffith	Wilfred N. Katzfey
Justo Guerrero	John B. Kerr
John V. Hadamek	Grady W. Kimball
Daniel B. Hademek	James F. Kimball

Marvin H. Lamprecht	Charles W. Nichols
Richard E. Lichtenberg	Pablo Nieto
Ernest Lindholm	George R. Norris
James O. Lindholm	Wilburn L. Norris
Alberto Z. Longorio	Clarence W. Odom
Leonard J. Lyne	Walton N. Orien
Leonard S. McClaugherty, Jr.	Pablo M. Ortiz
Marvin L. McCumber	Frank J. Pavelka
Thomas R. McEndree	Daniel A. Pawlik
Guy W. McGee	Ernest F. Pawlik
Clinton E. McMurray	Albert D. Peebles
Lewis E. McMurray	Reynaldo R. Peña
Daniel McNeill	Tommy E. Petrie
Thermon B. McNeill	Jesús Ponce
Buddy J. McQueen	Paul Primm
Owen L. Maley	Elwood L. Probst
James M. Mapes	Joe E. Probst
Adon Martinez	John D. Prosen
Manuel R. Martinez	James Pugh
Harold G. Maupin	Jim T. Pugh
Bonifacio V. Maurico	James R. Pullin, Jr.
William J. Meek	Clyde R. Purchase
Clinton Meyer	Alfred N. Qualls
Milton H. Meyer	Juan Quintanilla
John T. Millender	Cristobal Ramón
James A. Miller	Bobby L. Redding
Joseph E. Millner	Ervin A. Repka
Jack E. Mills	Arlon O. Retzloff
Robert A. Montgomery	Tomas Reyes, Jr.
Allen G. Morgan	Simón Reyna, Jr.
Eugene R. Morín	Richard L. Richter
Johnny S. Moser	Raul L. Rincon
Graciano Muniz	Eugene L. Riser
Matthew C. Murphy	Robert J. Riser
Jesús Nerios, Jr.	Billy R. Roberts
Billy R. Nettle	John B. Rockwell

Florentino I. Rodriguez	Martin F. Tanguma
William H. Rohde	Nasario Torres
Fred W. Rommel	Douglas J. Troell
Terrell Rosebrock	John Umphres, Jr.
Marcos G. Ruiz	Jesús G. Ureste
Joseph S. Rushing	Dennis E. VanCleave
Everett L. Russell	Eddie G. Vaughn
Archie M. Samford	Marion C. Walker
Thomas J. Sanders	Marshall E. Walker
Brooks M. Schley	Dave M. Walton
Edgar C. Schroeder	John A. Walton
Otto H. Schroeder	Nathan O. Walton
John T. Schultz	Carl G. Weickman
Irvin A. Shaw	Billy J. White
Thomas R. Shelton	Earl D. Whitley
William H. Rhode	William H. Wieding
James H. Sinor	Henry M. Wilder
Roy P. Smith	Alva Wade Williams
Wilfred D. Smith	Cecil H. Williams
Joseph H. Snider	Edward L. Williams
William E. Snider	Elwin P. Williams
Tilleman Staggs	Justin M. Williams
Richard L. Stannard	Larry W. Williams
Robert L. Stapleton	Wayman J. Williams
Daniel M. Starr	Marcellous Wilson
Sam W. Steen, Jr.	Eugene Q. Woelfel
Carl L. Stewart, Jr.	Jimmie L. Woodard
Thomas J. Stewart	José M. Ybañez, Jr.
William P. Stewart	Martín Ybañez
Gordon D. Stuart, Jr.	Ramón Zapata, Jr.
Freddie A. Tadlock	José R. Zepeda

Soldiers Discharge Record Volume IV

(Primarily Viet Nam Conflict)

Kennard O. Albrecht	Hal R. Lee
Herbert A. Arnold	Arthur Longoria
John K. Blair	Rufus R. Lyne
Bobby R. Carpenter	Michael T. McCumber
Benito Cuevas	Jerry L. McQueen
José L. Fuentes	Staton A. Martin
Earl P. Fischer	Crisoforo Moya, Jr.
Robert A. Galloway	Milton L. Odom
Alfredo Garza	Elwood L. Probst
William C. Goodwin	Clint E. Rawlinson
James M. Gullion	Richard O. Renick
Herbert R. Haag	Gerald M. Shaw
Lindon E. Hicks	George M. Snider
Marion E. Hougham	Sam W. Steen, Jr.
Lamar James	Lloyd T. Stewart, Jr.
Henry F. Krause	Lauro Ybañez
Nolan R. Kunkel	Curtis W. Zamzow

Soldiers Discharge Record Volume V

(Primarily Viet Nam Conflict)

Porfirio R. Aguillen	Dale A. Burell
Paul W. Armstrong	Joseph Burell
Miguel T. Benevades	Lawrence E. Buxkamper, Jr.
Alfredo G. Bernal, Jr.	August M. Byler
Tito A. Bernal	Danny E. Cadena
James M. Blankenship	Elmer A. Calloway
Luey A. Breshers, Sr.	Aubrey R. Carroll
Roland D. Bridges	Arturo Carvajal
Jack D. Bright	David C. Carvajal
Lorman F. Brown, Jr.	Billy J. Chandler

Gordon M. Chandler	Herman W. Haag
Cervando G. Chapa	Jerry L. Hahn
Ismael Chapa	Billy R. Haley
Roger Chapa	John K. Ham
Eddie G. Chobera	Ned K. Handley
Lloyd Clifton	E.S. Harris
Ronnie N. Conn	Horace A. Hart
Ernest W. Coonce	Harvey M. Heflin
Ricardo A. Cortez	Thomas C. Hernandez
George E. Crawford, Jr.	Robert E. Herring
Abraham U. Cruz	Steven W. Holloway
Cruz Cruz	Oscar Johnson
Charles F. Davis	Kasey K. King
Octavio Díaz, Jr.	Jimmy Kolacek
Jerome J. Dugosh	John D. Korczynski
Victor C. Eckhardt, Jr.	Waymond D. Kuenstler
Donald C. Edwards	Damon L. Lackey
Thomas M. Edwards	Joel W. Lansford
John R. Erwin	Bernard R. Lemley
William D. Fair	Richard A. Lerch, Jr.
Alejandro Fuentes	David M. Liska
Enrique Fuentes	Merced Lopez, Jr.
Soila Fuentes	William E. Lynd
Walter P. Gillett	John T. McCumber
Alfredo Gonzales	Charles McGuire, Jr.
Ernesto Gonzales, Jr.	Marvin E. McNeice
José C. Gonzales	Lewis E. McTighe
Santano D. Gonzalez	Ismael G. Macias
Jimmy H. Goynes	Remigio G. Macias
Jerry E. Grant	Wayne T. Martin
Omer P. Green	Joseph W. Matthews
Jessy F. Gray	Melvin W. Melton
Reynaldo Guajardo	Dewitt M. Miles
Reynaldo Guerrero	Joe R. Molina
José M. Gutierrez	Manuel Muñoz, Jr.
Rudolfo Gutierrez	Charles E. Nichols

Gerald C. Pennington	Charles L. Taylor
Alberto Perez	Joe A. Tharp
Gilberto D. Perez, Jr.	Jason E. Thompson
David C. Polozeck	Henry E. Toerck
Guadalupe P. Ponce	Kikola J. Troell
Joseph F. Pruchnicki, Jr.	Carie R. Tullis
David L. Pullin	Gabriel J. Valdez
Ponciano M. Ramón	Charles H. Wilson
Jerry E. Retzloff	Marcellus Wilson
William R. Richter	Clifford C. Word
Walter L. Roberson	Joe G. Wright
Daniel Rodriquez	Michael G. Wright
Ben R. Shaw	Christoval P. Ybáñez
Michael D. Smith	Robert P. Ybáñez
William S. Smith	Joseph E. York, III
Archie B. Stafford	James M. Younts
Earl Wesley Stark	Chester R. Zamzow
Light T. Stepheson	David G. Zamzow
James L. Stewart	Jerry L. Zamzow
Domingo F. Tanguma	Yndalicio Zepeda, Jr.

Casualties

The list of casualties for World War II and the Korean Conflict was supplied by the office of the Adjutant General in Austin, Texas. Kika de la Garza supplied the casualty list for the Viet Nam Conflict.

World War II

Juan Alegría	Raymond H. Lindholm, Jr.
Walter B. Arnett	Felix Z. Longoria
William Bednorz	Joe E. Macias
Halbert E. Burell	Wiley C. McKinney
August M. Byler	Manuel Montelongo
Marcelo F. Caballero	Eugene Murray, Jr.
Ernest Chapa	Valter A. Odom
Howard F. Crawford	Thomas E. Oxford
Donald M. Cunningham	Edward Pavelka
Cosme G. Díaz	Norman E. Proffitt
Tom P. Dolan, Jr.	Marvin F. Pullin
Doyle T. Dooley	Sidney F. Ramsey
Henry A. Estes	Benjamin S. Ruíz
Ventura G. Guerrero	Lynn B. Shannon
Richard E. Gullett	Eddie E. Sliva
Elvin Herring	James A. Stewart
Tolbert W. Holland	Gordon E. Taylor
William M. Holland, Jr.	George I. Tindol
Albert A. Horton	Luis Treviño
R.L. Jones	Jesse L. White
Walter Kolacek	Lester B. Williams
C.L. Landrum	Norman L. Williams
Edgar N. Langley	Jesús S. Ybañez, Jr.

Korean Conflict

Duane Coquat	Huey P. Griffith
Edward Slica, Jr.	

Viet Nam Conflict

José G. Hernandez
George C. Melton

Anthony G. Tate
Augustus L. Williams

CHAPTER V

OAKVILLE-THE FIRST COUNTY SEAT

The community which became Oakville took root among tall waving grasses and spreading live oak trees, interspersed with a few scrubby mesquites. The Nueces River ran west of this settlement, and about two miles above Oakville the road from San Antonio to Brownsville crossed the Nueces on a natural rock bridge. Santa Anna had crossed this bridge on his way to the Alamo. Sulphur Creek ran through the town, its springs furnishing the settlers with an abundance of water. Only a few Indians remained to cause trouble from time to time for the first families who came around 1850.

The Last Indian Fight

The last known Indian fight in the area was about 1885. Andrew Tullis, who lived about fourteen miles from Oakville, set out on a hog hunt one morning, carrying his pistol and knife. He came across a large horse herd which contained several of his father's horses. The two guards began shooting when he started to cut out the horses, and Andy returned the fire. Just as he was running out of bullets, a band of painted and feathered Indians appeared on the hilltop. Tullis' pony was not known for his speed, but whoops and shouts seemed to put wings on his feet. Andy and his brother-in-law, Tim Cude, took their wives and babies to the Rance Tullous home in Oakville before night.

The next morning about a dozen men set out to trail

the Indians. They came upon them at Turkey Creek in McMullen County late that evening. At dawn the Oakville men surprised the Indians and killed them all. The only paleface loss was Sebastian Beall's two front teeth, which were knocked out by an arrow.

* * * * *

*This section is based on an interview with Pascal Murray, grandson of James Murray.

When James Murray was about six years old, his family left Ireland on a ship bound for the United States; cholera broke out aboard ship, and both his parents died at sea. At New Orleans, James and his two older sisters were taken off the ship and separated, not to meet again for about seventy years.

The trip from New Orleans to Texas was overland, and James "landed" in Oakville, where he was taken into the home of Mr. and Mrs. John King. They provided for him like a son, and when the boy was old enough to be of help to them, James was paid \$15 a month to look after Mr. King's cattle on the range.

Mrs. King would give James enough biscuits and jerky to last several days; he would then wrap the food in the bedroll tied on the back of his saddle. When night came, he staked his horse with a lariat, and while the animal grazed on the lush grass, James would spread his bedroll, eat supper, and then, with his saddle for a pillow and the sky for a cover, get a good night's rest and awake ready for another day's work.

In those days there were no trees between Oakville and the Atascosa River, which watered the King's range, although there was timber along the river. Mr. King told James that in case of stormy weather he could spend the night in a vacant house near the river, but to never

approach it from the open range—he should first ride up the river, staying under cover of the trees until he was sure that no Indians were about. One evening as a storm was brewing, James approached the vacant house only to find the place swarming with redskins who were rounding up a drove of horses. Continuing under cover of the timber, he quickly retreated downriver. After putting a goodly distance between himself and the Indians, he staked out his horse and camped for the night, but admitted later that sleep eluded him.

Cattle were worth \$5 per head, and as James received his wages, he bought a few cattle; as time passed, he accumulated quite a herd bearing his own brand. When Mexican bandits raided the Live Oak County area, a large number of Murray's cattle were among those driven off to Mexico. Some of the owners petitioned the U.S. government to present their claims for redress to the Mexican government. Apparently no claims were paid at that time, but about 1910 Texas state legislator W.W. Caves influenced settlement of Mr. Murray's claim against Mexico, and the Murray heirs did receive some installments on the claim.

When James Murray sold part of his herd, he did not know what else to do with his money, so he bought some land—1,400 acres of it—at 45¢ per acre. He later built his home on this land, reared his family there, and spent the remainder of his life at this homesite, which is now within the city limits of Three Rivers.*

The Community

Oakville's growth rate probably equaled that of any frontier town of its day without a railroad. There were good days and bad days, droughts and hard times, rains and prosperity, all closely associated with the prosperity of the farms and ranches supporting it and the development of their natural resources. There were great

spiritual experiences among the God-fearing citizens, and cases of greed and hatred with accompanying strife and bloodshed among the others.

The first Sunday School in the county was organized in Oakville. Until appropriate literature could be obtained, those who attended brought the books they had—Bibles, blue back spellers, etc.

According to Clabe Robinson (who at one time planned to write a history of Live Oak County), during the decade following the Civil War over forty men were killed in or near Oakville—and only two men were arrested and jailed for serious offenses. They were out-of-towners, and were fatally shot through the jail window.

Outlaws and desperadoes sometimes made their hangouts here. As late as 1913 Mr. Hatfield, the Oakville blacksmith, received a visit from an old acquaintance, the notorious Frank James (who had been acquitted of his crimes).

In 1912 Mark Mahoney related this story of courthouse justice: A man was summoned to appear as a key witness for a criminal case at Oakville. Next morning when the witness stepped out onto the second floor porch of the old rock hotel, he was shot from the courthouse across the street. The witness died, and his killer escaped.

When Jim Drury carried the mail in saddlebags from Corpus Christi to San Antonio, he stopped at Oakville, and by 1859 Oakville had a post office. In 1877 W. Rush was mail carrier for the Mineral, Oakville, and Beeville route. By 1892, a hack line carrying mail and passengers (for \$2 each) operated directly between Beeville and Oakville; in good weather the trip took six hours. J.M. Coker's Daily Hack Line also went from Oakville to Pettus (for \$2.50 per person), making connection in Pettus with trains. In 1914 W.E. Lacks was operating an almost-daily auto mail and passenger service from Beeville to Oakville, and then to Three Rivers.

John Campbell was postmaster from about 1896 until 1914; this cabinetmaker and former Union Army officer had come to Oakville from Kentucky about 1875, and when the courthouse was repaired a few years later, he did the cabinet work. His daughter, Beulah Monroe, succeeded him. Other postmasters have included Tiny Mahoney, Macy Jones, Mamie Manning, Mrs. Harvel Carter, Bertha Lemley, and Joe Coquat.



Picture 9

Swinging bridge across the Nueces River near Oakville.

The *Live Oak County Leader* was started in Oakville in 1891 by T.R. Atkins and Miss M.E. Atkins. Subscription to the weekly newspaper was \$1.50 per year, and half the space was devoted to advertising. An ad in the November 5, 1891, issue invited the reader to "Bring your javeline skins, deer and goat skins to Ernest Wimmer," and the Blair and Hinton Grocery offered "fresh saur kraut,

potatoes and onions.”

The following letter appeared in the *Live Oak County Herald* in the fall of 1941; it later was reprinted in the *Bee-Picayune*.

Troy, Ohio
September 18, 1941.

Editor Newspaper,
Oakville, Texas.

Dear Sir:

I enclose a dollar as a subscription for the paper for the time that amount will cover.

Forty-nine years ago I taught school in Oakville, the school term of 1892-1893. At that time there was a newspaper published by Mr. Atkins; so there is certainly one now.

Lately I have been having. . . homesickness for Oakville, and to see some of the boys and girls who went to school to me. I had those from about twelve to eighteen in age; and the younger ones were taught by Miss Patty Reagan, fine and capable. I was a lanky, green youngster from Ohio here, age twenty-three. . . I liked my boys and girls immensely, and my experiences among them and in the town, make one of the happiest memories of all my years. . . .

My oldest pupils. . . were three brothers, Willie Lyne and the twins, Reuben and Rufus. I often think of them, and the big box of hides they sent me, of Mexican leopard, bob-cats, deer and wild hog that they had shot, which gave me some attractive rugs.

I recall Bert McBride, and a pet racoon. . . which he brought to school one day, and—different from Mary's Little Lamb—I told the youngsters that we would let Bert keep the little fellow inside, leashed to the desk, for safety—if we all would not let it distract our attention from our work. It was too far for Bert to take the pet back at once. . . He and his sister came three or four miles to school in a cart.

I remember Eugene Nation, a keen, fine-looking lad; and Green Cude, a bit lanky. . . and the Wheelis boys, Green, Sam, Ira, and Dillard. . . Sam would be out of school for a few days now and then to break a pony. . . Some of the girls in school were Mamie Gilmore, and Tiny, daughters of Captain Gilmore, who was on the school board; also the daughter of Mr. Atkins, the editor; Flora Wright; Nellie Wimmer—and I recall Fay Hatfield. . .

Children of the school board members that I recall besides the Gilmore sisters, were May Bauer, a bright and smiling lassie, and Murray Brown, whose father was president of the board—a very earnest and thoughtful lad.

Out of school, I remember Dr. Orr and his drug store; Otto Wimmer and his big general store; Mr. Hatfield, blacksmith and teacher of the Methodist Men's Class, which I attended; Eugene Reagan, of a sterling manliness, Miss Patty's brother, who had lately brought down from Kentucky a car-load of horses, with a Negro boy, Jim, who got a job at the Chester House, and whom I taught to read and write a little, so he could read his mother's letters and answer them. (And Jim used to ring the first bell for breakfast, then come and stick his head in my door and say, "P'fessor, I've got de cream at your end of the table.")

I used to enjoy going to Judge Cox's office in the court house for little chats with him—C.C. Cox, born in my state of Ohio, next a boy in Tennessee, then to Texas where he was in the navy of independent Texas, later in the Confederate Navy. Captain Gilmore, a Confederate Cavalry officer, was an encouraging friend, and a most interesting narrator of experiences of a cultured and splendid man.

I recall Squire Chester, of course, a Connecticut Yankee who became a Texas Justice of the Peace, and proprietor of the Chester House where I lived in Oakville.

In the Chester House, in a September court week, one of the visiting lawyers shared my room—General Bagby, a Confederate brigadier general who told me many interesting things about his West Point days, and his visits to Washington where his father was a U.S. Senator from Alabama, and where he got to see and hear men like Calhoun, Clay, and Webster.

General Bagby told me he had never taken the oath of allegiance after the war, to be able to vote, but. . . he had a good friend and client who was in a hot race for sheriff, "and he is insisting on my taking the oath so I can vote for him—and I reckon I'll do it."

Templeton kept a hotel near the Chester House, who as a boy of about fifteen had been a guard in the Confederate prison stockade at Camp Ford, near Tyler, Texas at a certain time in the war—which happened to be part of the time that my father and his Nineteenth Iowa regiment were prisoners there, captured in a fight near Morgan's Bend, Louisiana.

. . . . I would rather hear that Oakville orchestra now than any other music I know. There was Paul Bauer with his flute, Herman Wimmer and his banjo, George Orrick with his harmonica, and a blind man, Eddie Lyons. . . with his violin. . .

My favorite loafing place was Paul Bauer's shop, and he (was) secretary of the school board. . . also chairman of the Democratic county committee. . . When Congressman Crain came to town for a meeting, (my father and Mr. Crain being friends in Washington) Mr. Bauer got a pint of whiskey and gave it to me to slip quietly to Mr. Crain at the hotel, so there would be no need to go to the saloon; I surreptitiously eased the package to Mr. Crain, who at once opened it up and passed it around to the half-dozen or more men in his hotel room before he took a drink himself. Interesting group, and interesting speech at the court house afterwards. Mr. Crain was a man of eloquence and personal charm.

Paul Bauer shaped for me an 18-inch leather strap for emergency use at school, saying: "switches don't keep." I had to use the strap only two or three times. . .

George Orrick and Herman Wimmer. . . were mighty good pals, helping me in many a tough struggle with home-sickness—horseback rides, music, lemonade made with cold water from a well back of the store, sugar from the Wimmer store and lemon extract and tartaric acid from the drug store, lemons and ice being at that time unobtainable in Oakville except as "special."

. . . I can help out my recollections and my homesickness, by getting the Oakville paper for awhile anyhow and maybe seeing an occasional familiar name.

If any of those youngsters of mine are still in the old town, and might feel kindly like treating this as a letter to them, and would answer it, and tell about "who's who" up to now, I would surely appreciate it.

Very truly yours,

Irvine L. Dungan¹



Picture 10

The Oakville students and teachers, about 1902.

In 1895, J.M. Caves and his son, W.W., brought the newspaper from Atkins and changed its name to *Live Oak County Times*. J.M. Cunningham of Devine bought the newspaper from them in 1900, and the name was returned to *Live Oak County Leader*.

The 1880 census revealed Oakville's population to be 250. The next year Oakville erected the county's first free school building, and in 1899 it became the first independent school district in Live Oak County.

Oakville had one disastrous fire which destroyed the entire business block east of the courthouse; the area was never completely rebuilt. By 1900 the town had had its growth, and for the next decade the population varied little. Several times "promoters" came along, offering to build a railroad to Oakville if its citizens could provide them a large enough "bonus"—this they were never able to do.

It was a well-known fact that no area of the country could develop to its full potential without a railroad. Supplies for Live Oak County's first citizens came from Corpus Christi or St. Mary's on the coast, later from San Antonio, and still later from Beeville, via freight wagons drawn by teams of oxen, horses, or mules, over rough winding roads that were often impassable in wet weather. A railroad through the county was often talked about, but early efforts to get one were unsuccessful.

In 1907 Dudley Blair and Lee Hinton opened the First National Bank in Oakville, which remained until the founders organized the Three Rivers National Bank. That same year a lumberyard opened, and in 1908 Oakville boasted of an ice cream parlor.

Southwestern Bell Telephone Company opened an office in Oakville's Eagle House in 1912, with Fannie Tullis as chief operator.

That same year, George W. West offered a bonus of \$100,000 for a railroad to go through his ranch. Annie

Hamilton and James Mahoney also paid for the railroad passing through their ranches. The promoters of the San Antonio, Uvalde, and Gulf Railroad (which local citizens nicknamed Sausage) accepted the offers, and the railroad bypassed Oakville.

In 1913 J.M. Cunningham moved his family and newspaper business to the new town of Hamiltonburg, and in 1925 the name of that paper was changed to the *Three Rivers News*.

That same year the *Beeville Picayune* noted that Dr. Charles Reagan and his family had moved to Beeville for him to practice medicine, and so the children could attend high school—principally the latter (Oakville only had eight grades).

In 1914 Garland Buck started the *Oakville Optimist* in an attempt to save Oakville as the county seat, despite the fact that the railroad had left the town high and dry. Buck was an imaginative writer, but he soon realized that he had undertaken a hopeless task. He then moved to George West and began the *Live Oak County Herald*.

On February 20-21, 1914, the Live Oak County schools had a rally at Oakville. The first morning featured an exhibit of school work; after a barbecue, the director of the Interscholastic League spoke, and then the teachers and students marched to the athletic field. Each school had its own color and its own yell for the track meet. The winning schools were (senior league) Simmons 33, Votaw 26, and Oakville 18; and (junior league) Votaw 20, Simmons 17 1/2, and Lapara 12 1/2. The second day featured more UIL speakers. Teams from Simmons, Votaw, Mikeska, and Oakville debated whether or not education should be compulsory—the negative side won. The rally closed with basketball games and footraces by the men.

There were three schools at Oakville—one for whites, one for Mexicans, and one for Negroes. Oakville at one

time had a large black population. One day a black community leader was sitting on the porch of a store, when a white man came along, pulled the chair from under him, and hit the fellow over the head. Soon afterwards, almost every member of the black community moved away from Oakville.

In January, 1919, Live Oak County voted by a large majority to accept Mr. West's offer and move the county seat to the new town of George West.

People began moving away from Oakville, and in the 1970's only a few families here bear the names of the early settlers. Descendants of the Reagan, Coker, Curry, Hinton, and Crawford families have been joined by other people, however, and there still remains an active Baptist church, a post office, and three service stations. The busy old Highway 9 from San Antonio to Corpus Christi will soon be replaced by IH 37 and will be merely an access road. A farm-to-market road leads from Oakville to Ray Point and Mineral.

Children of the Pioneers

In 1889, Mr. and Mrs. Felix G. Crawford moved to Live Oak County. Crawford was a former Texas Ranger and a Civil War veteran. As a brickmason, he had helped build the Texas state capitol in Austin. After renting for a few years, the Crawfords bought a farm near Oakville, and there they lived out their lives. Mr. Crawford outlived all the other Confederate veterans in this county. His son, also named Felix, is now in his tenth decade, and he still lives on that farm. Among Felix Crawford's most cherished possessions is a single barrel, muzzle loading cap-and-ball musket which was used during the Texas Revolution by his grandfather, Captain Henry Rutherford Crawford, and he also has the gun his father carried during the Civil War. Other local Crawford descendants—besides those bearing the Crawford

name—include G.C. and Marley Gillett, Gus and Milton Dunn, and the Charlie Augustus Pugh descendants.

Joshua Hinton left his Virginia home at an early age to work as a deckhand, but in 1854 he left the Navy. The next year, he settled at Oakville, and began raising corn and cotton on his forty acres. Since that time the Hinton name has been prominent in Live Oak County. Joshua was the second county treasurer, and was justice of the peace for eleven years. He and his sons, Ira, Lee, and Harry, became merchants in Oakville. While serving as deputy sheriff, Harry was murdered by prisoners in the Oakville jail. Harry's son, Harry Leslie Hinton, taught school in George West for many years, and served as county judge for almost a decade. Harry is also a descendant of the first county judge, John Powell. Harry and Ann are now raising livestock on the farm begun by Joshua Hinton. After the 1966 flood, they moved to George West, but two more generations are now living in the old family home—their son Steve and his family have moved back to the farm.

Oakville Baptist Church

The Oakville Baptist Church was constituted in 1856, and the next year it reported a membership of 128 (the most members in its 123 year history). In 1873 it was one of nine area churches which withdrew from the San Antonio River Association to organize the Blanco Baptist Association. The first annual report to the new association (in 1874) gave the membership as 41; Elder J.W. Baylor was pastor.

In its over a century in the Blanco Association, Oakville Baptist Church has had some kind of services continuously. It has been served by twenty-six pastors: J.W. Baylor, L.D. Young, Butler Kimball, M.S. Stamp, G.H.M. Wilson, J.D. Walker, A.J. Peddy, J.M. Caves, A.J.C. Knowles, J.W. Cunningham, C.R. Newton, J.W.

Thomas, George W. Coltrin, C.G. Cleveland, F.F. Bledsoe, Ray Harvey, J.D. Clare, J. Milton Dunn, W.D. Binford, Clifford W. Alford, Grady T. Baskin, J.D. Gilliam, Jr., Durwood Hazzard, Robert L. Johnson, Weldon Harris, and the present pastor, Emmett Roberts.

In the 1880's F.H. Church organized a Sunday School, and he was superintendent until sometime after 1900.

We have no record to show when the first house of worship was built, but in the 1890's a two-story building was erected which was shared with the Masonic Lodge. For over forty years the church held worship services on the first floor, and the Masons met on the second story. Damage from a tropical storm in 1942 resulted in removal of the second floor and remodeling of the church.

In 1970 the church site was found to be in the path of a future interstate highway, and, after receiving satisfactory compensation, a contemporary house of worship was erected. The old building was moved, and it began a new life of service as a museum and post office.*

*Some of the information about Oakville was provided by Pauline Campbell Gray.

The Eastern Star

On October 9, 1912, the Grand Chapter of Texas granted the title Oakville Chapter No. 521 and appointed the following officers: Pattie L. Reagan, Worthy Matron; J.W. Cunningham, Worthy Patron; Blanche Riser, Associate Worthy Matron.

The petition had been signed by Josephine Bartlett, Dora Bartlett, Mattie E. Blair, Amanda E. Church, Sarah E. Gilmore, Fannie Lutts, Alabama H. Reagan, Blanche Riser, Pattie L. Reagan, Mamie Reagan, C.F. Allen, E.E. Bartlett, W.W. Caves, F.H. Church, J.W. Cunningham, C.H. Reagan, Vada Wimmer.

NOTES

¹"A Former Oakville Teacher Writes Interestingly of People and Events," *Bee Picayune*, November 6, 1941, p. 14.



City of George West.

CHAPTER VI

THE CITY OF GEORGE WEST

George W. West

George W. West was born in Tennessee in 1851, but his family settled in Lavaca County, Texas, a year later. George's first trip to Live Oak County was in 1865; the boy was deeply impressed by the beautiful open country dotted with live oak trees, and he began to dream of owning and developing the land. In 1876 George took Kittie Searcy as his bride, and five years later the couple purchased about 200,000 acres in Live Oak County. The Wests lived in the ranch home they built until 1902, when they bought a home in San Antonio.

In 1912 West donated \$100,000 in cash and secured the right of way so that the railroad from San Antonio to Corpus Christi would be built through his land in Live Oak County. When the dreamed-of railroad materialized, he decided to build a town and name it after himself.

Mr. West built the West Hotel, spent \$50,000 on the school building for the city, gave the county \$75,000 toward building a courthouse in the town, and gave city lots to the various denominations for the building of churches. He sold 15-20,000 acres to farmers, giving them twenty years to pay at 6% interest. He donated public roads in every direction, and gave to the county the bridges which he built over creeks and the Nueces River.

Plans to build a town called Kittie West northwest of George West were interrupted by his death in 1926. Vance West built a hotel—which probably never saw a paying guest—and was depot agent at Kittie West. Both hotel and depot have been moved away, but many thousands of cattle were loaded and unloaded at this point. A town



Picture 11

George Washington West

named Ike West (in honor of his nephew) was also planned, but only a railroad spur and cattle pens were built.

The City

Immediately after laying out the town of George West in 1914, Mr. West installed what was said to be one of the best public utility systems in Texas. In 1927 Walter Lamm and Guy McGee purchased the utilities systems, which they operated for many years. Lamm and McGee were the first to build brick homes in the city. They installed an ice plant which operated until about 1965,

when home refrigeration virtually eliminated the demand for ice. The electric system was eventually sold to Central Power and Light Company, and the waterworks were sold to the City of George West.

Lamm's daughter married Hale Canfield, son of Mr. and Mrs. C.Z. Canfield, who opened a mercantile business in 1914 when George West was only a tent city. The Canfields were instrumental in the establishment of the first church and school in the new town. Upon Mr. Canfield's death in 1932, Hale and his sister Lou Emma began operating the business. They built a new store in 1948, and the Canfield grocery and dress shops continue to be among the most appreciated businesses in the city.

The Canfield family rode into George West on the first train—the family was in the passenger car, and the furniture in the freight car. Josephine, Lou Emma, and Hale insisted that the goldfish must also move from Floresville. The patient conductor made many inquiries as to the condition of the goldfish, and did not seem to mind the children's frequent trips to the water fountain. They carried water in folding metal cups to replenish what the train's movement sloshed out. The fish were in better condition than Mrs. Canfield at the end of the trip!

The children found the new town a maze of ditches, for the waterworks were being laid. They investigated their new home—Mr. Canfield had already built a mercantile store, and in the back he used canvas to partition off four rooms in which the family would live until their house was built. Realtors lived in the only two houses in the town—the one across from the courthouse was later sold to Jim Sullivan, and another like it stood

where the library is today. The other families lived in tents.

The children used more care in their exploration after the little daughter of Mr. Ayres, the station master, was fatally bitten by a rattlesnake.

Iva Lee Rhode taught piano lessons in a tent, and for awhile Josephine took lessons from her. When L.G. Wilder opened up George West's first drugstore in the West Hotel, Josephine began taking violin lessons from his wife, Mildred. The Canfield daughters also studied piano with her sister, Miss Lidie Nixon.

Upon finishing school at George West, Josephine went to Westmoreland College (now Trinity University) in San Antonio, where she taught piano. After receiving a degree from Chicago Musical College (now part of Roosevelt University) and further study in Europe, she returned to George West to teach piano and (infrequently) violin. Miss Canfield is a charter member of the National Guild of Piano Teachers, and for over a decade she judged in the Guild auditions. Sixteen of her students have received high school diplomas through the Guild. She is certified by the National Music Teachers Association, whose local affiliate, the Coastal Plains Music Teachers Association (a five-county organization), has recently established an annual Josephine Canfield Scholarship Fund. About fifty of her compositions for solo piano have been published.

"Miss Josephine" has given a superb musical foundation to several generations of area youth. Each year her pupils won high marks in UIL and other area piano contests. Many of her former students are now teaching in the public schools or are teaching piano privately. Joyce Gilstrap Jones, her most outstanding former pupil, is artist-in-residence and chairman of Baylor University's organ department, and is one of America's most outstanding concert organists.

C.Z. Canfield became George West's first postmaster in 1914. Eight years later he was succeeded by Loren G. Wilder, and in 1927 Mrs. Wilder became postmaster. Ella Bartlett assumed the position in 1936. Other postmasters have been William E. Smith and Johnny Kircher.

The first physician in George West was Dr. Bomar. Mr. West built a house for him across the street from the one he built for Buck West. To insure the doctor's staying, West paid him \$100 a month for a year. At the end of the year Dr. Bomar moved away, but when West made the same offer again, he returned for another year.

Margaret Tate was the first child born in George West.

