



FRANKLIN COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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OUR MISSION:
*"To Preserve our Natural
and Cultural Heritage"*

MANAGER'S REPORT



BY GAIL REED

Hello Friends!!

Happy spring to all! If you've never experienced our Dupree Park walking trails, now is the perfect time to get out there and enjoy the bountiful displays of nature. The 58-acre trail is marked with over 60 guide posts so that you may easily navigate through the park. Take the entire family and have a picnic at the Lowry Pavilion. You just can't beat the beauty of a sunset walk with wildflowers in bloom.

Despite the cold winter, FCHA was able to stay active. March was a busy month, beginning with the delivery of 125 Reflective Rays books to students of Mount Vernon High School, written by Ray Loyd Johnson. These books offer a rare look into our community from the 1950s and 60s and will be valuable teaching tools for history classes.

March also marks our annual presentation of the Harris and Irene St. Clair Endowment Awards. This year's scholarships went to: Alamo Mission, Franklin County Arts Alliance, Friends of the Library, Franklin County Genealogy Society, Lunches of Love, and Mount Vernon Music. These awards were made possible through donations made by Mr. Jimmy St. Clair to fund community and humanitarian programs to enhance and better our community's way of life. Thank you, Mr. St. Clair for your continued support of these organizations.

It was such a treat to host the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts! Lillie Bush-Reves toured the troops through the Fire Station Museum and Cotton Belt Depot where FCHA webmaster Luiz Sifuentes demonstrated our latest technology endeavors with touch screen TVs and kiosks. Jerald and Mary Lou Mowery ran the model trains where Mount Vernon is depicted in the 1950s exhibit.

Thanks to all who have continued to support FCHA with donations and memberships! We hope to see many of you at our membership meeting on Saturday, May 14th. It will be held at 2 p.m. at Mount Vernon Music Hall at the corner of Yates and Leftwich Streets.

We are excited to be hosting the Pleasant Hill Quilters from Linden, Texas. Ranging in age from 63 to 96, the 15 women of the Pleasant Hill Quilters travel the country visiting high schools, universities, concert halls, and churches from Texarkana to Tuskegee to showcase their patchwork quilts. In their nearly two dozen performances per year, the quilters weave together the African American traditions of quilting and spiritual hymns like "Wade in the Water" and "Steal Away," songs associated with slaves fleeing to freedom on the Underground Railroad. Displaying a completed quilt onstage, the women will explain how runaway slaves and their supporters used quilt patterns to communicate messages along the network of routes, sympathizers, and safe havens that helped the fugitives escape to freedom in the days before abolition.

This is going to be a very moving and informative program you won't want to miss!



JOIN US SATURDAY, MAY
14TH AT 2 P.M. FOR OUR MAY
MEMBERSHIP MEETING!

Pleasant Hill Quilters

*A hand-stitched history of the Underground
Railroad*

Mount Vernon Music Hall
402 Leftwich Street
Mount Vernon, TX
Refreshments Served



The Harris and Irene St. Clair Scholarship Awards were presented by FCHA Director Mary Lou Mowery last month. Pictured are: Jana Capps/Franklin County Genealogy Society; Linda Hammond/Franklin County Arts Alliance; Glen Shelton/Mount Vernon Music; Mary Lou Mowery/FCHA; Susan Bass/Friends of the Library; Tom Sample/Lunches of Love; and Joe Hart/Alamo Mission.



Over 100 “Reflective Rays” Books written by Ray Loyd Johnson, were donated to the Mount Vernon High School students and teachers. Pictured left to right: Joel Dihle, Pat Hudson, Mary Lou Mowery, Jerald Mowery, Michelle Cupit, and Gail Reed.



Luiz Sifuentes demonstrates to the Scouts how dozens of bird calls may be heard by merely touching the TV screen in latest technology at the Fire Station Museum.



Lillie Bush-Reves conducts a tour of the Meredith exhibit to Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts.

Presidential Musings:

By B. F. Hicks

Former president of our group, Doris Meek, served for 30 years. She had a great team supporting efforts to obtain recognition of our heritage and history across the county.

As I mentioned in the last issue of our newsletter, I arranged oral interviews starting in the mid-1970's – have over 30 citizens; not a one of them still living.

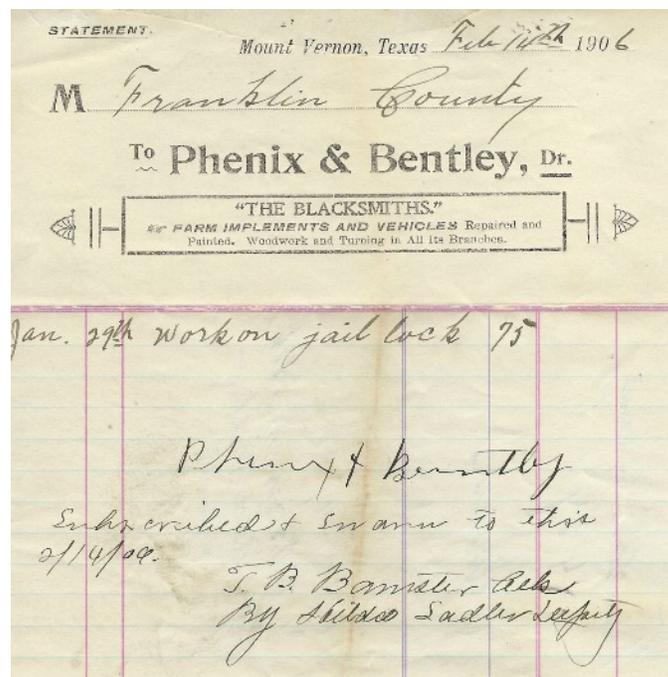
Now working to get digital recordings available since so few people still have cassette tapes (even had some 8-millimeter tapes and later VHS tapes but that's another story).

Technology can pass us by; what do I mean "can" – it has. I had a tape transferred to a CD – interview of Earl Kirk Sr. – great-grandfather of Jeff Goodman of Mt. Vernon; mailed the disc to Jeff; he e-mailed back that he had transferred the data to a format which allowed him to transfer to multiple family members; they were all enjoying the history.

So, I've had many good comments regarding the new Smokey Row sign installed at the entry to South Houston Street off of our town's square. And, the accompanying questions as to why it was called Smokey Row. We've addressed this: location of blacksmith shops at the end of the street including one entire lot devoted to a coal storage shed.

But back to Doris: among her papers was an odd receipt she had acquired along the way and I've chanced on it lately while trying to organize papers into searchable form and to have them loaded on our website.

Here's a blacksmith invoice from 1906. The Bentley name is often found; prominent family here; homes associated with the Bentleys still stand. Apparently, at least one member of the family was a smithy.



Mount Vernon News Now Available

The first edition of the Mount Vernon News will be published on May 5, 2022.

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Call 903-347-1124, or stop by the office at 105 Locust Street, Winnsboro, Texas.

ODE TO THE RURAL MAIL CARRIER

By John Hicks

In his poem "A Dutch Picture," Longfellow portrays an old freebooting buccaneer named Simon Danz, who dreams in his retirement of returning to sea, to plunder ships on the Spanish Main:

Restless at times with heavy strides

He paces his parlor to and fro;
He is like a ship that at anchor rides,
And swings with the rising and falling tides,
And tugs at her anchor tow.

The retired rural mail carrier of decades past could be like Simon Danz at times - without, of course, the questionable ethics of a pirate. He missed the adventure and the "heroic" aspects of his job, the many times he'd corralled loose cows, took wandering toddlers home, and played Good Samaritan to families stuck on the road. And, too, sometimes he fondly recalled the sound of tire chains slapping ice in the winter . . . and that unique sound, the "SHWRZZZ, SHWRZZZ," of his spinning wheels as a farmer's tractor pulled him out of the mud.

The plaque he'd received upon retirement carried the motto: "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." Sure, most postal workers these days think it stale; but, when our Mid-Twentieth Century rural carrier read it aloud to himself, he felt a certainty . . . he might have hoped they'd feel it, too, some day. He knew without a doubt he'd been worth something to his neighbors and friends; and, because of that, worth something to God. And that kind of knowing . . . to an old man, it's worth a lot.

FRANKLIN COUNTY POST OFFICES

My Hughes grandparents, an aunt, and my immediate family all dwelt in the 1927 structure I call home. While exploring cabinets a few years ago, I found some documents saved by my aunt, Virgie Beth Hughes. Among them, written by Congressman Wright Patman in 1968, was a historical outline showing rural communities on the mail routes of Franklin County - most of them having had post offices. The study runs for several pages; so I've omitted his comprehensive catalog of the many stations' numerous postmasters, and simply provided a still-impressive outline. (I can send you, on request, the complete document by email attachment. Congressman Patman asks in the original only that copies bear note of his authorship.)

Some names you'll know by signs and roadside stores and churches and schools and cemeteries. Other names hardly know where to set themselves down these days - they flit about like Noah's doves, one of them now and then bringing back a leaf from brushy overgrowth, an artifact of some once-thriving home to rural folks.

