



FRANKLIN COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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

FCHA MEETING

Place: Mount Vernon Music Hall 402 Leftwich Street

Date & Time: Saturday January 7, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Program: Shellie O'Neal's God Bless America: A World War II Radio Hour
Reception with sandwiches, cookies, and lemonade provided by your board to follow.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gail Reed



Hello, Friends,

The end of every year seems to bring endings and new beginnings. It is true for me, as I will be retiring as office manager of FCHA at the end of this year; however, I will continue as a member of the Board of Directors. It has been an honor and privilege to get to know many of you and I will cherish the memories of my six years in this position. I've learned so much about the history of Franklin County and its founding families. I could never have succeeded without the support of our Board of Directors, especially B. F. Hicks. I am constantly in awe of his dedication to history and preservation. It's been heartwarming to see

the love and commitment of so many in this town and beyond for the preservation of Franklin County's history.

Over the years, I have received many compliments on our newsletter, but there are many who work tirelessly to pull it together. B. F. Hicks, Tina Fountain, Cindy Stutts, thank you for painstakingly gathering information and editing. We could never have gotten the newsletters to print if not for Elaine Thomas. Her formatting skills were invaluable and I deeply appreciate her working all hours to complete the job so we could get it in the mail. Elaine is also retiring and we wish her the very best.

I am excited to announce that Lauren Lewis will assume the role of office manager. She will be located at the Fire Station Museum Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. The museum will also be open 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

Lauren is a Mount Vernon native and her family has a longstanding history here. Many of you may remember her grandparents, Dr. Calvin Tom and his wife, Teny. Lauren and her husband, Jason, share their home with a menagerie of animals, including a rabbit.

Lauren will bring a new and exciting element to our organization. Stop by during regular office hours and welcome her in her new position.

Sincerely,
Gail Reed

★ FCHA Memberships make the perfect holiday gift! After you have renewed your own membership ★
★ consider gifting one to someone on your list interested in local history. Members will be mailed ★
★ quarterly a copy of our newsletter as well as invitations to our regular meetings. ★



**Shellie O'Neal's World War Two Radio Hour
Mount Vernon Music Hall
January 7, 2023 at 7:00 PM**

God Bless America: A WWII Radio Hour celebrates our nation's beloved anthems. In this 58-minute play, Shellie portrays Sally Brennan, a WWII radio personality, who sings our nation's favorite anthems (and radio commercials of the era) and discusses the anthems' histories and the people and ideas that helped shape our great country.

Shellie O'Neal, a native East Texan, has enjoyed an active career in educational theatre, and she has worked in that realm as an actor, director, technical director, designer, and playwright. She has served as the chair of Theatre at Navarro College in Corsicana, Texas, for over 20 years. O'Neal's works have been preformed in schools, churches, colleges, and universities. She has traveled the state bringing her one woman shows to audiences across Texas and we feel fortunate to be able to bring her back to Mount Vernon for our first program of 2023.

FALL FESTIVITIES 2022

Gail Reed

Our journey began a year ago when Dr. Paul Benson suggested to B. F. Hicks that our organization should make ribbon cane syrup. The idea took hold since we already had a syrup mill on our property and soon after, a committee was formed with Dan Hoke as chairman. He quickly discovered that the mill, which had not been used in 30 years, was in dire need of serious repairs. Jack Rutledge and Jerald Mowery were consulted and after much discussion they decided to call in the big guns—Doug Ford from Hallsville and Don Reynolds from Henderson, Texas. They have been in the business of syrup making for decades.

Mr. Ford agreed to raise the ribbon cane for us and even throughout the drought season he kept it watered so that by harvest time, we would have sweet, juicy cane. Don Reynolds came to lend advice and give a step-by-step tutorial. He left shaking his head at the enormity of obstacles to overcome and advised it might be best to put the project off for another year. Undeterred, by April, Dan was having monthly committee meetings, doling out assignments, and fretting over every detail. The mill was given a facelift, firewood delivered and the day before CountryFest Mr. Ford brought the sugar cane and last-minute preparations were made.

Before daylight on a perfect weather day for CountryFest, Dan was at the mill, stoking a roaring fire. Jack Rutledge, Jerald Mowery and B. F. Hicks soon followed and the process began. Randy Ritter had been drafted to driving Jerald's vintage tractor in circles for hours on end in order to squeeze the juice from the cane. Renea McCracken, director of agriculture at Northeast Texas Community College, in addition to several of her students were on hand to carry buckets of juice to the cooker and help the team keep the juice stirred. Dava Teplansky (daughter of Dan and Myrna Hoke) also stepped in at a critical moment to assist with the stirring. Dava's husband, Chris, pitched in when Randy Ritter needed a break driving the tractor.