Several other doctors came and went before Dr. and Mrs. Hershall LaForge moved to George West in 1919, upon his discharge from the U.S. Army Medical Corps. For the next twenty-one years Dr. LaForge practiced medicine at the office next door to his home. For many years he was a school trustee. He helped organize the Rotary Club in 1938, and he served as its first president. In 1940 the LaForges moved to Uvalde. There he served as a member of the board of trustees of Southwest Texas Junior College from the time of its opening until his death in 1974; for twenty-eight years he was president of that board. Mrs. LaForge still owns several pieces of property here.

In 1916 Joe Probst and his sons Arthur and Elwood established a mercantile business which operated for many years. Arthur became Vice-President of the First National Bank in 1934, and held this position until his retirement. In 1940 Elwood was elected County

Treasurer, and he held this position until his death in 1953. The two-story brick building built by Joe Probst in 1927 now houses Pawlik Supply Company, owned by James, Edward, and Bobby Pawlik. A lumberyard was added after the store, well service, and trenching service were established.



Picture 12

The Joe Probst home graced the main street of George West for many years.

J.S. Hall of Beeville owned several gins in South Texas, and in 1918 he built a new gin across the road from the old one, and he induced A. Lumpkin (son of R.B. Lumpkin, who invented the air blast gin system) to move his family from Hillsboro and install the new gin. For several years Mr. Lumpkin managed the new gin, aided by his son Oren, while his daughter Dorothy kept the books for them. Dorothy later married Elwood Probst, and at his death she was appointed to finish out his term

as County Treasurer; she was later elected to that position, which she held until her retirement.

In 1919 C.C. Schley established a general mercantile business, which he operated until his death. He sold all kinds of staple or fancy groceries, hardware, dry goods, men's clothing, hats, shoes, etc. For many years this was the official rain gauge station for the National Weather Service. C.C.'s son Brooks now gauges the rainfall at his home. The building which Mr. Schley built is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Bob Strause, who operate the Floor and Paint Company. Their son Ronnie and his wife Betty also work there.

In 1946 the city of George West was incorporated. Albert W. West, brother of the founder, was elected the first mayor. Commissioners were Harry Linney and Hale Canfield; W.E. Cunningham was secretary. Other mayors have been Marvin Johnson (1947), R.H. Montgomery (1951), W.D. Trimble (1953), J.H. Straw (1957), Walter E. Lamm (1959), William W. Holden (1967), Jerry D. Robins (1969), Albert T. Brown (1972), Henry E. Houdmann (1975), and Holman C. Massey (1978).

L.S. Morrison opened a grocery store in Somerset during the 1920's, and about 1935 he opened Piggly Wiggly stores in George West, Three Rivers, Freer, and Aransas Pass. When World War II began, there was soon a shortage both of merchandise and of employees. The other stores were closed, and the merchandise was moved to George West and Three Rivers. Eventually the Three Rivers store was sold; Zamzow Grocery now occupies that building.

Morrison's daughter Frances married H.C. Brown, who had previously been in business with his parents. Brown took over the George West operation, and the store was expanded during the 1940's. Green columns in the

grocery section mark the dimensions of the old store.

Henry Brown took charge upon his father's death. During the 1950's he added a Ben Franklin store, and then a dry goods store. In 1963 he purchased the hardware and furniture store across the street from Gus Houdmann.

Three years later the Brown family, along with several other local families, decided to tour Europe. Near Innsbruck, Austria, there was an accident, and Mr. and Mrs. Brown were killed, along with their two daughters. Their son Mark was also in the car, but was uninjured.

Henry's brother Ross came to manage the L.S. Morrison Co. and the H.M. Brown Co., and to provide a home for Mark. Mark now manages the H.M. Brown Furniture Store and Western Auto Associate Store.

Ollie Peebles and Lily Mae Polocek began working for L.S. Morrison in the 1930's, and are still on the payroll, although they no longer work fulltime. Several generations of George West customers have received helpful service from these ladies.

Joe Gonzales moved from Jim Wells County to the Anna Rose community when he was twenty-four years old. He did ranch work with his father until 1939, when he moved the family to George West. After cooking for Marvin's Cafe for four years, Joe ventured into carpentry. He did repair work, remodeling, or building, working either by contract or by the hour—he always kept busy. He designed and built a number of buildings in George West, and also invested in real estate. After a hard day's work, Mr. and Mrs. Gonzales sometimes played for a dance that night, receiving \$20 for each performance. The nine Gonzales children attended George West schools, and three went to college. For fourteen years daughter Elda has been employed in the Tax Assessor's office. Son Raul T. Gonzales and his son own a thriving plumbing business. Raul has been on the

George West school board for many years.

In 1945 Harry Linney, a young pharmacist just out of the military service, purchased a drug store from J.E. (Dock) Davis. Davis had been in business for twenty years, and was ready to retire. Linney Drug moved to its present location in 1948; the old store is now the site of the DeLeon Bar. Mr. Linney was the only druggist in town until 1980.

In 1952 Verna Hardin opened a beauty shop so she could support herself and two small children. Those children have now finished college with outstanding records, and that tiny cottage which served as both business-place and home has expanded into a lovely, rambling brick building across from the courthouse square. Other long-time beauticians in George West include Marie King, Lupe Morin, and Lorene Lemley.

The old Rialto Theater was the destination of many a teenage couple, and of hundreds of school children whose teachers treated them to a special movie as a Christmas present. The appeal of television caused attendance to dwindle, and the doors were closed about 1960. After standing vacant for many years, the theater was remodeled into an office building by Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Stephens, who operate the abstract company of Elliott and Waldron. Other offices are also located in the building.

The old bank building contains the office of Lee Roy Hoskins, whose oil and gas leasing business dates from the 1950's. He is now aided by sons Lee Roy, Jr., Leonard, and Cliff. The office of County Attorney Bill Hardwick is also in the old bank building. Other local attorneys are Dwayne McWilliams and J.R. Schneider.

A new bank building was opened in 1961, and since then three additions have been made. In 1978 the First National Bank listed total assets of \$19,795,000, with \$18,081,000 in deposits. Robert L. Dirks is president; vice-

presidents are Alex G. McInnis, Brooks M. Schley, and Carol Maurer.

Live Oak Title Company, Abstractors, was founded by O.R. Kendall. Researcher Hazel Gattis has been with the company since 1943, but she now works for Margie and Bill Kendall, the founder's son.

In 1953 the William J. Van Kleef family drove into town—four preschoolage children wiggled in the back seat, and the family's belongings were stuffed into a two-wheel trailer which they had pulled from Minnesota. They had come to be near Mrs. Van Kleef's critically ill sister, Mrs. T.M. Rogstad, but did not intend to stay here permanently. Bill had sold a small insurance business in Minnesota, so he opened an office here. When the opportunity arose, he purchased the Cunningham and Trimble agencies, and the business grew. Later he branched into real estate sales. The four children graduated from George West High School with outstanding records.

The Live Oak Insurance Company was purchased in 1974 by Holman Massey from G.F. Jennings, who had run the business for many years. Joy Kuenstler is now carrying on the insurance business her late father, Roy C. Smith, established years ago. Roel Chapa also has an insurance agency in George West.

Ramiro García was nine years old when his family moved from Robstown to Anna Rose in 1921. He helped his father grub land for Rufus Lyne at \$20 an acre. In 1932 he began working at a service station for \$8 a week—during his twenty-six years there, the station was owned by Leon T. Vivian, Marvin Johnson, and Ernest Lindholm. When Lindholm sold out, García went to work at the Western Auto store. In 1963, he decided to go into business for himself, so he borrowed \$5,000 and started the T&T Cafe; eleven years later he estimated the business to be worth \$40,000. Ramiro García, who never

went to school a day in his life, has sent four of his nine children to college.

In 1965 Larry Holm and James Saunders began a leasing service; Holm bought out Saunders three years later, and when he sold the business in 1978, it was providing twenty-four hour service with bulldozers, heavy trucks, maintainers, welder, and crews for various kinds of construction work (primarily in oil fields). Holm Lease Service, Inc., has not changed its name. Hobe, Inc. (Larry Holm and David Bennett, partners) is a contract pumping business, doing service checks and salt water disposal.

Since 1945 Jim Ryan has been welding in George West. Travis Wilson is no longer his partner, but they still share the same building as Ryan and Wilson Welding Service. Ryan's first welding shop later became the site of Marvin's Cafe.

Marvin Johnson's restaurant was built on land owned by Dr. Hershall LaForge. After Johnson's retirement LaForge leased what became Ferguson's Restaurant to Elmer Ferguson about 1956. Charlie Carter bought the property about 1970, but Mrs. Ferguson continued to operate the restaurant another five years. Carter's Restaurant is at least as popular with truckers as it is with the local patrons.

A farming and ranching community would be incomplete without a feed store. Gus Houdmann bought the business Jack Ormand had operated since the 1940's. Houdmann Farm and Ranch Supply since 1963 has provided friendly service.

During the 1970's, George West experienced a building boom, and a number of new businesses opened. The businesses mentioned above have been here longer, and are just a sample of the many services available.

The *Live Oak County Herald* and the *Three Rivers News* have combined. Since 1977 Mr. and Mrs. Collis

Sellman have edited and published *The Progress of Live Oak and McMullen Counties*. Mable Doeblbler is office manager in George West, but the weekly newspaper's main office is in Three Rivers.

The George West Volunteer Fire Department has recently erected a new blue and white steel fire station on Bowie Street. Volunteer firemen in 1979 were Lloyd Clifton, Frank Sales, Frank Guerrero, Benny Perez, L.T. Davis, Bob Wientjes, James P. Jungman, Charles L. Smith, R.W. Lovic, Dale Burell, Lorman Brown, Jess Copeland, Morris Williams, Robert Davis, Pete Saldiva, Carlos Buenteo, Larry Busby, Randy Standla, and Richard Richter. The George West VFD has five vehicles, and all the VFD members are volunteer certified.

The City of George West received \$65,284.29 for the first eleven months of 1977, a 33% increase over 1976. The local option sales tax is collected by local merchants and other sales tax permit holders and returned monthly by the State Comptroller's Office.

Miss Grace Armontrout gave the 8.3 acres of land which had been her home to the City of George West. Although she continues to live in her house, it has been opened as a museum. On display are Miss Armontrout's antique furniture, glassware and jewelry, paintings depicting the county's history and scenery, as well as contemporary art objects. The city agreed to maintain landscaping with plants native to the area. There is also room for active sports around the museum and its South Texas garden. Playground equipment was built by the shop classes in George West High School. A swimming pool opened in 1975.

Although George West has not been as hard-hit by flooding as Three Rivers, the city officials in August, 1974, received federal flood insurance information, as well as maps indicating some parts of the city to be subject to flooding. The next day the maps proved to be

accurate, when a 13" rain fell in five hours. Flash flooding along Timmian Creek swept as much as four feet of water into thirty houses and mobile homes, and damaged city streets, projects, and bridges. The Red Cross spent \$5,000 on aid to flood victims. This was said to be a "200 year rain," but five weeks later another 13" of rain fell in four hours. Some houses were swept off their foundations, and several mobile homes were destroyed. Highway Department vehicles were stranded and could not set up road blocks around the flooded area. The fire department evacuated sixteen people from their homes and rescued several people from low water crossings. Four feet of water in the sewer plant ruined electric motors there. Cactus Park and the museum were also damaged.

The edge of George West has moved both west and north in the last few years. A new addition of homes has been built on land owned by Lynn Smith (son of former sheriff Albert Smith), and his brother Buster has opened a mobile home court further north. Billy Smith finally agreed to sell fifteen acres on the hilltop northwest of George West, and here Bernard Bednorz has moved his Chevrolet-Oldsmobile dealership. Bernard's is one of the true success stories of this county.

In 1962 Bernard opened a garage in an abandoned service station on the corner by the traffic light. He had ten years experience and very little money, but he soon had a reputation for fixing cars right. About a year later he hired another mechanic. The hours were long, but he always enjoyed the work and felt that he was doing a service for people.

He opened a Chevy-Olds dealership in 1971 with about eight employees, including both mechanics and sales people. His business kept growing, but there

was hardly room for expansion at the old site. Plans for acquiring more land were stymied.

Driving past that hill overlooking George West one day, he stopped the car, took a look around, and decided that was the place to move. It took some doing, but in January, 1979, Bednorz Chevrolet-Olds, Inc., opened at the new location. Bernard and his wife Margaret Ann drew all the plans—no architect was involved—and they work so well that the forty employees have more than doubled their output.

During the summers, the five Bednorz offspring spend their days at the shop—Curtis, Charles, and Morgan as mechanics, Laura Ann at the telephone, and John washing cars, windows, etc. The older two boys are doing well in college, but all five of them want to join the family business when they finish school. Dad says they have to learn from the bottom up.

The Bednorz family does not live extravagantly, and most of the profits are put back into the business. It takes about five years to make a good mechanic, and Bernard tries to find kids who are interested in working with cars. Then he watches them gain confidence as they progress, take pride in their raises, and eventually buy their own tools. When Bednorz was working for a dealership, he would beg for time off—at no pay—to go to training schools at his own expense. When he went, he slept in the car at an all night gas station, and ate a lot of crackers and cheese. (The time Margaret accompanied him, he did splurge and rent a motel room.) Now when one of his mechanics goes to training school, Bednorz pays all of his expenses, loans him a car, and pays his regular salary. When the employee returns, he shares what he has learned with the other mechanics. To encourage greater efficiency, a profit-sharing system is used. The Bednorz business had little employee turnover.

"This business is as much a challenge as it is a money-making operation," says Bednorz. "I enjoy working with people, and I like working with cars. I enjoy what I'm doing!"

The following article taken from the June 26, 1979, *Corpus Christi Caller* sums up the present situation of George West.

George West Enters Fiscal Year With High Hopes, Aspirations

The City of George West will begin a new fiscal year July 1 with a clean financial slate, Mayor H.C. Massey said. The \$90,000 in paving and utility installation bills from last year will have been paid off, and a city-wide revaluation of property probably will be wrapped up, he said. The tax revaluation is expected to triple the \$3.6 million total assessed values. Tax bills are not expected to go up, however, since the city council probably will cut the present maximum limit rate of \$1.50 down to one-third that figure. . . .

A committee is at work on a home rule charter, which the city council hopes to adopt if the town qualifies with the requirement that it have a population of 5,000. Massey attributed the wide range of government activities in an economic boom situation to retired army officer James R. Lindholm, who took over as city administrator in February.

Live Oak County had begun to boom from the uranium industry growth and construction of a new lignite-powered electric generating plant nearby. County Clerk Bill Bain gave an indication of the scope of the boom in Live Oak County, citing figures for recording of documents in his office. He said 2,675 deeds, leases, and other such documents were filed in 1975. The total was 3,350 in 1976, and increased to 3,675 in 1977 and to 4,420 last year. Already in 1979 the recordings number 2,411, he said. These were oil, gas and

mineral leases and deeds of trust on homesites for the hundreds of people who have come to Three Rivers and George West to work in the oil and uranium businesses.

Lindholm said taxable assets in Live Oak County in the uranium business were \$587,000 in 1975. These increased to \$4.9 million in 1976, then to \$17.2 million in 1977 and \$20 million last year. This rapid growth of two industries in Live Oak County has put a tremendous strain on housing, Massey said. "We are becoming a mobile home center. There are as many mobile homes as houses in the county."

He estimated the boom has added 30 percent to the cost of homes, over and above the nationwide increase in costs. He said his home was worth \$38,000 when it was built in 1970. It should be worth \$70,000 anywhere today, he said, but in Live Oak County, it would sell for \$100,000.

Massey said the population since 1970 has increased from 2,022 to an estimated 5,000 persons. Thirty new homes have been built in George West in the past 12 months.

The George West city administration is working on an application for a \$2.5 million federal grant to expand the sewer system. Lindholm said the city will help pay its share by selling waste water to farmers for irrigation. The city already has a contract to sell 150,000 gallons to a nearby farmer.

Also on the planning board is a new \$250,000 water well, and the city plans to build its own natural gas line to tie with Houston Pipeline Co. At present, George West shares a line with Three Rivers. This new line will cost \$50,000.

Massey said the administration has committees working on home rule, industrial development, park improvement, and other aspects of civic improvement. Anyone who finds fault with a situation or committee gets appointed to a committee to do something about it, he said. This has the whole town involved in doing something about this rural community in a boom situation.

The George West Housing Authority, established in 1946 but never activated, has been resurrected and will make applications for 100 low rent units, Massey said.

The mayor said the July 1 budget will be balanced with a total city revenue of about \$60,000 anticipated. A big street repair bill which had embroiled the city in a controversy several months ago has been settled and an agreed time pay-off is nearly completed.

The tax revaluation in George West is underway with two young men measuring and sketching every house and taking an inventory. When they finish the total values should be \$10 to \$11 million. "We hope to equalize taxation," the mayor said. By increasing values and lowering the tax rate, the city will have some leeway for financing improvements.

City officials in 1979 besides Mayor Holman Massey included Commissioners Alfredo Bernal, Jr., and John J. (Bucky) Houdmann, City Manager Roland Lindholm, City Attorney Dwayne McWilliams, City Superintendent Buddy McQueen, and City Secretary Doris Campbell.

George West Independent School District

The first school in the City of George West began in 1915 when some families with school children arranged for Mrs. Peabody to come from Corpus Christi and be the first teacher; Miss Eva Gallagher succeeded her. Ten children met in the little green school house that Mr. West provided—later it became a printing shop. It stood where the Ben Franklin store is today.

About a year later the public school building was completed; it stood near the present primary school. This large brick building had classrooms on the first floor and an auditorium on the second floor. Margaret Borroum and Ruby Wilson were the first teachers. Trustees were Webb Rhode and C.Z. Canfield. Josephine Canfield was the first graduate of the George West school, which at

that time had ten grades. It was several years before the school was accredited.

The oldest minutes of the board of trustees were for the October 20, 1920, meeting, which was attended by T.F. Nance, F.B. Grover, C.C. Schley, E.E. Bartlett, and L.W. Wilder. The George West Independent School District had been created by an act of the Texas Legislature on June 15, 1920.

A \$15,000 school bond election was held in July, 1921, regarding money to purchase, equip, and repair "the public free school building of brick and concrete now located in George West." The election was held in the ladies restroom in the courthouse.

C.B. Beard was hired in 1921 as superintendent; he and his wife were to teach for a combined salary of \$2,900. Miss Borroum, the principal, received \$120 monthly. Aline Gillett received \$95 monthly to teach the intermediate grades, and Ethel Schallert received \$110. Nellie McKinney received \$75 monthly to teach in the Mexican school, which until 1924 had only a six-month term. School terms for the white school were nine months, but in 1923 the term ended a month early because "the board was of the opinion that it was a matter of good business to close as funds were short on account of delinquent taxes and unexpected expenditures."

In 1925 W.S. Willis was elected superintendent. That year Lillian Addison was hired to teach Spanish, English, and other high school work. On December 28 a special meeting was called to discuss discipline problems. The board decided "That no student in high school will in the future be permitted to willfully disobey orders of his teacher, and the first time they disobey, or cause confusion of any kind in the school room—they will be sent home to their parents for correction—then if they return and cause second offense,

they will be suspended for five days, and if after that they persist in giving trouble, the school board will be called on to deal with them."

In 1926 J.E. O'Bryant was hired as superintendent at \$1,800. The teachers were paid \$100 a month, and Juan Reyes, the janitor, received \$50 monthly. That fall four girls were put on probation for improper conduct, and before returning to school they were required "to apologize to the whole school in audience for their conduct."

J.W. Boggas was elected superintendent in 1927. The record is absent for school years 1927-37.

In the fall of 1937 C.D. Landolt was principal and also a teacher. Harry L. Hinton was coach, and he also taught commercial subjects. Madeline Graves taught English and related subjects. Thelma Lindholm taught science and other subjects not taught by the other secondary teachers. Elementary school teachers were H.H. Mellard, Ruby Lee Pope, Mattie Young, Onie Beaty, Florence Barbes, and Celine Jehl. The teachers of the Mexican school across the railroad tracks were Nellie McKinney and Minnie Mae Shafer.

In 1938 two Mexican boys asked to go to the previously all-white seventh grade (the Mexican school ended at grade six). The trustees voted to leave such situations to the discretion of the superintendent, Mr. Steele, and the teachers. That year the library received a \$3,500 gift from an unknown donor.

In 1939 a school bus was purchased, and a garage built at the high school. J.A. Mote was paid \$50 a month to drive the bus. The Mexican school received an addition.

In early 1940 the trustees discussed the need for vocational agriculture and homemaking programs, and for a "utility auditorium." That fall Ester Stewart came as the first homemaking teacher, and Hubert Reavis

became the first bandmaster. C.D. Landolt was the superintendent.

In July, 1941, the trustees voted to add a twelfth grade. Raises were given to the superintendent and principals because of a large increase in school attendance and a larger number of teachers. That year they also voted to sponsor a school lunch program.

In 1942 Ben Gustine was hired as superintendent at \$2,100 plus car expenses.

In 1945 the smaller school districts in southern Live Oak County began to be annexed to the George West Independent School District. Oakville Independent School District (white, Mexican, and colored schools) and the community school districts of Votaw, Lapara, Gussettville, Mahala, Marbach, Spring Creek, Lyne, Mikeska, Bell Kidd (which earlier had annexed Cuba), Oak Ridge, and Lewis (Mestena) were annexed that year. In 1948 Jarratt, Goodwin, Anna Rose (which earlier had joined Hyman's white and colored schools), and Clegg (formerly Cardwell) were annexed. In 1949 there was annexation of the Lagarto (white and Mexican) and Dinero (white and Mexican) schools. Most of the schools were segregated, but as each district was annexed to George West, integration was accepted.¹

In 1947 E.A. Gay became superintendent, and he served in this position until his death in 1961.

* * * * *

In 1953 the first graders waited restlessly in a classroom of the Mexican school building—some crying, most with a sore arm from the required smallpox vaccination—while the mothers filled out their registration forms on the first day of school.

The primary schoolgrounds covered two blocks, with the Mexican first grade school on one block, and the regular primary school on the other. Since most Mexican children spoke only Spanish until they started to school, they spent two years in the first grade. A street separated the two schools and although there were chains across both ends of the street during school hours, children did not cross from one playground to the other. Sometimes there would be a planned visit by a class or grade to the other playground—both had swings and a merry-go-round, but the Mexican school had a slide. After crossing the street to the other school for the second grade, Mexican children were not allowed to speak Spanish, not even on the playgrounds.

After registration all the children waited under the shade of huge salt cedar trees in front of the primary school while principal Harry Hinton—in his last year with the schools—read the room assignments for grades 4, 3, 2,...then all the first graders, who had looked forward to hearing their names called, were put in a classroom and assigned a teacher. (At the end of that school year, room assignments were put on report cards so students could go directly to their new classrooms the next fall.)

At lunch time the children rode buses to the old school cafeteria, a friendly wooden building with huge screened windows. The children sat on long wooden benches that matched the long wooden tables. Later that year a new air-conditioned brick cafeteria was completed and the old one closed.

That same year the fourth graders moved into the elementary school, because the new high school had been built and the whole system spread out. The old high school buildings closed until 1959, when the seventh and eighth grades moved in.

For many years Dr. G.W. Sansom was the only

physician in town. Several other physicians came and went, but he was the school doctor. When the Salk polio vaccine became available in 1955, most of the school children were bussed to his office—they formed a line going in the back door, out the front, and back to the bus.

In 1962 Roy C.A. Butler became superintendent. He was followed in 1974 by S.T. Brown, Jr., Tige Brown had served the school system for many years as vocational agriculture teacher, and then as principal.

A new primary school was built, and the school built by Mr. West was torn down in 1968.

George West High School has an outstanding sports record. The girls basketball team has played in the state championship tournament seven times, and won the state Class AA championship in 1975. The 1965 boys track team won the state Class A championship. The Longhorn football team has been in the playoffs many times, but the championship has been elusive. On December 18, 1963, at least half the citizens of George West locked up and drove, flew, or rode chartered buses to Lubbock—five hundred miles away—to see George West play Petersburg for the state Class A championship. Snow began falling before the buses carrying the band and pep squad reached San Antonio, and by game time that night, the fluffy flakes were falling so thick and fast that it was impossible to read the players' numbers. The high that day was 18 degrees. When the band tried to play, there was little sound—most of the instruments had frozen. The game was one of the most exciting ever, but when time ran out the score read Petersburg 20, George West 12.*

*The author and his wife, aged 72 and 75 at that time, were sitting in that snowstorm, cheering on the Longhorns.

George West High School has won the district UIL literary championship for the last fifteen years—first in Class A and later in Class AA. In 1978 the students won the regional championship; in 1977 they were co-champions; in 1975 and 1976 they placed second; and in 1974 they were third. In 1978 there were three state literary winners—Kim Pawlik placed first in informative speaking and newswriting, and third in editorial writing; Susan and Jan Capps won first place in debate. Kelly McClendon placed second in prose reading.

For 1978-79, George West schools had a record enrollment of 1,117 students, and a total of 113 personnel, including aides, bus drivers, and 76 teachers. Ten routes bus 460 rural children to the schools. For many years there were eleven routes—bus number eleven was the smallest model bus, and was referred to by all the children as "The Crackerbox."

There are bilingual aides in the kindergarten, but very few of the children entering the kindergarten speak only Spanish. There is a bilingual program for the first through third grades. Classrooms through the sixth grade are self-contained.

The taxable property evaluation for George West school taxes is \$106,000,000—\$95,000,000 being from oil, gas, and uranium—with a \$1.55 tax base. Three years ago voters okayed a million dollar bond issue for ten years, but it appears that the bond will be repaid early. The high school and junior high were remodeled, with many additions to the high school, which now has 325 students in grades 9-12. A new administration building will soon stand on the site of the old water tower and ice plant. The schools are all air conditioned.

To the teachers should go much of the credit for the success of former George West students. Such dedicated teachers as Zelma Gerfers, Harry Hinton, Styra Glover, Minnie Mae Anderson, Eugie Edwards, Alice Caron,

Mary Ann Pawlik, Tige Brown, Beth Troell, Charlene Coquat, Jerry Robins, T.M. Rogstad, Howell Coleman, Onie Beaty, Maxine Henley, Inez Bennett, Ralph Meador, and Allie Mae Wilson, have taught generations of students. Thelma Lindholm spent most of her 47 classroom years in the George West schools.

When she was a little girl, Thelma Pugh loved to sit on the porch with Grandpa Crawford, drink sassafras tea and listen to his tales about the Civil War and early days in Texas. While her other grandfather, William Pugh, had been the first Civil War veteran to die in the county, F.C. Crawford outlived all the others. Thelma wanted to learn more about history, so she studied at home and got a permanent teaching certificate, and eventually two degrees in history.

She married a young Swede, John E. E. Lindholm, and soon after becoming an American citizen he went off to World War I. He returned home at war's end, but was soon recalled to Virginia. Mexico had nationalized the oil industry, and Lindholm and another American, along with a few representatives from other countries, were sent to Vera Cruz. Upon arrival, the men notified their wives—and were never heard of again.

Mrs. Lindholm is at her best in Texas history. Although she has been long retired from teaching, she is still in demand as a guest speaker. She has done much careful research into local history, and provides the information which appears on the historical markers in Live Oak County.

During her last years with GWISD, her junior high homeroom students were mostly Spanish-speaking "slow learners" who were sometimes far behind their age level—she tried especially hard to instill a sense of pride and self-worth in these students. She still gets letters from some of them.

When the Mexican national father of one of her

students was carried across the border and held for ransom, she went to County Attorney Robert Schneider, who helped secure the man's release, and then broke up the extortion ring. After that she helped many of the local Mexican-born people to secure their citizenship.

Now 81 years young, Mrs. Lindholm lives alone in George West, but she is far from idle. Besides historical research and speaking, she makes delightful dolls and other articles for Catholic bazaars, has a clothes rummage room for needy individuals, is an American Cancer Society volunteer, and is presently helping five young men who are enrolled in a correspondence course which will lead to a high school diploma.

The Churches

The first church service of any kind in George West was held on a Sunday afternoon in late November, 1914, in the two-story land office building (which later burned). At that time there were only three other buildings in town, and George West was primarily a tent city. Roads, bridges, and water and sewer systems were being built, and the contractors and workmen, along with their families, were housed temporarily in tents.

Reverend A.M. Foster, a visiting minister from Oakville Methodist Church, conducted the services for the small group which included members of the Canfield and Sagebiel families, who had moved to George West that same month. Mr. Sagebiel was in charge of selling farm tracts at the land office; the Canfields had built a store and post office.

In 1915 George W. West provided a one-room school building in the block where the West Hotel now stands. In the same little building, a Union Sunday School was begun through the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. C.Z. Canfield, and church services were held by visiting ministers of various denominations. Mr. West sent a small portable

organ for church use. He gave two city lots as a future building site for a Methodist church, and he also gave lots to several other denominations that planned buildings.

The Methodist Church in George West—In June, 1916, the Methodist Church in George West was organized as a branch of the Oakville Methodist Church South, with Reverend J.H. Stuckey as pastor. Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. C.Z. Canfield and their daughters, Jo Beth and Lou Emma, Dr. and Mrs. Ben S. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. O.P. Smith, and Mrs. Maggie Lyne. The Union Sunday School continued.

In 1921 at the West Texas Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the George West-Three Rivers charge was established, the Reverend H.P. Draper, presiding elder. Reverend W.B. Wheeler was assigned as resident pastor, the first Methodist minister to live in George West. Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler and their two children, Rodney and Wilma, stayed at the Canfield home until a parsonage could be provided.

The first trustees of the church were C.Z. Canfield, George R. Gillett, and Dr. Hershall LaForge (who was also Sunday School Superintendent). The pastor's salary for the year was \$1,200, with \$700 provided by George West and \$500 by Three Rivers. Also in 1921 the Pastor's Aid Society was organized, and the Methodists and Episcopalians received some help from the other denominations in this effort. To this society goes most of the credit for buying the Methodist parsonage, as well as most of the parsonage furnishings and a piano for the church.

The Episcopal group bought church pews, which were placed in the small printing office building which Mr. West loaned for use to any church group.

In 1928 the Methodists erected a sanctuary and classrooms of hollow tile stucco on the two lots Mr. West had donated. The pews which the Episcopal group had

bought were placed there and used until their own church was built in 1942. Until 1942 the Methodist Church was the site of the Episcopalian services, which were held on Sunday afternoons.

That first building, erected in 1928, is still in use; after an addition in 1952, it was beautifully remodeled in 1963 at a cost of about \$40,000. The church now owns all six lots in the block, which will take care of any needed future expansion.

In 1954 a new brick parsonage was designed and built by J.C. Gilstrap, at a cost of \$12,131.50.

A larger Baldwin organ was purchased in 1969 at a cost of \$4,409. A benefit concert to help defray the cost of the instrument was given by internationally known organist Joyce Gilstrap Jones, who had selected the organ for the church she had attended as a child. Joyce is a former piano pupil of Josephine Canfield, who (except for years away at study and teaching) has been organist for the church ever since, as a child, she played the little pump organ in the Union Sunday School.

In 1972 the membership was 220. Trustees were John Norris, chairman, Bill Giles, Howell Coleman, Nolan Kunkel, Hale Canfield, and Rex Lewis. Official Board members were O.K. Gaddis, chairman, S.T. Brown, Jr., Howell Coleman, Mrs. Luther Stewart, Judy Gaddis, Mrs. A.E. Caron, Jr., Thelma Johnson, Nolan Kunkel, Marjorie Collins, Emily Warren, Lorene Lemley, Julia Gillett, Corene Kelley, Minnie May Anderson, Dorothy Probst, Jessie Lee Gilstrap, Della Cox, Vera Gay, Zelma Gerfers, Thelma Harris, Woodrow Lemley, Beverly Meider, Charles Montgomery, Perry Riley, H.H. Wallace, Jr., Hale Canfield, G.C. Gillett, and Cecil Montgomery.

Pastors who have served the United Methodist Church in George West include J.H. Stuckey, A.M. Foster, C.E. Marshall, W.B. Wheeler, R.S. Adair, R.E. Burns, Fred J. Brucks, P.S. Connell, S.R. Harwood, C.W.

Rylander, J.M. Lewis, W.H. Marshall, F.M. Wheat, L.N. Myers, W.J. Weimer, J.W. Leggett, A.S. Masterson, M.C. Stearns, Irving T. King, Charles Malesky, Thomas McClung, Travis Rider, and David Crabtree.*

First Baptist Church of George West—The printing building owned by George W. West was, with his permission, used as a place of worship by several denominations, and it was here that the First Baptist Church of George West was organized on April 6, 1919. The building was on the site of the present-day L.S. Morrison Co.

Associational Missionary W.H. Ingle and Reverend E. Donahoe organized the church; secretary for the meeting was W.W. Caves, a member of the Oakville Baptist Church. Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. H.W. Rhode, Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Stewart and their daughters Mary, Margaret, and Ellen, T. Tate and his daughter Bobbie, Florence Johnson, and Mary Murray.

Regular preaching was held the first Sunday of each month. On June 1 the first trustees were elected—W.J. Stewart, H.W. Rhode, and W.W. Caves (he and Mrs. Caves joined the church that day).

In 1920 the first pastor was called—Reverend G.H.M. Wilson, a pioneer minister, had pastored churches in South Texas as early as 1883. Pastors who followed were Joe Burns, G.W. Coltrin, H.H. Spillyards, L.S. King, F.F. Bledsoe, Joe Amerine, W.R. Underwood, Clyde F. Griffin, Billy C. Stevens, Clifford Barnett, Gary K. Boyd, and William W. Webb.

In 1927 a Women's Missionary Society was organized with ten charter members—Mrs. Swafford, Mrs. C.B. Beard, Mrs. Marvin Johnson, Mrs. W.A. Smith,

*Information for this section was furnished by Lou Emma and Josephine Canfield.

Mrs. W.E. Cunningham, Mrs. J.A. Tetts, Mrs. Berie Owens, Mrs. G.S. Miller, and the president, Mrs. Spillyards. Enrollment today is about 85, and the WMU sponsors Mission Friends and Acteen work.