This helpful Franklin County map online reveals some forgotten locations:

https://www.tsl.texas.gov/apps/arc/maps/storage/texas_media/imgs/map05465.jpg

A HISTORY OF POST OFFICES AND COMMUNITIES IN FRANKLIN COUNTY

By Congressman Wright Patman, First Congressional District of Texas, 1968

CLEARWATER

In southern Franklin County near Camp County line.

Named for clear water of Cypress Creek. Settled in early 1870s. [Served by an unspecified mail route.]

CYPRESS

Named for Cypress Creek. An agricultural community on a mail route from Winnsboro.

DAPHNE

In eastern Franklin County eight miles northeast of Mount Vernon on the Titus County line.

Settled about 1850, now a ghost community. Office opened March 16, 1895, by Postmaster Joseph E. Gibson; discontinued, February 14, 1906. Mail ordered sent to Winfield.

ETNA

Three and one-half miles south of Mount Vernon.

Office opened Nov. 4, 1901, by Postmaster Jesey F. Bedgood; discontinued, July 15, 1905. Mail ordered sent to Mount Vernon.

FRANCIS

Five miles north of Scroggins.

Office opened by Postmaster William J. Francis, June 29, 1901; discontinued, June 15, 1906. Mail ordered sent to Leesburg.

GRAYROCK

Six miles east of Mount Vernon.

Office established in Titus County, under Postmaster Robert Jones, Nov. 10, 1848, with name of Gray Rock; changed into Franklin County, with appointment of Postmaster Samuel M. Speer, Dec. 2, 1885; name changed to Grayrock with appointment of Postmaster John T. Garner, March 26, 1895; discontinued, Jan. 1, 1906. Mail ordered sent to Winfield.

HAGANSPORT

In northern Franklin County twelve miles north of Mount Vernon at a Sulphur River crossing. A trading post in 1878, first called Hagan's Port for an early settler.

Opened by Postmaster James L. Clampitt, Nov. 10, 1857; name of office changed to Palmers Bridge with appointment of Postmaster Melvina A. Love Oct. 8, 1866; discontinued, July 29, 1868.

Office re-established under name of Hagansport with appointment of Postmaster F.M. Sims, July 10, 1876; discontinued, July 15, 1929. Mail ordered sent to Talco.

HOPEWELL

[Served by an unspecified mail route.]

LANGSTON

Five miles southeast of Mount Vernon.

Opened by Postmaster Samuel w. Langston, Dec. 11, 1885; discontinued, Jan. 13, 1887. Mail ordered sent to Mount Vernon.

LAVADA

Twenty miles northwest of Mount Pleasant, Titus County.

Opened by Postmaster David Warner March 15, 1901; discontinued, June 15, 1907. Mail ordered sent to Hagansport.

LAWS

Six miles southwest of Hagansport.

Opened by Postmaster John A. Laws, Oct. 17, 1883; discontinued, April 14, 1906. Mail ordered sent to Sulphur Bluff.

MACON

In northeastern Franklin County five miles west of Monticello, Titus County.

Opened by Postmaster Richard W. Hurdle, March 26, 1891; discontinued, March 31, 1906. Mail ordered sent to Winfield.

MAJORS

Six and one-half miles south of Mount Vernon in north central Franklin County. Named for J.H. Majors, Mount Vernon banker.

Opened by Postmaster Benjamin Majors, July 11, 1899; discontinued, Nov. 30, 1906. Mail ordered sent to Mount Vernon.

MOUNT VERNON (Pop. 1,455 in 1968)

Seventeen miles west of Mount Pleasant, Titus County. Settled by Joshua T. Johnson in 1839. Twenty-four acres donated by Stephen Keith in 1849 for a town called Lone Star. Made county seat of newly created Franklin County in 1875. Name changed for George Washington's home when the Franklin County Commissioners' Court first met in J.E. Brooks' barn.

Post office first established under the name of Keiths, still in Titus county, with the appointment of Postmaster William S. Keith, July 20, 1848; name of office changed to Lone Star with the appointment of Postmaster William C. Wright, Nov. 19, 1850; name of office changed to Mount Vernon, now in Franklin County, with the appointment of Postmaster John L. Rutherford, Sept. 21, 1875.

MUSGROVE

In southern Franklin County three miles west of Scroggins. Settled about 1890.

Opened by Postmaster Joseph N. Andrews, April 11, 1895; discontinued, Sept. 30, 1907. Mail ordered sent to Scroggins.

NEW HAGANSPORT

In northern Franklin County two miles south of Sulphur River. Established in the early 1930s and named for the older community of Hagan's Port on the river.

[Served by an unspecified mail route.]

NEW HOPE

Eleven miles south-southeast of Mount Vernon.

[Served by an unspecified mail route.]

PURLEY

In central Franklin County seven and one-half miles southwest of Mount Vernon. Settled by planters in the early 1850s.

Opened by Postmaster William H. Canaday, May 21, 1879; discontinued, Nov. 30, 1906. Mail ordered sent to Mount Vernon.

SCROGGINS

In southern Franklin County sixteen miles south of Mount Vernon. Named for Milt Scroggins, early sawmill operator. Settled in the early 1850s.

Opened by Postmaster Samuel H. Thomas, Oct. 30, 1891.

SULPHUR

A Paris and Mount Pleasant Railroad station at the crossing of Sulphur River.

[Served by an unspecified mail route.]

WREN

Six miles south of Majors.

Opened by Postmaster Benjamin F. White, Jan. 9, 1902; discontinued, July 15, 1905. Mail ordered sent to Winnsboro.

YALE

Seven miles southeast of Mount Vernon.

Opened by Postmaster William A. Lettman, Dec. 24, 1897; discontinued, Nov. 30, 1906. Mail ordered sent to Mount Vernon.



Postal Carriers - 1930

FRAGMENTS
(Reflections on the heritage of the rural school).

John Hicks

Big Creek, Center Point, Clearwater, Cypress, Eureka, Fairview, Friendship, Glade Springs, Good Hope, Gray Rock, Hagansport, Hamilton, Hopewell, Huckleberry, Lakeview, Majors, Mt. Vernon, Needmore, New Hope, Panther's Chapel, Prairie Grove, Purley, South Franklin, Spring Place, Union . . . These were all among our Franklin County schools in the early 1900s.

Once vital facets of rural Franklin County life, almost all have vanished today without a trace. By the late 1970s, when I worked with my Aunt Ivey to record some of her memories, these names lay on the page like fragments of some broken thing . . . like shards of Indian pottery that once littered Sweetgum Hill west of town, where my father taught my brothers and me to look for arrow heads after a rain.

One day my aunt described the pupils she taught at some of these rural community schools in the 1920s and 1930s; and, like many things she told me of that era, those images still remind me, "Don't whine."

The School Girl

She wore the same knee-length-or-above cotton dress all year round; it usually buttoned up the front and had big floppy collars falling over the shoulders. In winter she wore a long wool coat, varying somewhat in style but having, again, big floppy collars; or she wore a heavy, hip-length, button-up, knit sweater.

She wore her hair chopped off over the eyes; it might be cut to the shape of a helmet - bangs in the front and hair dropped at the sides to the ear lobes and around the back of the head. It was either straightened or allowed to stay straight; sometimes, though rarely, parted in the middle or on the side; and, if stubbornly curly, then combed to stick out to the sides in stiff, wiry fashion.

The School Boy

Dressed all year in overalls and a long-sleeve cotton shirt, he might go without a coat in cold weather because of his family being poor - he might just stand in the cold with arms instead of fabric wrapped around himself. A better-off child might have a worn hand-me-down jacket.

Clipped with a chili bowl on the top of his head, his hair, as it grew out, might appear unevenly cut all around, fall uncombed into his eyes, and blow into his face from the sides. An older boy, more conscious of appearance, might part his hair on the side or comb it straight back in one great flop. But in summer those boys' heads (in some homes even the girls') might be shaved.



Ivey Hicks (subsequently married Roy Smith) taught at the Lakeview School, north Franklin County (and also at Winfield, Daphne and Clearwater). These photos are at Lakeview; must have been taken at a spring picnic. Ivey is in the top row - center - of a group of children who must have been engaged in a softball game (one boy holds a bat; another a ball). Ivey had coached basketball in Winfield.

HISTORY OF THE FULBRIGHT COMMUNITY NORTH OF THE COUNTY LINE

Anne Russell Evetts of Clarksville has contributed a series of short historical summaries of some communities in Red River County which were established along the Southwestern Boundary of Red River County.

The articles provide good history for settlement of our region and a valuable genealogical record. The families that settled along the Sulphur River (our boundary with our neighboring county to the north) – those families traveled back and forth frequently; intermarried; and were involved in business transactions that originated often in Red River County and involved shipping goods (between the counties). Clarksville had manufacturing businesses producing furniture. Franklin County was producing cotton, corn and other grains. Wagons traveling south loaded with merchandise would return north with produce for shipment and processing. Franklin County was the largest producer (total gallons) of cane syrup in the entire state for several years. Photographs in our railroad depot attest to the quantity of fruits and melons shipped from the county.

This article regarding Fulbright ties in closely with Franklin County heritage. Birdie Fulbright (daughter of the founder of Fulbright, Texas) will marry J.L. Rutherford, founder of the first drugstore in Mt. Vernon. Miss Eula Bryson of Fulbright will marry Maurice Wilkinson, boy mayor Mt. Vernon, and she will later marry Graham Smith and then J.W. Carter, and she leaves an endowment providing scholarships for Mt. Vernon students to this day.