After several hours, the hot juice had reached the desired temperature and was transported to B. F. Hicks' home to be bottled. Upon completion, 78-pint bottles of syrup were capped. At a taste testing, it was determined that our first attempt was as good as that of any expert syrup-maker. And they said it couldn't be done!

Meanwhile, over at the Depot, Beverly Kelley assisted Mary Lou Mowery in selling various FCHA publications, while Eugene Hauptmann from Wylie, Texas, entertained visitors with a history of the Cotton Belt rail line.

Over at the Fire Station Museum, J. D. and Debi Green assisted Lauren Lewis, Pat Hudson, and Gail Reed in greeting people from all around our area. It was agreed that the day had been one of huge success. Some were even ready to run the syrup mill again next year—well, maybe.

FCHA would like to thank the volunteers (some, who didn't realize what they were signing up for) and Board members for making 2022 a memorable and successful CountryFest!



HALLOWEEN 2022

This year, Trick or Treat Around the Square was back and FCHA enjoyed handing out candy to hundreds of children. It's always so much fun to see them in their costumes. We were visited by hotdogs, vampires, train conductors, and even some royalty. President, B.F. Hicks, even managed to distribute some of our left over to sugar cane to our costumed guests.



From the 1949-1950 Texas Almanac:

Franklin County is one of the top Texas counties for production of sorghum and cane syrup. Also marketed are sweet potatoes, peanuts, cotton, corn, hay, grain sorghums, tomatoes, Irish potatoes, beans, peppers, and other fruits and vegetables.

It is wild to think that in the last seventy years we went from being one of the state's top producers of cane syrup down to FCHA's 78 pints this year.

A TRIBUTE OVERDUE

John Hicks

On the wall between Ola's side of the duplex and my own front room, pictures and shelves of knick-knacks rattled. Wham! Clack, clack. Wham! Clack, clack. Wham! Clack, clack. Click.

Spring rains had come and swollen the earth beneath the building's foundation and warped the wood of its old door jams. Nigh on eighty years old, she hardly had strength to push the doors shut. So she took a running start, as it were, like a child leaping into a pile of leaves, and put all her strength into a mighty thrust. The door went "wham" and the latch went "clack" until things fit together and the bolt went "click" sliding into its place.

In such wet weather, two or three slams would do the job, never requiring the verbal assault that most of us level against an inanimate object like said door. Ola was a lady. Her business with the outside world concluded for the day, the door latched, she would work through the evening on her next Dallas Travelers tour.

At her funeral three Greyhound drivers sat among the honorary pallbearers, with Baptist deacons, local businessmen, and friends. Of course, her contemporaries were missing, and the crowd was not large; but those of us present were of quality and devotion.

I moved into the duplex on Holbrook Street in the late 1970s; Ola, in her late seventies, would not speak of her age. Born May 20, 1897, to Robert F. and Ada Mae Pittman Foster, she considered herself a lifetime resident of Mt. Vernon, although she worked at Sanger Brothers in Dallas for thirty-nine years. At least into her eighties she organized Greyhound bus tours from a table in her kitchen next door to me and traveled the continental U.S.A.

Her grandfather had owned the R.A. Foster Grocery Store on the east side of the Mt. Vernon square from 1920 to 1932. Most days of her later years, with no car but with retail in her blood by nature and by nurture, she walked the square nearly every day. My mention of Ola on Facebook some time ago prompted comments on this. Patti Wafford, who worked for Stanleys' Rexall Drugstore, said Ola came in daily to have a coke from the soda fountain and to tell Sanger and Greyhound stories. Kathy Marrs remembers the same from M.L. Edwards. And Betty Crane says, "She also visited us at Crescent Drugstore. One time she brought us buttered biscuits to eat for breakfast. They were canned, but those were the best!"

These visits were essential to her self-appointed job as community herald. Sharon Martin recalls Ola's visits to Home Town, with stories of her trips and news of anything going on in town: "Ola kept people organized about funerals and where food would be served; and she had details of everything planned at church, who, what, where, and, most important, the time." Greg Carr recalls Ola's phone calls for funerals and other events: essential facts, a hang-up "click," and then the next number on her list.

Her friends and family always made sure that Ola had a place to celebrate holidays. I suppose my family's ownership of the duplex led to our saving her a place at the holiday table, too. Every time she came, she brought ambrosia. In Greek myth that's the food of the gods. In the South it's as simple as a chilled mixture of fruit cocktail, miniature marshmallows, flaked coconut, sour cream, and sugar. The dish's name indicates a heavenly delight - something like Ola herself.