In 1923 the church was given two lots for a building site by Mr. George West; an adjoining lot was later purchased for a parsonage, which was built in 1927. Other adjacent lots were purchased for parking space and an educational building. In 1958 a new parsonage was purchased in the Lamm addition of town.

The Mikeska Church building, which had been used by both Baptists and Methodists, was acquired as the first house of worship. In 1940 the frame building was moved to the back of the lot and a basement added for Sunday School rooms; the entire structure was then brick veneered. The present auditorium was completed in February, 1949, at a cost of \$34,100; in 1969 it was remodeled and air conditioned. In 1962 a new educational building was dedicated.

In February, 1923, C.B. Beard was elected as Sunday School Superintendent. Teachers were N.H. Wood, W.E. Cunningham, Linnie Coker, Mary Stewart, Mrs. G.S. Miller, and Ellen Stewart. W.E. Cunningham served as superintendent from 1925-47; Bill Spross then served for the next thirty years. Ross Curbellow is the present superintendent.

In 1955 Roy Stewart was called as the first choir and youth director. He was followed by other students from the University of Corpus Christi—Roger Hill, Dan Fowler, Anson Nash, Bill Young, and Bill Montgomery. For many years C.B. (Bing) Turner served as choir director. A.J. Viertel is the present director. For over two decades Wessie Hendrick and Sue Spross have faithfully served as pianist and organist.

The present membership is 328.*

*The above information comes in part from Margie Kendall.

The Baptist Mexican Mission—In 1952 the First Baptist Church in George West voted to sponsor a mission for Mexican Americans. Reverend Clyde Griffin and Mrs. Margie Kendall began a Sunday School on Sunday afternoons in a one-room building across the railroad tracks. When a used piano was moved in, Mrs. Kendall took piano lessons so she could learn to play for the mission.

In 1953 the need for a pastor was apparent, and Andrew Durón, a student at the University of Corpus Christi, was called as mission pastor. Other pastors who have served are Alcides Guajardo, Leandro Castro, Antonio Padillo, Oscar Contreras (layman), Jesse DeLeon, David Villalobos, David Espurvoa, Blas Garza, Marcus D. García, and Gregorio Perez, the present pastor.

In 1960 the church located four lots just west of the railroad on the corner of Austin and Brazos streets. The land was for sale, and owner Buck West lowered the price. The church voted to buy the land if the money could be raised in a month. It was, and the old building was moved to the new site, as was the parsonage.

In 1963 the disbanded Clegg Baptist Church offered its building for the use of the mission, and the building was moved in October. In 1969 money was donated for remodeling, so the old church was brick veneered and painted.

In 1964 David Espurvoa came as the first full-time pastor—previous pastors had been UCC students and had not lived here. When Marcus Garcia came with his six children in 1970, another room was added to the parsonage.

In 1972 a bus was purchased for use by the mission

and First Baptist Church. Two years later a new piano was purchased.

Regular services are now held each Sunday morning and evening and on Wednesday evenings. Acteens meet Mondays after school. Summer Vacation Bible Schools are well attended, as are occasional revivals.*

St. Paul's Lutheran Church—On July 31, 1921, Reverend J.C.A. Pfenninger, a traveling missionary of the Texas Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America, held a worship service in the Marbach School which was attended by thirty-four people. After this, services were held in the District Court Room of the county courthouse, and then in the home of F.H. Knipling (later known as the Sullivan house) across the street from the courthouse. In December, 1921, Mr. West gave block 46 to the Texas Synod for the work of the Lutheran Church.

Under the leadership of Pastor E. Listman, the St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was organized on August 3, 1924. Serving on the first church council were D. Richter, chairman, Charles Kellner, secretary, and V. Houdman, treasurer. These men and a Mr. Fenton began building a small chapel which was completed in early 1925.

In 1927, during the pastorate of Reverend R. Lentz, a Sunday School and Ladies Aid were organized. Alvin Sahm was often asked to serve as lay pastor.

In 1941 Pfenninger returned to the parish as pastor. The chapel was moved from the center to a corner of the block, and an eight-room, two-story parsonage with garage was built. The Sunday School, which had lagged, was again started, and a Woman's Missionary Society was organized, with Mrs. Alvin Sahm as the first president. Mrs. Pfenninger served as organist.

*Compiled by Eugie Edwards.

Willie Krietsch led the men of the congregation in building sidewalks for the church in 1946.

Pastor J.W. Kern began serving the parish in 1952, and under his leadership, a Luther League for young people was formed. A choir was begun, and Ella Beyer became the oldest and most faithful choir member. Alfred Blaschke, W.H. Striebeck, Jr., Theodore Kreuz, and Ernest Colle signed a note to purchase a new electric organ to replace the old pump organ.

The United Lutheran Church in America merged with two other Lutheran bodies and became known as the Lutheran Church in America, so on January 27, 1963, a new constitution was adopted by the congregation of St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

Also in 1963, while Richard Achgill was pastor, a new church building was started. Members of the Church Council and Building Committee were Pastor Achgill, Floyd Daley, W.H. Striebeck, Jr., A.C. Mumme, Ernest Colle, T.M. Rogstad, Alvin Sahm, C.E. Voges, Herbert Krietsch, and Dr. and Mrs. Travis Cole. The new building was dedicated to the glory of God on December 1, 1963. Air conditioning was installed in 1972.

The present church membership is 38 adults and 15 children. Donald Brown is pastor. Council members are Pastor Brown, C.E. Voges, Roland Krietsch, Herbert Krietsch, Sr., Mrs. L.J. Katzfey, Mrs. Charles Polozeck, and Mrs. Ernest Colle. Mrs. C.E. Voges is president of the Lutheran Women of the church. Mrs. Ernest Colle is organist.

Pastors who have served the church are Erik Gentner, E. Listman, E.P. Richter, R. Lentz, R. Sauberzweig, G. Walter, R.G. Hartfiel, J.C.A. Pfenninger, J.W. Kern, Andrew Carlsson, Richard Achgill, Harold Muffley (whom the Lord called home while serving the church), and Donald Brown.

Sunday services are at 9 A.M. and Sunday School at

10 A.M.*

Church of God—Land for the Church of God was donated by Brother and Sister Stalling, and a building was erected alongside Highway 281 South.

Reverend Melvin was the first pastor, followed by Marshall David, Brisco Davis, Reverend Lovelace, and Reverend Gann. Fern Duke has served as pastor since 1975. Trustees are Tommy Oxford, Bill Oxford, Willard Davis, and Reverend B. Davis.

Church of Christ—During the first years of the town of George West, only three families were members of the Church of Christ—Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Arnold, Mr. and Mrs. I.J. Dowd, and Mrs. E.E. Bartlett— so following the example of New Testament Christians, they met in the members' homes.

About 1920, Preacher L.A. George, who lived a few miles east of George West, began preaching in the courthouse. The group met in the courthouse for some time, and then moved into the school auditorium until the membership increased enough to build its own house of worship in 1930 on a lot donated by Mr. West. At this time, in addition to those named, the membership included Mr. and Mrs. J.A. Mote, Tom Strause, Mr. and Mrs. W.E. Lamm, and Mr. and Mrs. Guy McGee. Oscar Smith of Houston preached for the first revival in the new building; Foy Wallace and Roy Condill conducted other revivals.

In 1939 the church bought an additional lot and established a home for the local preacher. In 1964 a new auditorium was built.

Other preachers who have served the church

*The above information was furnished by Lucille Troell Colle.

include E.E. Rhodes, L. Bufford, F.J. Berry, D.C. Williams, G.S. Westbrook, Bomer Gist, Cline Drake, J.B. Hudson, Cloud Royal, Lanny Hennenger, David Allessandra, Hershall Davis, Billy Allen, L.M. Wilson, Lyman Mereenes, and Terry Adams. Elders who have served are J.A. Mote, J.H. Elliott, Guy McGee, and Herbert Rouse.

The present membership is 85.

St. George's Catholic Church—The town of George West includes many Catholics of Irish, Polish, Bohemian, German, and Mexican heritage.

Father Harold Purcell came to George West in 1915. The building which was started was wrecked by the 1919 storm. Other resident pastors have been Fathers David Buckley (1920), John A. Walsh (1925), Father Chrzanowski, William Oberste (1929), Father Corbin (1930), Albert Schmidt (1935), A.J. Ordner (1948), Anthony Goegle (1953), and Reverend Pietro (1966). In June of 1939, Father Herbert Buckholtz was appointed assistant pastor; he was followed by Reverend William Kinlough.

Construction began on the present church under the leadership of Father Ordner, and it was dedicated on Christmas Day, 1950.

Knights of Columbus—In March of 1952, a subordinate council of the Knights of Columbus was established with the following charter members: John A. Byrne, Thomas L. Dowd, Joseph Goynes, Tommy Gregorcyk, Elmo J. Hartman, Thomas C. Hartman, Ben Henicke, Tolbert W. Holland, James F. James, Wilfred N. Katzfey, Reverend William Kinlough, Andrew S. Nance, Jake Ploch, John Ploch, James F. Pugh, Harry J. Schulz, Cecil H. Williams, George A. Yendrey, Ben C. Bodden, Robert B. Boudreau, Dr. David W. Davis, Robert W. Dowd, Robert A. Ellerman, Andrew Gerhard, Sr., H.G. Goodwin, Dan Goynes, Leo O. Hartman, Frank Havelka,

Edward Holland, F. Edgar James, Joseph S. Korczynski, O.F. Lewis, William R. McCampbell, Thomas J. McCumber, Wm. D. McKinney, Conrad J. Moravits, Thomas F. Nance, Reverend Aloysius Ordner, Jackson E. Ormand, Eugene E. Pugh, William D. Pugh, William F. Pugh, Edmund J. Rehm, John T. Schulz, Orion J. Tindol, Thad D. Tindol, Henry A. Tullis, P. Wojtasczyk, and Alex J. Yendrey. The forty-nine members included eighteen insurance and thirty-one associate. The Supreme Council of New Haven, Connecticut, designated this Subordinate Council as Council 3499.

Shortly after the organizational ceremonies, a meeting was called and a name selected—Live Oak Council No. 3499.

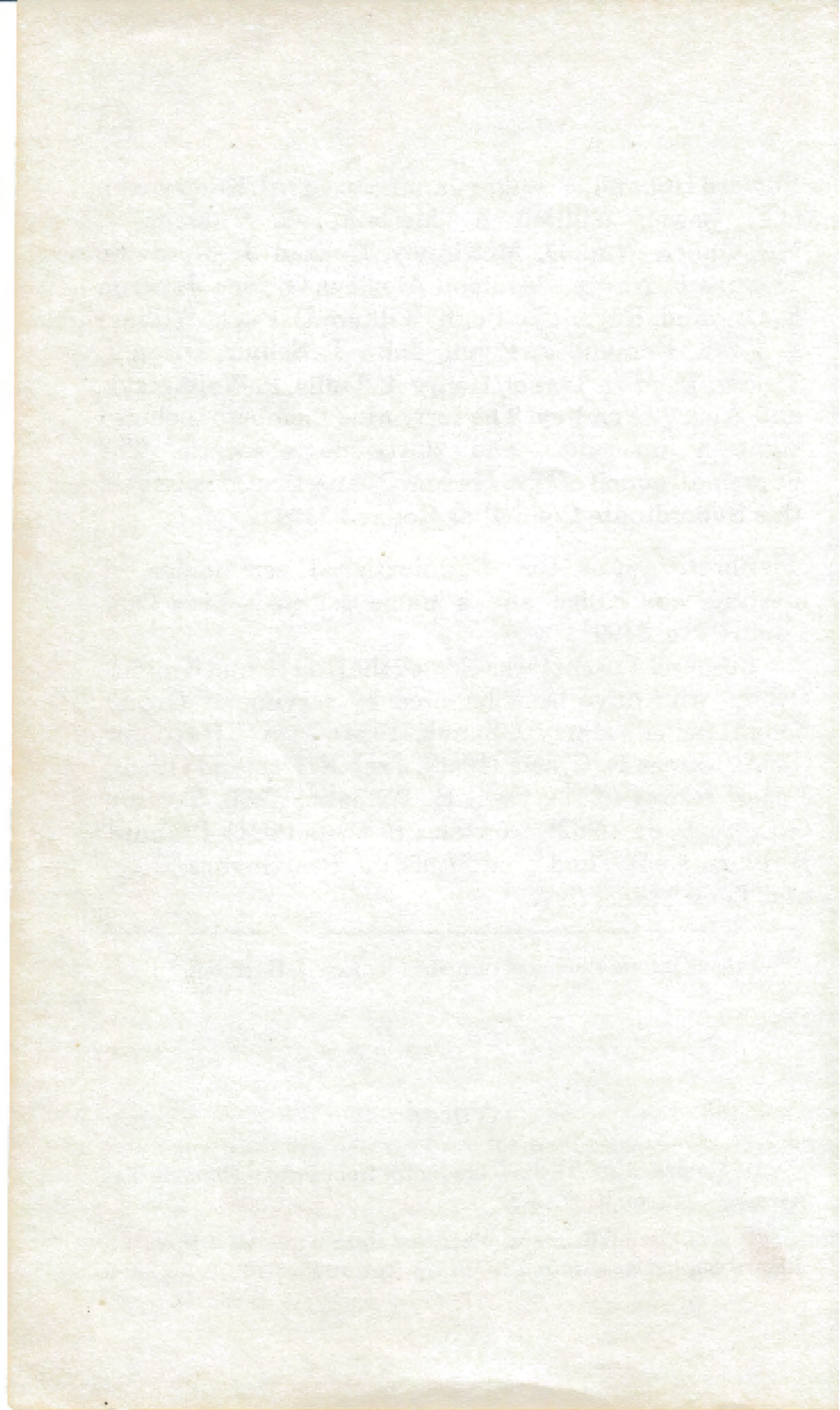
Edmund J. Rehm was elected the first Grand Knight. Others who have been honored by serving as Grand Knight include Harry J. Schulz (1954), Tom C. Hartman (1955), James B. Opiela (1956), Jack E. Ormand (1956), Robert Repka (1957), Cecil H. Williams (1961), Tommy Gregorcyk, Jr. (1962), Gonzales R. Pena (1964), Bernard Bednorz (1965), Thad Tindol (1966), J. Dan Goynes (1969), and Thad Tindol (1972).*

*The above information was furnished by Leo O. Hartman.

Notes

1. Compiled by Thelma Lindholm from *School Records*, Tax Assosser-Collector, G.W.I.S.D.

2. Mrs. Carroll R. Jones, *What God Hath Wrought: A History of Blanco Baptist Association 1878-1978*, Texian Press, 1973, pp. 281-5.



CHAPTER VII THE CITY OF THREE RIVERS

Hamiltonburg

When the San Antonio, Uvalde and Gulf Railroad (nicknamed "Sausage") was being built through Live Oak County, Mrs. Annie Hamilton (who lived in Cuero) paid a bonus to have a depot put on her ranch; the depot was to be named Hamiltonburg. Her son, Thornton Hamilton, was given power of attorney to make a working agreement with Charles R. Tips.

A townsite was organized whose board of directors included D.T. Blair, president, First National Bank of Oakville; W.W. Caves, Oakville attorney; Charles E. Tips, Seguin banker and father of Charles R.; Judge J.B. Dibrell; Fredric Hobarth; and George Hagn. Charles R. Tips was general manager and secretary of the company.

Tips, a young man just out of college, was an ingenious and tireless worker. He first set foot on the future townsite in March, 1913, when the land was covered with mesquite, underbrush, and cactus. Using a tent for an office, Tips supervised the beginning of a town. By June 5 the railroad was completed through the town. By July 4 much of the townsite had been cleared, streets were laid out, and lots had been surveyed. He advertised in the newspapers, gave a barbecue, and had the first sale of lots on that date.

That September the *Live Oak County Leader* carried the following article:

THE VALLEY OF THE NILE in modern speech has become a synonym for fertile agricultural land. In all countries and in all ages the valley lands have been the most productive and the most valuable. Three important rivers, the Nueces, the Frio, and the Atascosa, flow through Live Oak County and join together near its center, forming one immense valley.

HAMILTONBURG, the fastest growing town on the San Antonio, Uvalde, and Gulf Railroad, is beautifully situated on high level ground just below the junction of the Atascosa and Frio Rivers and just above the junction of the Frio and Nueces Rivers. This town offers a long needed market for the products of this most fertile territory and makes the land too valuable to be used for stock raising purposes.

Thousands of acres of unsurpassed black mesquite lands surrounding Hamiltonburg and lying in three river valleys have been subdivided into small farm tracts and are now offered for the first time to actual farmers.

If you want to sell your high priced land and buy better land for less money, if you want to select your choice tract while the prices are the lowest, write immediately or take the next train to see CHAS. R. TIPS, GEN. MGR., HAMILTON TOWNSITE COMPANY, HAMILTONBURG, LIVE OAK COUNTY, TEXAS.¹

Tips was reared in the banking business, and by February of 1914 he had virtually completed organization of a bank. The \$25,000 capital stock had been subscribed, primarily to influential Live Oak County citizens. Tips was elected president of the bank, with James Murray vice-president. Directors were C.E. Tips, Dr. S.W. Neal (the town's first physician), and W.J. McMurray of Oakville. Former county judge W.A. Hill was persuaded to move to the new town and become cashier of the bank, and Charles B. Gaddis came from San Antonio to serve as assistant cashier. On August 12, 1914, the Live Oak County State Bank was chartered, and a substantial brick building was erected on the corner of Thornton Street and Harborth Avenue.



Picture 13

Charles R. Tips.

Three Rivers

The people of Hamiltonburg found that their mail was often missent to Hamilton, Texas, and asked for a name change. The town's nearness to the junctures of the rivers prompted Mr. Tips to suggest the name Three Rivers. Congressman (later Vice President) John Nance Garner was instrumental in the renaming. On May 1, 1914, the U.S. Postal Department approved the name Three Rivers.

An elaborate first birthday celebration took place on July 4, 1914—one hundred chickens, eleven goats, and three cows were barbecued and consumed.

Among the first families to move to Three Rivers were former Oakville citizens Mr. and Mrs. Ed

McMurray, Woody Tullos, and J.M. Cunningham. Tullos built a two-story business building on Main Street; a grocery store was established in it by a Mr. Mitchell, who later sold out to H.T. Harber. Cunningham was editor of Oakville's *Live Oak County Leader*, which was also moved to the new town; in 1925 the name was changed to the *Three Rivers News*. W.E. McMurray opened a hardware store.

Homes were also built by the building contractors, Mr. Harris and his partner, Mr. Bales.

Harry Whitworth was the town's first grocer, and in December, 1913, he became its first postmaster. When another grocery store opened, he closed his store and became full-time postmaster.

Before construction began on the town, a lumberyard was set up by Hillyer, Deutsch Lumber Company of San Antonio to provide materials for the first buildings. Later on, D.R. Owens and Sons purchased the lumberyard, which is still doing business under the name of Three Rivers Lumber Company, Robert Stapleton, owner. For about twenty years, F.W. Rommell operated the Alamo Lumber Company. Roberson Brothers for many years operated a lumberyard and cabinet shop in conjunction with their building and construction work.

George Hagn, who owned several gins in Guadalupe County, installed a gin to accomodate the cotton produced in the Three Rivers area, which until then had to be hauled to the Oakville gin.

A pavillion was built on the public square—the dancing there on Saturday nights was followed by preaching on Sundays. The first house of worship was built by Baptists on land donated by the Townsite Company. Methodists, Lutherans, and Catholics soon built their own places of worship on donated land.

A two-story hotel was erected across the street from the railroad depot. Oscar and Emil Voges established a

general merchandise store. A drugstore was operated by Mr. and Mrs. E.G. Majors. J.O. Blackwell of San Antonio opened a two-story clothing store. Mr. Cox ran a restaurant. The Charles R. Tips Land Company was managed by W.M. Carter of San Antonio.

The first railroad depot, built in 1913, was soon replaced with a larger one, which had to be rebuilt after it burned. N.G. Parr, W.G. Crain, W.K. Russell, and L.O. Hartman were depot agents. The third depot was moved after being sold to Mr. and Mrs. C.F. Huegler.

In 1920 gas was discovered on the L.F. Reagan land near Three Rivers. The pipeline laid to the town was almost the sole source of energy until electricity became available. On June 14, 1926, the Texas Central Power Company was granted a franchise for the town, and in a few months it was transferred to Central Power and Light Company.

About 1927 a city water system was installed at a total cost of \$51,679.51. The waterworks rates were set at \$2 for the first 2,500 gallons, and \$.50 for each additional thousand gallons. There was a \$7.50 connection fee.

C.J. Bains owned the telephone company at Three Rivers, as well as another independent system.

For awhile Fred Harris ran a jitney (taxi) service with his Model T Ford.

In 1922, Charles R. Tips opened the Three Rivers Glass Factory, the first such factory in Texas. It manufactured glass bottles and jars, and was powered by local natural gas. Local sand was used in the process. The Great Depression forced selling of the factory to Ball Glass Company in 1937, and it was permanently closed in 1938.

* * * * *

During the Great Depression many robberies and burglaries took place. One night an armed gang (some said a truck load of men) arrived in Three Rivers bent on

bank robbery. As Harry Whitworth, the night watchman, made his rounds, two men stepped out of an alley, stuck their guns in his face, and demanded to know the location of a cutting torch. While Harry was under guard, other members of the gang took a pick-up truck from the Ford Motors garage and hauled the torch to the bank so they could cut their way into the vault.

Two men went to the telephone office and cut the lines. When Mrs. Reeves, the operator, heard the men, she said, "Don't bother that phone!" She was told to keep quiet—she was in the hands of desperate men. Mrs. Reeves replied, "But I can't! I've just got to scream!" And backing up to the wall, she began such screaming that the whole town heard her.

Individuals coming out of their homes to see what the excitement was about were taken into custody and lined up, but lights soon began to appear all over town. One of the alarmed bandits called out, "The whole town is awake—we'd better get out!"

Since the telephone lines had been cut, someone had to drive to George West to report the incident to county officials. Not a shot had been fired or anything taken. No one knew who the desperadoes were or where they went, but they provided a discouraged people with some excitement which had a happy ending—all because a woman "just had to scream."

* * * * *

In 1935, Dr. C.D. Williamson was named the first City Health Officer.

During the 1930's a young man unable to find other employment took five Maytag washing machines on consignment. Elmer House first used extra space in his father's garage as a base of operation, but he was so successful that his father soon joined him in a business called H.D. House and Son. Other kinds of machines were

added to the line, then tractors and other farm implements, and finally an auto agency. Elmer now operates House Auto and Tractor Company with his son Mack, selling cars, tractors, and other equipment.

About 1939 Albert Huegler opened a feed store which served the needs of farmers and ranchers for many years.

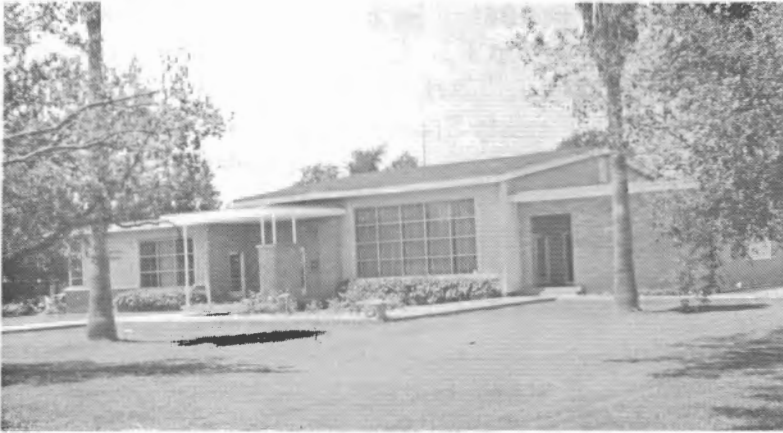
Mr. and Mrs. Henry King came to Three Rivers from Karnes County in 1941. The first year Henry managed the Variety Store for T.L. Cole, while Nell—a doctor's daughter—worked in Carl Witt's Drugstore. The Kings still operate the Variety Store which they bought in 1942. Although they suffered a total loss of merchandise in the 1967 flood accompanying Hurricane Beulah, they cleaned out the building, restocked, and are again carrying a full line of clothing and dry goods.

In 1946 Aubrey Lee established the Three Rivers Locker Plant. He would slaughter an animal, process the meat, and keep it in cold storage for the owner to take out as desired. He also purchased animals to slaughter, and kept the local meat markets supplied. Flooding in 1967 caused so much damage that Lee closed the old plant and rebuilt at a higher location. He omitted the lockers because of the advent of home freezers, but continued slaughtering and processing stock both for the public and wholesale markets. When Lee retired, he sold out to Three Rivers Meat Company, which continues to do a thriving business.

In 1950 a municipal building was built to house the tax collector's office, water and sewer department, jail, fire department, community hall and city library. The library now has a new home in the old bank building, which has been remodeled.

In 1951 construction of a dam on the Frio River began, and Tips State Park was opened beside it. Many a school boy took delight in diving into the pool just behind the dam, or walking gingerly across the concrete where an

inch or two of water poured over the dam. Although vandals destroyed much of the playground equipment, the park is still a delightful place for a picnic or an outing for boys and girls. Camping facilities are also available. Even the hottest days seem cool in the shade of those huge live oaks draped with Spanish moss.



Picture 14

Three Rivers City Hall.

Alton Zamzow began his career working for the Smith and Shannon Grocery, and eventually he purchased the business from them. Zamzow Grocery has been in operation since the 1950's. After a few years at the old rented stand, Alton and Mrs. Zamzow purchased a larger building at a better location and remodeled it. A severe loss of merchandise was sustained from flooding in 1967, but, like the others, the Zamzows started over again. Their perseverance has paid off in a business which is an asset to their little city.

In 1964 Mrs. R.H. Persley established a small nursing home near Highway 72 East, and opened with a twelve patient capacity. In 1966 Mrs. Persley sold the

home to Mrs. Evelyn Huebotter and former sheriff W.A. Smith. The name was changed to Roma Memorial Nursing Home, in memory of Mrs. Huebotter's mother, Roma Viola Head McNeill. Mrs. Huebotter has been manager of the nursing home since its purchase. A member of the Texas Nursing Home Association and American Nursing Home Association, Roma has thirty employees and is usually filled to its 51 patient capacity. It is thought by many to be unsurpassed in efficient service and compassionate care.

Three Rivers celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1964. The beautification projects of many civic groups contributed to the success of the festivities, which were reigned over by Frank and Pauline Gray. Mr. Gray, whose farm lies south of Three Rivers, had been a member of the Texas Legislature two different times. Colonel Tips was there to help celebrate.

In 1967, the Coastal Regional Planning Commission was so impressed by the town's slogan—"Let's Keep Three Rivers Clean, Safe, and Beautiful"—that they asked permission to copy it. This was a difficult slogan for the town to live up to because that September Hurricane Beulah flooded the lower half of the city. The Nueces River flood stage is 42 feet (when it reaches the streets of the original townsite), and this flood stood at 49.9 feet for about forty hours. Cleanliness, safety and beauty were restored, but only after much work and time. The damage was extensive—for example, restoring the public school to its former condition cost half a million dollars. Many gifts of labor, clothing, food, and loans were received from friends in Live Oak County, and some came from as far away as Three Rivers, Michigan.

In 1970, Hurricane Celia's winds tore across the county. Besides damaging buildings and trees, electric

lines blown down by Celia were probably responsible for a \$250,000 fire at the Three Rivers Refinery.

In 1971 Three Rivers won an award for towns under 25,000 population at the annual Beautify Texas Council in Austin, and the next year the city won first place.

In 1973 Three Rivers received \$8,814 from the federal revenue sharing plan—the check was deposited for future street maintenance. That year the first city manager was hired—and quit—and Wayne Miller became the second city manager.

In 1975 Melba Wolff became postmaster of Three Rivers. A revamping of the Rural Route 1 mail service so the boxes could be numbered in sequence prompted a wave of protests, as well as a lawsuit against the postal service.

The *Three Rivers News* merged with the *Live Oak County Herald* to become *The Progress of Live Oak and McMullen Counties* during the 1970's. In 1977 Mr. and Mrs. Collis Sellman purchased *The Progress*, whose main office and plant are in Three Rivers.

As of December, 1977, Three Rivers had received \$54,006.02 for the year on city sales tax rebates. The local option sales tax is collected by local merchants and other sales tax permit holders, sent to the state, and returned to the cities monthly by the Comptroller's Office.

At the end of June, 1978, the First State Bank of Three Rivers had \$15,307,000 in deposits, with assets of \$17,234,000.

In 1925 Henderson Coquat was elected the first mayor of Three Rivers. Other mayors have been W.A. Hill (1927), J.K. Montgomery (1935), James L. Nance (1955), James Bryce (1963), Joe Dan Bright (1969), and E.L. Evans (1974). James L. Nance was again elected mayor in 1978.

Three Rivers has an active Volunteer Fire Department. Firemen in 1979 were Jerry Adams,

Kenneth Ammann, Tommy Brosig, Arthur Byrne, Marvin Cunningham, Marcus Cruz, Robert Coleman, Alfred Guerra, Rudy García, Eddie McCoullough, James Nowlin, Roy Ochoa, Alvin Owens, Jesse Perez, Toby Perez, Ben Ramirez, Roy Rodriguez, W.D. Smith, Ronnie Stendebach, W.D. Stewart, Alan Alexander, Roy Van Cleve, and Nick Neitermeyer.

In May, 1979, a town-hall meeting was held to discuss a proposed flood protection levee project, which has been under study for almost twenty years. The new Choke Canyon dam will not protect Three Rivers from flooding—after the lake is full the town will actually be in more danger of flooding. Some federal funding is available for the project.

Three Rivers Independent School District

The first record of the Three Rivers schools involved a bond election held April 22, 1922, for a brick addition "to the present public free school building of brick."

School trustees H.K. Martin, Jr., R. Webb, Oscar Voges, T.H. Robinson, and secretary J.M. Cunningham were present at the January 22, 1923, meeting. In March the Live Oak County Interscholastic Meet was held at the Three Rivers school. Some of the unused school property was rented to farmers. That year rules of conduct were formulated for the teachers, including the requirement that teachers live or stay in Three Rivers and not be gone more than three Sundays (except holidays) during the school term without the consent of the trustees; and that "no teacher shall be allowed to receive company or participate in any amusement that may have a tendency to detract, effect, or impair the school work from Monday until Friday evening of each week."

The teachers of the white school for 1923-24 included

Mr. Maddaux, Mrs. M.T. Buckaloo, Nora O'Neal, Miss White, Ruby Lee Coquat, and Thelma Moor. Irene Whitworth taught the six-month term at the Mexican school.

In 1924, Henderson Coquat was elected superintendent at \$2,000 per year. He is the first superintendent mentioned, but Mayor Jack Nance says the first superintendent was his uncle, R.W. Burks. That summer, Mr. Mahan was given permission to teach summer school to bring up those behind in their work, but he "shall teach no propoganda." A discussion of discipline resulted in the policy that children must apologize to the superintendent for misconduct in the school room before returning to school.

In late January, 1925, school was dismissed for a week because of a diphtheria outbreak.

Finances were a problem in 1926. W.F. Lewis was hired as superintendent for \$1,750. The teachers were earning \$90 monthly, except Mrs. Buckaloo (\$100) and Miss Snowden (\$60 for the Mexican school). In May the trustees voted to borrow enough money to pay the teachers' salaries, and okayed the music teacher's teaching in the school auditorium that summer. Because of crowded conditions that fall, the trustees decided to build a 16' x 24' box building for use as a primary room, and ordered sixteen desks.

In 1928 H.B. Nevilles was hired as superintendent. Other teachers were Mrs. Buckaloo (primary), Miss Thedford, Mrs. Dietz (half the third and all the fourth grade), Mrs. Russell (all the fifth and half the sixth grade), Principal Culpepper, Mrs. Royce Bomar (half the sixth and all the seventh grade), Mrs. Nevilles (all the second and half the third grade), Mr. Black, and Morine McMurray (all grades at the Mexican school for the six-month term—her salary was raised to \$75). Troy Hicks received \$20 per month for janitorial services. That

year a \$50,000 school bond election was held for an addition, remodeling, and equipment.

In 1929, J.L. Harrison was hired as superintendent at \$2,400.

In September, 1930, the pastor of the Mexican Lutheran church asked that his children be allowed to attend the white school. In a special meeting, the trustees decided to adhere to the rule that Mexican children not be allowed to attend the white school until the seventh grade. By this time there were two teachers in the Mexican school. Later that school year the trustees received a petition from twenty-six patrons of the Mexican school asking that the term be extended another month, and the trustees voted to do so.

By the summer of 1931, the effects of economic depression were being felt. The banker refused to carry the school account unless expenses were cut, and the teacher contracts had already been made. The state superintendent's office said the contracts, once made, could not be changed. Finally Superintendent Harrison—who had threatened to resign—agreed to take an 8% cut and ask the teachers to take the same salary cut if the same number of teachers was employed as the previous year. That fall the teachers were issued vouchers instead of paychecks.

Things were worse in 1932—school taxes were way behind. . . a flood destroyed most of the crops. . . many teachers resigned. . . there was talk of closing the school. When the number of teachers was cut, Mr. Harrison resigned, and I.W. Eaves was hired as superintendent. In June, 1933, he reported eighty or ninety applicants for the three teacher vacancies.

In 1933 the following letter was sent to the taxpayers:

Three Rivers, Texas.
January 20th 1933.

To the Patrons and Tax Payers,
Three Rivers Independent School Dist.,
Three Rivers, Texas.

IN THE BEST OF HUMOR,

Your teachers have received less than $\frac{2}{3}$ of one months pay for the $4\frac{3}{4}$ months labor in your school.

Would you expect any other man or woman employed by you to continue to work for you and your children without pay?

Your bank is carrying past due notes for the years 1929 and 1930, your teachers are carrying vouchers for the year 1931, and are receiving the same kind of useless paper for this year.

You cannot justly expect your teachers to teach under these conditions nor can you expect your school board to continue to run your district in debt without your support and assistance to pay these debts.

You helped to vote the bonds against the district. Your children are attending the school. You are supposed and expected to help pay these bonds and teaching expenses.

Your district has collected less than eleven per cent of the taxes for this year. There are delinquent taxes for other years.