We will run at least one of these community histories in each of our upcoming newsletters. For this issue we print the history of Fulbright. Anne typeset a typed document for us in our digital system. The typewritten manuscript was compiled and typed by Mrs. Iva Lassiter Hooker during July, August and September 1963, and read to the Red River County Historical Society, at its meeting on September 7, 1963, at Clarksville, Texas.

Mrs. Hooker reports that the information on the Fulbright Community was furnished to her by Mr. John Ford of Bogata, Texas, who was born in 1874; and was 89 years of age at the time of her report. Mr. Ford reported that he was the oldest native-born male citizen in Bogata. Ed Howison furnished the information regarding the Fulbright family.

Judge David Fulbright, for whom the town of Fulbright was named, and his wife, who was Permelia Smathers, came to this neighborhood from Missouri in 1842. They were the parents of 23 children, 14 of whom lived to maturity. Some of their children were grown when they came to the vicinity of Fulbright.

The first business to be established in what was later named Fulbright was a grocery store built and run by a man by the name of Flem Elmore, in about 1880. Later other businesses were built and at one time Fulbright boasted eleven businesses, consisting of grocery stores, dry-goods store, bank, barbershop, blacksmith-shop, drugstore, hardware store. Some of the early day merchants were: E.R. Horn, Simmons & Houston who had the first dry goods store, Sam Bright, Joe & John Ford, and A.Y. Boyle, to name a few.

Fulbright children first attended a school which was at Bethel, about 1-1/2 miles northwest of Fulbright but in the early 1880s the school was moved to Fulbright and a new building was constructed. Some of the first school teachers were: L.W. Lassiter, George Morrison, Joe Cunningham, and a man by the name of Harris, to name a few. In 1902 a larger schoolhouse was built and George Trice was the first teacher. About 1913 an 8-teacher school was built out of brick, which had a large auditorium. This school was in operation until about 1956 when the district was consolidated with Detroit, Deport and Bogata, and school-busses are run now to transport children from their homes to their respective schools.

A post office was established in Fulbright in 1882, and the first postmaster was John T. Harden. J.J. Purdue took it over January 17, 1883, and others who served were: J.L. Fulbright, Samuel G Bright, Susan A. Senter, Alonzo C. Davis, Joseph H. Ford, Elbert Tucker, W.N. Fuller, John R Bright, Irene M. Bell, Mrs. Lelia Rowell Ward Baker, and it is now run by D.C. McDonald.

Fulbright also had four churches: Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Church of Christ.

Two gins were built close into Fulbright and another was built one mile west of the stores, totaling three gins that were very busy from the beginning of the cotton-picking season until late in the fall. Now, only one gin is in operation.

Some of the early day citizens were the Fulbrights, F.L. Scaff, , J.N. Miller, Johnny and Buddy Kerbow, J.N. Bell, P.W. King, Dr. I.W. Teague, (who later moved to Deport where he practiced medicine until his death), Ernie Boyer, and John C. Turner, (who both married Fulbright girls).

After the turn of the century, many beautiful homes were built in Fulbright and people were prosperous for several years. Then in 1910 the community began to go down. Good roads were built, people bought cars and drove to other larger communities to trade; citizens also moved to larger towns and cities to live.

There is now only one store, one filling station, one gin, and two churches (Baptist, and Church of Christ) that are still active. Mostly, older people live in Fulbright now, and very few of them. There is nothing to stimulate growth. So, it is believed, some day there won't be anything left of Fulbright. Mr. Ford remembers when Fulbright was nothing but a cotton field. In other words, he has seen Fulbright come and go in his lifetime.



Eula Carter with a 5th grade class. She came from Fulbright; came to Mt. Vernon as a teacher in 1924.

Memorials & Honorariums

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- Greg Carr
- Brad & Stephanie Hyman
- Paul & Victoria Fletcher
- Emily Lucid
- J. D. & Debi Green
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- Robert Long
- Barbara Norris
- Eddie Hicks
- Robert Long
- Bill & Geraldine Copeland
- Diane Loftis

In Honor Of:

- B. F. Hicks
- John Hicks
- B. F. Hicks
- B. F. Hicks

A Story - The Old Winfield Gym *by Ralph Banks*

It was a January day sometime during the early 1930's and Roger Joe Banks was rapidly walking down a Winfield Street on his way to the school gym for the daily workout for this high school basketball team.

Roger carried with him a clean "tow" sack that contained his green and white basketball game uniform since they had a game coming up that night. The sack also included a number of biscuit and jelly sandwiches that Roger's mother had included for him to eat before the game. The uniform had been carefully laundered by his mother with her other "washing" that week, and hung out to dry on the clothes line that traversed her back yard.

The gym building was privately owned and under a contract arrangement with the local high school for having its basketball practices and games within the gym. The gym was a rambling old building of wood that fronted on one of the Winfield main streets. It was called the Taylor Gym by local people after its original builder. The building had no windows to speak of, but did have electric lights suspended from the ceiling.

On arrival at the gym that day Roger encountered their coach, Millard F. Fleming, a burly, stout man from his days as a player and coach from another school in the county, Green Hill, which was located north of the county seat of Mt Pleasant. Presently, other players arrived and Coach Fleming got the daily workout underway.

Millard Fleming would in later years, about 1940, become the Superintendent of Schools at Mt Vernon, which due to a couple oil strikes in the county was able to build a new high school and gymnasium.

Millard was also able to hire a renowned basketball and football coach by the name of Milburn (Catfish) Smith who had recently been medically discharged from the US Army Air Corps due to stomach ulcers. But, before that Catfish had coached a country team, in the community of Carey, out near Childress to a State basketball championship with the teams, regardless of school enrollment playing in one large class.

Catfish would later in the 1940's coach the Mt Vernon football team to a regional football championship which was as far as Class A teams advanced in the State playoffs in those days. Then again during the ensuing basketball season in 1953 when a new gymnasium was finally built for the Winfield schools, but that high school was closed in 1957.

With the closure of the Winfield High School, most of the boys transferred to Mt Vernon where they would immediately play football. So, they did that year, being substituted as a unit in the game with Bogata high school that season.



Mt. Vernon High School Champions 1948

Back Row: M.F. Fleming – Superintendent, Coach “Catfish” Milburn Smith, Gerald Skidmore, Gene Fleming, Robert Banks, Pat Lloyd, Herbert Zimmerman – Bud Campbell, Bo Campbell – Assistant Coach
Front Row: Dudley Miller (Manager), Kenneth Meek, Jack Meredith, Dewey Moore, Dale Moore, Billy Barton, Robbie Cannaday (Manager)

Just A Little White Lie
By Kay Howell

“When is my birthday?”

Mother answered me without looking up from the pan of peas in her lap that she was shelling. “It’s the same day that I told you the last time you asked me. It’s October 22nd.”

“How long is that?”

“How long is it until your birthday?” Mother looked up and saw me nod. “Oh, a little over two months.”

“Is that enough time to get ready for my birthday party?”

Now I had Mother’s full attention.

“You had your birthday party last year. You’re not going to have one this year.”

“But Suzie had a party. She got a lot of presents.”

Mother let out a huff. “Is that why you want a birthday party, so you can get a lot of presents?” The look on Mother’s face made me squirm.

“And eat choc’late cake and play with my friends.”

And do you want strawberry ice cream, too?”

“That would be nice,” I whined.

Mother’s cheeks were turning red, a warning sign that she was getting mad. “I ran out of chocolate several weeks ago and haven’t been able to buy any more because the stores can’t get it. The vines quit producing fruit last June, so there are no strawberries. We’ll celebrate your birthday this year, but it won’t be with cake and ice cream and lots of presents.”

In the days that followed I thought about the party I wanted often, but I didn’t try to talk to Mother about it. It was obvious something I said made her mad. I didn’t want that to happen again.

The hot days of August gave way to the cooler days of September, the big kids in the neighborhood went back to school, and the trees began to transform their leaves into the bright colors which told me winter was near. As the days passed my hope for a party faded. Instead I looked forward to Christmas. Perhaps Santa would bring me a nice present.

It was just another fall morning, but an unusual aroma woke me. It didn’t smell like biscuits or bacon, so I climbed out of bed to go see what it was.

Mother turned from the stove when I walked in. “Papa will be here soon, so I’m making some coffee for him. I don’t like coffee, but he does.” The coffee pot she put on the burner began to gurgle, steam was rising from the spout, and the unusual smell grew stronger. Mother watched for a moment and turned off the burner. “Eat your breakfast, and then I’ll help you get dressed.”

The dress she chose for me was one of my favorites because it looked like a big girl’s skirt and blouse. The top was white; the pleated skirt was blue, black, and white plaid with a narrow stripe of red separating each square. Mother was brushing my hair when we heard a light knock on the front door. She opened the door, led Papa to the kitchen, and poured a cup of coffee for him. I followed them and watched as Papa took a sip and set the cup down on the table.

“Happy birthday,” he said and held out a lumpy package wrapped in brown paper and tied with a big red bow.

“Is it my birthday?” I asked as I accepted the package.

“Yes, it is,” Mother answered. “Open your gift.”