Ola Georgia Foster, age 99, went to her rest August 3, 1996. Rev. Jimmy Duckworth came to assist First Baptist Pastor Pepper Puryear, and my brother B.F. gave a eulogy. I was prompted to write this added tribute when I found, among saved photos and correspondence, a nice card she sent me in 1986. I was laid up at the time with a fractured vertebra. She cared.

Ola lived for a while in the nursing home near Teresia Wims, who says Ola, "never the wallflower," sat out on the front porch, holding court and greeting passersby. Sherri Harvey says that Ola called her from the nursing home one day and asked her to come by. "She had a couple of house dresses that she had rarely worn. She wanted me to keep them at the funeral home for families without burial clothes for their loved ones. I kept those dresses and eventually did use them. I have never forgotten that touch of kindness. Ola was a special lady."

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). Sometimes I think he meant, "Put up with one another as Jesus puts up with you." We all live with thin walls, of one sort or another. It's good when the

person on the other side is an Ola.

Ola, seated on the right and looking up at the photographer, was like my Aunt Virgie Beth Hughes in many ways. Each was self-assured, firm in her convictions, and yet capable of joy and kindness. I was glad to find this photo of them together.



Rex Scott with Eddie Hickernut Turner

TOM SCOTT LUMBER YARD (1923-1986)

Reprinted from the 1986 Sesquicentennial Edition of the Mt. Vernon Optic-Herald which carried a history of Franklin County businesses.

In 1923, at the age of 32, Tom Scott started a lumber mill in the Macon community southeast of Mt. Vernon. That company grew with the size of his family and the times and has now become what is known as Tom Scott Lumber on Highway 67 East, Mt. Vernon. It, like many businesses in the county, has been family-run since the beginning.

“Just like boys on the farm grow up on the farm, I grew up at the mill,” remembers Joe Scott, a son of Tom Scott who retired from the business in 1983. “We all worked there as boys growing up, after school and in the summertime,” he said. The business is now being run by fifth-generation Scotts, Larry Scott and his brother-in-law, Larry Billings.

Tom Scott, Sr. moved here from Mississippi as a boy with his mother during the Civil War. They stayed with relatives who lived about four miles east of Winnsboro which was part of Titus County and present day Franklin County. After the war they returned to Mississippi for approximately 3 years, but moved back to Texas, this time to Sulphur Springs.

Tom Scott, Jr. learned the logging business as a young man, hauling logs for Ed Scroggins’ mill, which was located five miles south of Winfield, in Titus County. Tom worked there three years, hauling the logs with three

yoke of oxen. After that, Tom farmed for a number of years, before going into the sawmill business himself in 1923.

Scott moved from his first location in Macon to a site that is near the Lake Franklin Dam, then to a new building in White Oak Bottom, nearly six miles north of Mt. Vernon. Four years later, he moved to Mt. Vernon.

For ten years, the lumber yard was located on the south side of town. “When they built the new highway (Hwy 67), we moved out here,” said Joe Scott, speaking of the present building on the east side of Highway 67.

Joe and his brother, Pat, joined the business that year – 1937. Another brother, Rex Scott, began working full-time in the business after World War II.

When Tom began the business, logging was his main concern, with the lumber yard secondary. His brother, Hal, handled the retail segment of the business. Shortly before World War II, the company employed 80 to 85 employees and still found it necessary to hire contract loggers. Business was good. The Scotts owned their largest tract of land ever at this time: 12,000 acres of timberland in the Sulphur River bottom, 30 miles northwest of Mt. Vernon. It took six years to “cut it out,” said Joe Scott, from 1939-1945.

The Scotts milled hardwood for flooring, and after drying and seasoning of the wood, it was sold (mainly to the Texas Oak Flooring Co. in Dallas). Pine was sold in a finished state to area residents.

Although pine replenishes itself in a twenty-year cycle, it takes many more decades to grow hardwoods such as oak and maple. The bigtime logging business in Franklin County could not sustain itself any longer. “We knew from the beginning that it would not last,” said Joe Scott. During the early 1940s, we started feeling the effects of timber loss and the loss of manpower.” Joe said the company was “cutting timber a lot faster than it was growing.”

“I miss it very much, (logging), grew up in it, it was a lot more fascinating; the mechanical operations of logging and the sawmill.” The business slowed down after the second world war, and eventually the mill was eliminated altogether in 1963. Tom Scott Lumber expanded the retail end of the business.