Our records show that you owe taxes and we are asking that you strain a point to pay all or part of your taxes at once—NOW, and help your district and your teachers as well as yourself.

We know too well that conditions are hard; that we have

had a flood and that many are on the verge of want. But we must insist that if you expect the school to continue
TAXES MUST BE PAID.

Your School Board is sending this letter out in a last minute effort to do all it can to maintain the kind of school that you and your children have a right to expect. You elected the Board and you expect them to guard the interest of your school. Your Board expects your moral and financial support. Give what you can.

Your Board hopes that you will accept this letter in the spirit it is intended.

YOURS FOR A GOOD SCHOOL.

Board of School Trustees
 Three Rivers Indpt. School Dist.

In 1934 the Mexican school became overcrowded, so the sixth grade was transferred to the white school.

In 1935 G.M. Turner was elected superintendent, and he was followed in 1937 by E.H. Stendebach. Sometimes teachers received cash payments (especially in December), but most of the time they were issued vouchers.

In 1936-37, the Three Rivers Independent School District brought suit against the Three Rivers Glass Company, the George West estate, the Ball Glass Company, and others. Although they tried "not to take the bread out of the mouth of anyone," eventually many lawsuits were filed over unpaid school taxes.

Things started to look up in 1939. The board borrowed \$200 to light the football field built by the Rotary Club. The trustees also voted to buy new band instruments, and talked about buying a school bus and building a new Mexican school.

In 1941 Leslie Glaze was elected superintendent,

followed the next year by E.O. Larkin.

In 1943 the trustees discussed the teacher shortage, and gave some of the teachers a raise in mid-year. That year Nell I.S.D. (white and Mexican schools), Kittie, Salt Creek, and Central community schools were annexed into the Three Rivers Independent School District. They were joined in 1945 by Simmons Independent School District, Mapes (White Creek), North, and Ray Point schools. In 1947 Toms (white and Mexican) was annexed. In 1949 the other community schools in the north end of the county were annexed—Whitsett (Pleasant Hill), Oakwood (including Atascosa since 1917), Fant City (including Midway, Arkansaw, and Elwell), Benham County Line, and Mountain View.² Some of the buildings were sold to individuals, some to the community for use as a community center, and some were torn down and the materials used for making additions to the Three Rivers schools.

In 1948 R.E. Stafford was hired as superintendent at a salary of \$6,000. Plans were made for a new high school building. There was periodic discussion about building a Negro school—no mention of black children in the community was made—but nothing was done.

Bryce Taylor was hired as band director in 1951. He built the Three Rivers High School Band into an outstanding organization that was known throughout the state for over a decade.

In 1954 H.B. Benold was hired as superintendent. There was talk about a new elementary school and junior high. The trustees voted to continue segregation in the schools.

In 1957 Drew H. Reese became superintendent. In 1962 a new elementary school was built at a cost of \$226,000. The high school received an addition in 1969. A new administration building is now being built.

A.F. Cobb has been superintendent since 1965.

Principals are Carl Weber, Jr., Dale Johanson, and Charles Arnott. There are presently 53 certified personnel and 29 non-certified personnel employed by the school system. School board members are Dudley Bellows (president), Raymond Wieding, Joe Churchill, Alvin Meyer, Arlon Retzloff, James Esse, and Melvin Maikoetter.

All school buildings are located on the same sixty-acre campus, and all are made of brick, concrete, and cinder block. The present physical plant is valued at \$2,000,000 plus. Property valuation for the 410 square miles in the Three Rivers I.S.D. is \$39,026,020—84% of its actual value. The tax rate is \$1.30.

The total 1977-78 budget was \$1,317,039, with an expenditure per pupil of \$1,805.34. The buildings are capable of housing 956 students, but enrollment was 740, including 361 in the elementary building (kindergarten through grade six), 104 in junior high (seventh and eighth grades), 241 in the secondary building (grades nine through twelve), and 3 in special education. The academic program meets the state requirements, and fifty elective subjects are offered. Average daily attendance is about 96%. Six bus routes transported 210 students (32% of the enrollment) from rural areas—the buses logged in 110,000 miles for 1977-78. The cafeteria served 93,500 meals, including 51,260 free lunches; regular cost of a hot lunch is 50¢.

There is a fairly even ethnic division between Mexican American and Anglo children. Most of the parents are involved in the school. There are many active school-sponsored groups—4-H, Future Farmers of America, Future Homemakers of America, Band Booster Club, Young Homemakers. . . Occupational training and a pre-employment program are available, and the school cooperates in the Special Education Brush County Co-op.

In 1979 Three Rivers I.S.D. placed second in the

district Class A Interscholastic League contest. For 1978-79 the boys basketball, football, and golf teams won the district championship. In 1955 Three Rivers won the Class A state championship in track. The football team has often been in the state playoffs.

Almost every parent hopes that his child will have a better life than he. The average parent of the children in the Three Rivers schools today has an eleventh grade education. A generation ago the average was much lower.

In 1924 a young man named Nicanor Lopez spent several months clearing land for me—he had just come from Mexico. He married a local girl, and spent the next half century working and raising a family on the Robert (later Edward) Rokohl farm across the road from me. In 1949 I helped Mr. Lopez obtain his United States citizenship.

Neither Mr. or Mrs. Lopez spoke English, but they reared seven daughters and six sons who—except for the oldest daughter—attended the Three Rivers schools. Five of the Lopez children now teach in the public schools.

Their daughter Elvira Reyna teaches kindergarten in the Three Rivers school. Her husband Wally—from a large George West family—teaches seventh and eighth grade science. Both Elvira and Wally attended Bee County College, and then went to Texas A & I University. During the summer months, Wally leaves each day at 5:30 a.m. to attend classes at A & I which will lead to a graduate degree in school administration.

The Churches

First Baptist Church—On November 9, 1913, the First Baptist Church of Hamiltonburg was organized with eleven charter members: Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Cunningham, Mr. and Mrs. George D. Smith, J.E. Bales, H. Moore, W.M. Moore, Mattie Moore, J.M. Thompson,

and Mr. and Mrs. J.O. Blackwell. Reverend J.W. Cunningham presided over the meeting, which was held in the little yellow schoolhouse across the street from the present Church of Christ.

The next year the town's name was changed, so the church changed its name to the First Baptist Church of Three Rivers. Reverend Cunningham preached at services the second Sunday of each month.

Pastors have been J.W. Cunningham, J.W. Thomas, E. Donahoe, G.H.M. Wilson, C.E. (Charlie) Jones, J.L. King, S.E. Burroughs, J.T. Hollan, H.H. Spillyards, W.S. Gibbs, J. Manley Reynolds, Rayford Harris, Z.E. Parker, W.E. McGraw, J. Earnest Stack, Judd B. Holt, R.D. McCelvey, Fred W. King, Tommy Curbo, Norman Fry, Milton B. Litzler, Chris Walker, Victor L. Haney, and C.L. Garey.

In August, 1921, the Townsite Company contributed lots 1 and 2 in block 47 for a church building. A tabernacle was constructed by the members at a cost of \$310. The building had hinged wall sections that allowed for full air circulation, a shingle roof, dirt floor, wooden benches, and was lit by kerosene lamps. An organ was furnished by the Oakville Baptist Church.

In 1917 a mission was begun at Simmons, and another at Calliham in 1925. Membership at the Three Rivers church and the missions totaled 108 in 1925.

In 1917 the pastor's salary was \$8.33 1/3, which was probably a month's salary. By 1923 the salary had increased to \$30 monthly. In 1927 the church began half-time preaching, which meant one preaching service a Sunday, alternating between morning and night; the other service was a song and prayer session led by volunteers.

The church adopted its first budget—\$107 a month—in 1929. In August, 1931, preaching services were

discontinued because the church was behind on the pastor's salary; in May, 1932, J. Manley Reynolds was called as pastor. As the first full-time pastor, he advocated a "pay as you go" policy which resulted in a new church being built over a long period of time.

A two-story frame educational building was dedicated in 1950, and about this time a meetinghouse was built for the Mexican mission. In 1961 a new parsonage was built just back of the church. Also that year the First Baptist Church of Three Rivers entered the Rural Church Achievement Program and received state recognition.

In 1973 plans for a new church building were under way. Membership was 302.

Calvaria Baptist Mission—About 1950 a meetinghouse was built for the Mexican mission of the First Baptist Church of Three Rivers, under the leadership of Associational Missionary Milton S. Leach. In 1962 Nicholas Casarez was called as the first full-time mission pastor. That fall additional classrooms were built.

In November, 1965, a new building was dedicated in the Atascosa addition—that building had been moved from Ray Point, where it had been used for Methodist and Lutheran services.

Pastors have been Nicolas Casarez, José C. Leon, David Espurvoa, and Diego Riveria.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church—In 1919 Jesse Legette, a Catholic director of the Three Rivers bank, donated \$162.50 and two lots as a Christmas gift so that a Catholic church could be built. Mrs. Corrine Beal donated some pews and another block of land after the church was built in 1920. The Bishop of Corpus Christi, Most Reverend E.B. Ledvina, donated \$750. The new church became a mission of St. George's Parish in George West

in 1924, with Father John as pastor.

Other pastors have been Reverends David Buckley, Chrzanowski, William H. Oberste, B. Corbin, Albert Schmidt, Herbert Buckholtz, and Louis Ordner. On February 15, 1950, the church became an independent parish, with Father W. Kinlough as pastor. In 1966 Monsignor J.W. Alvarado became pastor.

The Sacred Heart Catholic Church has 1223 parishioners, and its mission consists of 668 parishioners.

St. Michael's Evangelical/Our Savior Lutheran Church—The community of Ray Point was settled in the 1920's by people of Methodist, Lutheran, and Evangelical backgrounds. The Methodists were the first to start a building program. The Lutherans, still few in number, offered to help their Methodist friends build, with the understanding that when they were able to find a pastor, they could hold services in the building.

In August, 1924, the church building was dedicated, and soon the wish for a Lutheran pastor was fulfilled. On March 29, 1925, the mission pastor of Sinton and George West, Emil Listman, held the first Lutheran service in the Methodist Church at Ray Point. The second service was held by Reverend Erdman Paul Richter on Easter Sunday, April 13. Lutheran church services in German were held on the first and third Sundays each month in the Methodist church. Most members of each denomination attended the services of the other.

By June, Lutheran attendance had increased enough to justify the organization of a church. A meeting was held with Christian Friedle, Karl Braune, Otto Braune, Alfred Wesch, Hugo Wieding, Robert Rokohl, August Wieding, Jr. and August Lamprecht present, and the congregation was named St. Michael's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

In February, 1926, the congregation was

incorporated, and on April 27 it was accepted into the Texas Synod of the United Lutheran Church of America.

The 1935 list of congregational families included Otto Braune, Karl Braune, Reinold Braune, Gerhardt Heinen, Hugo Kopplin, Henry Magel, Robert Rokohl, William Stridde, Alfred Wesch, August Wieding, Sr., August H. Wieding, Henry Wieding, Hugo Wieding, Otto Zamzow, Paul Zamzow, and Walter Zamzow.

In 1927 the Lutherans built a combination church and parsonage on land donated by Otto Zamzow, Sr. This they used until 1945, when the Methodist church disbanded, and the St. Michael's congregation purchased the building which many of its members had helped to build.

In 1962 St. Michael's congregation decided to move its place of worship to Three Rivers. After purchasing four acres of land adjacent to Highway 72 on the edge of town, they built a parsonage, which was dedicated on November 11, following the arrival of Richard Achgill, the new pastor. St. Michael's Evangelical Lutheran Church was disbanded and the new congregation was reorganized as Our Savior Lutheran Church. Architect Edward Gondeck was hired to draw plans for the new church building.

Guiding the membership through the various phases of the building program were Lillie Mae Wieding, general chairman, Gerald Krause, finance chairman, Mrs. Bill Retzloff, education and publicity, and Ernest Wolff, Jr., member. Miss Wieding was the first woman to be president of a building program in the Texas-Louisiana Synod. Councilmen during this period of building were Arlon Retzloff, Allan Franke, Raymond Wieding, Fred Krause, Albert Braune, Alfred Krause, Oscar Stridde, Ernest Wolff, Jr., and Otto W. Zamzow.

A dedication service for the newly completed

building was held on January 24, 1965.

In 1967 Hurricane Beulah offered the new church a unique opportunity for ministry. Flooding which followed the rains drove many people from their Three Rivers homes. Members of the congregation brought food and clothing to the forty families which were housed in the church until they could return to their homes.

The congregation has been served by the following pastors: Reverends Erdman Paul Richter (1925), Rudolf Lentz (1927), R. Sauberzweig (1930), R.G. Hartfiel (1938), J.C. Pfenninger (1941), J.W. Kern (1952), Andrew Carlsson (1960), Richard Achgill (1962), Harold Muffley (1967), and Donald Brown (1970).

Our Savior Lutheran Church is often the only church which sponsors a float in the Live Oak County Fair parade.*

Assembly of God—In 1928 Reverend Hubert Chick of Oklahoma held an open-air revival near the old water tower, and a church was organized which at first was called the Church of God of the Apostolic Faith. Charter members were Mrs. G.M. Armstrong, Alice Bellows, Mrs. Tuny Cliff, Minnie Pullin, Mrs. Lige Plocker, Ben Moon, Charlie Moon, James Moon, and Mrs. W. Riley.

The next year Reverend Chick returned with a Reverend Campbell and set the church in order. Ben and James Moon began to preach and pastor the church. In 1931 Reverend Chick again returned, and pastored the church for a year. Allen Roberson and Mr. and Mrs. D.L. Hicks united with the church, and in 1932 Roberson was ordained; he served as pastor for ten years. Roberson later served several other terms. Reverend Moon returned and pastored during 1947. T.J. Wooten and Sam Armstrong also served as pastors.

*Information regarding St. Michael's and Our Savior Lutheran Church came from the Golden Anniversary booklet published by the church.

The first deacons were W.A. Holder, D.L. Hicks, and Ben Moon; Moon, Holder, and Roberson were trustees.

The first meetinghouse was built on Murray Hill, but when James Moon was pastor, the church was built closer to town; it is now used for Sunday School rooms and pastor's quarters. The present church was built by pastors Armstrong and Roberson, while Reverend Wooten was pastor.*

Evergreen Masonic Lodge²

On June 19, 1970, Evergreen Lodge No. 325, A.F. & A.M. will celebrate its 100th anniversary. . . the lodge is now in Three Rivers.

Evergreen Lodge was organized in Oakville, then the county seat of Live Oak County, March 12, 1870. While under special dispensation, M.W.C. Frazier served as worshipful master. Other organizing officers were George Irvine, senior warden; G.P. Reagan, junior warden; E. Lawley, secretary; and E. Adams, tiler.

Photos in neat black frames of many of these early officers now grace the walls of the lodge across the street from the Three Rivers Post Office, one block east of the public square.

The two-story frame building was moved intact from Oakville to Three Rivers in 1946. Just prior to completely remodeling this building into the attractive one-story it now is, some records and other valuable items were brought downstairs—unfortunately just in time to get caught by Hurricane Beulah's flood waters.

*Allen Roberson provided the information for this article.

After many hours of patience, work and sunshine, most of the minutes in journals were restored. Even so, the ink used 100 years ago is dark and clear.

Reading the hand-written minutes is as though one were reading 100 years of Live Oak County history. Few people today write with such careful flourish. The later minutes are typed.

Masons are accustomed to concluding their minutes to read: "No further business appearing, the lodge was duly closed in Peace and Harmony." This in 1870, M.W.C. Frazier and E. Lawley signed. Now 100 years later, Frank J. Ellis and J.K. Montgomery sign.

The first elected officers under the charter were installed on December 31, 1870, except the worshipful master, Dr. G.P. Reagan, who was absent. One wonders who was ill that night, or perhaps one of a current Mason's grandpas was born then.

Others who had been elected on December 3, 1870, were E. Lawley, Samuel Beckman, J.R. Francis, E.M. Reid and J.W. Drury. Annual dues 100 years ago were \$4 to be paid quarterly. The 1970 dues are \$12 paid annually.

These hardy souls thought nothing was wrong with them when they rode horseback or walked many miles to lodge meetings. J.B. Geasy came from San Jacinto for the regular monthly meeting in Oakville—that was 59 years before highways and 42 years before railroads came to nearby Three Rivers. . . Officers included R.H. Brown and C.W. Word, both of Rockport.

First members included R. Tullos, Daniel Hayne, William Adams, G.Z. Wilson, F.M. Dossett, A.J. Nations, J.C. Howell, J.M. Ussery, W.T. Townsend, J.V. Ellis, J.B. Ferrell, J.W. Campbell, W.C. Anderson, also J.C. Clayton, S.S. Mapes, Thomas DeWees, G.A. Beeman, S.J. Claunch, L.C. Fudge, A.B. Butler, I.B. Ammons, N.H. James, G.W. Sanders, John H. Hill (came from Gonzales), W.W. Payne, R.H. Lowery, G.W. Legy and

W.M. Freeman.

E. Lawley was the first representative to Grand Lodge of Masons of Texas in 1872. November 26, 1872, the burial rites of Brother Beckman are recorded with all members wearing the badge of mourning for 30 days. The *San Antonio Herald* was chosen to publish the resolutions of condolence.

In 1878, petitions to join came from J.C. Cade, H.W. Peters, T.H. Sealey, J.D. Edwards, and I. Marx, and in the next year, J.E. Verson and W.S. Jones. This year, S.S. Mapes received 55 cents for fixing the lodge door—a problem door as far as subsequent minutes prove. . . .

That door was needing repairs again by September 18, 1880, so J.M. Coker fixed “the doors and moved the staircase to the other side of the lodge—paying it all himself.”

. . . On February 5, 1881, the following persons sent to the lodge (three men carrying same) a petition asking for recommendations to establish a Masonic Lodge in Tilden. Signers were S.F. Dixon, T.H. Kuykendall, C.W. Byrne, E.A. Hinman, George H. Miles, E.H. Carter, T.M. Drake, and E.C. Moore. . .

In the year 1883 there must have been a population explosion in Oakville, judging from the many new applicants. . . .

The first time we note in the minutes that the Evergreen was called on to give aid is when a Sam H. Foster of Floresville asked for “sort of Benevolences” to which \$5 was sent. . . .

In 1884 a Sabbath School Committee was formed and it was voted to build a house 36 x 22 feet, and 18 feet high. Committee chairman was Dr. Reagan. The lumber was hauled in from Martin & Schryver of San Antonio with the note on this carrying 12 per cent interest.

What happened? Again the lodge moved; now renting a room for \$7 from Mrs. Bartlett. . .

Evergreen voted in 1887 to assist in the establishment by the Grand Lodge of a Widows and Orphans Home. Later, they cast their choice of the location to be in Temple. . . .

F.H. Church became M.W. in 1888. . . The "Hall" (secretary calls it) was insured for three years and a "whole box" of candles was bought for \$5.50; \$2.50 was sent to aid a Carolina Lodge, and another payment was to Brown. . . one of many.

. . . Now we learn the church house (presumably this is the Sabbath School the lodge built) is Baptist and the lodge met there. Business of the May 11 meeting (called communication) was "to devise means for disposing of the lumber from the wreck of our lodge." A committee was named to dispose of the lumber.

An appeal was sent to Grand Lodge for permission to ask help from all Texas lodges so a new lodge "room" can be built. Soon thereafter, the lodge "suspended labor" due to the lack of a suitable room.

Five years later, May 1, 1894, they rented a room from F.H. Church for \$5 per month and asked Grand Lodge for a renewal dispensation to "resume labor" in the town of Oakville under the old charter. This was granted and the next regular communication was held on May 9, 1894.

F.H. Church went to Grand Lodge in Houston in December and was reimbursed \$12.25, including Grand Lodge fees. . . .

A family name still well known in Live Oak county comes up when on February 27, 1894, burial rites for Joshua Hinton are recorded, stating he was "a Brother for more than 40 years." . . .

The sum of \$35.45 was spent on a suitable carpet for the lodge room.

With R.W. Johnson as W.M. in 1896, installation procession was to the church house on St. John's Day. There was a second hotel—the Waller Hotel—from

whence the burial of C.O. Orrick on September 13 proceeded to the cemetery. . . . Eager to be educated, Evergreen paid the \$5 asked by the Beeville Lodge so that all members could attend school of instruction there. . .

(In 1900) Five dollars was given to E.F. Hatfield for his expenses to go to Grand Lodge in Houston. Today each member pays his own expenses, according to J.K. Montgomery.

The minutes show that on February 2, 1901, an appeal came from Grand Lodge for the "storm-stricken brethren" and \$5 was sent. . . .

The July 19 (1902) minutes state "the treasury is in fine condition, no indebtedness, and a balance of \$51.35."

. . .

The minutes show that the brothers aided the needy. On May 25, 1907, they hired Mrs. Mattie Waller for \$15 a month to take constant care of a deceased Mason's wife. .

. .

Use of the hall for organizing an Eastern Star Chapter was voted on April 27, 1912. W.W. Caves was sent to Grand Lodge in Waco, allowing him \$33.05. . . .

April 4, 1914, A.M. Foster (a Methodist circuit rider) was a visitor. . . The carpet was worn out and the senior officers were "ordered" to buy new sanitary carpet which was explained to mean linoleum.

In 1916 a lock was purchased from D.R. Owens & Sons for \$1.75 (And we thought vandalism was modern).

Lamps were bought for the hall for \$11.06 in 1917. . .

E.L. Riser became W.M. in 1918 and served into 1920. Some regular meetings were skipped in this war time. Twenty-five cents per member was sent to Grand Lodge to be used "in the interest of Master Masons in the military service."

. . . The custom of sending Christmas cheer to the Orphans Home was begun in 1920. . . .

There must surely have been a social on August 13 as

H.A. Jones "scrubbed the floor" and \$3.50 worth of ice cream was eaten and \$27.10 worth of chairs were bought. Later, they voted to loan the chairs to the King's Daughters.

This was the beginning of revival after World War I. They voted to pay their share of a moving picture machine to illustrate the lectures. . . .

W.E. Cunningham was W.M. in 1922. Five dollars per member was donated to a special fund for the Grand Lodge. An oyster supper was held in spring. An ice cream supper was held on July 8 with the five gallons costing \$7.50 at Witt's. . . .

(In 1925) activities included a highly successful Washington Birthday program—as "he was a Mason." Here we read that there was "now a Masonic Lodge in George West." (October 1924)

A contribution was sent to the Home for the Aged Masons in Arlington. Again, they were looking for larger quarters for their meetings. On December 6, 1924, it was voted to use the upper floor of the Oakville Jail, that it be repaired and put into condition for them. Many months and several committees later, the title still not cleared, several women were appointed to see about the matter with Miss Julia Wilson. . . .

In 1925, Ira Hinton was the secretary and for the very first time the expression "OK" was used.

In 1926, the jail deal must have fallen through as a committee now was appointed to see about buying the WOW building and the cost of moving it. It was bought June 11, 1926, for a sum of money subscribed by 27 members.

. . . (In June, 1929) again money was sent to disaster victims, this time to Puerto Rico and to Florida. A Delco lightplant was bought for \$160 from the George West Utilities.

. . . (1932) It was the first year the taxes were assessed

on the lodge building. . . The famous Louis Tampke was hired to tune the piano for the holding of the 61st anniversary. . . and everything points to its being a real big event. . . Rocky Reagan has written previously about the lodge history and surely he has much of this in his files. He is also writing a book for the June 19 celebration.

...

Each year, installation is on or near St. John's Day, June 24. . . .

August 1943, a request was sent to Grand Lodge for permission to move the building to Three Rivers and it was not granted immediately. . . on June 13, 1946, the meeting was held for the first time in Three Rivers with installation following in the First Baptist Church on June 28 when M.R. Garrison became W.M. . . .

W.M. now is Frank J. Ellis.

For 20 years, the two-story lodge building was used. On May 18, 1967, it was voted to spend \$13,000 to remodel it into the attractive one-story building it now is.

This was interrupted by the flood. Masonic brothers from neighboring towns came over to help clean up and the contractor moved back on the job. The Evergreen was back in its own home on November 25, 1967. And this it hopes to hold for many years forward.

NOTES

1. "The Valley of the Nile," *Live Oak County Leader*, September 12, 1913. Furnished by Dr. E.D. Drozd.
2. This information was furnished by Thelma Lindholm.

CHAPTER VIII COMMUNITIES IN SOUTHERN LIVE OAK COUNTY

Dinero

In the year 1838 Jane Curry, Archibald McDonald, Thomas Morin, Stephen Simmons, Isaac Smith, and George Wright acquired land from the newly established Republic of Texas. Later they were joined by the Shipps, Givens, Haneys, Weathersbys, Gorbets, Watsons, McWhorters, Brooks, Johnsons, and others who bought land and went into the cattle business by legally branding wild cattle.

The village these settlers established on the west bank of the Nueces River was called Barlow's Ferry, in honor of E. Barlow, who operated a ferry boat across the river; after Mr. Barlow's death, his son Fentril continued the ferry service for many years. Barlow's Ferry was replaced by a suspension bridge around 1900.

Fort Merrill* was built in 1850 as a refuge for settlers and rangers against Indians and marauding Mexicans. It was manned by U.S. troops. Patrick Burke carried supplies from Corpus Christi to the troops, and Patrick Fadden sold corn and other vegetables to the soldiers.

About 1872 the town's name was changed to Dinero, the Spanish word for money. Several legends persist regarding the name change. . . It is said that Spanish explorers operating a silver mine in the hills east of present-day Dinero aroused the wrath of Indians, who murdered the Spaniards and filled in the mine. Small pieces of metal found in the area in recent years have been pronounced by a metallurgist to be silver smelted by a crude process. . . According to another story, a large

*Named in honor of Captain Hamilton W. Merrill of the Second United States Dragoons.

number of Mexicans once descended upon the area. They came armed with maps and charts, and when questioned, each man replied that he was searching for "dinero."

For many years Dinero boasted of one large general merchandise store owned first by George Wright, and later by his sons Orion and Willis. In 1890 the Wright brothers, after selling out to Bob Johnson, went to Mexico and never returned. Johnson later became county tax assessor.

In 1865 Sam McWhorter settled on 160 acres, and here he raised corn, cotton, feed grain, and cattle. His wife Sarah opened a small trading post on the highway running from San Antonio to Laredo. Their great-granddaughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Aaron E. Johnson, now own 1,228 acres (including the McWhorter land) on which they raise cattle, hay, and feed grain.

Farming was done on a very small scale; only small fields of corn and hay were planted until 1896, when a few people began raising cotton. J. Frank Taylor erected a small cotton gin and operated it for several years.

Although Barlow's Ferry had a small school in 1858, it closed, and there was no school at all until 1894. Kate Jackson came from Gainsville to teach about 45 pupils. She received \$40 for each of the four months in the school term.

In the late 1890's, Dan Shipp, who owned a 10,000 acre ranch on the Nueces, set mesquite mileposts on the thirteen-mile road from Dinero to Ramireña. He measured the circumference of a front wagon wheel, and wrapped a piece of rawhide around the rim of a spoke to which a white rag was tied. As the horses slowly pulled the wagon down the road, Shipp counted the revolutions of the wheel. When 5,280 feet had been covered, he stopped, dug a posthole, and set in the post bearing the appropriate number. It took two days to mark the road.

About this time, Mr. and Mrs. Pate McNeill and their stalwart boys moved from Lagarto to Dinero. The McNeills were great church and community leaders. They erected a large ranch home with material taken from the old Lagarto College. Bruce McNeill now lives on the site of his parent's home, but the old house has been replaced.

In 1885 the Dinero post office was opened. About 1906, Clinton Dewitt (Dee) Johnson drove the mail hack from Dinero to Beeville (about twenty miles) twice a week. Mrs. J.R. McGuffin is now the postmistress of what may be the smallest post office in Texas.

When the SAU&G Railroad was built a mile west of the townsite in 1914, Dinero moved from the riverbanks to the railroad. About the same time, the Sparks and McGuffins settled in Dinero. Mr. Sparks was section foreman for many years. Mr. and Mrs. J.R. McGuffin served as both depot agents and postal clerks for many years, and have contributed much money and time to the upbuilding of Dinero.

In 1931 the first commercial oil well in the county was drilled on Holman Cartwright's land near Dinero. One of the largest gas fields in the country was found to be on the Cartwright ranch.

Today our dinero comes from natural gas and oil, farming (on land that produces almost anything), cattle raising (the area boasts several fine Hereford herds) and honey production (by Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Taylor).*

Echo

The community called Echo (pronounced Eeko), or The Point, was located on land belonging to James McGloin. The empresario never lived there, but his

*Special thanks to Mrs. J.R. McGuffin and Mrs. L. McCumber for their help on this section.

daughter Elizabeth and her husband, Patrick J. Murphy, established a general store at Echo.

John Bernard and Margaret Mary Murphy bought part of James McGloin's land in 1850, and five years later they were living in a large two-story home on The Point.

Echo was on the Old Spanish Trail. The earliest record of mail service in Live Oak County shows that when Jim Drury carried saddlebags of mail between Corpus Christi and San Antonio—in the days before post offices—he stopped at Echo. The second post office in the county was established at Echo on November 1, 1858, at the request of J.B. Murphy. It was discontinued October 27, 1879.

During those same years, Echo was a stop on the old stagecoach line from Corpus Christi to San Antonio. The scheduled stops were at Corpus Christi, Tula Lake, Santa Margarita, Miller's Ferry, Mathis, Echo (Murphy's Place), Grover, Kivilin, D. Johnson, Gussettville Oakville, and on to San Antonio.

The stage depot at Echo was only a single room, but behind it was an inn for passengers who had to stay over to catch another stage. The depot was built of huge caliche blocks taken from the surrounding hills and set with mortar. Patrick and Elizabeth Murphy ran the stagecoach inn.

The Murphy ranch was the site of the earliest known irrigation in Live Oak County. The Murphys sold vegetables to freighters on their way from Corpus Christi to San Antonio. These oxcarts and wagons provided the people of Echo with Mexican beans, unroasted coffee, salt, and unrefined brown sugar which was dried into a cone and wrapped in sugarcane leaves.

At one time Echo had a community school.

During the turbulent years before the Civil War, J.B. Murphy and his wife moved to Corpus Christi. There he practiced law and eventually became mayor. In 1885, a

year after J.B.'s death, his widow acquired the land that had belonged to the Patrick Murphys.

Two years later, Margaret Mary Murphy moved to San Antonio where she dedicated her life and personal income to St. Peter Claver Academy, a free school for Negro children, and to the convent and teaching order she founded, Sisters of the Holy Ghost. She kept the ranch as a retreat for nuns in training. The Echo depot was converted into St. Stephen's Chapel, where Mass was said monthly.

In 1906 Mother Margaret Mary Healy-Murphy¹ deeded the ranch to Richard F. Sellers. Sellers remodeled the old Murphy house and used the depot for storage.

In 1968 Sellers' heirs sold the place to Dan Coker. The stately old home once overlooked the Nueces River, but the Coker family now has a lovely view of Lake Corpus Christi.

The old depot stood until 1970, when a tornado spawned by Hurricane Celia reduced it to a pile of rubble. Only the old chimney and part of a wall now stand.

Lagarto is about three miles away.*

Lagarto

Not all of the original inhabitants of our county were hard-working settlers building homes. Cattle rustlers and gunslingers were moving in from other states, and often the man who was quickest with his gun survived. The atmosphere was uneasy and sometimes unhealthy. The ranchers began hiring rangers to guard their property, and because the wheels of justice moved too slowly, they began forming minute companies.

Heading one of these vigilance committees was Henderson Williams, who had settled in 1855 on what he

*Information for this section is based in part on an interview with Dan Coker.

called the Lagarto Rancho. One of Williams' sons was killed by a gunslinger on the streets of Oakville, and another never returned from a trip to Mexico. To add to his troubles, Mrs. Williams—sick of so much trouble and bloodshed—developed a longing for the tranquility of her native state, and divorced him.

There were still periodic raids by bands of Mexican outlaws who would round up thousands of horses and cattle, and then rush them across the Río Grande before the Texans could muster enough men to stop them. Mexican officials showed few signs of disapproval.

On August 28, 1872, Henderson Williams petitioned the U.S. government to pay him, or force the Mexican government to pay him, for the loss of 19,075 head of cattle which he claimed had been forcibly taken from him and driven into Mexico by armed bands of Mexicans; he offered evidence to prove his claims. He priced the cattle at \$10 a head—\$190,750.*

The May 31, 1875, issue of the *Galveston Weekly News* carried the story of

the death of Mr. Henderson Williams, one of the oldest citizens of Live Oak County, the result of an accident. Mr. Williams went to where his hands were building a pasture fence and, while assisting in lifting a log, his six-shooter fell from the scabbard, and striking against a picket, fired, the ball taking effect in the left side, and passing out the opposite side, breaking a rib on each side. He was carried to his home, but lived only a few hours.

Williams was 53 at the time of his death.

*The author could find no record of Williams or his heirs ever collecting anything for the loss of his cattle. In 1947 to 1948 his grandson settled Henderson Williams' estate in Bexar County Court; total value was \$14,688.98, according to his great-grandson, Elton Cude, District Clerk of Bexar County.

The town of Lagarto was laid out in 1856 by John W. Ramey, a saddle tree manufacturer. The townsite was on the Lagarto* Creek, near the Nueces River. In 1866 James Rather of Corpus Christi built Lagarto's first store, which he eventually sold to Captain C.C. Cox, who sold it to H.B. Newberry in 1875. Other early citizens of Lagarto included Sterling Dobie, Samuel Cook, Pate McNeill, T.D. Newton, Clint Lewis, and Doctor A.L. East. The October 11, 1875, edition of the *Galveston Weekly News* reported that Lagarto land sold for \$15 per acre, while the land around Oakville was selling for \$.50 to \$1.00 per acre. Lagarto was the site of county's first college; Dr. A.G. Heaney of New York came to be its president. Ella Byler was teaching at Lagarto College when in 1887 she married Richard J. Dobie; her son



Picture 15

Lagarto College, established in 1884, closed in 1895.

*Lagarto is the Spanish word for alligator.