I tore open the package, and something red and soft fell out.

“My, my,” Mother said, “look at what Mama knitted for you.” She unfolded it and held it up. “A nice warm sweater. See the buttons? They look like red jewels.” She helped me put on the sweater and smoothed the back. “Go look in the mirror. It matches your dress perfectly.”

The sweater was warm and soft against my neck. I looked in the mirror and ran back to the kitchen to give Papa a big hug. “Thank you. It’s really nice. I like red a lot.”

“You’re welcome,” Papa said as he returned my hug. “Are you ready to go, Thelma?”

“I’ll get my purse and a jacket.”

“Where are you going?” I asked.

“We’re going to Paris,” Mother said as she walked back into the kitchen. “I thought I’d buy you shoes for your birthday if we can find some that fit.”

“Oh, I would like to have new shoes,” I said. I held Papa’s hand, and we walked to his car. Mother paused to lock the front door and followed us.

Papa drove only 35 miles an hour. He said Uncle Sam asked everyone to drive at that slow speed because the car would burn less gasoline that way. I didn't mind. It gave me time to look at all the houses and barns and animals, and I enjoyed it. I didn't get to ride in a car very often.

We went to three stores before we found shoes that fit me. We were walking toward Mother's favorite fabric store when Papa stopped and looked behind him. "Did you hear that?" he asked.

"Yes. Let's wait a minute. It's getting louder," Mother replied.

People began to line up at the edge of the sidewalk and look down the street in the direction of the noise. Papa handed the package he had been carrying to Mother and picked me up. "Sit on my shoulders so you can see," he said.

I saw two men on horseback round the corner. They were wearing fancy western shirts and broad-brimmed cowboy hats. One man was carrying an American flag; the other man was riding beside him and carried a Texas flag.

Next I saw a big white horse pulling an open carriage that was driven by a man in a white suit. A pretty young woman in a blue evening dress sat in the back. She smiled and waved to the crowd that was gathering on the sidewalk.

Now I could hear music. A young man marched into the middle of the street. He was wearing a tall hat that had a chinstrap and appeared to be covered in white fur. His jacket and pants were dark blue and had brass buttons and gold braid on them. I turned to Mother. "Who's that?"

"He's the drum major. That's a baton he's carrying. He uses it to tell the band where to go and when to play their horns."

Then four young women pranced into sight. They were wearing white jackets with gold braid, short blue skirts, and white boots. Mother told me before I asked that they were majorettes.

The music got louder as the band marched down the street toward us. The drum major signaled them to stop, the band played a snappy tune, and the majorettes lined up close to the edge of the sidewalk and danced and twirled their batons. Then everyone marched down the street away from us.

"That was very nice," Papa said as he set me down. "What do you think of your birthday present?" "Oh, I love the sweater; I like the shoes, too."

"I'm talking about the parade. Have any of your friends ever gotten a parade for their birthday?" "That parade was for me?"

"The band stopped right in front of you and played, didn't they?"

Mother turned and walked down the sidewalk. "I'd still like to go to the fabric store," she said over her shoulder. Papa and I followed her and waited outside the store while she shopped. I kept asking Papa questions about the parade, and he kept telling me he didn't know.

Finally Papa held up his hand to silence me. "All I know is your mother asked me to drive the two of you to Paris, and that's what I did."

The next morning at breakfast I blurted out, "Papa said the parade was my birthday present."

Mother put down her fork and looked at me. "I heard what he said. He was just trying to make you feel good because you didn't have a party. It was just a little white lie."

My disappointment was intense. I dropped my head and said nothing, but I was thinking. I didn't like for the people I loved and trusted to lie to me, even if it was "just a little white lie."

The truth is, given that the parade was held in October, it was probably in celebration of Homecoming at the local high school. There was probably a football game and a dance also. Now that's my story, and I'm sticking to it.

F:\fcha\newsletters\april 2022\kay howell WWII story – Just a Little White Lie

REMINDER

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO JOIN FCHA.

**IF YOU ARE NOT YET A MEMBER, GET IN TOUCH WITH GAIL AT
THE PARCHMAN HOUSE.**

SHE WILL BE HAPPY TO ENROLL YOU.

REMEMBERING... WITH DAN HOKE



Berek sweaters made in the 1980s were each hand sewn with a particular theme. This golf-inspired sweater would have sold for \$300-\$400.00.

Remembering.... Berek Sweaters

OK ladies. Anyone remember Berek sweaters? They were a high end, as in pricey, pullover sweater with a seasonal theme. I guess most of us like to have our money right where we can see it; hanging or belted on our frames.

Actually those sweaters were beautiful garments, fashionable with striking color designs. Thirty plus years ago numerous Mt. Vernon lasses were determined to be seen and styling wearing the latest adaptation while at work and in church, committee meetings, coffee klatches and lunches. But now they are packed away and maybe even hard to recall. I wonder why...

In the 1840s our great grandmothers wore bonnets when outside washing or working in the garden. In the 1940s our grandmothers wore gloves and hats to Church on Sunday. Often their hats were adorned with a mesh veil over the top. Sometimes it was a different color adding a stylish flair. Several business in town have a panoramic photograph of our town square in the year 18???. Notice the dress code for most of the men in the photo. The guys on horseback or wagon are wearing shirts with ties. Sure many of them were ranchers and farmers during the week; but it was Saturday and they were now in town so they dressed for that occasion. That's sure changed. For a long time it was custom to dress-up to attend funerals. Now I not sure how the tank tops and shorts, that I've seen, fit in. Are you old enough to recall when passengers dressed in their Sunday best just to board an airplane? That too has changed.

I wonder why? Maybe the fashion designer Coco Chanel was right. She claimed that fashion has to do with the way we live and what happening around us.

To all the grandfathers out there; can you remember the wide ties with those huge knots at your throat? Or recall those long narrow ties that stretched bellow our waist and tied with an extra small knot? In High School, if I had to wear one, I especially liked the shaded ties that changed color shades when you move side-to-side. And then we abruptly broke all custom for Texas guy's apparel by proudly purchasing a lime green leisure suit with the ruffled shirt and gold chain that went with it. No doubt we were "staying alive" by channeling John Travolta.

I wonder why? Maybe it's because we were just having fun with clothes.

Our High School age daughter Dava saw a hair design in a magazine and she took the magazine to Nancy Mays, her hairdresser, to engineer her new "do." Her Mother reacted to Dava's new look with controlled composure, followed with the right amount of surprise. Her Pops, on the other hand, at first thought she had a stylish cut; but had accidentally fallen onto a running fan that clipped off the right side. The Mamma quickly ushered the Papa out to the patio. Interestingly, within two weeks Nancy had fixed that same lop-sided style atop other high school girls.

I wonder why? Maybe when we need a change, we want to dress like it.

Remembering ... Auto Air

Dan Hoke

I think we are in a new era of high class driving. The 3rd party apps take care of our everyday tasks of making arrangements, sending messages, purchasing and ordering. That way we have more time for self-care on the way to Brookshires. Oddly enough, it negates the need to leave the driveway in the first place.

With all due respect to innovative technologies, I submit the greatest improvement for autos has been the air conditioner. That's because, many of us remember when they weren't there!

Before auto air conditioners, drivers used the dual-60 method for gaining some relief from the heat during summertime travel. Roll down both windows and drive 60 mph. That created a stiff breeze mostly to the back seat. Passengers needed to hang-on to their hair or hat. For extra adjustment, there were those triangle shaped vent windows in front of the driver and passenger door windows. On the highway they redirected some of the air blowing inside toward the front seat. They got the slang term "fly windows" because bugs would be caught in the slip stream and blown onto the driver's chest. A wasp impact usually created the shouting and slapping that kept the driver awake.

For highway travel there was another auto air flow adjustment. There was a lever just under the center of the dash. Pull the handle and a vent would pop up just in front of the windshield. The vent forced a blow on to the front floorboard. The first pull of the vent, with every trip, created a dust tempest for a few minutes until the debris could fly to a new location or out a window when lucky.

Town and city travel in Texas summers was equivalent to touring the lower rings of Dante's inferno. Rolling down all the windows and pulling the lever didn't help much. The coolest remedy was to get an early start in the morning. Even still, expect to arrive all stuck-up. Hair was stuck with sweat, shirts were struck to our back and pants were stuck to our butt.

Back in that day, the auto store sold air flow seat cushions. Covered in a woven fabric, they were a seat and back cushion with a tube framework between the coverings. The sales claimed they vented air while keeping your back cool from the upholstered seat. It reduced the stuck factor a bit; but you still arrived with some "stickiness."

One summer my Mom and I went with family friends on a road trip to Oklahoma. The novelty in that trip was a borrowed air conditioner. It was a tube-shaped unit about 18 inches long that was filled with water and mounted by rolling up the passenger side window onto the unit vent tray. Outside support brackets fit to the door frame. The instructions explained that as we traveled wind would blow into the inlet, flow over strips of felt that wicked water from the reservoir. There was a temperature knob and start chain hanging beside the vent into the car. The process was to drive a few miles to prime the system. Then roll up the other windows and pull the chain. Desperate for relief, we turned the knob to "full cool." All hoped ice chunks would blow out. Instead we got a slight puff of air circulating sour mildew at 98% humidity. Basically it was a portable swamp. Soon it was abandoned to the trunk.