The business changed in many ways after that. Pat died the year the sawmill was closed, and Hal died in 1974. The man who started it all, Tom, died in 1977, at the age of 83.

Rex retired in 1983, and Joe in 1985. But both brothers are no strangers around the store, as both are in and out frequently. The business was incorporated in 1980, with two new partners joining: Rex’s son, Larry Scott, and his daughter’s husband, Larry Billings.

The business has received a boost in recent years, along with other businesses in Franklin County, from new residents and construction on Lake Cypress Springs. “The lake has helped us quite a bit,” said Joe Scott. “Even better than we anticipated.”

Tom Scott Lumber Yard, Inc. is a family business that changed with the times, and made some wise business decisions. And one of the wisest was deciding the business belonged in a town called Mt. Vernon.

TOM SCOTT LUMBER YARD

1923-2023 – A Centennial for the Business.

By Linda Scott Billings, granddaughter of Tom Scott.



Founders Tom and Ottie Scott

interest in the lumber yard corporate organization until his death.

As the youngest son, Rex started working full time after returning from World War II. He began in the sawmill, but after a back injury in 1957 he switched to the retail side of the business with his Uncle Hal.



Joe Scott

in several locations since 1923. In 1988, they relocated to its current location on Highway 37 South. The company has continued to grow. In 2008 Larry Scott's son, Jay, started working in the business, and Jay has now arranged for purchase of the interests held by the third-generation owners. As the fourth generation takes over, Tom Scott Lumber Yard, Inc. is proud to continue serving the community.

Larry Scott has announced his intention to retire during the year 2023. Jay Scott has succeeded as president of the company and works with his wife, Kristen, in present management and administration of the business.

Tom Scott was born on Titus County in 1891. He learned the logging business as a young man, working for Ed Scroggins' mill located south of Winfield. Tom worked there for 3 years, hauling logs with 3 yoke of oxen. In this time frame, he married Ottie Hopper of the Hopewell Community. In 1923, at the age of 32, he decided to open his own sawmill business.

Tom wanted to diversify and start a retail business for the local community. His younger brother Hal ran his part of the business. It became known as the Tom Scott Lumber Yard. Tom and Ottie had 3 sons, Pat, Joe and Rex. As they grew up, each would become involved with the business. Ottie Scott died in 1965; Tom died in 1977; and his sons, Pat and Rex, were dead within a decade. Uncle Joe, though, would make it into his 9th decade and died in 2010, retaining an ownership



Larry Scott and Larry Billings

It became harder for the sawmill part of the business to sustain itself. They were traveling further just to find enough timber to cut. In 1963, the sawmill was shut down completely and the main focus became the lumber yard.

Rex's son, Larry, started working in the lumber yard after graduating from college in 1975. As Rex and Joe thought ahead to retirement, Larry soon realized he would need help running the business. In 1980, the lumber yard was incorporated and Larry's brother-in-law, Larry Billings, joined the business.



Aerial View of Current Location on HWY 37



Wilda Scott

Wilda Scott's Caramel Pie

The recipe makes 2 pies. I will put in (parentheses) the amount needed to make just one pie.

Go ahead and brown 2 (1) pie crusts (put holes in them before browning).

Separate out the egg yolks and whites. Put whites aside to make meringue.

Mix in Large bowl:
2 cups (1 cup) sugar
2/3 cup (1/3 cup) flour – sift first before measuring
1 Tablespoon (1-1/2 teaspoons) cornstarch
1/2 of 12 oz. can (1/4) evaporated milk
7 egg yolks (4 egg yolks)
Stir together and add 1/2 can (1/4 can) evaporated milk

In Large saucepan (or skillet) brown 1 cup (1/2) cup sugar. As soon as sugar melts, cook until brown; don't stir much. Add to melted sugar 1 cup

(1/2 cup) cold water and 1 stick (1/2 stick) butter. Add bowl mixture to saucepan mixture. Cook until thickens (will happen fairly quickly). Add 1 teaspoon (1/2 teaspoon) vanilla. Pour into 2 (1) – 8" or 9" browned pie crusts. Cover with meringue.