Frank called it an elementary school, part free and part pay. S.S. Cox published Live Oak County's first newspaper, *The Lagarto Times*, a four-page weekly with very little advertising; publication ceased about 1896.

*Lagarto*²—About 1875, the town of Lagarto, located on the road from San Antonio, Victoria, and Goliad to Brownsville, became a prosperous trading center. Mexicans came up to Lagarto with horses and cattle for sale; the American buyers sold the animals in East Texas and bought fine stock to sell to the Mexicans returning to Mexico. At its height, Lagarto boasted six or eight stores, two churches (Christian and Methodist), several hotels, and a two-story college, as well as a number of nice residences.

Whiskey flowed as freely as water, and many gamblers, desperadoes, and cutthroats found their way to Lagarto. There were many quarrels and fights between the Mexicans and Americans, and the life of a man was hardly worth the snap of a finger. Many a time the bodies of five or six men were found hanging from a large tree on the banks of the Nueces River, and nobody could tell who had committed the deed.

Some large oak trees near the road between Gussettville and Oakville were a favorite spot for hangings; the place became so notorious that people dared not pass that way at night. Once a group of young boys who happened by riding good horses were swung up to the trees, their horses spirited away, and the bodies left hanging. Finally times grew so terrible in Lagarto, Oakville, and the entire western side of the Nueces River that the citizens organized a vigilance committee to try to put down the lawlessness. Pate McNeill was elected captain of the fifty-man group.

My husband, S.G. Miller, was tax assessor of Live Oak County for years, and he and the sheriff, Mr. Coker,

always traveled together. In carrying out his duties, Mr. Miller sometimes was gone for three weeks at a time, and I never knew when he left whether he would return.

Mr. Miller cut out a road leading to Beeville, and employed a Mexican to run a ferryboat across the river.* Because the nearest river crossing was fifteen miles away at San Patricio, the ferry was well patronized. Crossing herds of cattle and horses sometimes paid the ferryman as much as \$150 a day, and half of it was his.

Many times we crossed that river when it was level bank full, and the night was inky black, while we had only a lantern to light our way. Big trees, logs, and brush would come rolling down on the water, while the men pulled the cable for dear life to avoid them, lest we be swamped beneath the raging current.

Early every Sunday morning we all went into Lagarto to Sunday School, ringing the bell before many of the inhabitants were awake. Mr. Miller and I rode with our seven small children in a carriage drawn by two fine horses, while the three older boys rode horseback. We acted as janitors of the church, and had it swept and dusted before anyone else got there. For 21 years Mr. Miller was superintendent of the Sunday School and I was organist; neither rain, mud, sleet, nor snow prevented our being there.

Music added much to the social life of Lagarto. A double quartet and glee club met from house to house, and gave many concerts to benefit the school. We not only had a great deal of pleasure from this organization, but had exceptionally fine music for a country town. The members of the glee club were Mr. and Mrs. S.G. Miller, Dr. and Mrs. A.G. Heaney, Mrs. Isham Railey, and E.L. Faupel.

About 1888, the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railway was built from Beeville to Alice, bypassing

*In 1907 a bridge was built across the Nueces River at Miller's Ferry.

Lagarto. In a short while, the once lively town was left a dead little village.

Post Fences and Barbed Wire—Increasing the size of our ranch through the purchase of additional land brought about erection of the first fence to enclose a pasture south of San Antonio.

In 1872 Mr. Miller bought the 4,428-acre McGloin tract of land which lay directly in front of our house, and which was part of the original grant of the San Patricio settlement. He later acquired two other tracts to make the property complete without gaps, bringing the total land to 20,000 acres.

Mr. Miller decided to fence his land, so he hired Mexican men to cut mesquite posts for the fence. Next, he had them dig a ditch about three feet deep, and then the posts were set in vertically. What an undertaking it was—five miles from the river to the southeast corner, an equal distance north, and then another five miles west to the river again—fifteen miles of posts set solidly against each other! At last the fence was finished, and gates were put in at the northern and southern lines of the straight road that ran from San Patricio to Oakville.

People felt that we had no right to buy and fence land which had been used by the public so long, and because of this attitude we had trouble with people all the way from Gussettville to Corpus Christi. Nearly every day we would find the fence cut somewhere, and a large number of stock driven into the pasture. Because the old road ran through the place, travelers did not hesitate to tear down yards of the fence and leave it down, instead of going a little out of the way to the gate.

This went on until Mr. Miller could stand it no longer. He set the Mexicans to work digging a ditch about three feet deep and six feet wide inside his own fence line. The first set of wagons from Corpus Christi arrived after nightfall, and the trespassers headed straight into the

ditch. Such cursing and swearing you never heard, but that was the end of the trouble.

Mr. Miller later built a plank fence with lumber from Corpus Christi, and when barbed wire came into use it was substituted for the lumber fence. He and Tom Mathis built a wire fence on the property line between them, the first wire fence in that country.

Medicine in the Early Days—My brother, Dr. A.L. East, was a physician in Louisiana. I was only twelve years old when he came back from the Civil War, but Dr. East decided I could make an efficient nurse, so he began taking me with him. He would tell me about each disease, the kind of medicine he gave, and the proper dosage. He took me with him for four years, teaching me how to diagnose all kinds of diseases.

When I came out to Texas, I brought my medicine chest and prepared to help the sick and needy, for there was not a doctor within fifty miles. I had not been here long until I had to help the sick Mexicans, and then the Americans, too. People came from every direction. I had my own medicine, and never charged them a cent. When doctors came to the area, they sent cases to me, especially small children, and often called on me to help them perform an operation.

Grandma McNeill Tells a Panther Story—Grandma McNeill, the mother of Pate McNeill, told me of a terrible experience she had while living above Lagarto on Spring Creek.

One evening she was cooking supper in her small two-room cottage while the menfolks were out at the cowpen branding calves. Suddenly she heard a terrible squawk from the hen sitting in a box under her bed. She ran from the kitchen into the front room, and lifted up the spread, which hung to the floor. To her horror, she looked straight into the eyes of an immense panther.

Before she could straighten up, the panther sprang onto her back, and with his great claws tore down her back and grabbed her by the neck with his teeth. The men heard her scream in mortal agony, and ran to her assistance. On reaching the door, they saw the panther, and one shot laid him low—but the scratches he made on her back and prints from his teeth made dreadful wounds which remained for a long time.

* * * * *

Mary Ann Adams was born in 1856 in Corpus Christi soon after her parents immigrated from England. Her mother died when Mary Ann was five years old, and shortly thereafter her father and a brother perished at sea because of a fire aboard ship. Young Mary Ann lived first with a married sister, and then with her rancher brothers. She attended school at Nuecestown, Motts, and Dinero. In 1876 she was married to Henry M. ("Tobe") Hinnant, whose father, John, had purchased a tract of land near Lagarto about 1856.

In 1877 Tobe and Mary Ann built a home on the 400 acres of land which they purchased near John Hinnant's tract. Eventually their ranch on Lagarto Creek totaled 4,000 acres, and was given the name "Los Picachos" because of its caliche hills.

Six children were born to Tobe and Mary Ann—Roy, John, Neville, Robert, Bessie (Mrs. Robert Muil), and William. Tobe died in 1892, but Mary Ann lived to the ripe old age of 108. In 1956, her hundredth year, she reigned as Queen of the Live Oak County Centennial.

In his boyhood, William, the youngest son, attended school in Lagarto, five miles away; Miss Ella Taylor was his first teacher. He graduated from Corpus Christi High School, and then attended Draughon's Business College in San Antonio. William married Jessie Baylor, and they reared one son, Robert. William and Jessie acquired a part of his father's holdings and established their own

ranch home; they continued to purchase land until they now own 10,000 acres.

The Hinnant family has long been active in both religious and civic affairs of Lagarto. Mrs. Hinnant is presently chairman of the Live Oak County Historical Survey Committee.

* * * * *

For thirty-seven years, Miss Zerapha Cook was postmistress of Lagarto. At her retirement (sometime prior to 1940), Lagarto became part of a rural route.

Lagarto was once a prosperous town, whose citizens had enough self-assurance to think, "The railroads can't afford to pass us by!" They fixed their terms and waited for the railroad to meet them. When the railroad bypassed Lagarto, the town's decay began, and it is now almost abandoned.

*Zepher Baptist Encampment*⁴—In the mid-1950's the five Southern Baptist associations which comprise District V in South Texas felt the need for a youth camp on Lake Corpus Christi. Prior to this time area youth attended Alto Frio Baptist Encampment near Leakey. District Missionary Dr. Joe Amerine, Earl Hill, Roy Johnson, Wallace Rogers, and Mathis pastor James B. Franklin spent many hours in prayer and in travel, searching for a suitable camp location.

The committee's search for one day ended with coffee in the home of Mr. and Mrs. H.D. Miller. The Miller's daughter, Mrs. Marshall R. (Happy) Sanguinet was visiting, and she listened as the committee members told of their search.

Mrs. Sanguinet could not forget the quest, and in July she told her pastor, James Franklin, that the most beautiful site on the lake was part of the land owned by her uncle, D.B. Miller. Because of "Uncle Dem's" health, she had not seen him or his wife, Zepha, for several

months, and she told her pastor that only the hand of God could provide an occasion for her to talk with her uncle about a camp site.

The very next morning, "Uncle Dem" drove up to see Mrs. Sanguinet, and when he told Happy that it was his desire to leave her a sizable inheritance, she knew that God had answered her prayers—his gift to her would become her gift to the youth of South Texas!

Not long afterwards, Mr. and Mrs. Miller deeded 130.8 acres of land to the First Baptist Church of Mathis to be used as a camp site for the children of South Texas. Mr. Miller told his niece, "Happy, you have never asked us for anything. This land is your inheritance from us." With that, Happy promised to be active in the fulfillment of the Miller's desires. The church leased the land to District V for 99 years, with a 99 year option, and Happy was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Zephyr Baptist Encampment.

"Aunt Zepha" Miller asked that the camp be named Zephyr ("Gentle Winds"), a name which corresponds with the gentle breath of God, the soft winds of South Texas, and the lovely name of Mrs. Miller.

Zephyr Baptist Encampment has a large open-air tabernacle and facilities for canoeing, sailing, water skiing, pontoon boating, camping and other recreational activities, including a rifle range (22 rifle for ages 12 and over; BB's for those younger). Its facilities are for church-sponsored groups. It is principally supported by and for Baptists, but other denominations use the facilities when they are not in use by Baptists.

Corpus Christi Abbey—In 1927 the Benedictine abbot and monks of New Subiaco Abbey, Subiaco,

Arkansas, accepted the invitation to staff a new high school in Corpus Christi; since then, over 40 monks have devoted their lives to the youth and people of South Texas. In addition to teaching and administering Corpus Christi Academy, a day and boarding prep school for boys, the monks regularly performed weekend pastoral and missionary activities in South Texas. In 1961, Pope John XXIII elevated the priory to the status of an abbey. Father Alfred Hoenig was elected the first abbot of the only Benedictine abbey in Texas.

Corpus Christi Academy survived the depression years of the 1930's and a disastrous fire in 1948, but the loss of priest and brother monks in the 1960's doomed the school to failure in 1972. The ravages of Hurricane Celia in 1970 caused the monks to pray for a new monastery site.

On April 16, 1974, groundbreaking took place for the new Corpus Christi Abbey, high on a promontory overlooking Lake Corpus Christi near Sandia. On March 15, 1975, the new fiberglass complex gracing the western bank of the lake was dedicated. Into the new setting moved Abbot Alfred, ten priests, two brothers, and two novices. Four candidates were considering the Benedictine way of life.

In groundbreaking ceremonies, the Abbot outlined his hopes for the new abbey: "This monastery is to be a house of prayer, a liturgical center, a house of personal spiritual renewal, where men can become monks and dedicate their lives to advancing the glory of God and their own salvation. This monastery is to be a cultural center. . . a center for the helping of the poor. . . a house concerned with the evangelization of all peoples, especially through radio broadcasting. . . a national center for the distribution of medals of St. Benedict. . . a

vocation camp for boys, to encourage vocations to the diocesan priesthood and to monastic life."

Ramireña

When R.J. Dobie settled in southern Live Oak County a century ago, the clear waters of Ramireña Creek ran through the ranch year round. Now the creek runs only after a heavy rain.

The town of Ramireña, about eight miles west of the Dobie ranch, consisted of a small store run by an Englishman named Hughes. Mail was brought from Lagarto to the post office in the corner of the store. Ramireña was also called La Posta because it had been a stage stand where horses were changed.

R.J. Dobie helped build the Methodist church at Ramireña and the Dobie home was headquarters for the preacher when he came once a month from Oakville to hold Sunday services. Although it met but monthly, church was an all day affair—the morning sermon was followed by a picnic dinner (each woman prepared enough food for her family plus a few vistors) and then afternoon services.

J. Frank Dobie thought the Ramireña brush was thicker, taller and thornier than around Lagarto, and the people were more down-to-earth.

The tallest man in the Ramireña settlement was Perry Williams, who had a small ranch and a big family. Besides ranching, he drove a big freight wagon, hauling merchandise from Beeville to the Hughes store. Many years later, Mr. Williams' grandson and namesake, O. Perry Williams, supplemented his income from ranching in the same community in a similar manner—he operated a cattle trucking business.

Victoriano Chapa and his son Prisciliano Chapa owned a large ranch near Ramireña. Don Victoriano was

captured by the Comanches when he was a boy. A few years later he escaped, and although the Indians trailed him to San Antonio, the woman who had taken him in refused to return him to the Indians. Much later, Victoriano and his son worked for T.J. Lyne, who had a hide and tallow factory on Padre Island. When Lyne bought a ranch in Live Oak County, the Chapas also acquired 10,000 acres.

The Chapas raised Spanish horses and longhorn cattle, and their method was to let nature run its course. At their ranch house on the upper Ramireña Creek, they built a big tank—the blood of a heifer was mixed with the dirt to strengthen the dam. It was the only permanent watering place on the whole ranch, but some of the Chapa cattle were so wild that they refused to go to the tank—they drank water when it rained, and the rest of the time, it was said they obtained their moisture from prickly pear.

When he was 81 years old, Don Victoriano Chapa became so despondent at the prospect of having to sell his ranch that he hung himself. Don Prisciliano eventually sold most of the ranch to T.J. Lyne's son Tom, and willed his property to two old women (one was the granddaughter of the woman who saved his father from the Indians).

Many of the settlers are buried in the Latham Cemetery. The grave of Texas Revolution hero Jesse Robinson bears a historical marker. Robinson was one of the husbands of Sally Skull, a horse trader and sometime freighter who wore (and used) at least one, and sometimes two pistols. She bought horses in Mexico, and took them to East Texas to sell. Here the author also found the grave of their granddaughter, Ophelia Robinson, who was one of his schoolteachers.

Clegg

Sometime in the 1880's, Jacob White paid \$1 per acre to the State of Texas for 480 acres in what is now the Clegg community. Mr. White's taxes that first year were \$3.07. (His son, Oscar White, in 1974 paid \$307.00 just for school taxes on 1,215 acres in that same community.)

Some of the other community settlers were C.L. Latham, Estol Harris, Perry Williams, J.T. Dowdy, and Bruce Ferrel. The first school in the community was on the Williams ranch; Williams school terms were four months long. The name changed to Mote Valley when the school was moved to the Mote land, and when Harry Hyman donated five acres for a school and cemetery two miles north of Clegg, the Cardwell school came into being. Cardwell was a four-teacher school in 1948 when it became part of the George West school system.

At the school and cemetery site a Baptist church was built, and here people of all faiths worshipped together for many years. J.H. Dixon built a store; later owners were Mr. Rud, Ray Sharp, Ben Lissie, Tom Iley, and Mr. Herring. R.P. Stuart operated a gin; he later sold it to Sid Hall Industries of Beeville.

At one time a community mail service was organized; Jim Dinn rode horseback once a week to Lagarto and brought the mail to his residence, where neighbors called for their mail and paid Dinn 50¢ a month for the service, which they referred to as the "pony express." Mrs. Gay was postmistress at one time; later she also ran the store and telephone office.

The old Clegg store was near the home of J.T. Horton, and during World War II it did a booming business. Business died down after gasoline became plentiful and people could go to George West, Alice, or Freer with little difficulty. The store opened at a different location, the hilltop juncture of Hwy 59 and FM 1359, but it finally closed. The old store now is the home of the E.W. Hammit

family. They own a service station, but it is seldom open these days because of the gas shortage.

While some of the best cropland continues to produce grain to feed the hungry, much of the land that has produced thousands of bales of cotton and millions of bushels of feed grain has been returned to improved strains of grasses, and is no doubt running more livestock than at any time in its history.

Of all the public institutions in the community, only the cemetery remains, and that is still a center of much concern. Each year the local citizens are joined by those who have moved to distant places, leaving loved ones buried here. What a homecoming it is! On October 27, 1974, the author was among an estimated 500 who came from as far away as Dallas and Houston to the Clegg homecoming barbecue. While most of the original settlers have passed over the Great Divide, this tradition keeps alive in the hearts of their descendants an interest and concern for the land which nourished them and their parents.*

Clegg Baptist Church—The church that became Clegg Baptist Church was organized by a Reverend Jackson in the Mote school, and was first called Mote Baptist Church. When Clegg and Mote consolidated to become Cardwell school, the church met in that building, and was renamed Clegg Baptist Church, possibly in 1916.³

The church was affiliated with the Corpus Christi Baptist Association until 1932, when it withdrew and affiliated with the Blanco Association. Pastors listed in the Blanco Association records are W.S. Gibbs, O.C. Robinson, J. Milton Dunn, J.D. Clare, G.T. Cunningham, G.D. Bailey, Warren Norris, Roy Stewart, and Raymond Rone.

*Some information for this section was provided by J.T. Horton.

In the Clegg community, Christians of several different faiths, particularly Methodist and Church of Christ, met with the Baptists. Their presence, participation, and financial support were a vital part of the church.

About 1940 the Clegg Baptist Church acquired its own building, one which already had a history of service. The building had been built in the 1890's in the Lebanon community as a Methodist church, and was moved to Cadiz about 1920. By 1940 the Methodist church had disbanded, so the building was sold to the Clegg Baptists, who remodeled it after moving it to Clegg.

By 1958 so many members of the Clegg Baptist Church had moved away that the church disbanded. The building was given to the Baptist Mexican Mission in George West where, after changing denomination once and location three times, it continues to play an important role in the Lord's work.

Anna Rose

Tom Weston owned several hundred acres of land west of Ramireña, and he raised cattle, horses, watermelons, and corn. He was an Indian, and his wife was black; Weston lived to be 86. His sons, Atlee and Nob, were noted cowhands who reportedly could tear a hole through a thicket. Atlee drowned crossing cattle on the Nueces when it was on a rise. Nob lived on the Tom Goodwin ranch at nearby La Posta Ramireña after his father's death.

Romano Chapa, who had come to Texas from Mier, Mexico, married Tom Weston's daughter Pinky. They ranched on about 600 acres she inherited from her father.

During the 1920's Leona Chapa opened a store and filling station at Anna Rose. When the Ramirena post office burned, a post office opened with C.J. Roberts as postmaster. Pinky and her husband opened a dance hall

about 1926.

The other enterprises did not last long, but until the late 1950's, folks come from miles around every Saturday night to the dance hall, which always had good bands.

At one time there was a white and a Negro school at Anna Rose, but by 1944 the schools had combined, and one of the teachers lived in the old Negro school. When the school consolidated with George West, Chamaco Chapa, youngest son of Pinky and Romano, purchased the building for use as a residence.

Anna Rose is almost a ghost town now. Only George Chapa and the Carlos Cuellar family live there—the other houses are empty. The old two-room school has lost its coat of white paint, and many of the windows are broken. A sign on the long, unpainted wooden building proclaims "Dance Hall," but weeds crowd the door. The Chapa residence in the rear of the hall is losing a door. The last dance is over.*

Argenta

When Richard Bethel Bomar came to the Ego community from Arkansas about 1903, he thought the name sounded presumptuous, so he called the place Argenta, in honor of an Arkansas community. Bomar bought a tract of land, cleared off the brush, and then sold it to a friend from Arkansas. He bought more land, cleared it, and sold it to another Arkansan. Eventually quite a group of former Arkansas farmers lived in Argenta. R.B. Bomar was a hard worker, but even while grubbing land he wore a white shirt and tie. It was he who instigated the building of the community church.

In 1909 his sons, E.T. and M.B. Bomar, sold an acre of land for a church site. Lumber was hauled from Skidmore, and the men of the community erected a building. The steeple and belfry, with its big bell, have

*Based on an interview with Pinky and Romano Chapa's daughter Mrs. Ramiro Garcia.

been removed, but the building still stands. The handbuilt pews have been replaced, but the original pulpit remains. The church is in good repair, and an addition has been made. Joe Wolfe is the present pastor of this small but still active Church of Christ congregation. A small cemetery behind the church is neatly kept.

FM 888 runs through the Argenta community, and IH 37 is nearby. Even the unpaved roads have a caliche top—much of that caliche comes from pits in the community. The roads are passable in all kinds of weather, but they have not always been so. Before the automobile became the major means of transportation, Commissioner Tom Bomar, who was born in 1913, remembers seeing men take the bolster pins out so the front wheels could come off a wagon. They would then hitch the horse and ride away on the axle and wheels, which were less likely to get stuck in the thick black mud.

Bomar recalled one particularly wet year when the careless weeds grew so big in the corn field that his father used a grubbing hoe to get them out—Tom, who was a small boy, climbed the giant weeds as he would have a tree. The 1919 storm blew down all the windmills in the area, and destroyed some of the homes. During the hurricane a neighbor came to the Bomar home seeking refuge—she had been blown into a barbed wire fence and was bleeding. High winds had torn off much of her clothing. When the winds died down, Tom peeked under the house, where he found a pool of water and many different kinds of snakes.

The gin brought from Arkansas was never assembled, but Argenta was a busy place from about 1910-25. A molasses mill was owned by Jim McEachern. Tom's father, James Monroe (Mon) Bomar opened a store and post office sometime after 1910. He later sold the store to Miss Edna Gist. Richard O. Rouse owned a rock burr type grist mill, as well as a blacksmith shop. "Uncle

Dick" Rouse also carried the mail two or three times a week in his buggy from Mathis to Argenta until the post office was closed and a rural route started from Mathis about 1923. J.J. Baker was the first rural mail carrier. The community spirit began to fade after that. Miss Gist closed the store about 1927.

In 1919 Reeves Brown was breeding registered Hereford cattle at Argenta. J.M.A. (Alphabet) Brown measured and marked many of the area roads by counting the revolutions of his buggy wheel. Jack Brown and Jess Curlee also lived at Argenta.

Before the age of television, the school was the center of community life. Argenta had weekly spelling bees which were open to all ages. The folding doors that separated the two rooms of the school would be opened, and when Mrs. Critchfield and her sister, Miss McEachern, had finished choosing their teams, both walls were lined from one end of the school to the other. The last two spellers left were always Miss McEachern and Mrs. Critchfield. At least once a month a cyphering (arithmetic) match was held—this was generally just for the children, but it kept the students on their toes, because the older kids did not want to be shown up by the younger ones, and the younger ones were looking for an opportunity to excell. Probably the most exciting event was the community Christmas program which was held in the school—this was where the gifts were exchanged, even between family members.

One of the first radios in the area was purchased by the Argenta school—the children sold pencils to their parents, to their friends' parents, and to each other to earn enough money to buy the radio. Lee Critchfield built an antenna, and the whole community gathered in the schoolhouse the night the radio was first turned on. When a voice was heard at last, the grownups were much more excited than the children to actually hear a man

talking two thousand miles away in New York City.

When Tom Bomar attended school there were two teachers for about seventy-five children. He recalled his brother's winning a registered Hereford heifer from Demory Miller for writing an essay about cattle breeding. Only ten grades were taught at Argenta, so when Tom's sister Geneva wanted to go to college, the Bomar family moved to Mathis so she could finish the eleventh grade and receive a diploma from an accredited school. Geneva must have received a good academic background at Argenta, because she was salutatorian of her class at Mathis.

Tom's first teacher was Grace Terry, and he married the last teacher, Evelyn Moore. When Evelyn came to Argenta in 1940 only the church and the school remained. She had thirty-six pupils that year, but in 1945 when the school consolidated with the Mathis system, there were only six pupils.

The schoolhouse that was built in 1917 is now owned by the Argenta Community Center—trustees are Tom Bomar, Jack Brown, Jr., and Roland Engler. Argenta has a firetruck, but the fire department is no longer active.

A number of new homes are being built in this community just a half mile from the San Patricio County line.*

Swinney Switch

In 1917 Sid J. Swinney purchased about a hundred acres on a hill three miles east of Dinero. He opened a store which he called Swinney Switch, hoping the name would attract a railroad. During the Great Depression Mr. Swinney carried people on credit as long as possible, but finally he had to close the store. Members of the

*Information in this section is based on an interview with Tom Bomar.

Swinney Switch church, which he had helped bring into being, repaid as much as they could, and Mr. Swinney started up the store again.

Swinney Switch remains as far from a railroad as it ever was, but it is at the intersection of FM 534 and FM 3024 (old Highway 9); IH 37 passes about a mile to the east. Dan and Faye Kohutek own the store and gas station that Goofy McCumber ran for a number of years. The Country Store and gas station, owned by Philip Poole and managed by Melba Rouse, is the only other business.

Swinney Switch retains its community spirit. It boasts a new fire station and has an active Volunteer Fire Department and Ladies Auxilliary. Harold Wallace is fire chief; other members are Ruth Wallace, Carter Younts, O.G. Scott, Bob and Barbara Self, Brady and Doris Pickett, Harry and Cile McKinney, Bob and Agnes Staples, Dan and Faye Kohutek, Wilburn and Joyce Atwood, Johnny and Brenda Burton, Bernice Montgomery, Gary and Nancy Sibley, Rip and Donna Wallace, Bill Anderson, Leslie Atwood, Tommy Atwood, Ernest and Marie Hughes, Marvin and Gloria Luder, and Gene and Elsie Arnold. One of the most popular fund-raising activities in the county is the Swinney Switch VFD's almost-annual wild game dinner. Another 1979 fund-raiser was a quilt raffle—the prize was a hand-pieced quilt donated by Kittie Bomar. The fire department has had its share of mysteries—twice when the firemen started to answer a call, the truck would not start because the gasoline had been drained. The first time it happened, Harry and Cile McKinney's house burned, when it could have been saved.

Beside the fire station a road climbs the hill to the little stucco building that used to house the Swinney Switch Baptist Church. In 1932 Carroll R. Jones held a revival under a brush arbor that had been built by men of

all faiths in the community. That meeting resulted in the organization of a church that for thirty years was very active. An article in the *Southern Baptist Training Union Magazine* told the many Bible learning activities in which this rural church was involved. The church met for awhile under the brush arbor, then built a small sanctuary. That building was rebuilt after being destroyed by a tornado, and then was replaced by the stucco structure. A small parsonage was also built.

On the hill north of the church, a road winds its way to one of the most charming roadside parks in South Texas. The picturesque rock fences were made for children to climb on, and lovers to sit on, looking out at Lake Corpus Christi and the surrounding hills and valleys.

A few miles south of Swinney Switch is the ranch home of Harold and Ruth Wallace, which they estimate to be almost 150 years old. It was built of cypress which came by ship to Indianola, was hauled from there by oxen, and then was nailed together with square nails. The Wallaces have made a few changes, but the old McGloin house remains basically intact. Above the eight-room downstairs was a full attic where dances were held. So many people came to the dances that while they were there the floor had to be propped up with 4" x 4"s.

For many years visitors traveling north of Swinney Switch along old Highway 9 were startled to see various species of exotic animals peacefully grazing behind a deerproof fence. The J.I. Hailey ranch had the usual cattle and some cultivated land, but it also featured buffalo, crossbuffalo, elk, axis deer, and blackbuck antelope in a natural environment. The Hailey ranch has a large water tower, and the only known northern-style big red barn in Live Oak County.

NOTES

1. For more information about Echo and Mrs. Murphy, see Sr. Mary Immaculata Turley, S. H. G., *Mother Margaret Healy-Murphy*, (San Antonio: Naylor Co., 1969).

2. Kathryn Turner Carter, *Stagecoach Inns of Texas*, (Waco: Texian Press, 1972), p. 108.

3. Mrs. Carroll R. Jones, *What God Hath Wrought: A History of Blanco Baptist Association 1873-1973*, (Waco: Texian Press), p. 170.



CHAPTER IX COMMUNITIES IN CENTRAL LIVE OAK COUNTY

Gussettville

Patrick McGloin (no relation to empresario James McGloin) and his family came with the first group of San Patricio colonists in 1829. In 1831 he was granted 5,240 acres for the production of cattle and corn. Within the boundaries of that grant, on the east side of the Nueces (southeast of present-day George West), he soon helped establish Fox's Nation. The Foxes were the first settlers, but in the 1850's the name was changed to Gussettville, in honor of one of the village's most prominent citizens, merchant N. Gussett.

Oldtimers claimed that when the waltz was first introduced to the area during the wedding of Agnes McGloin and Will James, it was denounced by the old ladies as being immoral. Lamar James now owns 342 acres of his ancestor's original grant, and there he produces livestock, corn, milo, and forage.

According to the historical marker at the Gussettville church, land for the church and part of the cemetery was donated by Thomas and Annie Shannon. The oldest tombstones in the Gussettville cemetery list such Irish birthplaces as counties Sligo, Roscommon, Lathrum (Letriem), and Fermanagh, as well as San Patricio and Santa Margarita.

Gussettville was a stop on the stagecoach line which ran between San Antonio and Brownsville. The third post office in the county was established at Gussettville. It was a prosperous little town until bypassed by the railroad.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church—Gussettville's early Irish settlers were Catholic, and the church they established was and remains the heart of the community. Early priests included Reverends Stannard (1846), Grandon (1852), B. O'Riley (1855), J. Begart (1865), C. Padey (1866), P. del Faan (1868), and A. Maury (1870). Father Maury carried his supplies in two large saddle bags, and a local resident baked the altar bread between two flat irons.

A small wooden building between two large oak trees was converted into a church. In 1871, Father Y. Ferra, a young Spaniard, became the first resident pastor; in 1874 he was succeeded by Father Daniel Tuomy. Reverend Edward Smyth had a new church erected in 1878, and the church was dedicated under the name of St. Joseph. Gussettville once more became a mission of San Patricio.

In 1970 Hurricane Celia blew the church off its foundation and turned it almost completely around, but the parishioners, determined to save the old church, contributed the funds necessary to return the building to its original site and restore it to a better condition than before the storm.

Mikeska

About the turn of the century, Peter and Anna Mikeska purchased some property west of Gussettville and established a little town. When the Mikeska bridge was built across the Nueces River in 1902, Peter and Anna boarded the men who built it. Anna probably made little change in her cooking methods, because she already had twelve children to feed. (That bridge was in use until 1980, when it fell under the weight of an oilfield truck.)

The Mikeskas gave two hundred acres as a townsite, and they built a two-room school in which church services were also held. A church was probably built later, because the First Baptist Church in George West later acquired a building that had been used both by

Baptists and Methodists at Mikeska.

On July 15, 1908, Mikeska had an Irish celebration, with horse races, baseball games, and a free barbecue. The new gin whistled its welcome. Onie Sheeran had purchased the gin from Mrs. Bryers at Oakville, and then moved it to Mikeska. In August, 1927, when the gin was operating at the peak of the cotton harvest, the boiler exploded, killing Ernest McCumber and Earl Freasier. Jim Gallagher lost an arm in that explosion, but for several years he continued to operate gins for Sid Hall Industries.

* * * * *

Jim Gallagher was born in Gussettville in 1887 and, except for service during World War I, he has lived his entire life in the Gussettville-Mikeska community. He described life there around the turn of the century.

"When I was a boy, families farmed small—six or eight acre—corn patches to provide food for the horses and bread for themselves. No cotton was raised here. Our main livelihood was cattle, and they were raised on the open range. Any landowner was entitled to run his livestock on the unfenced range, but to keep from losing cattle, it was necessary to ride the range often and herd the stock back toward home. Owners had to keep their stock branded, because any unbranded weaned calf was considered a maverick and could be claimed by the first man to get his brand on it. Cattle were roped on the range and branded there. On their saddles, most cowboys carried a hooked iron rod with which almost any brand could be traced. Others, rather than use a branding iron, carried large steel rings in their saddle pockets, and used two sticks to hold the hot ring as they branded an animal.

"Wild horses watered at the Nueces, and sometimes a looped rope was hung from a tree limb which extended over the trail to the river. As the unsuspecting mustang passed his head through the loop, the noose tightened

around its neck; the men would rope the horse's feet, throw him, and put a hackamore on his head. Now man was in control, and the real fun was in riding this kicking, biting, bucking piece of horseflesh until he was tamed.

"On the Nueces River near our home, Romicio Hernandez operated a ferry boat which had been built by Pat Sheeran, Sam Watson, J.M. Gerhard, Dan Shipp, Mr. Corbett, Bud Wright, and John Elliot Wright. The ferry was used by the owners, whose ranches lay southwest of the Nueces River, and by other travelers who wished to attend court or had other business in Oakville. As a boy, I liked to ride the ferry and hear the boat go spsph-sh-sh-sh down the river until it reached the end of the cable on the opposite bank; the men would then wind up the cable and draw the boat to its landing.

"One day as my father and I rode in a wagon on the old ferry road, our team of horses began snorting at a foul odor. Investigation revealed three men hanging from a live oak tree near the road. The dead were two Burleson boys and a stranger whose only identification was an envelope in his pocket with the words "John McAntire" on it. We dug a large hole, covered the dead men with a blanket, and buried them. Colonel Crump was thought to have been the executioner."

* * * * *

For at least a decade the *Beeville Picayune* carried news of Mikeska and Gussettville. It told of dances and parties, of weddings and babies, of school events and visits. It mentioned the families of Scott Lindholm, Charles Frerich, E.W. McWhorter, W.F. Shedd, C.M. Lindolm, Guy James, Don McKinney, Mike Dolan, J.M. Gerhart, Andrew Sheeran, R.J. and B.B. Gallagher, and, of course, the Mikeskas—Peter and Anna, Henry, Lewis, Millie, Ella, Klara, Marie, schoolteachers Lillie and Lydia. . .