Sometimes remembering can teach gratitude. Let's wait until it's hot and then sit in our cars, run the AC for a while and be glad that some things are in the past.





B.F. Hicks and Graciela Gonzales flank Amy Hammons after the presentation of the 2021 Preservation Awards at the Texas Historical Commission's 2022 annual conference. The annual awards recognize worthy accomplishments and exemplary leadership in the preservation of Texas' heritage. Ten awards were presented covering preservation fields ranging from archaeology, architecture, media and publicity, museum management to education.

Amy Hammons has served as the Texas Historical Commission's director for county historical commission outreach. Commencing in January 2022 she has been named as director of the state's Main Street Program. The City of Mt. Vernon is a long-time participant in this program administered through the Texas Historical Commission. Ms. Hammons has been a regular visitor in Mt. Vernon and a long-time friend of Hicks. She had nominated two of the ten awardees and Gail Reed captured this photo of Hammons with her two nominees with their awards following the annual awards banquet.

Graciela Gonzales of Duval County received the George Christian outstanding volunteer of the year award from across the entire state of Texas. Hicks received the John Ben Shepperd County Leadership Award from among the 254 counties in the state.

Annetta O'Neal Hamilton, a Mt. Vernon native, has assumed the position of Mt. Vernon's Main Street director, effective April 1, 2022. Mrs. Hamilton follows Carolyn Teague in the office. Teague retired in 2021 after a successful run in promoting Mt. Vernon and obtaining the coveted national status for the entire Mt. Vernon downtown as a National Register Historic District. Amy Hammons is now undertaking her new role with visits in the state's Main Street Cities; Hicks promised her a party when she visits Mt. Vernon. We look forward to the visit from this officer of our Texas Historical Commission.



FCHA members attended the annual conference of the Texas Historical Commission in Austin February 3-5, 2022. The conference was held at the downtown Austin Hilton and featured three days of seminars offering training in a wide range of preservation topics. The conference theme was Real Places Telling Real Stories.

Among relevant topics for our community were seminars for cemetery preservation (we have at least 48 rural cemeteries in Franklin County – some in complete neglect and abandonment and some administered in great condition); preservation tax credit applicability (with Mt. Vernon’s downtown receiving formal designation as a national historic district, building rehabilitation expenses qualify for both state and federal tax credits); volunteer development; courthouse maintenance; museum administration; folklore and folkways (cooking and heritage recipes); archaeology; museum and educational outreach; and many other topics.

The speaker for the closing luncheon on the third day of the conference was Ivan Myjer of Boston, Massachusetts. Myjer is nationally recognized in monument conservation and had worked for over 12 years in supervising restoration of the San Antonio Missions while working on sites across the eastern half of the United States. Myjer was seated with the Franklin County group at the Thursday night awards banquet and recounted experiences while working in Texas. His fascinating presentation on Friday was made more special after the local group’s fortuitous seating at the evening banquet. As recipients of the outstanding county award, the group were seated front and center during the awards banquet.

Shown (left to right): Scott Harvey, Ivn Myjer, Dan Hoke, Myrna Hoke, B. F. Hicks, Gail Reed, Nancy Bolduc, Genie Bolduc.

English Street Update

We know our preservation efforts are paying off when we see an entire street undergoing a transformation. If you haven't driven down English Street in the last couple of months, please take ten minutes and check out the restoration and transformation underway.

English Street runs north from West Main Street; drive about four blocks west on Main; turn north on English. The streetscape is essentially one with craftsman cottages and a few earlier houses.

Our historical commission started off with about 30 designated homes in 1980 under the presidency of Doris Meek. J.D. Baumgardner, Ron Milton, and John Stephenson all followed in stewardship of the program. The signs were awarded to homes which were well-maintained and of sufficient age (originally pre-1918; now we recognize homes which meet the century mark in age and we are up to over 70 homes).

You know your program is succeeding when more and more homes qualify under the criteria. Homes on English Street did not merit our awards. But then Jason and Alyssa Burton purchased the Banister House and Steve Hammons purchased the Judge Cowan House. The Burtons and Hammons restored their homes. Jason Burton and Steve Hammons both served terms as directors of the association. And then the neighbors started working on homes.

In April 2022, Josh Petticrew, a Bogata native and fireman working in Longview, Texas, called and said that he was purchasing the Stripling House on English; what did he need to do to get a historic designation. Our association's response: Restore it. And he is and he will receive a sign before a month can pass.

We are out about \$100 per sign (post and sign cost). The program does cost us but it also has helped with promoting an awareness of our history and heritage. And, those blank lots which used to exist on English? Drive that street.

The Burtons built one cottage which blends in with the other craftsman housing and now Dan and Myrna Hoke have chosen Mt. Vernon for their retirement home and have built a lovely home at the northern end of the residential neighborhood – a home matching the style and character of the neighborhood.

The homes all tell their stories through the record of ownership and the street has little, if anything, to do with England. Campbell English settled here about 1850; the street was a lane leading through his land; his daughter married W.J. Galt and their home still stands at the corner of West Main and English.

Check out the street; you'll be proud that your support of the historical association has helped to promote the preservation and development in this neighborhood.

Lindsay Bliss Creates Dirt and Diamonds Outfitters

Lindsay Bliss is responsible for the renovation of “The Fair” –at the northeast corner of Mt. Vernon’s town square. The large building now occupied by businesses known as Recycled Renaissance and Dirt and Diamonds Outfitters is operating as a dry-goods store – think a department store – by 1900; in 2022 the exterior façade is very similar to the building as erected about 1900.

Lindsay moved back to Mt. Vernon in 2017; promptly pitched into the life of the town and opened Dirt and Diamonds in the midst of the pandemic in 2021. She’s the daughter of Craig and Brenda Bliss. Why do we remember the family name? They moved to Mt. Vernon and built the Barnstormer’s Restaurant in 1983. The building was demolished to make way for the McDonald’s out on South Highway 37 and I-30 in 2015.

Brenda’s parents, Robby and Hattie Lasater, moved to Mt. Vernon in the same time frame and jumped into a role of community service and leadership. What brought the Lasaters here? Friendship with Mr. Henry Carter from some connection along life’s way. Who is Henry Carter? A Mt. Vernon boy who retired back home after years of work away. I do know that he truly managed to dip on of my aunt Ivey’s pigtails in an inkwell about the year 1914 (he told it; she confirmed it). A Mt. Vernon friend brought the Lasaters to Franklin County.

Their son, Charles Lasater, as well as the son-in-law Craig Bliss, all played a major role in obtaining an airport to serve Mt. Vernon. The Lasater family gave several hundred acres to insure creation and construction. Craig was a private pilot and died in a crash in 1989 at the age of 39. Brenda operated the restaurant for a few more years; sold to J.D. Green and Debi Whitworth Green, who continued serving in the community with the restaurant renamed Hubbard’s, as a complement to the restaurant the couple operated in Garland as Hubbard’s Cubbard.

Brenda eventually remarried and moved to Georgia with her two children Lindsay and Landon. Lindsay married in Georgia and has three children from the marriage. After her mother’s death, Lindsay divorced and has moved back home to Texas with her three children, Craig, Jessa, and Banks.

She has purchased the two “halves” of “The Fair” and the businesses will operate out of the building, anchoring the northeast corner of the square. Her retail business operates as Dirt and Diamonds Outfitters. And she has purchased the adjoining building which is currently home to Recycled Renaissance.

Check out the buildings. If you step back in time to 1900, you are facing The Fair -a large dry goods store. The right half of the large “Fair” Building has remained fairly open as one large shop; housing, among other operations, a car dealership in the 1930’s.

By the 1960’s the west half of the “Fair” was divided. Charlie Max Grau operated Grau Grocery in the east side of the “Fair” and his wife, Mary Ruth Grau, had a flower shop in the east half of the adjoining building. By the 1980’s, businesses known as Images By Design, The Samaritan Shop, Attic on the Square - an antique shop, occupied the space. Gail Reed had a bakery in the former flower shop portion. A lot of businesses, a Merle Norman studio; Richard and James Hamrick operating out of an office here.

Ownership of “The Fair” building passed to Tom Ramsay and his family (east half) and the west portion was held by Walter and Margaret Sears, Brad and Stephanie Hyman, and other local families over the course of the past century.

If we look to the present Dirt and Diamonds location, we find the Woodrow Edwards law office from 1952 until 1977 when he moved to an office across from the old jail. Martha Edwards Cargile Hill, daughter of Woodrow Edwards, reported that when her father moved to the office facing the square that he was the first lawyer to have a first floor office; up to that time the professional men in the town had taken offices on the second floors of the business houses.

The eastern half of “The Fair” building was operated as the Grau Grocery. The grocery had a doorway cut through the wall allowing access into the flower shop operated by Mrs. Grau.

Richard Mercer has traced out a map of Mt. Vernon in 1938-40; he reports that the order for the four present buildings facing the square in those years from east to west is: Covington Ford Company at the corner; then an office for J.R. Hill Insurance; then the beauty shop; and then the abstract company. This is a correct statement of the occupancy; the Covington dealership would have taken up the entire “Fair” Building; which is today divided.

The 1939 Tiger Annual carries an advertisement for the Covington & Covington Ford Dealership as Franklin Supply Company. The Covingtons sold their dealership to John Hester who operated a Chevrolet dealership. The “Fair” space eventually was converted to an auto parts store until about 1950 when the grocery took over the space.

This location was used in the 1880's as a store by Henry Weaver. Henry Weaver was a Civil War veteran and used to carry his twin daughters, Lula and Lola, to all of the Civil War reunions. The Weavers were makers of furniture, cabinets, and caskets. In front of the store was one of the square's two water wells - at that time. This well was considered the favorite among merchants of the town and they drew their water there every morning. Henry Weaver – Baptist - started the first Sunday School Class in the town about 1869. Rev. Weaver preached to the congregation with

a rifle leaning against the pulpit. Every day, Rev. Weaver would ride his horse, Traveler, through the large sliding door of the Cotton Belt depot to set his watch by railroad time.

The Edwards store was here from 1901 until opening in the Edwards Store Building on the west side of the square in 1916.

The 1925 Optic-Herald carries an advertisement for Mutt and Jeff's Service Garage at this location. The garage took in the wide space now occupied by the antique shop. It was owned by D.R. Yates and Mutt Strickland. Don Yates, grandson of D.R. Yates says that his grandfather was in this location from about 1920 until 1935.

In 1946, the eastern building again became a Chevrolet dealership when Dave Bolger opened the Bolger Motor Co. here. The Bolger Motor Co. location on Holbrook Street burned in March 1946 and Dave Bolger moved to this location on the town square. Then Dave Bolger was killed in an automobile accident in March 1946 and the Teagues purchased the dealership. There were no new cars sold during World War II. People had to make do with trades and keeping up the old cars.

The Teagues opened here on May 24, 1946; moving on to the present location on East Main; opening there on November 27 and 28, 1949, as Teague and Son Chevrolet (Hiram Teague and his son, Charles). And remember that Hiram's father had a blacksmith shop on the land now occupied by the courthouse; they were in transportation for over a century.

After Teague left, Wells Lamont operated here for a short period during construction of their building. Then Charlie Max Grau moved his grocery into the building, moving from his long-established location on Houston Street – Smokey Row - across from the Wagon Yard, about 1954.

Lucky Ramsay ran a tire and oil store here in the early to mid-1970's.

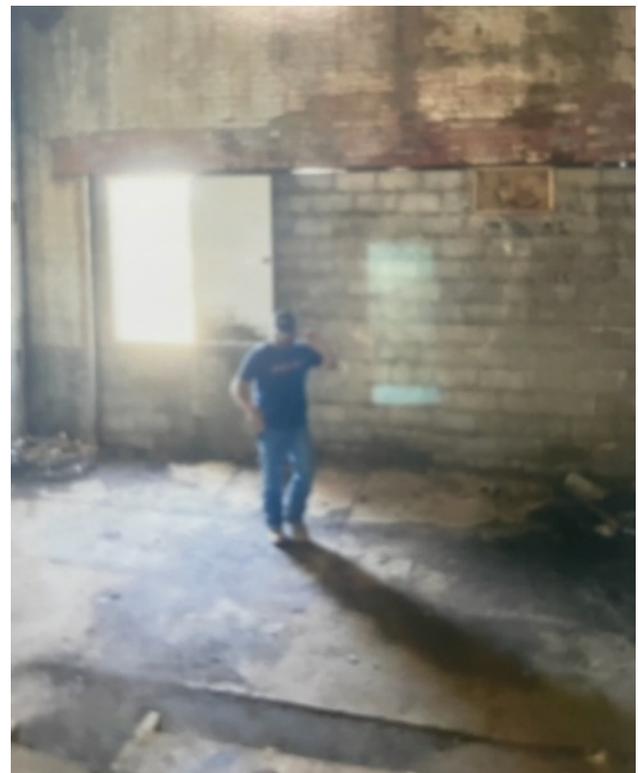
In summary, if you study this row of buildings (to the east of the courthouse), you are dealing – in 2022 - with four established business locations in two large historic buildings:

- (1) the Franklin County Abstract Company Building (now a laundry);
- (2) Tom Ramsay Real Estate
- (3) Dirt and Diamonds
- (4) Recycled Renaissance.

The laundry and Tom Ramsay Real Estate buildings were built in 1935 by Raymond Hill who bought the property from the city. He built three three buildings with common walls; Tom Ramsay occupies two of these three. And we have “The Fair” - now protected by Lindsay Bliss; aren't we fortunate to have young people coming home.



Original photo of Dirt and Diamonds building before it became what it is today.



Jack Boyd inside the Dirt and Diamonds building as renovations began.

The Brenda Bliss Brownie Fudge Pie

A favorite at the Barnstormer, as perfected by Brenda and by Peggy Broach in the bakery.

For 2 pies (8 or 9 inch size)

4 c. sugar

3 squares chocolate

1 stick butter or margarine

1 c. flour

2 c. warm water

1 large can milk

2 c. chopped nuts (pecans or walnuts, Brenda used pecans)

1 t. vanilla

Melt chocolate in water. Add milk, bring to a boil. Mix sugar, flour, and butter. Cut in butter until texture is that of cornmeal. Add chocolate mixture to flour mixture slowly.

Add vanilla and milk and bake in 2 unbaked pie shells at 350 degrees for 35—40 minutes.



Grau Flower Shop in the 60's.



puravida
LIVE  FREE



Above: Dirt & Diamonds Today.

Left: Left to right: Lindsay's children, Craig, Jessa and Banks Ross; Lindsay Bliss Boyd, Jack Boyd and Jack's son, Blaine.

PHOTOS FROM OUR ARCHIVES

Check out these photos and others on our Website - <https://www.fchatx.com/> under The Photo Galleries



Majors Methodist Church ID: Church stood at Majors; about 5 miles south of Mt. Vernon; west side of Hwy 115. Demolished ca. 1956.

1-Bro. Cherry, 2-Fairlena (Barrett) Moore, 3-Jo Marvis, 4-Peggy Crain, 5-Aunt Carrie Lawrence Lovelace Loveless, 6-Lela Thomas, 7-Mrs. Exa Barrett, 8-Linda Crain, 9-Mr. Barrett, 10-Claud Stinson, 11-Fannie Stinson, 12-Jo Thomas, 13- ?, 14-Walter Moore & Daughter



Last Passenger Train
(Left to right)

1-Wayne LaForce
2-Christa Campbell
3-Patsy Joyner
4-Pat Bass
5-Minnie Glover
6-Arlene Meek
7-Royce Dickson
8-Linda Cowser
9-Linda Maples
10-Terry Newsom
11-Sarah Birdsong
12-David Stinson
13-Anne Campbell
14-Syble Parish

HOLMES, WATSON, ORANGE MARMALADE & MRS HUDSON FOR VALENTINES

By Jean Pamplin

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle achieved more success as an author than he ever did as an eye specialist. The characters Doyle developed are timeless. Their trim figures, assisted undoubtedly by the occasional steam bath, Sherlock Holmes and his sidekick Dr. Watson, were typical men of their era and especially attentive at the table set by the illustrious Scotswoman, Mrs. Hudson. Scotch scones and lemon biscuits covered in butter and orange marmalade with a bit of cream and the usual hot tea made Scotland's cold weather and London's cool nip merely an annoyance for the world's greatest crime solvers.

As Valentine's Day looms close, it may be the thing to celebrate marmalade with the British. The Dalemain Historic House & Gardens (marmalade@dalemain.com) is home of the Jane Hasell-McCosh Marmalade Festival. This is the world's original marmalade festival and it is held in February complete with recipe contest. The general consensus is that proper marmalade should have slices of fruit in it and marmalade made from slightly bitter Seville oranges is considered the best. Although there are many kinds of traditional marmalades in Britain, according to Dalemain's Marta Edwards, the timing of the awards and festival is scheduled in February because January is the time to make Seville orange marmalade and also, she says, "Jane Hasell-McCosh thought it was a good time to do something to cheer yourself up, when the weather is miserable and especially cold in Cumbria!"

Legend has it that the fleeting life span of fresh fruit occasioned the first Scots woman to invent spreadable marmalade. Dundee was a major port in 1797 and Mrs. Janet Keiller was gifted with a cargo of oranges. Her husband had purchased them cheaply from a Spanish ship forced to take refuge in the port during a storm. Her thrift and ingenuity birthed the eighteenth-century invention of orange marmalade, carrying it into the hallowed annals of English tradition; and, who better than the character of Mrs. Hudson to ply its comfort power. Undoubtedly, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, were willing subjects.

Marta Edwards thought the following recipe from the home of the World's Original Marmalade Festival would be especially nice to share. The cooking of it will bring to mind the cheer and smells of marmalade no matter the weather.

DALEMALN KITCHEN GARDEN MARMALADE

4 large Grapefruit
1 Orange
1 Lemon
3 lbs Rhubarb trimmed and chopped
1 pint water
3 lbs sugar

Wash the citrus well, then grate and squeeze juice, chop pith and put in muslin bag with pips. Place rhubarb, rinds, bag and water in jam pan and simmer for 35 minutes. Remove the bag and squeeze, add sugar and bring slowly to the boil, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Boil rapidly until setting point is reached. To test setting point put a teaspoonful of marmalade onto a saucer in a cool place and then push with your finger – it should wrinkle. Leave to stand for 15 minutes and pour into sterilized pots. Fill to the top and cover securely.