The June 28, 1913, issue noted that hundreds of acres of land were being cleared for cultivation around Mikeska.

The railroad came through that summer, and the paper announced a few weeks later that Mikeska had won a ball game against the railroad boys. H.H. Leslie was the first depot agent at Mikeska, followed by Mrs. McCumber; her daughter Angie was agent from about 1922 until the depot closed.

In 1914 a telephone line was installed from Mikeska to Ramireña.

On December 6, 1913, an election was held to determine whether or not the county seat should be removed from Oakville. The Mikeska news in the *Beeville Picayune* two days before the election said, "The people of Mikeska are in a stir—they don't know where they do want the county seat, but the people of Oakville know where they want it! Hurray for Oakville!"

The following week the Oakville column noted that "Oakville citizens are rejoicing over the failure of the effort to move the county seat from this place in the election of Saturday."

No signs of a town remain in either Gussettville or Mikeska. FM 799 runs through the community, and mailboxes along that road and the dirt road that passed over the Mikeska bridge contain many of the old family names, as well as some new ones——Tom Gregorcyk, H.T. McKinney, Kaase and Alexander, Joe Matkin, Jim C. Pugh, O.K. Gaddis, Hardie Chandler, Tom Morgan, Herminio Licon, A.D. Snider, J.O. Power, R. Worthington, Victor Juarez, Tommy Gregorcyk, W.F. Huebner, J.G. Hamrick, Jr., John A. Walton, D. Walton, Adolph Marek, L.E. Cavallin, A.J. Mangold, M.J. Hosek, T.L. Martin, J.W. Hisey, Bernard Frerick, and Homer Morgan.

Votaw and Karon

In Deed Record Book A of the County Clerk's Office, there is recorded a grant of 320 acres to Elijah Votaw in 1857 by the Adjutant General of Texas. The ink has faded and the flourishes of the original handwriting make reading difficult, but the land was most likely granted Votaw as payment for his service during the Texas Revolution—his name was listed among the Texas soldiers at the Battle of San Jacinto. In 1860 he purchased another tract from Thomas Wilson. Votaw later sold his land, but the community that developed took his name.

In December of 1875, Henderson Waller sold George O'Neill a tract of land known as the old Cotton ranch. O'Neill was a Missourian who came to Texas at the age of eight. He fought with Green's Brigade during the Civil War. The family came to Votaw from Gonzales County when his daughter Nannie was six years old. About a year later, George announced to his family, "We're going to have some neighbors—I hear woodcutters to the south!" Augustus Dunn, another Confederate veteran, had moved in. Young Nannie and Augustus' son A.H. (Kim) were married in 1888.

According to Howard Custer, his father, Tom, and another Civil War veteran, Harvey Hall, came to Votaw in 1876 from Alabama. The old Wilson house was the only home between them and Oakville.

About this time Mr. Ballard settled on the place that he sold in 1884 to Tom Edwards, Civil War veteran from Fayette County. In 1878 Mrs. Humphreys and her son Joe came. From Fort Bend County came Traz Gill.

Others who established homes in the nineteenth century included Asberry Adams of Kenedy; Ben Brown; R.D. Brown from Alabama; John Curry, Alabama-born Civil War veteran who married Narcissus Waller of

Oakville; Jim Dowd; Bob Nations; W.L. (Doc) Nelson, Weslie Nelson, and Jim Williams from Lavaca County; Date Thurmond from Lavaca and DeWitt counties—he married Martha Custer; Henry McKeen of Bandera County; Wes Magby; “Gassey” Smith; Professor Van Dusen; and Mr. Simms, who sold out to Charlie Maguglin (a native of Italy who married a Bee County girl).

In 1900 came Big Richard and Joe Coquat, natives of France who had served in the French Navy. Others who came after the turn of the century included Mart Lewis and W.E. (Bud) Dove of Alabama; Bill Hornung from Lee County; John Key and Elmore Emerson from DeWitt County; Chris Beverly; Lewis Massengale, a former trail driver; Mr. Pentecost from Missouri; Fred Lippard, Elmer Vaughn, Dee Maley, Floyd Weed, and Albert Smith from Bee County; Sibet Roach and Sidney W. Sparkman (father of the author) from Tennessee; Robert Rokohl and Bill Stridde, who were born in Germany but came from Gonzales County; Charlie Templin and his son Bill from Gonzales County; Henry Magel from Karnes County; and John Armstrong from Hays County.

The Votaw children attended school first at Gamble Gully, by the old Lebanon church and cemetery. Later some went to Salt Branch on the Bee County line. The Gamble Gully school had a rock chimney in one end and a well which was several feet across and sixty feet deep. Mrs. Kim Dunn recalled the day Percy Bailey fell into the well. Professor Van Dusen tried to jump in to help, but Walker Gill, who was a big boy, caught the teacher and said, “Why, the boy is all right—don’t you hear him yelling?” Then Walker let the bucket down and drew Percy out with only a bump on the head. For a short time there was also a school on the Date Thurmond farm; it was built by standing pickets in a trench.

In 1896 a group of neighbors began moving a small school building from near the old Wilson and Tullos



Picture 16

The old Wilson school teacher and children. The school was about two and a half miles east of Oakville.

ranches east of Oakville to a point where the Rice gin later stood. Two beams were put under the house; the beams were then placed on two wagons which were side by side. The coupling poles of the wagons were lengthened so that the front wheels were in front of the building and the rear wheels were behind it. Each wagon was drawn by two pairs of horses, and each team was driven by one of the owners.

Fate intervened with the moving. The men were hot and thirsty, and became very provoked when one of the wagons broke down while crossing the Votaw Gully. They looked around and saw the cool, inviting shade of the great oaks nearby, and one exclaimed, "Why, right here is the place for our school!" The men skidded the

little building up among the live oaks and left it there.

That 16'by 20' first building was called by such nicknames as "Bugscuffle," "Sneak up and Hitch," and "Possum Trot." Tom Custer, Traz Gill, and a third man were the first school trustees. Later the room was enlarged, and when it became a two-teacher school another room was added. In 1915 the building burned, and a new schoolhouse was erected. In 1935 an addition was made and a third teacher employed.

For almost half a century the schoolhouse was the center of community life. Everybody attended Sunday School and Prayer Meeting here. Preaching services were usually conducted by the pastor of a nearby Baptist, Methodist, or Pentecostal church. The building was also used for Christmas programs, picnics, and domino parties. Many different kinds of transportation brought people to these events—some come afoot; others rode horses, mules, or donkeys; some came in wagons, two-seated carriages, buggies, and later, automobiles. When automobiles were first coming into use, two young men seeking to revive pioneer memories drove to Sunday School in a top buggy drawn by a yoke of oxen—no automobile could have stampeded more horses than did this rustic outfit!

In 1943 the Votaw school was annexed to George West. All that remains of the old school is a windmill standing silent sentry over the decaying teacherage in a grove of live oaks in George Maguglin's pasture. Now, instead of walking up to three miles to a one-room school, area children walk to their gate and ride fifteen to twenty miles on a school bus to an air-conditioned classroom.

In the early 1890's, Traz Gill built an old-style cotton gin on his farm; large baskets carried the cotton to the gin stands. Until the 1920's, cotton was the main (and often the only) cash crop produced in the Votaw community. In 1923 Ira Rice built a gin by the Karon

store and post office, which was one mile east of the Votaw school. About this time Hicks Williams began operating a grist mill. Miss Ella Curry was the first postmistress; Ralph Caron* was assistant postmaster and merchant. Rufus Stevens ran the store and post office for about two years, and finally Clint Lippard took over the store and post office until rural delivery came to Votaw in 1928.

During the 1940's news of Karon appeared in the *Bee Picayune*. Mrs. M.E. Emerson wrote of the daily events of her family and that of the Larkin and Hicks Williamses, Dee Maguglins, J.T. Weeds, G.W. Doves, and the Currys. Although a few descendants of these families still live in the community, only a Spanish-speaking church remains.

*The community was originally named Caron, in honor of Ralph Caron, but the U.S. Postal Department refused to accept the name because of its similarity to an existing post office. They offered the name Karon as a possibility, and this was found acceptable.

Instead of rough roads winding through pastures with gates to open at every fence, paved roads now point three different directions from the heart of the community. When my father went to Beeville in his wagon, he was often accompanied by another wagon bearing a neighbor. They talked on the way, camped in a wagon yard that night, did their trading, and returned the next day. It now takes me half an hour to drive to Beeville in an air-conditioned car. Instead of cotton, grain is now grown in abundance. Instead of cotton gins costing thousands of dollars, we now have petroleum and uranium plants costing millions.*

Lapara

At one time old Lapara had a gin, a corn mill, a general store, and a drugstore—it was quite a busy place. The first school—the Little Red School—was on land that is now owned by Jim Coward, and in that schoolhouse the Lapara Baptist Church was organized. Patrick Burke, about the year 1877, donated five acres as the site of a church and cemetery. The Lapara Cemetery is all that remains of the community's public institutions.

In 1907 the *Beeville Weekly Picayune* carried a weekly column from Lapara. In February it was noted that "Breaking land is progressing nicely in this country," and "Willie Dolan, Dea McKinney, and Jim Dickson have ordered new buggies and are supposed to take their best girls riding." Names appearing in that column included the families of Will Lewis, Mikie Dolan, Charlie Brennan, Jim Goodwin, J.J. Jones, G.B. and Ira Sheive, O.J. Sheeran, and John McCumber.

*Some information for this section was provided by Mrs. A.H. Dunn, Mrs. Lee Coquat, and Howard Custer.

By 1915 the first settlement was about gone. Tommy Lewis had a grocery store at another location in the community. Mrs. McCumber at one time had run the post office, but "Aunt Belle" Lewis was in charge then. Glenn McCullom carried the mail from Cadiz in a horse-drawn, two-wheel cart. The store had no mail-boxes, but each family had a mail sack which was hung from a nail. The Lewises did not always stay in the store, but they left it open during the day. When Mrs. Lewis saw someone enter the store, or noticed a horse hitched in front, she would get on her horse and ride side-saddle down the hill to the store to wait on the customer.

After the Lewis store closed, Esau Harrison opened a store in a different location—it closed about 1929, when Harrison was jailed for his involvement in a cattle theft ring.

The school was relocated on the Gattis farm and, still later, on the Wright farm. Elnora Robinson was the last schoolteacher. When Marvin Maples attended school at Lapara from 1918-26, there were 35-40 children in seven grades, all taught by one teacher. There were children of the families Sinor, Nolan, Wright, Tubb, Torres, Vickers, Maples, Valdez, Harrison, Gattis, Chandler, Fleming, McCumber, Deckert, Craft, and Heffnarn. The older generation of Tindols went to school at Lapara, but their children attended school at Cadiz. Other nearby schools were Bell Kidd, Goodwin, and Mahala.*

Lapara/Cadiz Baptist Church—In August of 1877, Elders John East, James Scarborough, and A.H. Barber headed the formation of Lapara Baptist Church. They met in the Little Red School on the Tindol tract of land. Mr. and Mrs. G.W. Tindol, C.B. Ferrell, John East, Martha Goynes, and Mr. and Mrs. George Barber

*Information in this section is based on an interview with Marvin Maples.

presented themselves for membership by letter. Another twenty-two presented themselves for "baptism," and another for "restoration."

Patrick Burke donated five acres of land on Lapara Creek as a site for the church and cemetery. The first building proved inadequate, so another was built by Mr. Cox.

Irene David Messer, who was reared in the Lapara community, related how a drought ended about the turn of the century. When the governor of Texas set aside a certain day as a day of prayer for rain, the people went to church prepared to stay and pray. They got down on their knees and prayed all day, although the ladies took just a few minutes now and then to feed the children. Toward evening, the prayers were answered—it came such a rain that the creek rose and some of the people had to stay in the church all night! It rained all over Texas that night.

In 1920 the church was moved to the Bee County community of Cadiz, so it would be more accessible during bad weather. In 1947 the church was remodeled and an educational addition added, but the sanctuary of the Cadiz Baptist Church is that built by Mr. Cox. R.C. Jeanes has been the pastor since the resignation in 1966 of Carroll R. Jones.

Brother Jones, grandson of Elder A.H. Barber, gave thirty-two years of service to the Cadiz Baptist Church. As of 1979, he has been in the business of preaching to small, mostly rural congregations for sixty-three years. In 1960, he was recognized as Rural Minister of the Year of Texas, an award sponsored by the *Progressive Farmer* magazine; the Live Oak County Farm Bureau had nominated him for the award. The next year he was awarded the Doctor of Divinity by the University of Corpus Christi, which he had helped establish.

Since a rural ministry provides little financial

security, a second source of income was always necessary for the Joneses. During the Great Depression, he taught in the Jarratt School near his home for two years with no pay except vouchers. As their resources were used up, the family began to get hungry. Jones finally was able to cash a voucher at Beeville, and he bought hundred pound lots of rice, flour, beans, sugar, and other staples. When he got home (near Swinney Switch), he learned that Bill Whitworth had found and butchered a long-lost hog, and had shared it with the whole community. Knowing that eating pork on a long-empty stomach could cause disastrous results, Cora and Carroll quickly divided their new supply of staples and made deliveries at the homes of all their neighbors. Although the Jones family now had little more than before the voucher was cashed, things began to get better after that. Reverend Jones was pastoring both at Swinney Switch and Cadiz, and from the two churches he received fresh milk, a goat, a calf, and some hogs as payment.

The Joneses had always kept a small flock of chickens and sold a few eggs, but in the 1950's the business expanded into the Live Oak Poultry Farm, a model caged egg operation, which they continued until their retirement about 1970.

Always concerned about soil conservation and improved farming and homemaking methods, the Joneses led the Cadiz Baptist Church to participate in the Rural Church Achievement Program of Texas Southern Baptists for three years. The first year the church placed first in the association, next first in the district, and the third year it was runner-up in the state.

Lebanon

In the early Lebanon community the heads of families included John Atkins, Ben Atkins, Wren Atkins, George Gillett, Tom Custer, Augustus Dunn, Date

Thurmond, Harvey Hall, Charles Edwards, Tom Edwards, Jim McCullom, Ben Flemmings, W.E. (Bud) Dove, Bud Johnson, Frank Johnson, Jim Johnson, Ceif Garner, Jesse Garner, Lawrence Adams, Jack Mills, Jeff Mills, Andrew Tullis, and Ben Freasier.

When the Lebanon School was organized in the 1880's, a long, one-room box schoolhouse with a rock chimney was built, and a water well was dug by hand. Among the teachers at that school were Mr. Gaddis, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Van Dusen, Miss Pattie Reagan (daughter of Dr. G.P. Reagan), and Miss Ruby Atkins.

In the schoolhouse a Methodist church was organized, and each summer great camp meetings were held under the huge live oak trees up the Gamble Gully from the schoolhouse. In the 1890's a sanctuary and large arbor were built. The arbor had a flat roof of 1" x 12" lumber, and those who attended revivals sat on backless benches of 1" x 12" planks nailed on mesquite blocks; the dirt floor was covered with hay.

Whole families came with their wagons outfitted for a week or two of camping, visiting, picnicing, and preaching services which began at 10:30 AM and sunset. When the congregation got revived, the shouting sometimes lasted until midnight. As many as six hundred people sometimes gathered from as far away as Beeville, Mineral, Oakville, Dinero, and Mathis, as well as from nearby Salt Branch and Votaw. The visiting evangelists were aided by some wonderful singers—a special favorite was the Johnson Brothers Quartet (Bud, Dee, Frank, and Jim Johnson).

The author was attending the close of one of those great revivals when some brave youngbloods rode by the grounds in the darkness. Half a dozen six-shooters rang out, and the bullets whizzed directly over the arbor. The next sound was of pounding hoofs as the young men dashed away.

Among the pastors of the church were the Reverends McGeehee, Godwin, Monk, Keathley, Henry and Morton.

About 1920 the church building was moved a few miles away to the Cadiz community in Bee County, so that it would be on a good road. The membership dwindled, and the church finally disbanded; the building was then sold to the Clegg Baptist Church.

The old dirt road still passes through the community that was Lebanon, but only the cemetery remains.*

Mahala

Until some time after 1900, roads usually went through property, rather than around it. After the land was fenced, gates were put at the public roads, and the system worked as long as travelers remembered to close the gates.

Seth Dunn, son of English immigrant Augustus Dunn, became so frustrated at the number of gates left open on his land that he set the fence posts back around the edge of his property and made one of the first open roads in the area. Maintaining the public roads was everyone's responsibility. About once a year the Mahala men spent several days working on the road from Oakville to Cadiz.

Across the new road from Seth and Ida Dunn's land was the ranch of Charles and Mahala Edwards. The old road from Beeville to Oakville ran through their property, and they decided to open a store on the road. Lee and Jimmy Crawford hauled supplies in their freight wagons from Beeville to the new store.

Soon the store had a post office in the corner, as well as a name—Mahala. The mail carrier stopped there on his way from Beeville to Oakville, and again on the way

*Some information was furnished by Jim Gillett.

back. When someone in the community was sick, the carrier often took the prescription to the Oakville druggist, and then brought the medicine back to Mahala on his return trip to Beeville.

The school was located on the Seth Dunn farm beside the public road, rather than near the store, which was in the middle of the Edwards property. The *Beeville Picayune* in 1914 reported that a Sunday School had been organized in the school, and that church services were held twice monthly. The services continued for five or ten years.

Most of the time the Methodists went to the Lebanon Methodist Church, but they sometimes had problems getting along. On Sundays one family sometimes put locks on their gates that were on the road leading to the church—they gave keys to all but the family they were peeved at.

The Mahala column of the *Picayune* carried news about singings and other such events in the life of this small community. It mentioned the families of Lee Umphres; Charles O. and Frank Edwards; Pleasant, Garnot, and Jim Gillett; and the Dunns—Seth, A.A., A.H. (Kim), June, and the twins, Ezra and Extra (at one time the name Dunnville was considered).

About that time telephone lines were installed to connect Mahala with Oakville. Mrs. Edwards' daughter was the Oakville telephone operator, and when she first heard that familiar voice, Mahala exclaimed, "Just a minute—let me go out in the back yard so I can see you while we're talking!"

When the Mahala school was annexed to George West, Seth Dunn purchased the school building and remodeled it for use as a residence by his daughter, Geneva Williams. After her death, her husband Wayman moved the house to Three Rivers. A cistern under a huge live oak tree on the Gus Dunn farm marks the spot where

the Mahala school stood.*

Simmons

In the year 1900, Dr. Charles F. Simmons purchased a 60,000 acre ranch in the Nueces Valley adjacent to the ranch owned by George W. West—in fact, West had once owned that land. Simmons was a city man full of innovative ideas. He cleared land for a farm, and then installed a large steam engine and pump to irrigate it. The engine worked so well it pumped the Nueces dry before the day was over. He designed leather leggings to protect his horses from the thorny brush, but neither the horses nor their riders appreciated them. He used a steam-run machine to chop prickly pear; cottonseed was added before feeding the mixture to the cattle. It was said that Dr. Simmons periodically lined up his ranch hands and administered to each one a dose of Simmons Liver Regulator. His brand was liver-shaped.

A drought was on, and Simmons became disenchanted with ranch life. When his only son, Harry, died of a rattlesnake bite in 1903, Simmons began advertising the ranch for sale.

Buyers came and went, but one day Simmons received what sounded like an outrageously high offer from a young man who, when questioned, revealed plans to realize a profit on the land through a lottery scheme. Simmons called the fellow a scoundrel and a robber, and ran him off his ranch. He then stayed up most of the night writing letters and advertisements for the proposed scheme.¹

The little forty-eight page pamphlet which was distributed around the country is reprinted in part. The

*Based in part on an interview with Reverend J. Milton Dunn, son of Mr. and Mrs. Seth Dunn.

covers contained the words to the songs, "Old Folks at Home," "Home of the Soul," "Nearer my Home," "Home, Sweet Home," and "My Old Kentucky Home." There were also many photographs of the area, but they were not very clear.

Home, Sweet Home—
A Home in Sunny South Texas for a Song

Every heart yearns for a home. A home in town and a farm in country in balmy south Texas for \$120.00, payable \$10.00 per month.

Dr. Chas. F. Simmons of Oakville, Tex., was born Sept. 27, 1853, in Mississippi, where he received his literary education in its best schools and colleges. He received his medical education at the Jefferson Medical College and Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. He then took the law courses of the University of Virginia. . . and successfully practiced law until early in 1879 when he removed to St. Louis, Mo., and by purchase became the successor of his father, Dr. M.A. Simmons, in the manufacture and sale of the famous Liver Regulator, founded by him and which bears his name. . . (The C.F. Simmons Medicine Company) grew to such proportions that overwork (caused physicians to advise him) that unless he quit all business and permanently retired he would be dead within a few months, and having accumulated a sufficiency of this world's goods to satisfy any reasonable man, he sold his business and extensive real estate holdings in St. Louis, and removed to Live Oak County, Texas, on a ranch of about 60,000 acres on the Nueces River, previously purchased for his only son, whose accidental death induces this publication to practically give away probably the finest body of river bottom land in balmy South Texas. . .

(There followed a list of 100 reasons why Texas was the grandest of them all—not every reason being strictly truthful. Some of these are listed.)

There are more fortunes to be made in Texas than in any other state in the union.

No state in the union, nor other territory in the world, shows such a variety of soil and products as it does. There is nothing grown on a farm in any part of the U.S. which is not successfully grown here.

It is first in area, having 265,780 square miles.

It is first in production of Cattle, Horses, Mules, Peaches, Pecans, Honey, and Cotton, it producing a quarter of the whole world's crop, and a third of the crop of the U.S.

It has more railroad mileage than any other state, and more new railroads being constructed.

It is third in per capita wealth.

It is second in the production of Hogs, fourth in Poultry and Eggs.

It is the fifth state in the union in population. It has more Prairie land than Kansas, more Timber than Michigan, more Oak than West Virginia, more Iron than Alabama, more Marble than Vermont, more Corn land than Illinois...

From its trees growing wild on its streams in South Texas it produces the greatest yield of the finest Pecans in the world, and it has planted about 500,000 Pecan trees, and more are being planted every year. Its land produces a higher value per acre, and a higher interest on the investment, than any other in the U.S., as shown by the government reports based on a ten year average of all crops.

Its Homestead and Exemption Law, fixed by the Constitution, is most liberal, and protects the mothers and children. Its permanent Public Free School Fund, amounting to over \$147,769,202, is the largest to any

permanent Free School Fund in any state in the union, and over 700,000 children are receiving the benefits of its public free school education. Its entire State Tax is only 22 1/2¢ on the hundred dollars, half of which is used for the education of its children. Its annual distribution is five dollars for each school child, while the average of the United States is but \$1.35. Its Universities and Colleges, with expensive buildings and attractive grounds, compare favorably with those of any of the older states.

REMEMBER, that these averages (above) were made from the poorest land in Texas, and before the vast resources of that fertile belt of south Texas, near the coast, were being recognized, and at a time when this fertile southern country was used as a cattle range. During the past four years, its par excellence as an Agricultural, Truck Farming, Fruit, and Vegetable producing section is being recognized, and the next Agricultural Census is bound to show results more than doubling Texas showing in the above comparisons.

President Roosevelt said, "Texas is the garden spot of the Lord." Investigation will show that the famous Nueces River Valley, from 80 miles south of San Antonio (the largest city in the state), southward for 40 miles is the very cream of the "CENTER OF THE GARDEN," in the fertile coast country, unsurpassable as a Farming, Grazing, Truck Farming, and Colonization property.

It was here that after a busy life of many years in a crowded city I sought to retire on a ranch and farm of almost 60,000 acres previously purchased for my only son, whose death is cause of my desire to remove from the property upon which I spent more than \$40,000 in improvements, on the only known ranch and farm in Texas where poor cattle put on the range in November are hardly fed, and top the St. Louis and Kansas City beef markets the next April, May, and June, by the side of fed cattle with \$10, \$12, and \$15 feed bills on them.

(It is) located on that middle plain between east Texas, where it rains too much, and the arid section of west Texas, where it does not rain enough; with 24 miles of Nueces River frontage, on both sides of the river; with 95% of fine, dark, sandy loam, cheaply cleared, easily worked land, in the irrigation belt, but where no irrigation is needed; only forty miles from Corpus Christi Bay; only forty miles from Aransas Pass, the coming deep water port of Texas; on direct line for trunk railroads from Aransas Pass to San Antonio.

(It is) where the constant sea breeze makes cool summers and warm winters without snow or hard freezes; where there are no blizzards, nor tornadoes, nor earthquakes, nor cyclones; where the flowers bloom ten months of the year; where the climate is so mild that the northern farmer here saves practically all his fuel bills and three-fourths the cost of clothing his family in the north.

There are no aristocrats and people do not have to work hard to have plenty and go in the best society.

The average temperature is about 60 degrees, varying from 50 degrees in winter to 90 degrees in summer, which is rendered cool by constant sea breezes. The average rainfall for the past five years is over 39", and well distributed.

(It is) where sun-strokes and heat-prostrations are unknown; where the residents have charming homes surrounded by trees and flowers of a semi-tropical climate; where sufferers with Asthma, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Hay-Fever, and Throat troubles find relief; where one can work out of doors in shirt sleeves, without inconvenience, 29 out of every 30 days the year round.

The people are so law abiding that usually only two days of District Court every six months is required to dispose of all the Civil and Criminal business. The taxes are so low that the amount is never missed. Public

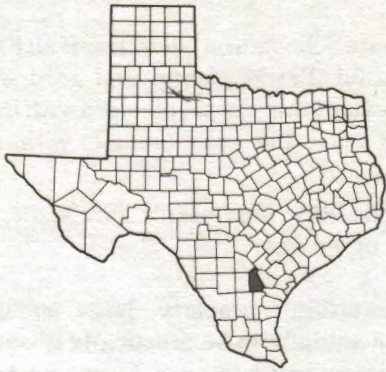
and Private Schools and Churches of all denominations are plentiful. Peace, plenty, and good will prevail to such an extent that the people sleep with their doors and windows open the year around, without danger of molestation.

It is so healthy that people rarely die, except from accident or old age.

This magnificent property, large enough for 4,200 homes, is actually to be practically given away to the 4,200 persons purchasing a farm and town lot for a home in a new town to be opened on the line of one of the railroads located to run through this property, one lot and farm together will be sold for only \$120, on terms \$10 cash, and \$10 per month, and any purchaser of a lot and farm together will receive free of any charge, a Warranty Deed for the lot, and a Warranty Deed for a farm large enough to employ a market gardener's time the year around. The largest farms will be 640 acres, while the smaller farms, nearer the town and river and railroad, will be worth from \$100 to \$200 per acre in the near future if land values continue to increase as they have here during the past four years.

The idea of a solid body of almost 60,000 acres of as fine land as can be found in the world being practically given away, is such an extraordinary proposition that some may think I need a Guardian, but when I shall see the idol of my dead son's heart, a prosperous town and flourishing colony of happy and contented Agriculturalists, Merchants, and Professional men, I shall be content to again retire and spend the remainder of my days elsewhere.*

*Special thanks to Elton R. Cude for use of the booklet, "Home, Sweet Home."



It sounded like a good thing, and on opening day, a long stream of hopefuls came—farmers, merchants, horse traders from far and near—all following the age-old lure of thrills and adventure. They came by stagecoach, in wagons, on horseback, and by foot to this near-wilderness of chaparral, mesquite, and guajilla. Nearly a thousand of them came to the auction on September 12, 1907, and then returned to their homes to make preparations for the move.

The Simmons correspondent to the *Beeville Weekly Picayune* noted in the October 4, 1907, issue that two family grocery stores were in operation, and a dry goods store about to open. Mr. Ratcliff said he would ship lumber to Beeville and haul it to Simmons City. The town boasted three carpenters, a stonemason, blacksmith, shoemaker, gunsmith, barber, bricklayer, and contractor. Surveyor Claude P. Nevil was the busiest man in town, showing people their lots. Postmaster was Mr. Soe H. Payne. F.M. Land had found fourteen bee trees and intended to start an apiary. Colonel Charley Green, an experienced fruit and truck grower, was the "big" man in town—both in size and in stories.

The nearest railroad point where milled lumber could be purchased was in Beeville, to be taken to the building

site at Simmons. Among the freighters were Harry Whitworth and Sylvester Claunch; a small boy named Clem Nolan was roustabout on the Claunch freighter. Freight wagons at that time were pulled by teams of six and sometimes eight mules, and the round trip from Beeville to Simmons took a full three days if nothing happened. The "something" which could happen included a broken axle, a loose rim on a wheel—or sometimes just the simple matter of the wagon boss having "one too many" and having to sleep it off. When it rained, the road became black and gluey, slowing—and sometimes halting—traffic for days.

During the early years, Simmons was a growing and busy community. Among the first buildings erected were the church, schoolhouse, and city hall.

Dr. Simmons donated the church building for nondenominational use, and the tradition has been maintained. The lofty steeple, standing proud and stately, can be seen for miles; the Sunday services have been attended by all ages and all faiths, and it has been the site of weddings and funerals. In 1957 the fiftieth anniversary of the town was observed on the church grounds. A noonday basket lunch followed the worship service, and many oldtimers visited and relived the past. In a drive spearheaded by the Simmons Improvement Club (oldest nonfederated club in the county), the church received a new coat of paint and a new foundation. In 1969 a Texas Historical Marker was placed at the church entrance. Frank Williams is the present pastor.

When the two-story, three-room frame schoolhouse burned in 1937, a void was left not only in the scenery, but in the hearts of community members. It was not only a schoolhouse, but a gathering place where young and old came in buggies and on horseback to dance by lantern light to the music of a violin and guitar until the wee hours of the morning. Play-parties were enjoyed by all

ages, who danced "Josie," played "spin the plate," and shook a mean leg to "Skip to M'Lou." Box suppers were held there, and each young lady sat momentarily in suspense, fearing that her best beau would be outbid by some other young blade as her box was auctioned.

Most of the old buildings have been torn down or moved away. All that remains of the hotel is part of a stone wall blackened with age and weather. Its large lobby was once a gathering place for Forty-Two parties, and newlyweds often waved from an upstairs window to their shivareeing friends below.

Mail was first delivered to the Simmons post office from Oakville in a two-wheeled, horsedrawn cart. A buggy was later used, and still later a Model T, but the mail carrier more than once swam the flooded river with the mail sack on his back. The local post office has been replaced by a star route.

The Nueces River, which years ago was forded by horseback at certain shallow, rocky points, and was later crossed by ferry, still winds its way beneath the old bridge which has served this community for many years. Occasionally after heavy rains, the river rampages out of its banks, and traffic must take another route.

Simmons is no longer a town, just a friendly community known for the hospitality of its people. Gone are the plucky pioneers who braved floods, storms and isolation to lay claim to their rich acres in Live Oak County, and sometimes saw their hopes vanish on the winds of a drought. But one who pauses long enough may still hear the long, lonesome howl of the coyote that once prowled almost at the door, the creaking of a windmill blown by a fresh wind, and the ghost of squeaking wheels on a horsedrawn wagon traveling the dusty road.*

*Thanks to Louise Burch Nolan for special help on the above section.

From the early 1920's until his death about 1955, Jacques Tilton lived alone in a cave on his fifteen-acre tract of land at Simmons. He dug a two-room home into a caliche bank on the creek, left some 12" by 12" pillars to support the caliche roof, and finished the inside with the skill and design of an artist. Tilton raised a garden and kept a flock of chickens. Two wires ran from his home to the chickenhouse, so he could open the door in the morning and close it at night without going outside. H.D. House, Three Rivers rural mail carrier, was well acquainted with Tilton and told the author about his home. The great floods of recent years have obliterated all signs of this once-unique dwelling.

Thomas Leander Murray purchased a tract of land at the opening celebration of Simmons City, and then returned to Roseburg, Oregon, for his family. They began gradually moving southeast—he was a railroad worker, and worked his way down to the end of the railroad at San Antonio. There the family bought a covered wagon and took the Old San Antonio Trail to Oakville. Margaret rode in the wagon with her newborn son, and daughter Irene (who later married Henderson Coquat) cared for the two of them while the other children, Grace and Roscoe, walked behind the wagon all the way to Oakville. There "the most wonderful people in the world" took over—they bathed the children, fed the baby, called Dr. C.D. Williamson for the sick mother, and washed the clothes. Not everyone had been so nice to the "Simmons Suckers" on their journey.

Two weeks later the Murray family set out for Simmons City. There they found tents everywhere—even the hotel was in a large tent. Murray was a good carpenter, and he found plenty of work to do.

Dr. Simmons had not given any land to be used as a cemetery, so when Thomas Murray was killed by lightning in 1913, he was buried in the Oakville cemetery. Simmons had donated a tract for the use of retired preachers, and a vagabond moved into a little shack there. When the old man died from bee stings, he was buried on that tract of land—that was the cemetery's start.

In 1914 Grace had an appointment to take a teaching examination at George West. Simmons postmaster Pedelty took her and the mail on the stagecoach as far as Kittie West. The Nueces was on a big rise, and the driver would go no farther. Pedelty put his mail bag on one shoulder and Miss Murray's valise on the other. "Follow me, but don't look down," he said to Grace, as they waded into the waist-deep water over the railroad tracks. They felt for the trestles with their feet, and made it to George West.

Grace passed the examination and began teaching at Simmons under superintendent R.W. Burks. She taught for the next 51 1/2 years in Simmons, Marbach, Votaw, and then Three Rivers. In 1920 she married Aldoph Houseton, who died in 1966. Mrs. Houseton continues to take an active part in the Simmons community life.*

* * * * *

A 1979 tour of the Simmons community showed mailboxes bearing the names of Reagan Matkin, Lynn Redding, J.M. Davenport, L.Z. Teague, W.L. Chaney, C.L. McMahon, Howard Hemphill, L. Fregia, E.G. Gutierrez, Bobby Redding, T.R. James, Dave Calliham, Frank Pullin, Mrs. Adolph Houseton, C.A. Nolan, and C.W. Valentine.