SCOTCH SCONES – a common recipe on which to test the marmalade:

Mix 2 c. flour, 3 t. baking powder, 2 T. sugar, pinch salt -
Cut in 6 T. shortening to crumbly, add 1 1/2 c. buttermilk to moisten -

Turn onto lightly floured board, make in 1-inch-thick round, cut into pie-shaped pieces before baking 20 minutes on greased sheet.

I dare to say that crimes committed under cover of London's foul oppressive fog would never have been solved without Mrs. Hudson and marmalade. For after all, hungry men rarely think of anything except their bellies. This significant point enables every creative woman the opportunity to better the world with a good Orange Marmalade and Scottish Scones.

Mrs. Hudson dutifully rose two hours before her lodgers to light the coal stove, boil water and begin the morning meal of which marmalade was a mainstay. Watson, habitually a late riser, ate an hour or more later than Holmes.

As Holmes' fame increased, Mrs. Hudson rose to the occasion and her sensual tutelage constantly stirred the deductive reasoning set forth by the men. Meals became more extravagant, including hearty soup and buttered barley bannocks. Cornish pastries were extremely adaptive, especially when she could satisfy her thrifty Scot nature with the addition of diced potatoes and veggies.

Savouries such as raspberry buns, brandied apricots and oatcakes would have finished off the afternoon's repast, only to be bettered by the evening meal's sensuous assault of brandied puddings. But nothing could ever take the place of marmalade and scones.

The far-reaching travels of Watson and Holmes and their varied opportunities introduced them to the best, as well as the most questionable, food in the world.

But, rest assured, never were crimes solved as readily as in the presence of Mrs. Hudson's culinary assistance at 221 Baker Street. Her marmalade, scones and tea, embodied the imaginative zest and quintessential comfort for body, soul and crime solving.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle obviously stirred his imagination with marmalade.

Listening to the wind rock the chimney pots of Baker Street, waiting with bent ear to hear Holmes and Watson pronounce a mystery solved, would have merely been bad fiction had it not been for Mrs. Hudson's expertise in the kitchen. Your Valentine's Day may be waiting for marmalade and a sweet story to unfold in the kitchen.

THE WEDDING DRESS

By Jean Pamplin

Based on a story told to Willie Frankenberger's long-time neighbor, Sarah Parchman of Gainesville, Texas, recipient of the wedding dress who later gave it to the Franklin County Historical Association Fire Station Museum, Mt. Vernon, Texas where it presently resides as a testament to enduring love.

Willie Frankenberger was born in 1880 and died in her late eighties. She fell in love at about twenty years of age. With the innocent bliss common to the young, she and her betrothed held hands and made plans. He was well respected, the up-and-coming undertaker in Gainesville, Texas. A community of friends and family smiled upon the two lovers. The wedding day drew near. All the arrangements were completed in anticipation of this very special undertaking. The beautiful, hand wrought wedding dress hung ready to be donned for the walk down the aisle.

Gainesville is located near the Red River on Texas' northern border. In those days, Oklahoma was a wild and lawless territory. Any outlaw committing a crime in Texas was quick to seek refuge across the river. If the local toughs were itching for a fight, they also went a few miles into Oklahoma and were usually rewarded for their efforts. A prominent gunslinger met his demise after just such a frolic and was shipped back to Gainesville by train. Willie's groom, being the sole undertaker, met the train and claimed the gunslinger's body.

Once back at the funeral parlor, the undertaker and his assistant opened the coffin used for shipping the body. The assistant was a bit excited about actually getting to see the famous gunfighter. When it was discovered that the dead man still had a full holster strapped on, the assistant didn't hesitate to grab one of the guns. "Hey, he's still wearing old so-and-so's guns," he said. At this point, the revolver discharged.



The beautiful wedding plans were set aside for the funeral, not of the gunfighter, but of the young undertaker shot to death by the inexperienced excited hand of his assistant. Willie Frankenberger was never to marry. Her wedding date, however, had been so near that the groom had already included his soon-to-be bride's name on the deed to the little farm where they were to have lived.

She moved there with her mother and father and lived there her entire life. In the years just before 1920, oil was discovered on Willie's little farm. The oil well did not make her rich, but it did bring in a comfortable income. So, although the young groom was killed before he could marry his bride, he supported her and her mother and father all of the rest of their days.

Boots Pickett's Grocery at Greenwood
By Bob Cowser

In 1935 J. W. (Boots) Pickett bought a store formerly owned by A. W. Knotts. The building was a frame structure with a metal roof. Iron bars were placed across the only window at the front of the store. The store had electrical power furnished by a co-operative corporation in Greenville. At some point after 1935 a room was constructed on the east side of the original building. That room was used to store sacks of feed for livestock and chickens. The sacks were made of cotton with a variety of patterns. Women sometimes accompanied their husbands who went to the store to buy feed so they could choose the particular pattern on the feed sacks. It took at least two to make a house dress. There was a container of kerosene on the back porch of the building. Irish potatoes were available to be used in sealing the spigots after the customers had filled their cans with kerosene. The potato prevented the kerosene from spilling when the customer carried the can away.

Customers who did not have power bought kerosene for lighting their homes, and a few used it for heaters. Those residents who lived on the main road to Saltillo had electrical power furnished by the Greenville Co-Operative Corporation. Those who lived along the road north to Old Saltillo and those who lived south of Greenwood did not get power until 1947. Since the store had power, Pickett was able to sell ice cream cones, five cents per dip. Pints of vanilla or strawberry ice cream from Johnson's Ice Cream in Sulphur Springs were also available.

Four States Wholesale Grocers delivered many of the grocery items. The driver of the truck, who came two or three times a week, became a source of information for the men gathered at the store. The information ranged from the amount of damage a windstorm produced at another community in the county to the developments in a murder trial in Sulphur Springs. Pickett drove to Sulphur Springs at least once a week to collect the bags of feed his customers needed. It was common for two or three men to hitch a ride to Sulphur Springs when Pickett made these junkets. Most in the community did not own a car.

Six days a week and on Sunday mornings for a brief time Pickett's Grocery was open. At the back of the store was a wood-burning heater where men often gathered on winter mornings. In the summer they often sat under the portico at the front of the store, sitting on upended Coca-Cola crates or squatting Indian fashion on their haunches. Most of the men smoked, rolling their own cigarettes with thin tissue paper and Prince Albert tobacco. The red tobacco cans were a common item in the junk piles in ditches in the community. Some of the men chewed tobacco. Bull Durham was a favorite brand.

A few women came to the store, though they rarely sat down. It was customary for the men to buy the staples: flour, corn meal, sugar, and shortening, though most rendered their own lard from the hog each one slaughtered in the fall. The candy case stood near the entrance to the store and provided such standard bars as Milky Way, the Three Musketeers, and Mounds. Each of these cost five cents; the small box of marshmallows sold for fifteen cents per box. Also available were peanut patties from a factory in Greenville. Across the aisle from the candy case was the refrigerated chest that held the bottles of Coca-Cola, R. C. Cola, Pepsi Cola, as well as Nehi orange soda and cream soda. Each bottle cost five cents. A punch board was available on occasion. A customer could choose a name or a number, pay 10 cents and punch out a circle on the board. The winner did not learn of his good fortune until all of the circles on the board had been purchased. The prize was either a dollar or a pound box of chocolates.

After a customer told the clerk the particular item he/she wanted, the clerk retrieved that item from the shelf behind him and placed it on the counter. Usually, the clerk used a pencil and pad to calculate the total amount of the goods. Homer Osteen was one of the first clerks Pickett hired. After Osteen moved to Saltillo, Pickett hired Homer Fuller, who worked in the store for at least fifteen years. Pickett's wife Adele occasionally helped customers. Most sales required cash, but credit was extended to some customers.

One could bring eggs to the store to exchange for merchandise. If under a special light the egg revealed a chick's embryo inside, it was rejected. It was not unusual for customers to take home a fourth or more of the eggs they had brought.

Two pumps at the front of the store provided gasoline; a clerk or Pickett himself pumped the gasoline. The price ranged from twelve or fourteen cents per gallon up to eighteen cents. It was unusual for a customer to buy more than a dollar's worth.

Pickett had mechanical skills. At some point in the early '40s he built a shop on a plot southeast of the grocery. There he repaired cars, trucks, and sometimes tractors. It was not unusual for him to return to the shop after the evening meal so that he could continue with a repair job. On most evenings the store was open for customers who could not come earlier. The shop was also used as a polling station on days of the Democratic primary and general elections. The few Republicans in the community did not hold a primary. Pickett was in charge of the elections.

Thanks to Boots Pickett and his helpers, Pickett's Grocery provided essential service to the community.

An Elegy for the Nature of an Earlier Texas

By Matt White

Some years ago I realized that in Franklin County it is still possible to experience the nature of an earlier Texas. Parts of this land of green pastures and lush prairies are little changed since the days of the Caddo, or the first Americans who came quietly while it was still a possession of the Spanish. It was called Texas and it was as irresistible as it was mythical.