*Based on an article by Viola Ebel Aldof.²

NOTES

1. Rocky Reagan, *Rocky's Yarns* (San Antonio: Naylor, 1973), pp. 11-23.
2. Viola Ebel Adlof, "We'd Like You to Know Mrs. Adolph W. Houseton of Simmons City," *The Progress*, May 23, 1979.

CHAPTER X

COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN LIVE OAK
COUNTY*Weedy*

In the decade following the Civil War, several families settled near Weedy Creek in the northern end of Live Oak County. Gus Bobo came with his mother and sister; Nate James and Charlie and Brister Harmon also settled here. From Higgins, Mississippi, came Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Mills with their sons Ethan, Dick, Young, Roger, and Jim (who later married Gus Bobo's sister), as well as Widow Stewart (whose husband was a Civil War casualty) with her sons William (Billy), John, and Dick.

This was the trail driving era, and trail drives from South Texas started in the spring. Spring also happened to be calving time; calves born on the trail were usually shot, since they could not keep up with the herd. Mrs. Stewart had several cows, and when a trail drive camped near her home, she was often given the newborn calves. Each year her cows raised an extra calf or two along with their own, and before long Mrs. Stewart had a good-sized herd. She ran her cattle on the open range until she purchased some land and fenced it.

The few Indians living in the area were usually peaceable, but word got around that a Karnes County man had offered the chief some homemade whiskey in exchange for good horses. Charlie Harmon had some good horses, and, knowing how the Indians felt about the

white man's firewater, each night he put them in a rail pen with a gate of pole bars. Charlie had dug out a huge tree for use as a feeding trough, and he decided to sleep in that trough with his gun. One night he was awakened by the slight noise of bars being eased out of the gate. Charlie tried to maneuver into position to fire at the Indian but he somehow got stuck in the trough—now he figured the best thing to do was keep quiet and still. He managed to extricate himself after the Indians had left with the horses. Harmon notified Nate James, Dick Stewart, and Jack Mills, and at daybreak they took to the trail. After about fifteen miles they overtook the Indians, who left the horses and fled without a fight.

The McCowans and Dan Carney owned land north of the settlement. When the SAU & G railroad was built, Maley McCowan wrote a check for \$10,000 so the railroad would go through his ranch. To the south and east lay the ranch of Colonel Fant.

Armstrong/Good Hope

William Jasper Armstrong was born in 1845 near Talaposa, Alabama. His brother Sherman enlisted in the army at the beginning of the Civil War, but W.J. was only sixteen. One day while he was plowing, a band of soldiers marched by; W.J. tied his horse to a tree, lied about his age, and joined the ranks. The brothers were reunited and served together until the end of the war.

After the war he married Aniaes Martin in Louisiana, and a few years later they moved to Kyle, Texas, where Sherman lived. The brothers rented land for several years, always moving to the same farm. W.J.

wanted to have his own farm, but the price of land in Hays County was high.

On a visit to Beeville, Armstrong met Frank Church of Oakville, who told him about land opportunities in Live Oak County. Church also said he could buy land from Curtis Herring, who owned a large ranch in the forks of the Frio and Atascosa Rivers.

Without waiting to see Herring, W.J. rushed back to Kyle, loaded his wagon with tools and supplies, and returned to Oakville with his oldest son, John and his brother-in-law, Jesse Davis. Armstrong purchased 106 acres of land from Mr. Herring at \$4 per acre (eventually he was to acquire a total of 300 acres).

A large one-room house was erected, and Mrs. Armstrong and the nine children moved in before winter. W.J. began to clear land and till the virgin soil. The first barn was built with elm logs cut from the river bottom. W.J. and his son Preston camped several miles from home to cut logs—they both worked through the day, and then Preston returned home at night, taking the logs with him.

Within walking distance of the Armstrong home was an abundant supply of game—deer, wild turkey, birds, rabbits—and the boys also enjoyed hunting javelinas for sport (but not for meat). On rainy days the boys sat around the fireplace and molded bullets for their muzzle loading guns.

The nearest school and church were at Oakville, which was eleven miles away on winding, rough roads. Ranchers usually hired a private teacher to live in their home and teach their children during the winter months. Mr. Armstrong realized the need for a public school in the neighborhood, and through his efforts a small school was started on Weedy Creek, two miles north of the Armstrong home. People in the community occasionally attended church services in Oakville, but W.J. organized

a Sunday School in the schoolhouse.

Several years later the school was relocated at the crossing on the west bank of the Atascosa River. Sunday School and also preaching services continued to be held in the schoolhouse, and each June or July, after the crops were "laid by," revival meetings were held in the shade of the trees or under a brush arbor. They were an important social, as well as spiritual, event.

The Armstrongs hauled water from the Atascosa on a heavy cart which held two barrels and was especially built for that purpose.* About 1900 they got a large rainwater cistern, but during prolonged droughts water still had to be hauled from the river to be put in the cistern (to keep it from falling apart).

Entertainment was provided by an occasional "play party," a picnic, or a trip to Oakville or Pleasant Hill to see a school play (the community school was not large enough for a play, although recitations and readings were sometimes done on Friday afternoons).

Part of the Armstrong land was sandy, and W.J. became known as "Watermelon Armstrong" because he planted and sold so many watermelons. He also raised tomatoes, corn, and blackeyed peas. As he grew older, Mr. Armstrong took up beekeeping, and acquired quite a large apiary.

W.J. Armstrong lived to be almost 88, having reared thirteen children and four grandchildren.**

Good Hope Baptist Church—Early in 1903, a Sunday

*In 1920 I purchased that old cart from Mr. Armstrong's son-in-law, John Horton. We lived near Oakville at the time, and used it to haul soft water from the public well for drinking, cooking, and washing.

**The above material is taken from *Through the Years*, a booklet written by Pearl Stewart on the life of her father, W.J. Armstrong.

School mission in the Armstrong community was organized by the Oakville Baptist Church. Sunday School was held at 3 p.m. so it would not conflict with services at Oakville. In the summer of 1904, Reverend R.L. Pierce held a revival in the community which resulted in the organization of the Good Hope Baptist Church that October.

The church was organized by Reverends A.J.C. Knowles, R.L. Pierce, and W.H. Petty. Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Armstrong, Mr. and Mrs. B.R. Armstrong, Bailey Armstrong, Dollie Armstrong, Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Horton, Mary Williamson, Mr. and Mrs. R.E. McCoy, L.D. Morris, J.K. Murray, Sr., J.K. Murray, Jr., Betty Murray, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Layfield, and Addie Murray.

Pastors of the church have been C.B. Pearce, A.W. Caperton, R.B. Thames, J.W. Cunningham, J.W. Thomas, E.G. Hughes, C.E. Jones, J.L. King, J.T. Hollan, T.J. Bingham, W.S. Gibbs, J. Milton Dunn, G.T. Cunningham, G.D. Bailey, D.W. McClure, C.D. Sowell, Charles Hewitt, Jack Walker, Dan Sanford, Johnny B. Hutchings, Mel Hardin, Harvey Graham, and Bill Klinglesmith.

In October, 1966, the church and parsonage were destroyed by fire. While some decided to go to Three Rivers, many of the members began working to rebuild the church at the old site. Reverend J. Milton Dunn was called again as pastor, and he spent many hot days working alongside his flock to reconstruct the building. The new church building was dedicated in 1975.

Whitsett

The town of Whitsett, in northwest Live Oak County about fifteen miles from Three Rivers, is situated on an 1835 land grant to John Houlihan. When the railroad came through Live Oak County, land for a townsite was donated by ranchers Taylor Whitsett and Walter Reiffert

(Whitsett donated the land south of FM 99, and Reiffert donated the land north of that road). The flip of a coin decided whether the town's name should be Reiffert or Whitsett.

W.H. Leckie surveyed the land in October, 1912. The incorporation of the Whitsett Town Company was registered on August 5, 1913, for a tract of 424.34 acres, less 17.3 acres deeded to the SAU&G railroad. Walter Reiffert was president of the townsite company.

In 1913 the railroad built cattle pens at Whitsett, and each year thousands of cattle were shipped to the northern markets. Local farmers planted hundreds of acres of watermelons in 1925-26, and many carloads of melons were shipped from Whitsett. Celia Weatherby, Allene Harkey, and Francis Gomillion were depot agents.

Mr. Perrenot built a lumberyard and hardware store in 1913, and he furnished materials for all the construction in the community.

A general store was established by Houston Weatherby, and a post office was opened in his store. When he died in 1922, his brother Sam took over the store and post office. When the building burned ten years later, Sam built a service station which is still in operation. He provided space for a post office, and when Falls City built a new post office, Weatherby acquired their old postmaster's cage (complete with stained glass), combination postal boxes, and other equipment. The post office remained in the Gulf service station until 1979, when a separate post office was built. Nancy Pullin is the present postmaster.

When Tom Draper set out to drill a water well in 1913, he stopped at about 600 feet, after hitting salty water. Each family then dug a large, underground cistern to catch and store rain water from the tin roof of the home. In 1926 Harry Pullin laid a waterline to the Atascosa

River for household use, but the cistern water continued to be used for drinking.

The railroad built a grist mill and a three-stand cotton gin, which was fired by mesquite wood. About 1923, Henry Steckelmeyer bought the gin and installed a diesel motor. The Farmers Union also had a cotton gin, and each ginned 2-3,000 bales of cotton per year. Steckelmeyer's gin was later moved to Three Rivers, and the Union gin went to Midway.

A road was opened through Whitsett along the railroad, and a two-story hotel was built. On Olmos Creek a one-room school was built, and here both Baptist and Methodist churches began.

In 1917, a bridge was built across the Atascosa River near Whitsett. Oil produced at Crowther (in McMullen County) was hauled in ten-barrel tanks on Model T Trucks to a loading rack at Whitsett. Later, a four-inch pipeline was laid from the Loma lease to a large storage tank at the railroad, and large quantities of crude were shipped out.

The brick school built in 1923 burned four years later. Classes were held in the old hotel until another building was constructed closer to the center of town. The building still stands, but the students have been bussed to Three Rivers since 1949.

In 1923, Wayne Hallmark had a grocery store in the Perrenot building. Two years later he sold it to Albert McCowan, who ran it until he built a store and cafe on the west side of the tracks, where he had a dance hall.

Also in 1923, Heber and Whitman Coffey bought Lawrence Casey's bee apiaries. Coffey bred and sold queen bees, and Whitsett soon became famous for its honey. H.E. Coffey died about fourteen years ago, but many of the younger generation had worked for him. Five or six beekeepers in the community now have from three hundred to a thousand hives each. Most sell by the

barrell to Sue Bee or to larger honey processors at Uvalde.

Bruce Withers opened a meat market in 1926, and Lee Pope, Jr., started a general store. Pope's store was eventually owned by Sterling Dobie, a rancher and retired schoolteacher. When a friend entered the store looking downhearted, Dobie would strike up an old cowboy ballad or a funny folksong to cheer him.

Jess Ray Pullin opened a garage in 1926, then a machine shop, and he kept enlarging to accommodate any kind of machinery. In 1938 he installed a one-cylinder diesel engine, which brought electricity to the community until 1943, when the REA connected up with Whitsett.

The oil refinery that was started in 1930 was never completed, but another was built three years later to process oil from the Loma loading rack. The refinery was eventually abandoned because there was no market for oil.

The highway built through Whitsett in 1923 was first called by its historical name—the Old Spanish Trail—then later it became Texas Highway 66, then Highway 9, and finally U.S. 281. IH 37 is now under construction two miles east of town.

The purchase of a fire truck several years ago stirred the dormant community spirit. Fireplugs were installed in the village. A building to be used as a community hall is to be moved in from Calliham. There is interest in starting a museum to display local archaeological finds—several Indian burial grounds are nearby, and there are many fossils and petrified plants in the area that apparently was once a lake. Several years ago the tusk of a hairy mammoth was found on the Atascosa bank. A team of archaeologists from the University of Texas was called to uncover the artifact—half a dozen men were needed to carry the nine-foot tusk.

The village now has a cemetery about five miles east of town. In 1878, M.L. Claunch rode to Oakville to register his assignment of four acres of his ranch for use of the Pleasant Hill School. Claunch (who had ridden to Mexico with General Zachary Taylor in 1848) asked to be buried in the schoolyard, so a small family burial ground was started. The school long ago consolidated with Whitsett, but eventually about a hundred people were buried in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery. Many men and boys of the community are spending their spare time repairing and painting the fence, cleaning and repairing headstones, and planting shrubbery. At least half the area is unused, and many of the 250 people who call Whitsett home plan to buy cemetery lots there. The old Claunch ranch is now owned by the Elmer McCoys, but Bernice Claunch (grandson of M.L.) was present at ceremonies when the cemetery was turned over to the Whitsett folks. Cecil Wilson, Jean Bensmiller, Andrew Gomillion, Joe Ruiz, and Harrell Elliott are on the Cemetery Committee.

In April, 1979, the village of Whitsett placed second in the rural communities improvement program sponsored by Texas A & M Extension Service. Mathilda Wilson is chairman of the Whitsett Community Improvement Association; other officers for 1979-80 are Elsie Dickens, Effie Elliott, Ruth Pullin, Judy Ham, and Raguel Ruiz. Community Property Improvement and Building Committee members are Harold Ham, Harrell Elliott, Dale Meeks (who bought the unsold Whitsett townsite lots), Carl Lee Stewart, Jr., and Dick Bensmiller. Planning and Finance Committee members are Eva Ruiz, Vicky Ruiz, Judy Ham, and Lucy Hawk. Recreation Committee members are Dick Bensmiller, Joe Ruiz, Dale Stewart, Jim Pilgrim, Leslie Cheatham, Ricky Ruiz, Raguel Ruiz, and Judy Ham. Other improvement goals are to clean city streets, urge installation of necessary traffic lights, improve the playground behind the Baptist

church (fix a ball park, volleyball, tennis, and basketball courts), and improve the city dump.

The Volunteer Fire Department, which started the whole thing, plans to paint the fire truck, erect a fire alarm, train drivers for the fire truck, and train the members in first aid. David Pullin is fire chief—other members are Carl Lee Stewart, Tony Dickens, Joe Ruíz, Manuel Ruíz, and Harold Ham.

There are 146 registered voters in Whitsett. Although the town expects a big boom when the Choke Canyon Dam is completed, at present there are only three businesses in town. Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hawk are remodeling their Texaco station and cafe in a pioneer motif. The Hamms operate the Gulf station that formerly housed the post office. Cecil and Tillie Wilson sell tasty hamburgers and their own pure guajilla honey.*

Whitsett Methodist Church—The Weatherby brothers, Houston and Samuel, organized the Methodist Church in 1914. For the first year, their families comprised the total membership. In 1915, Reverend Pollard became their first pastor. J.G. and Mrs. Pollard rode the train from San Antonio each weekend, accompanied by their daughter Mildred, who was the pianist. They stayed with Sam Weatherby's family.

The present church building was given by Lee Pope. J. Roland Cole, who is also the Three Rivers Methodist pastor, now holds two Sunday services for the small Whitsett church.

Whitsett Baptist Church—The Whitsett Baptist Church was organized in the school building by Reverend C.E. Jones on January 23, 1921. Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Pullin, Mr. and Mrs.

*(The above section is based on an interview with Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Wilson, and an article by Viola Ebel Adlof, "We'd Like You to Know Whitsett People See a Bright Future," *The Progress*, April 18, 1979.)

L.S. Casey, L.A. Goldman, Mrs. Wayne J. Hallmark, and Stella Bell. Reverend Jones was called as fourth-time pastor. Within three months five more members were added.

The church's pastors have been C.E. Jones, W.S. Gibbs, J.T. Hollan, W.H. Ingle, Paul C. Smeltzer, W.T. (Tommy) Smith—who pastored the church for thirty-two years and led it to full-time services—Coy L. Vestal, and Chris Walker.

In 1931 the church completed and dedicated a new sanctuary; a piano was purchased, and Reverend Smith donated an organ. In 1971, the church observed its fiftieth anniversary with 72 resident members.

Fant City/Sunniland

Colonel Fant—Dillard R. Fant was born in South Carolina in 1841, but his parents settled near Goliad eleven years later. When Dillard was fourteen years old, he began working with the teams of oxen that hauled freight between San Antonio and Goliad.

During the Civil War he served in the Texas Cavalry, and returned as Colonel Fant. In 1866 he went into the cattle business in a big way. For the next fourteen years he drove about 200,000 cattle up the trail to the northern markets. In 1884 he engaged in one of the largest cattle drives ever—several herds totaling 42,000 cattle (costing \$12-20 each) made the drive to Wyoming.

Fant continued his own cattle business in Goliad County, and improved his stock by introducing Durhams and Herefords. He was said to be the second man to fence a pasture in Texas (1874). Eventually Colonel Fant owned over 700,00 acres of grazing land in various parts of the state, including 60,000 in Live Oak County.

Fant hired Peter Kerr to build a dam on the Sulphur Creek in exchange for a hundred yearling heifers. The resulting reservoir, known as The Big Tank, covered a hundred acres, and it remained until washed away by

Hurricane Beulah's floods, three-fourths of a century later.

Fant City—The May 21, 1914, issue of the *Beeville Picayune* reported that L.S. Elwell owned a large amount of land on what used to be the Fant Ranch. Much of the land was improved, and for demonstration purposes he grew alfalfa, asparagus, bur clover, onions, strawberries, pecans, corn, cane, milo, cotton, and "almost everything you can think of. . . (it is) one of the prettiest places they ever saw—way out there in the wilds of Live Oak County."

The details of the Fant City scheme are hazy, perhaps because few local people knew what was going on, and few of the buyers stayed. The Fant ranch at this time was owned by a land company, probably with Elwell as the manager. A plan very similar to Simmons City was advertised around the country—but not in South Texas. For what was said to be an outrageous price when compared with local land prices, each buyer would receive a city lot and a small farm.

Elwell drilled a well about 3600 feet deep to irrigate the crops he grew for demonstration purposes. Much of the ranch consisted of shallow soil atop caliche, and the dry winds and low moisture did not make for easy farming. Most of that land even today is still in brush.

Many of the buyers were from Minnesota and other northern states. Not all of them came to see their new property, and few of those who did stayed. There were many law suits, and eventually the land company went broke—although the owners may have left with their pockets jingling.

Most of that land is now owned by the Albert Huegler estate and the Dobie Cattle Company. There are still a few legal problems, including the fact that a share of mineral rights is still owned by descendants of the land company owners.

Sunniland—The Fant City townsite was mostly east of the railroad track. A townsite was laid out, but few homes were built.

The depot was called Sunniland, and for eighteen years, Margaret McNeese was depot agent and postmistress. When Mr. and Mrs. A.E. Adolf moved to Fant in 1928, there was only a school, post office, hotel, and the railroad camphouses. Sunniland was headquarters for the railroad maintenance crews for the section from San Antonio to George West. When the Fant City school was incorporated into the Three Rivers school district in 1949, that community ceased to function.

Esseville and Nell

In the second and third decades of this century, some large landowners in the northeast end of the county subdivided their ranches and sold 200 and 300 acre blocks to farmers, who cleared the land and established homes.

The area was settled about 1913 by Edgar and Walter Long, Don Taylor, T.B. Ustace, Oscar Withers, and Joe Ellison. Walker Wright still lives, with his daughter and her husband (Mr. and Mrs. Dale Meeks), on the farm he bought in 1916. In the 1920's, farms were established by A.H. Gomillion, Pinges Taylor, Charles Rogers, and W.D. Shelton.

In 1933, Willie Esse, Sr., built a home, store, and gin at what became known as Esseville. The nearby community of Nell was also the site of a gin and a store. The two communities organized the ~~Toms~~ school, and for many years church services were also held in the school building. Mr. and Mrs. Esse continue to operate their store, but the school, church, and the Nell store are gone. Cotton, once the mainstay of farmers, has almost disappeared from the farms in this community, and with

it have gone the gins.

Esseville/Nell continues to prosper, and it is the site of some of the most attractive farm homes in South Texas. The rich soil produces corn, flax, wheat, and oats, as well as cattle, but the shallow caliche subsoil is said to make production of grain sorghums unprofitable. Lack of good water has been a handicap in most of this area as far south as Three Rivers, but that problem seems to have been solved by a bountiful supply of fine, soft water which has recently been piped to the whole area.

Ray Point

When James F. Ray died in Pettus in 1907, he owned 26,000 acres of land. His heirs later sold 10,000 acres of his Live Oak County holdings to two Gonzales County men named Dilworth and Kokernot. They reportedly paid \$10 per acre, which was a high price for raw land in 1912.

By 1920 the railroad through Live Oak County had been completed; Three Rivers was off to a good start; and the bumper crop of cotton that year brought a high price. Dilworth and Kokernot decided the time was right to realize a profit on their investment.

The land, about seven miles east of Three Rivers, was subdivided into farm-sized tracts, and their agent, Colonel Charles R. Tips, began advertising the property. Tips had sold most of the raw land around Three Rivers, as well as the lots in the townsite itself, and he soon had this 10,000 acres sold.

Most of the purchasers were of German descent, and they went to work in earnest to improve the land and build comfortable homes. Among the family heads of the original settlers were Otto Luescher, his son Harry, and his son-in-law Paul Albreicht; Charlie Templin; Robert Rokohl; August Lamprecht; August Wieding and his son

Hugo; William Hornung; Otto Braune; Charlie Braune; Antone Muenzler; Kugo Kopplin; Alfred Weisch; Julius Bauer; Christian Friedle; Paul Zamzow; and Edgar Ludewig and his son William. Most of them came from Gonzales, Lee, and Guadalupe counties. When the original 10,000 acres had been sold, nearby land was purchased by Beno Albreicht, Rinert Storch, Edward Schraeder, Otto Zamzow, and William Stridde.

These energetic citizens soon established a community center named Ray Point, which had a school, Methodist and Lutheran churches, a store operated by Otto Luescher, and a blacksmith shop owned by Paul Guettler. Since cotton was the most important crop in the county, a gin was installed by John Schultz and Sons of Three Rivers.

Because they had come from established communities, the people of Ray Point were used to rural delivery mail service, and their efforts resulted in Live Oak County's first rural delivery mail route. In 1928 Rural Route 1 began mail delivery to Votaw, Ray Point, and Sunpiland communities.

In the 1940's when electric lines were being strung over the country, the Ray Point Electric Cooperative was organized, and electricity became available for the community farms.

For the last 80 years my home has been on land adjoining the Ray land, and my wife and I have benefitted from many of the Ray Point community's progressive enterprises.

In the days before the public meat locker and home freezer came into use, Ray Point citizens organized a Beef Club. Each Saturday through the summer and fall, the members met at a different home to butcher a good fat calf and divide the meat among themselves. Each Saturday the members took a different cut of meat. A record was kept, and when all had butchered a calf, each

member had received the equivalent of a calf.

* * * * *

When Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Templin moved from Gonzales County to Ray Point in 1932, their worldly possessions consisted of their household goods, a Ford auto, and enough cash to buy some used farm tools and a couple of cheap teams of horses. They rented a farm and went to work.

A few years later Bill bought a tractor. . . then a row binder. . . then a combine to harvest his crops. . . then a terracing machine. He did custom work for his neighbors, and each fall did several thousand dollars worth of terracing. He also bought a truck and began trading, buying livestock and trucking it to the San Antonio markets.

Bill's father, C.H. Templin, lived in the community, and Bill found time to help his father farm. When C.H. died in 1943, he left a 400 acre farm with a considerable debt against it. Bill bought the other four heirs' interest in the estate, and began operating the farm himself, while continuing his custom work and trading. In a few years he had paid all the heirs, as well as the indebtedness on the farm.

Bill usually worked by the eight-hour plan—eight hours before noon and eight after—and he seldom used more than one part-time hired hand. Fishing provided needed relaxation.

In recent years, the Templins have received some income from oil production, but they had already accumulated enough to support them comfortably in retirement.

Verda has been a true helpmate, running errands, taking care of the home, and looking after the livestock when Bill was working away from home. Though no longer young, the two of them are still ready to help a neighbor in need, day or night.

* * * * *

All but a few of the original settlers have gone to their final reward. Their children have grown up, married, and many of them bought land and built their own homes. Many of the businesses in Three Rivers are operated by individuals who grew up in the Ray Point community.

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In 1925, Anna and Otto Zamzow moved to Ray Point with their nine children. Today four of their six sons are farmers at Ray Point—Arnold, Otto, Reno, and Walter (who is also a retired carpenter). Arnold, the bachelor, still lives in the old home his parents built. Little did the elder Zamzows realize the value of the home place. Arnold is able to farm only part of it now because of the in situ uranium pipelines and pumps which cover much of the fields. Yellowcake—the finished produce—is selling for \$40 per pound, as of 1979.

Arnold has cut down his activities for health reasons, but for twenty years he was a member of the Live Oak County Fair Board. He is now district director of Germania Farm Mutual Aid Association. For about thirty years, he was Sunday School Superintendent of the Lutheran church. Many of the first and second graders he taught were his nieces and nephews, and he eventually taught many of their children.

* * * * *

The Lutheran church has been moved to Three Rivers, and members of the Methodist church united with the First Methodist Church in Three Rivers. The school district was consolidated with Three Rivers years ago, but the school building was purchased for use as a community center. Barbecues, anniversary celebrations, civic meetings, elections, and other community

affairs are held here. The store has been enlarged and is now operated by Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Wernle under the name Ray Point Mercantile. An asphalt road (FM 1358) passes by the community center and the store.

Ray Point is still on the map.

CHAPTER XI

RANCHING AND FARMING

Horses and cattle were unknown in the new world which Columbus discovered, but as the Spaniards began to explore and settle Central and North America, they brought horses for the cavalry and for transporting light military equipment. Cattle were brought both for use as draft animals and for food. When a mission or fort was established, both horses and cattle were usually taken. Since there were no fences, livestock often wandered away and were lost; some animals were left behind when a fort or mission was abandoned. The free-running livestock eventually resulted in vast herds of mustang horses and Spanish cattle, both as wild as the native deer and buffalo.

The Mustangs

J. Frank Dobie estimated that at one time there were about a million mustangs in Texas. In 1804, a Spanish judge went from Reynosa to inspect an area in the southern part of present-day Live Oak County. He reported the mustangs to be so numerous that settlers could not raise horses on the range, because they would join the wild herds. He reported the only notable improvements on the land to be some old mustang pens, which were in bad condition.

The early South Texas settlers found some of these pens. In the hills south of Ramireña Creek, a few old posts outlined a pen, with large trees and brush inside; a few loose pieces of wood showed where the wings of the pen had been.

There were some good horses among the mustangs—soon after the Civil War, a mustang stallion captured in southern Live Oak County was sold out of the pen for \$50 (a fabulous price for a mustang). Over the years, many degenerated into creatures almost worthless to man. The Indians ate horsemeat, but the white settlers did not. When barbed wire came into general use, many of the mustangs were shot in an attempt to rid the range of them. In my boyhood, I saw a few mustangs that had been caught with the expectation of taming them. They were barely large enough to carry a man, and were as wild as jackrabbits. About 1902, Dr. Simmons hired Jim Pugh to capture the herds of mustangs on his ranch, which had been fenced since 1881. Pugh's payment was to be the animals he captured.

The Texas Longhorn

Spanish cattle were a different story. No matter how wild one was, it was still edible, and expert cowboys could herd and handle them. Many Spaniards built cattle ranches in South Texas, especially along the Río Grande, San Antonio, and Nueces rivers. These early ranchers are said to have invented the use of the branding iron.

The Spanish cattle that were running wild had long since learned to fend for themselves. They not only survived, but thrived and multiplied, and were found all along the Texas frontier. After the Texas Revolution, the Americans who settled in South Texas brought a different type of cattle. The cattle from the U.S. mixed

and crossed with the Spanish cattle, and the animal that resulted was one of the toughest forms of cattle that ever lived—the famous Texas longhorn.

The longhorn's long legs and light body enabled it to travel great distances from water to grazing grounds. The steer's sharp, slightly twisted horns often reached six and occasionally eight feet from tip to tip, and were highly effective weapons against wolves and other predators. The longhorn was a slow developer, and did not reach its maximum weight until eight or ten years of age. A ten-year-old steer weighed from a thousand to sixteen hundred pounds.

For many years, a glass case on the courthouse grounds at George West housed the mounted body of Geronimo, a longhorn owned by George West. He was a tawny animal, whose horns measured a bit over six feet. When the animal returned from the taxidermist, Mr. West was disappointed at the poor workmanship, which did not improve with age. Before a tour of the Soviet Union in the 1970's, Geronimo's horns were remounted on the body of a smaller animal.

Thousands of wild and half-wild longhorns roamed South Texas by the time of the Civil War. When the men went away to battle, the women and very young boys carried on at home as best they could, but by the end of the war, the range was overstocked with cattle, most of them unbranded. Honest cattlemen tried to brand suckling calves with the brand their mothers wore, but any unmarked weaned animal was called a maverick, and was legal property of the first man to get his brand on it. All a man needed to begin ranching was a rope, a branding iron, and nerve; the fortune of many an adventurous man began in this manner.

Cattle were worth about four dollars per head in South Texas, and buyers were scarce; however, a market had developed for Texas beef in the growing industrial

cities of the North, where buyers were willing to pay not four, but forty dollars per head for Texas longhorns. The great cattle drives began in order to get Texas cattle to the northern markets. Between 1867 and 1890, almost 10,000,000 cattle were driven out of Texas and sold in northern markets.

One of the earliest trail drivers was George W. West. In 1867, he drove a herd of fourteen thousand cattle from South Texas to the Rosebud Indian Reservation, a hundred miles south of Canada—no other drover ever equaled that feat. He continued driving cattle north until the trails were closed by fencing and quarantine.

In 1886 when the trails were being closed, herds owned by George West and John Blocker (another powerful cattleman and trail driver) were stopped in Kansas by armed ranchers and lawmen trying to keep them—and the fever carrying ticks on the South Texas cattle—from going any further. Other herds were following, and eventually over 100,000 were backed up. West and Blocker came to the site as quickly as possible, and spent over \$100 sending telegrams to Washington. Orders finally came to cut the fences and pass on through. West and Blocker narrowly escaped death, because just after they left to carry out instructions, lightning struck the telegraph instruments and destroyed the office.

George W. West was said to have matured, fattened, and shipped to market more fat steers than any other man in South Texas.¹ George's brothers Sol and Albert W. West, Sr., also had large ranch holdings in Live Oak County.

Sol West was the youngest man who ever "bossed" a herd up the trail. *The Trail Drivers of Texas*, originally published by the Old Trail Drivers Association, contains Sol's account of a cattle drive which captures some of the excitement and frustration of such an undertaking.

Confusion over multiple revised editions and copyright laws prevents us from reprinting the old trail driver's words, but the gist of the story follows:

In 1874, Sol made an agreement with his brother George and George's partner to drive a herd to Ellsworth, Kansas, in return for half the profit of the drive. Due to unusual circumstances, Sol's pay for the year's work turned out to be 75¢.

The herd left Lavaca County on February 27, 1874, and had clear weather until they crossed the Red River into Indian Territory. There they grazed a few days, and then headed for a campsite on Hell Roaring Creek. Mist and light snow had been falling that day, and just as the lead cattle got within a hundred yards of camp, the blizzard struck. The cattle turned their backs to the wind—and the camp—and began to drift.

The traildrivers—all still teenagers—eventually got the cattle checked sometime after dark, but the horses they were riding froze to death, as did all sixty-five horses in the remuda that was following behind. The men spotted the light of a dug-out and headed for it. They were hospitably fed, having eaten nothing since breakfast, and put to bed.

Sol traded the dug-out owner some steers for three horses and a mule, and made a similar trade with some Indians. Eventually, the herd began moving north again, and reached Ellsworth on May 20. The townspeople bought Sol a new suit of clothes for bringing the first herd of the season.

* * * * *

The northern markets were unable to handle all the surplus cattle, and scores of "hide and tallow" factories began to dot the coast of Texas. Rockport was the chief center of the hide and packing business in Texas. In 1872,

Rockport and Corpus Christi sent out nearly 300,000 cow hides.

The packeries did not use ice, and while much meat was salted and pickled, many cattle were killed for their hides alone. After the tallow was extracted, the cooked meat was often fed to hogs, dumped into water to become fish food, or thrown into a stinking heap. The parts of the animal with little fat, such as the loin, were fed raw to the hogs or given away free to anyone who would haul it off.

Winter became to be "skinning season." According to custom, anyone who found a dead cow was welcome to the hide, no matter whose brand it bore. There were those who had no cattle, but made a living on the hides they skinned—if the skinner ran out of dead cattle, he sometimes created more. During the "skinning war", the price of cattle was so low that rustlers who would normally have taken cattle to market just killed the animals and took the hide, leaving the carcasses for the buzzards and coyotes.

* * * * *

During the sometimes prolonged droughts, ranchers were often unable to get feed to their cattle because of inadequate transportation, and the cattle died in droves. Mary Ann Hinnant reported that in 1871 the Nueces was full of dead cattle. Many cattle who went down the trail to drink at the river were too weak to climb back up the bank, and the trails became choked with dead animals.

During a drought in 1886-7, the Nueces quit running, and water stood only in the holes. There was no grass, and no market for cattle. George West had his cowhands carry an axe on their saddles so they could bring him the left horn of every dead steer they found on his ranch. Before the drought broke, several thousand horns were stacked to form a huge mound—at night, West would sit



Picture 17

Some of the many types of barbed wire which ended the open range era.

on the mound, scanning the sky for signs of rain.

Barbed Wire

The first patent on barbed wire was issued in 1867, and J.F. Glidden of DeKalb, Illinois, invented a practical machine for the manufacture of barbed wire in 1874. Many styles were soon under patent, each having its own merits.

Regardless of the type used, barbed wire soon changed the style of both farming and ranching in Texas. Prior to this time, all livestock had shared the open range. Each owner tried to keep his stock close to home, but as herds grew larger, they naturally ranged farther away in search of food. If a man had a watering place for his stock, no one could tell him how many animals he could own. Men of means sometimes turned vast herds loose and overstocked the range.

The November 7, 1877, issue of the *Oakville Tribune* carried the following advertisement:

All honest, good, industrious, poor men with families are welcome to kill an occasional calf of mine for food, provided they do not waste the meat, and all my honest neighbors are welcome to skin and sell the hides of my dead animals, but living animals must be untouched. The killing for food, skinning or selling must not be kept secret. John Timon.

Timon's cattle were scattered so badly that the advertisement was placed in newspapers in several counties.

The availability of barbed wire meant that landowners could fence their land and protect their property. It meant ruin for those who refused to sell their herds down to size. It also brought strife. A rancher might go out and find great sections of his fence cut to pieces. If a killing resulted, little was done about it—a man who was tried in court would probably be found “justified.” Wire cutting became so prevalent and such a source of bloodshed that in 1884 a special session of the Texas Legislature made it a felony to cut another person's fence.

Cattle

"If you can get ten cows and keep them and their increase for ten years, they will then keep you." Pioneer axiom

Much of Live Oak County's farmland has been returned to pasture, and much ranchland has been cleared of mesquite and underbrush and developed into a highly productive range, using principally buffel grass and coastal bermuda. The county is the home of several highgrade producers, and there are several associations of registered cattle breeders.

In 1973 the Live Oak County Livestock Auction sold a total of 81,681 cattle, horses, and goats, for a total of \$19,283,990.

The June 13, 1979, issue of *The Progress* carried the following news item:

Beefmaster Sale Nets \$2 Million

More than \$2 million worth of Beefmaster breeding cattle were sold on the first day of a herd dispersal sale by the Harrell Cattle Co. The sale was held near Three Rivers.

One of the highlights of the event, which lasted two days, was the sale of a three-fourths interest in Harrell's famous bull, "Showboy," for \$150,000. That was more than double the old record for a similar sale set in 1978 at \$66,000 for an equal interest in a Beefmaster bull.

The two-day sale of Herring Ranch Beefmasters by Harrell Cattle Co. brought a total of \$2.6 million on 391 3/4 lots, for an average of \$6,714. This also is an industry record for such a large number of cattle.

Gene Kuykendall, executive vice-president of Beefmaster Breeders Universal, said, "The eyes of the beef industry have come to rest on the Beefmaster breed. That is apparent by results of the Harrell Cattle Co. sale of the Herring herd. We probably never will see again a

herd of this quality sold. The Herring herd played a major part in the growth of the Beefmaster breed."

Sheep

Although there is scant written evidence, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, South Texas was the site of a thriving sheep industry. Sheep were mentioned in the probate records of the wills of B.B. Wright, February 4, 1892 (p. 209); W.D. Hodges, June 16, 1892 (p. 228); and Mary and Pate McNeill, November 18, 1896 (p. 326).

The range was still unfenced, and the sheep ate the native vegetation. As a youth, I often heard men who lived during that period recount their experiences and observations.

Within a mile of where my home now stands, Ben Epperson once had a large sheepfold, but he lost most of his flock in a great snow and ice storm. Some people provided a little shelter and saved a few sheep, but many whole flocks were destroyed.

Tom Brown, who moved to Oakville in 1891 with his brother Murray, told the story of a Goliad man who bought a flock of sheep in the region west of Oakville, and was driving them home. Upon reaching the Nueces ferry, the sheep became uncooperative, so the owner went into nearby Oakville for help. There some young loafers accepted his offer of \$10 to put the sheep into the boat. When the shepherd went into the ferry and called them, the sheep, knowing their new master's voice, began crowding in. The owner backed to the opposite side of the boat, but the sheep kept coming so fast that they knocked the owner against the gate, which fell open. Man and sheep both landed in the water, and the sheep, being headed toward the opposite bank, swam to shore. Those

sheep just kept coming in and going out of the boat until all had crossed.

When the shepherd got out of the water, he was the maddest human those young fellows had ever seen. He said he offered them the money to put the sheep into the boat, not to swim them across the river, and he was not going to pay them one red cent. Now, the Rix Gang were "tough hombres"—sometimes in serious trouble with the law—and they told the shepherd they had put the sheep into the boat and were going to have the whole \$10. They did get the money—as well as a story they recounted to all who would listen.

Farming

The invention of barbed wire allowed a farmer to fairly easily fence as large a field as he desired. In the late 1880's a few farmers began to raise cotton for market. Elicia and Pete Lawley owned and operated the first cotton gin in the county. They bought cotton seed and divided the seeds among the people who wanted to grow cotton. By 1900, the cotton industry was booming. Several gins in the county were running to capacity, and cotton sold for 10¢ a pound. Soon farmers were planting one to three hundred acres of cotton, plus enough corn to feed their teams of horses.

The early farming methods did not encourage small farmers to cultivate much land. Charlie Jones, father of Reverend Carroll R. Jones, said when he first began farming in the Jarratt community in the 1890's, he had no planting or harrowing implements. He first plowed the ground and seeded by hand, then cut brush for the horses to pull across the ground to cover the seeds.

It usually took two people to plant the crop—one laid off the rows with a walking lister, and the other followed

behind with a planter. When plowing, a man put the horse's reins around his neck, and walked behind the horse and the walking plow.

One year my father read about the checked-row method of planting, which—if it worked—would end up with a field of cotton looking somewhat like a checkerboard, so that it could be plowed in any direction to get rid of the weeds. After the land had been flat-broke (turned in one direction to be level), we three boys planted the cotton. Knox took the cultivator, which had two plows, and laid off two furrows at a time till he got to the end of the first row. He then turned around, and came back down the second row, so that he was actually only making one row, using the other as a guide. After the whole field had been plowed this way in a north-south direction, he repeated the whole process in an east-west direction. Cotton seed is sticky, and I had rolled the seeds in sand or ashes so they would separate easily. My job was to drop three to five seeds at each of the criss-crosses, or checks. Henry followed with a walking planter (with the planter inoperable) to cover the seeds. When the cotton came up, everyone was quick to point out that I had not always hit the check—the plan did not work in practice as well as in theory.

Two-horse plows were at first used to break, plant, and then cultivate one row at a time; two-row, four-horse outfits came into use later. Farming methods continued to improve, and the 1926 Texas Almanac listed 8,205 bales of cotton ginned at the sixteen gins in Live Oak County; that produced here but ginned in adjoining counties was not recorded.

Production increased until 1930, when the Great Depression began to demoralize the U.S. economy. The federal government, in an attempt to save the farming industry, began to control production. Farmers were given allotments to plant only a certain percentage of



Picture 18

The Gill gin on the west side of the Sulphur Creek bridge, Oakville.

their cotton acreage, and then were paid to put their idle land in the "Soil Bank."

Today the cotton acreage is very small compared with the total crop acreage, but with the aid of fertilizers, insecticides, and improved farming methods, the acre yields are much higher than those of half a century ago. The 1977 A.S.C. (Agricultural Stabilization Committee) Record showed 2,588 bales produced in Live Oak County, 907 of which were ginned at the county's only gin, which is located in Three Rivers.

Although production of this crop fluctuated, broomcorn was of considerable importance until the early 1950's. A field of broomcorn looks much like a field

of milo maize, but instead of grain, the head produces long, slender straws which are ideal for use as a natural-fiber broom. It was easy to cultivate, and was one of the earliest crops to harvest, but harvesting had to be done by hand. When labor costs became too high for profitable production, the crop was discontinued.

In the 1930's and 40's, peanut production became popular in the light sandy areas of the county. The crop required considerable labor to harvest, but farmers swapped work and harvested in crews, so that the only cash outlay was to the thrasher-man. If a farmer wanted to sell the hay, it would usually pay for thrashing. In the 1940's while land was fairly cheap, a farmer sometimes could pay for his land with one good crop of peanuts. But peanuts had allotments, too, and the crop has been abandoned in favor of those which more easily lend themselves to mechanization.

Watermelons have been grown in the sandy areas of the county for many years, and when they "hit the market right," the crop is highly profitable. Some farmers, like the late W.J. Armstrong, raise watermelons year after year for the local market, and find it a profitable crop. Sometimes a group of farmers agrees to plant melons and sell in carload lots for the early market. In 1956, Dee Maguglin of Votaw bought seed to plant peanuts, but that was the last year of the long drought, and it remained too dry to plant the peanuts, so he fed them to the chickens. Maguglin planted the twenty-three acres of peanut land in watermelons, and, after he harvested them, his wife delivered them to local stores. Their return came to almost \$2,500.

For the last two decades, corn and maize have been the most important cash crops in the county. One man, with today's powerful tractors and eight-row implements, can cultivate and harvest several hundred acres of grain.

Hay for home use and market is produced mainly from the sorghums and from costal bermuda, and is an important crop.

* * * * *

About 1915, agricultural leaders advised farmers to diversify—"The cow, the sow, and the hen will pull the farmer through" was one slogan. One plan advocated keeping a few cows and selling cream to a creamery; raising a few hogs to utilize the skim milk, as well as to produce meat and lard for home consumption; keeping a flock of hens to utilize the skim milk and the waste grain from where other livestock was fed, as well as to produce eggs and fryers for home use, with some to sell. That idea has faded out. Most farmers feel their time is too valuable to spend it on small chores, and they buy their eggs, meat, milk, shortening, and butter at the grocery store.

Poultry—Until the 1940's, most farmers kept a flock of chickens—and sometimes turkeys—to supply the family with eggs and fryers, and occasionally they sold eggs, hens, or fryers. By the 1950's, poultry could be found on only a few farms.

The first successful commercial hatchery in the county was established in 1947 nine miles northeast of George West by Sidney Sparkman. Each year from 100-150,000 baby chicks were sold locally, or were shipped to points from San Antonio to Brownsville, and sometimes into Mexico. Sparkman's Hatchery and Poultry Farm expanded to include 4,000 laying hens for hatching, as well as for production of graded market eggs; it operated until 1961.

In 1948, John and Jake Ploch of Three Rivers established a hatchery, and later a poultry dressing plant. During the drought of the 1950's, several commercial laying flocks of from one to six thousand hens were established by Leroy Riser, Carroll R. Jones,

Royce Passmore, G.C. Gillett, Rodney Miller and his father, and Wilson Rackley. By the late 1960's all had discontinued because of changing conditions.

Dairies—From the 1920's until the beginning of World War II, many local farmers kept a few dairy cows—from four to a dozen. They did not sell the milk, but sold the cream locally or delivered it to the railroad depot—sometimes via the star route mail carrier—for shipment to points as far away as Kansas City, Missouri. For a time, the Devine Creamery provided ice boxes in which to keep cream until it was picked up by truck.

Until the early 1950's, residents of George West and Three Rivers could have morning delivery of milk from one of the small local dairies. The herds of Frank Ambler, the Riddells, Tom Gilmore, Alvin Kay, H.L. Hardwick, and Cecil Kendall included from 25 to 40 cows.

Several large commercial dairies of up to a hundred cows operated for a time. For about twenty-five years, S.F. Coffin and his son Kellam maintained a herd of Jersey cows which held one of the nation's outstanding production records. In 1974, they were forced to sell out because of environmental protection rules for Lake Corpus Christi, which bordered on and had claimed some of the Coffin land.

Changing conditions have resulted in milk being brought to local stores from as far away as Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Soil Conservation

by W.B. (Bill) Spross

In 1944 the farmers and ranchers of Live Oak County requested the U.S. Department of Agriculture to send technicians from the Soil Conservation Service to help them apply conservation practices to their land. In 1946 a district was organized under the leadership of L.L. Bennett, the County Agricultural Agent. Mr. Bennett

assisted the landowners in their conservation needs, but because of his other duties as County Agent, he could not serve all the farmers and ranchers.

A supervisor was elected to represent each of the five areas within the county: Tom Cannon of Nell (North), L.C. Smith (East), Lee Pope (West Central), Tedd Witt (East), and Jim McGuffin of Dinero (South). To assist the supervisors, the Soil Conservation Service sent three technicians: M.D. (Dick) Stanford, Work Unit Conservationist; Charlie Ward, Range Conservationist; and W.B. (Bill) Spross, Soil Conservation Technician. An office was opened November 9, 1946, on the ground floor of the old West Hotel in George West.

Waterways, terraces, stock ponds, and irrigation land leveling were the greatest needs at the time of organization, and the S.C.S. technicians were kept busy. As land values increased, the need for other conservation practices arose. Gully shaping and critical area revegetation were added to their duties.

During the first ten to fifteen years of S.C.S. assistance to the Live Oak Soil and Water Conservation District, a yearly average of 98,000 feet of terrace lines were run; 25 acres of waterways were shaped and vegetated; 45 farms ponds were built; and 55 acres of irrigation land preparation was done.

Conservation of the soil, our most valuable possession, is a never ending task. The Soil Conservation Service is ready to assist landowners whenever called upon.

The Farmers and the Ranchers

Katzfey Brothers—In 1925, Bernard Katzfey brought his family from San Juan, Texas, to Live Oak County. He purchased 315 acres of raw brushland in the Mikeska community, five miles from George West, and began to clear the land and build a home. When Mr.

Katzfey died in 1932, he left a wife, five sons, and two daughters. Martin, the twenty-year-old eldest son, received good cooperation from his brothers as he tried to lead the family.

Two of the brothers died many years ago, but Martin, Leonard, and Wilfred have continued to work as partners. In 1945 they began doing custom work with heavy machinery, first building terraces and earthen tanks, then going to land clearing. During the twenty-five years they prepared many thousands of acres of Live Oak County's brushland for farming.

In 1953 the brothers built grain storage tanks with a twelve carload capacity. Public demand for custom storage caused the capacity to triple the next year, and the Katzfeys also began grinding and mixing feed. They now have a total storage capacity of 225 carloads.

Also in 1953 hog production was added to the operations, and this aspect has been expanded until by 1973 they were producing 5,000 hogs per year. There have been downs, and well as ups, however—about 1969 atrophic rhinitis struck, and the Katzfeys were completely out of the hog business for a year. In 1974 over 300 hogs drowned in flooding caused by a fourteen-inch deluge.

In 1968 a dehydrating plant with a capacity of 3,200 tons per year was added. It is mainly used to produce coastal bermuda in pellet form, which can then be mixed with grain pellets in any desired ratio.

The brothers also have a cow and calf operation, keeping about three hundred cows.

Katzfey Brothers, Inc., is government approved, bonded, and insured to take care of the custom grain storage business. It has good standing with the banks, sometimes owing as much as half a million dollars, and paying \$74,000 interest in one year. About thirty people are on the payroll, which amounts to about \$200,000 per

year. Katzfey Brothers, Inc., owns 1,000 and rents 400 acres of land. Its net worth is estimated at about \$400,000.

In the office of Katzfey Brothers, Inc., hangs a little sign which says, "The world owes you a living, but you have to work hard to collect it!"

Smith and Sons—The Smith and Sons Hereford enterprise is the story of three generations, with a fourth in training. Sidney Smith was born in Bee County in 1874, and lived his entire hundred years near Beeville, farming and ranching in Bee and Live Oak counties. In 1913, he started raising registered Hereford cattle, and in 1937, he became the first charter member of the South Texas Hereford Breeder-Feeder Association.

In 1919, he took his seventeen-year-old son, Leonard, into partnership, and twelve years later they bought a tract of land and leased some more east of George West. Leonard moved to the new location, continuing the Hereford enterprise. His sons, Charles and William, grew up in the business with father and grandfather, and there are prospects that their sons will follow in their footsteps. All four generations have been active in church and civic affairs.



Picture 19

Leonard C. Smith (right) and sons Charles and William, from a poster advertising their annual bull auction.

Buyers come from throughout Texas, as well as from other states and Mexico, for Smith and Sons' annual auction at the farm. In 1973 their top hundred two-year-old bulls averaged \$1,060 each, while 28 commercial bulls averaged \$790.



Picture 20

Some of the Smith herd of registered Herefords.

Leon T. Vivian—Leon Thomas Vivian was born in 1894 to a Civil War veteran and his Irish wife. After finishing school, Leon became a cowman like his father. In 1917 he married Nellie Morris, and the couple had three sons.

In 1931, the family moved to Live Oak County. Vivian was a "tick inspector" in charge of forty-two men in Live Oak and McMullen counties. Several county inspectors had been run out, but trouble ended when the chief of the Texas Rangers responded to Vivian's appeal for help.

During World War II, Vivian, as a regular Texas Ranger, patrolled the Río Grande to keep out alien

Mexicans and Japanese. From 1945-67, he, was a special Texas Ranger and field inspector for the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, in charge of inspectors from Live Oak County to Brownsville, and from Laredo to Victoria. During all his years of law enforcement, he never killed anyone. He was named to the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame, and was elected to life membership.

Mr. Vivian served on the George West School Board for fourteen years. Once, after weeks of investigation, he met with ninety-one students who had been caught for stealing and similar offenses. He offered them another chance if each of them promised to go straight. The students promised, and through the years, he has received many warm thank you's from these young people, now grown up.

Though officially retired, the Vivians keep a garden and have a few cattle on their ranch just north of George West.

World Champion Cowboy—Phil Lyne is a fourth generation rancher, whose great-grandfather came to Live Oak County in 1877 and established the Lyne Ranch. Most of that land is still owned by his descendants. Phil, his brother J.L. (Poochie), and their father Joe Rufus operate their ranch in partnership. Phil grew up on a horse working cattle, and began at an early age to perform in rodeos, as had his father before him. I counted 45 awards displayed in Phil's office for performances beginning at age 12 and continuing on to the World Championship, twelve years later.

Phil graduated from George West High School in 1965 and earned enough money rodeoing to put himself through college. In 1970 he was Rookie of the Year for fastest calf roping and tie-down. The next year in the National Finals in Oklahoma City he won the All Round Cowboy Championship Award for fastest calf roping

and tie-down ever made (8.5 seconds) to win the award for a second time. Phil was the only one to ever win in both timing (calf roping and tie-down) and the judging event (bull riding), and he won a record amount of prize money for one year—\$60,000.

The Coquats—Henderson Coquat, the son of a French seaman, was reared on a six hundred acre stock farm near Oakville. He studied at Southwestern Texas State University (San Marcos) and the University of Texas at Austin. Feeling that the cow of the future for South Texas would be a crossbred animal, he carefully bred registered Brahmans and registered Charolais. He was instrumental in the formation of the American and International Charolais Associations. Henderson died in 1958, but his son Robert and nephew Tom Coquat continue the select breeding operation.



Picture 21

Jim Pugh, a descendant of colonists Thomas and Margaret Pugh, raises purebred Brahman cattle.

The Pughs—The only descendant of Live Oak County colonists still living on the original grant and still bearing the same surname is the William D. Pugh family. Thomas Pugh, born in Ireland in 1798, took his wife to New York City, where, after six weeks, they received their United States citizenship. Eventually they decided to join the San Patricio Colony. The ship bearing that group of colonists in 1833 met with such foul weather at the Aransas bar that it returned to New Orleans without landing. From there, only Thomas and Margaret Pugh and one other family made their way overland to Texas. On their 4,595.5 acres, they raised corn, cotton, sweet potatoes, hogs, and cattle. Since there was no gin, the cotton was cleaned and picked by hand. William D. Pugh, who is a great-great grandson of Thomas Pugh, raises maize, grass, and cattle on his 131 acres. Some other descendants of the Pughs also lived on the original grant.

The Garzas—In 1939, Librado Garza bought over eight hundred acres of land at Clegg. Most of the cotton he planted had to be hauled to George West for ginning, because the Clegg gin was usually broken. Now age 83, Mr. Garza is still on the farm, but he mostly raises cattle.

Librado's son, Alfredo, after ten years as a merchant, decided to try farm life again, so he bought a farm at Clegg. That was during The Drought, so in 1958 he sold the farm and opened a small grocery in George West. Garza's Grocery has prospered for twenty-three years, and has enabled the family to purchase some rental property—and get back to the soil. Mrs. Garza's great-grandfather owned several sections of land, and the family has purchased about five hundred acres of the Casas survey. Alfredo's son Cruz and his wife help with the store and the ranching operation.

The One-Man Experiment Station—Holman

Cartwright, whose great-grandfather came to Texas during the Revolution, was born in Terrell in 1889. In 1911 he married Claire Lucas, daughter of cattleman Cyrus B. Lucas. Lucas was known as a "steer man deluxe," constantly upgrading his cattle, and he owned a great deal of land, including seventeen thousand acres in Live Oak County. Holman saw the ranch that was to become home for the first time in 1915, but he and Claire did not move here until 1937. He inherited a large plantation in Fort Bend County which has been in the Cartwright family since 1836.

Cartwright received a law degree from the University of Texas, but he has never practiced law—he loved the land too much to leave it. When the Cartwrights moved to the Twin Oaks Ranch, Holman had an extraordinary vision of the potential for this land of huisache, guajilla, and mesquite, and he has spent a long lifetime supervising the fulfillment of that dream.

He has used every known method of brush clearing—from Mexican workers "grubbing" by hand—to bulldozers, tree rooters, and cabling equipment—to burning and spraying. By the mid 1950's, there were about 3,500 acres of farmland—then Lake Corpus Christi claimed about 2,000 of those acres. The Cartwrights moved to the next level, cleared more land, and made it highly productive. Many different grasses have been experimentally grown on the ranch. For many years, the Cartwrights selectively bred registered Hereford cattle, but they are now involved in carefully controlled crossbreeding of registered Herefords with Simmentals.

Holman Cartwright has been placed in many responsible positions. During the Great Depression he was Executive Vice-President and General Manager of the Texas branch of the Federal Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation. He has been on the Board of Directors of Texas A & I University; Director of the

National Bank of Commerce, San Antonio; Chairman, Board of Directors, San Antonio branch of the Federal Reserve Bank; Director of Houston Oil Company and Houston Pipe Line Company since 1930; and President of Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association. He is actively involved in the affairs of the Episcopalian Church.

Holman Cartwright is now ninety years young,* and his cousin Lon Cartwright has managed the Twin Oaks Ranch for several years. Since Claire's death, Lon—who has spent most of his life here—and his wife Leigh have moved into the main ranch home with Holman. That large, two-story home was built by ranch hands in 1920-21. Made of poured concrete, it cost about \$10-15,000 at the time. Lon, Jr., has inherited a love of the land from his forebears, and is a student at Texas A & M University.

Live Oak County Farm Bureau

The Live Oak County Farm Bureau was chartered in 1963, but there was an active Farm Bureau organization long before that. The earliest minutes go back to August, 1949—when the president resigned.

Nearly six hundred families hold membership in the Live Oak County Farm Bureau, an organization that seeks to improve the social and economic conditions of farm and ranch families through legislation, education, marketing programs, group purchasing, and insurance protection. Harold H. (Rip) Wallace, Jr., has been with the Farm Bureau since 1972, and is now Agency Manager. Special Agent is David Matkin. Alpha Williams has been secretary since 1971.

President for 1980 is John Koemel; other directors are Milton Blankenship, Coke Braune, Kellam Coffin,

*Holman Cartwright died in February, 1980.

Douglas Grant, John Ed Holland, Billy E. House, J.L. Lyne, Carl Matthijetz, Alvin Meyer, Willie Retzloff, Charles L. Smith, and Sidney F. Sparkman.

Presidents since 1961 have been Leonard Smith, Sidney Sparkman, Lon Cartwright, Edward Pawlik, William Goodwin, Coke Braune, Richard Dobie, and Carl Matthijetz.

Agricultural Production in Live Oak County for 1976

	Acres Planted	Acres Harvested	Yield Per Acre	Production
Upland Cotton	850	480	250 lb.	250 bale
Wheat	9,500	4,700	6.0 bu.	28,000 bu.
Flaxseed	7,200	5,800	4.7 bu.	27,600 bu.
Barley	*			
Rye	*			
Sorghums	Grain	42,000	24.1 bu.	618,300 bu.
	Silage	---	3.6 ton	1,800 ton
	Hay	---	1.4 ton	2,000 ton
Corn	11,500	9,000	26.0 bu.	234,000 bu.
Peanuts	*			
Other Hay (excluding sorghum)	---	11,800	1.9 ton	22,700 ton
Pecans	*			
Watermelons		150		
Peaches	*			
Eggs Produced	*			
Wool Produced				1,000 lb.
Milk Produced	*			

January 1 Livestock of Farms

All Cattle	70,000
Milk Cows that have Calved	39,000
Beef Cows that have Calved	6,100
All Hogs	*
Sheep	*
Hens and Pullets of Laying Age	*

Government Payments in 1976

Feed Grain Program	\$327,535
Wheat Program	\$30,345
Cotton Program	\$15,940
Wool and Mohair Program	\$32
Cropland Adjustment Program	\$37,825
Rural Environmental Assistance Program	\$46,850

Cash Receipts from Farm Marketings

All Crops	\$2,825,000
Livestock and Livestock Products	\$6,624,000
Total Crops and Livestock	\$9,449,000
Government Payments	\$459,000
Total Farm Marketings and Government Payments	\$9,908,000

*Items reported but not published because of either limited production or to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

NOTES

1. J. Marvin Hunter, ed., *The Trail Drivers of Texas*, volume II (published privately in 1923 by George W. Saunders), p. 280.
2. J. Marvin Hunter, ed., *The Trail Drivers of Texas*, 2nd Rev. ed. (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1925), pp. 126-132.
3. From 1976 *Texas County Statistics*, compiled by Texas Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, published jointly by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Texas Department of Agriculture.

CHAPTER XII

MINERAL RESOURCES

Petroleum

Many of our forefathers struggled for the barest necessities of life while, unknown to them, millions of dollars of oil lay deep beneath their feet.

The first discovery of oil in commercial quantities in Webb County about 1920 stimulated interest throughout Southwest Texas. In 1923, oil was discovered in McMullen County at Calliham, just over the Live Oak County line.

The Millers, the Collins, and Holman Cartwright of Dinero, the Reagans and Browns of Oakville, and many other local landowners offered their lands as good places to drill. New gas lines were being built to San Antonio and to Houston, and there was much interest in gas production. Great excitement was aroused by the roaring shallow gas wells brought in by the Houston Oil Company. In 1921, the Three Rivers gas field was discovered by W.J. Walton. About 1922, the Houston Oil Company found the Mount Lucas gas field on the Cartwright ranch, and four years later a gas line was built to Houston.



Picture 22

The first Mount Lucas gas well on the Holman Cartwright ranch.

That same company also brought in the first commercial oil well in the county in 1931 on the Cartwright land, but Henderson Coquat, a Live Oak County native, was responsible for the first prolific oil production in the county.

On the McGriff property (the old Tom Church ranch) near Oakville, Coquat drilled shallow (1800 feet) wells, each of which produced several hundred barrels of oil daily. Only about a hundred acres proved productive, but that small spot soon yielded over a million barrels of oil.

Coquat organized the Live Oak Gas Company to transport and distribute gas in Three Rivers and George West. The Three Rivers Refinery was built to guarantee a market for the local oil, and pipelines were laid from Oakville, Ezell, and White Creek to Three Rivers.

In the 1940's, Coquat began drilling deeper, and again the landowners offered advantageous leases for drilling—instead of asking for money, Walter Goebel, Rocky Reagan, and Albert West made it attractive to develop instead of wait. In 1943, Henderson Coquat discovered more new fields in Live Oak and Bee Counties than were discovered that year by any major company or other individual in Southwest Texas. The Goebel, Coquat, South Oakville, Mineral, Karon, and the Marsden fields were his individual discoveries, and he extended and developed the Kittie, Harris, and Clayton fields. Great pipelines were constructed, and through these lines billions of feet of gas were transported to warm the homes and turn the wheels of industry in Chicago, New York, and other distant points.

With the pipelines came cycling plants and chemical industry to take from the gas the liquid hydrocarbons and other chemicals that had been wasted by running wild in the air.

Many fine people moved in to direct and operate such pipelines and plants, and jobs were provided for many local citizens. Many Live Oak County men were trained and brought up to be leaders in the industry.

The Longhorn Drilling Corporation of Three Rivers has (as of 1963) drilled more wells in the area than any other two drilling concerns combined, and its workers are known throughout the area as well-trained and efficient.*

*Statistics*¹—As an era of cheap energy fades, Live Oak County's crude oil and natural gas production have become more significant to Texas and the United States than at any time since production began.

*The above article by Jack Montgomery was excerpted from the 1963 Three Rivers Golden Anniversary Program.

With its 1977 production marketed for a record \$40,200,000, and an industry payroll estimated at \$3,000,000, petroleum continues to be an important factor in the economic health of the county. Live Oak County ranked eighty-ninth in the state in total value of petroleum produced, receiving \$9,500,000 from the sale of 1,100,000 barrels of crude oil, and \$30,700,000 from the sale of natural gas. The county's royalty owners received \$5,000,000.

According to the Texas Employment Commission, 251 people were employed in the oil and gas industry in Live Oak County in 1977, but because production and processing operations require such extensive support from service and supply firms, these figures are only part of the story of the petroleum industry's impact on the local economy.

The search for oil and gas continues, and in 1977 an estimated \$19,500,000 was spent drilling 103 wells in Live Oak County. The forty-three dry holes accounted for \$5,600,000, but the total drilling effort yielded ten oil wells and fifty gas wells. There were twenty-four wildcat wells.

Processing also contributed to the county's petroleum-related economy, through the operation of a refinery with a daily capacity of 10,800 barrels, and a natural gas processing plant with a daily capacity of 90,000,000 cubic feet.

*Processing*²—The Mobil Oil Corporation gas processing plant, with a 4,000 barrel capacity, produces propane, 150 butane, normal butane, gasoline and distillate.

The old Three Rivers Refinery, owned and operated by the Boudreau family, had a 5,000 barrel capacity. When running low gravity crude, it produced diesel fuel, light lube, heavy lube, and fuel oil. High gravity crude products were light naphtha, kerosene, diesel fuel, and



Picture 23

Aerial view of Sigmor's Three Rivers Refinery.

fuel oil. It was destroyed by fire and hurricane in 1970.

At a cost of \$14,000,000, Sigmor purchased the wrecked refinery, removed the machinery, and built a new plant. The seven-man staff of the Three Rivers Refinery was asked to continue their jobs with Sigmor, and the staff has expanded to include 130 workers in 1977, with an annual payroll of over \$1,000,000.

The construction that began in 1974 has yet to cease. In August, 1978, the plant included the Main Crude Unit, capable of handling 11,500 bbl/day of light crude, or 5,000 bbl/day of heavy crude—this involves the distillation process (separating products through controlled boiling). The 6,000 bbl/day Catalytic Reformer reforms or molecularly rearranges heavy naphtha from the crude unit into a high octane blend stock called reformate; it facilitates the blending of specification gasolines. A byproduct is fuel gas to support the heat requirements of the plant. The Light Crude Expansion Unit, which was recently completed,

increased the light crude capacity from 10,000 to 20,000 bbl/day. Storage, sales, and blend tanks with a combined gross capacity of 547,000 barrels take up a large part of the plant's property.

An eight-inch pipeline delivers foreign crude via Refugio to the Three Rivers site, and a six-inch pipeline brings blend stock from Corpus Christi. A product pipeline to San Antonio will soon be completed.

Regular, no lead, and premium gasolines, LPG fuel oil, diesel, kerosene, and a wide variety of lube oils contribute to sales averaging nearly 20,000 barrels per day (840,000 gallons), and have exceeded a million gallons daily. Truck receipt of materials averages nearly 5,000 barrels daily.

Uranium³

The South Texas area from the Río Grande to Karnes County is the third largest uranium mining area in the United States. Uranium mining in Live Oak County began in 1967 in the Ray Point community, and the area is now dotted with mines.

Until five years ago, all uranium was mined through the excavation of huge open pits. Usually the sequential backfilling process is employed—a hole is dug at one end of the uranium seam and the ore removed. As the extension of the seam is dug into, the overburden is used to refill the hole from which the ore has been removed. When the end of the seam is reached, there will be a hole in the ground covering perhaps fifteen to twenty acres, and a mountain of dirt. Until recently, the pits were left, although the sides were tapered to make an accessible lake. Eventually the pit filled with underground water to within perhaps thirty feet of ground level; the lake might be as deep as 150 feet. If the landowner was lucky, the company put topsoil on his mountain and sprigged it

with coastal bermuda grass.

At the present time, Exxon is doing open pit mining, but the dirt is piled in layers and replaced in the appropriate manner after the ore is removed. The closed pit is then revegetated.

Open pit mining is feasible only for deposits less than three hundred feet deep, and is economical only for large deposits. It is regulated by the Texas Railroad Commission, which now requires that surface contours and vegetation be restored when the mining is finished.

In 1975 a new mining process—in situ leach mining—was introduced at a site southwest of George West. Atlantic Richfield installed the \$7,000,000 plant at the Clay West site on U.S. 59, and later sold it to U.S. Steel.

In solution mining, a dissolving fluid is pumped into the uranium seam via injector wells. The uranium coating on grains of sand is dissolved, and is then pumped to the surface through production wells. It is then transported by pipe to the plant, which runs twenty-four hours a day. The solution must be pumped in and out of the ore zone at equal rates to avoid contamination of other areas and to prevent loss of solution. Monitor wells scattered about the area are checked periodically to see if any of the solution is escaping.

At the plant, the solution passes through a carbon column to remove the sand, and through an ion exchange column which uses a commercial resin to extract the uranium oxide. It is then passed through a charcoal column to remove impurities, and carried to precipitation tanks. There the yellowcake is precipitated with ammonia.

The Clay West plant in 1975 was producing daily about one 55-gallon drum of yellowcake (refined uranium) worth at least \$15,000. Uranium is processed into rods used to fuel reactors in nuclear power plants,

and with the growth of these plants, the price of a pound of uranium has increased from \$8 in 1973 to \$43 in 1978.

Solution mining is regulated by the Texas Department of Water Resources. Miners are required to restore the quality of the underground water after removal of the uranium.

In 1978, a pound of yellowcake cost \$8.93 to produce by solution mining, and \$11.88 by open pit mining. Strip or pit mining takes two or three times longer than does solution mining.

Another solution mine owned by U.S. Steel is near the Clay West site, and Intercontinental Energy has an installation near George West. Exxon has such a plant at Ray Point.

NOTES

1. From "Petroleum Industry Vital to Live Oak," *The Progress*, August 19, 1978.

2. Information for this section was taken from *The Progress*, August 9, 1978.

3. Based on Hoyt Hager, "Uranium Industry Is Spreading Rapidly," *Corpus Christi Caller*, July 17, 1977, and Roy McNett, "Uranium Plant Toured by Reporter," *Beeville Bee-Picayune*, August 21, 1975.

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