Although far from San Antonio, Goliad or San Jacinto, and the well-known clashes of culture that in 1836 took place there, the lands along the Sulphur River in Texas' northeast corner (what Jefferson understood he had bought in 1803 from Napoleon in the Louisiana Purchase) were later traded to Spain in exchange for Florida by U.S. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams in the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819. And the battles that every student of Texas history learns delivered these quiet landscapes back to the United States.

Soon even more Americans would move to this land of milk and honey.

Large savannahs of tall grass would feed their cattle and their horses. The rich soil would grow corn and wheat, and of course cotton, plus a cornucopia of garden vegetables. There were rivers and springs and forests of mighty oaks and pines that were perfect for cabins. That it is possible to see glimpses of these landscapes today is something I have repeatedly insisted is nothing short of miraculous.

But today it's the very nature of this quiet land that is threatened by a one-two knock-out punch that will leave the region forever altered.

For decades massive earthen dams have been on the drawing board and eventually will flood, forever, the bottomlands and the beautiful forests that once grew along the banks of the Sulphur River and its tributaries. An entire ecosystem is slated to disappear, dammed (or damned if you will) stem to stern. Will anyone remember the beautiful bottoms, whose channels drained a land of prairie and timbers hauling water east into the Red and then the Mississippi before finally dumping it into the Gulf of Mexico?

Will anyone remember the birds that once flew through these forests? Birds like the giant Ivory-billed Woodpecker whose gleaming white beak made it a trophy for hunters and drove it to the brink of extinction in the Twentieth Century. There were credible sightings in the 1930's, and a slew of sightings in the 21st Century have not all been disproven. Rumors that the birds may hang on in the Sulphur River will likely fall on deaf ears as there is enormous pressure to declare these massive woodpeckers extinct. After all, we can't save habitat for something that no longer exists.

When these dams are completed, the overflowing freshets which rise after torrential rains and spring thunderstorms will be captured and delivered westward to the Metroplex to water yards and make possible the steady pace of urban sprawl that is destined, like lava flowing, to consume everything in its path.

But recently another threat to the very nature of this region has appeared on the horizon. In a headlong quest for energy—green energy no less—business and conservation interests have aligned themselves. Huge areas perhaps the size of California or Arizona will be converted to solar power. And these solar farms are already being installed. And the last and largest remnants of that earlier Texas, including the rarest remnants of unplowed prairie are being threatened, and many will disappear.

After decades of mocking the impracticalities of solar power, this alliance has concluded that northeast Texas' quiet and out-of-the-way places are ideal for rows and rows of solar panels. Already thousands of acres of grasslands are being covered up.

But will anyone remember the birds, the bees, the grasses and the wildflowers, the monarchs and the milkweeds and the wild habitat we must sacrifice? Will anyone miss the scenery that still takes us back to an earlier Texas?



Stringer Jersey

About 1923, J.C. Stringer (married Tula Broach of Hopewell/Winfield family ties) imports a Jersey bull and two Jersey cows. The Stringer family home still stands on South Holbrook and is designated by our association as one of our historic homes.

The present house reflects a 1905 renovation in which the Victorian lines of the house were changed to reflect the new craftsman style just coming into favor in America.

The Stringers owned about 30 acres of land behind their house, which fronted Holbrook (then known as the Mt. Vernon to Pittsburg Road); they kept cattle and they were especially proud of the first calf born of the union.

J.C. and Tula had only one son, Bernard; Bernard and his wife, Mattye B. Stringer, had only one son, Jim (J.C. Stringer II).

Jim and his wife, Nonie Kothmann Stringer were very supportive of our organization. Jim left no children; Nonie sold the house, retired to Mason, Texas, where she is very active with that county's historical association activities.

Jim said that his grandfather had papers to support the bloodline for the cattle which were actually imported from the Isle of Jersey. Last issue we reported on Joel and Laurie Dihle and their Red Devon breed; know your history; they are not the first to take an interest in historic breeds.

The gentle Jersey was a favorite until the Holstein came on board as such a great producer. Let this harken you to the years when - before electricity and regular refrigeration - every family kept a Jersey cow on the lot behind their house.



MT. VERNON BARBERSHOPS

By Ray Loyd Johnson

Ray Loyd Johnson is kind of a genealogy anomalism in Franklin County, as the 1880 census lists all 8 of his great grandparents and all 4 grandparents in residence. He can also be credited with having a sharp and accurate memory of all things Mt. Vernon. Reminisce with him for a minute and smell the aromas of the barbershop still scenting his memory, like Lucky Tiger, Wildroot, Mastertone, Bay Rum and 3 Roses.

Pete Johnson married 17-year-old Gertrude King in 1919 at Purley, Texas south of Mt. Vernon. He started working at a big store there. You could buy anything you needed in Purley then. He would load a wagon with anything the women might need and sometimes come back with more than he left with. They'd trade chickens, anything. The owner had a chair in the back of the store and Pete started cutting hair there and began his half century of Barbering. No license was needed back then.

After a few years the couple moved closer to Mt. Vernon and he worked part time in a shop on Smokey Row, riding his horse to town and leaving it at the wagon yard. He opened his own shop at Saltillo in 1925, staying eleven years, and then owned a shop in Winfield for five years. I was born in 1938.

Winfield had two local tricksters named Windy and Slick. One morning Pete unlocked his shop and a live pig met him squealing inside; that was the final straw. Though Pete had served as the Winfield mayor, he up and moved his family and shop to Mt. Vernon in 1941. It was a small shop and at that time haircuts were 25 cents. Pete paid \$7 a month rent all 28 years he was there, until he retired. The shop was located on Scott Street, midway of the block between Houston and Kaufman across from the 1940 rock City Hall/Fire Station.

People from the county came into town on Saturdays, many in wagons until after WWII. All the stores in town were open until nine; and on Saturdays, Pete stayed open until at least 10 p.m. and sometimes later. After going to the Joy Theater, mother and I waited in the car. We watched people congregate on the corner of Scott and Houston; the black folks especially enjoyed the evening visits.

In my early years there were four barber shops in Mt. Vernon. The shop on Smokey Row was owned by Tom Newsom until about 1950 when he sold to Jake Brookshire. The Newsom and Johnson ancestors came in the same wagon train from Alabama, along with the Holder (Ramsay) family. But the Star of the barber shop on Smokey Row was Jimmy Sowell, the Shoeshine Man, a highly respected Mt. Vernon citizen. According to Jerry Tittle in his Optic column "Tales From the Jail," "His (Jimmy's) long fingers had rhythm, slinging that polish to a catchy beat, and then he'd snap that flannel shine rag several times against the shoe, ending with a resounding Pop! Pop! Pop!"

In the 1930's, or early 40's Jimmy may have worked at Mt. Vernon's fanciest Barbershop; Rob Arrington was on the east side of the square. That shop closed about 1947. The shop had an awning over the sidewalk. When Mother and I walked past it early on Saturday nights to the Joy (Roy/Trigger, Gene/Champ, Hopalong/Topper) I wondered, why is that Barbershop here when Pete has his shop?

Bob Hightower's shop on Kaufman, now the Chamber office, was there for decades, even preceding Pete in 1941. Cousin Roy Hightower was the other barber. Bob was a very colorful character. On Saturday night after closing late, Bob and Roy Ramsay headed for the big woods in South Franklin to Fox Hunt with hounds, camp out and listen to the chase.

Something I remember vividly about barbering in the 1940-50's is the dreaded unscheduled visit by the State Inspector. Barbershops were highly regulated, mainly health-related rules like sterilizing tools and clean towels. In the late 1940's Pete had a young barber who received some low grades previously. Pete always got an A. One day, Bob Hightower rushed around warning that the Inspector was in town. The young barber hid out in the Ramsay Feed next door for hours until the Inspector came and went (with no ears loose on the floor like the last time).

Later, Burton, Jagers and Watermelon Mills joined the Barbering fraternity. Watermelon didn't go to Barber School until after his son Donald and I graduated MVHS in 1956 (along with Don Meredith). He apprenticed a couple of places, including Pete's, before renting the corner of Houston and Main. At one time that location anchored Lowry's whole block and had previously been the City Café.

Haircuts now cost a little more than Pete's 25-cent rate in 1941, but that quarter bought a lot back then. Oh, Pete said that on Saturday he gave more shaves than haircuts, shaves with a straight razor and several steaming hot towels. Shampoos and tonics meant more steaming towels. During WWII there was NO laundry Service and gas rationing. Mother washed Pete's towels and spreads in a big outside wash pot.

Then there were the Barbershop Sitters, the "Sitters" couldn't believe it when the "new woman in town," Tish Bass (she and her husband were well-known Optic-Herald owners) said the word PREGNANT in reference to the Feed Store cat (Reflective Rays pg. 55). Every year at Country Fest, I stand at the exact location of Pete's Shop, amid the car show, and recall every detail of Shop Life back then, can even hear Pete calling out, "NEXT!"

NEW PHOTOS, including the Guthrie Family (Charlie Brown's photos) are now on the FCHA website.

(Kris Guthrie Sears, check them out. Your father and grandfather are both in the photos.)



Guthrie Family: (L to R) Jack, Jeff, Charlie Brown, and Joe Dan



Joe Dan and Jack Guthrie hauling and stacking hay.