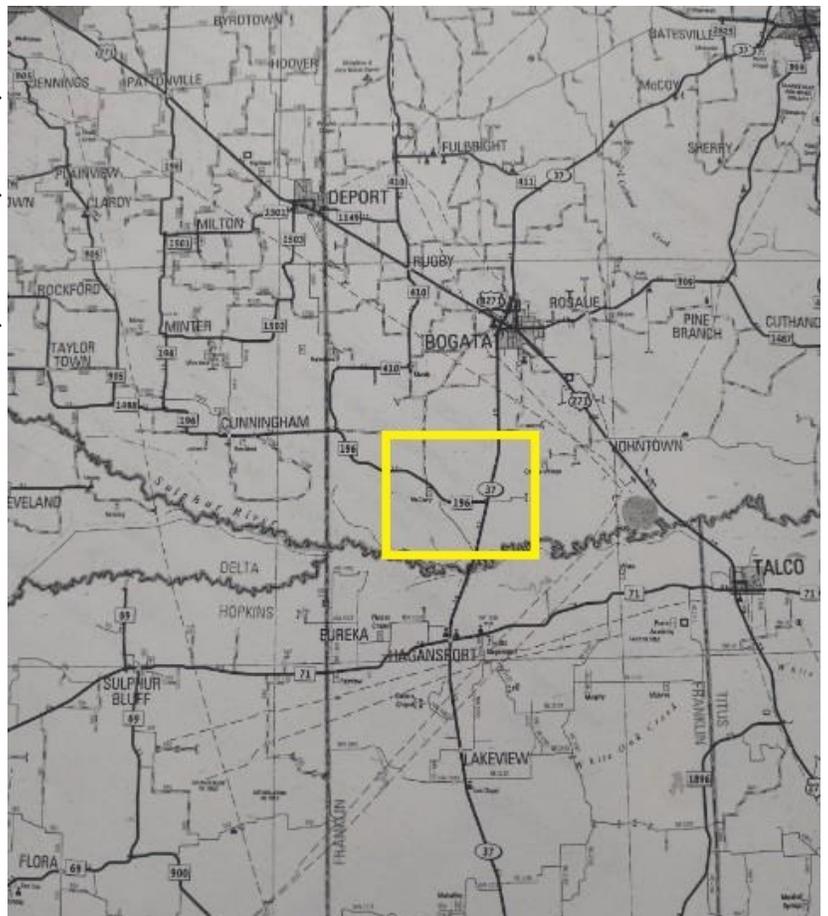
Meringue: Beat the egg whites until frothy. Add 1/2 teaspoon (1/4 teaspoon) cream of tarter. Beat. Then sprinkle salt and few sprinkles of water and beat. Add 1/3 cup (6 Tablespoons) sugar slowly and beat well. Add 1 teaspoon (1/2 teaspoon) vanilla. Put on top of 2 (1) pies and bake.

THE McCRURY COMMUNITY

Anne Russell Evetts of Clarksville has contributed a series of historical summaries of Red River County communities located along the Sulphur River Boundary with Franklin County. In 2022, we printed the histories of Rugby, Fulbright and Halesboro.

For this issue we cover McCrury. The map we run with this article shows the proximity to Franklin County (about two miles north of the county line). Many of you will have driven over to Cunningham to check out the solar panel installations and will have passed a state historical marker for McCrury – about all that remains of this once thriving port of entry.

To further place the historical context: Remember that Clarksville is established sufficiently that it is named as one of the 16 county seats in those 16 original counties created when Texas gains independence from Mexico. Red River County will be divided into 23 counties with Titus County carved out in 1846 and then Franklin County carved out of Titus in 1875. Look at those roads leading south from Clarksville and you understand the significance of the community in the 1800s with the ferry crossing just south of the community.



Anne typeset a document for use in our digital system. The earlier 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 noted that she had interviews with Mr. Tient McCrury (age 77) and Mr. E.S. Palmer (ages 77 and 81, respectively, in 1963), both of whom were reared in the McCrury Community. The article focus is heavily toward John and Edie McCrury (John is one of the 5 siblings who arrived in Texas in 1835; the subjects of the interview were apparently descendants of this branch of the McCrury family). What a pioneer spirit in all of those very early arrivals in the soon-to-be-independent state.



Tient & Maude McCrury

arrived in December 1835, along with their two sisters. The McCrury family migrated to Texas from the state of Missouri. They acquired large tracts of land north of the Sulphur River, between the Kitchen Survey and the Ringo Survey. It is not known why the five young brothers and sisters left their Missouri home and came to the wilderness of Sulphur bottom, but we do know they had the true pioneer spirit and courage to face dangers that arose almost daily after they left their Missouri home.

East of the McCrury settlement, about 2 1/2 or 3 miles, another pioneer family, the Wards, settled on a large tract of land, located between Mustang Creek and Sulphur River. Mr. Ward had a beautiful teenage daughter named Edie. It was not long after John McCrury came to the neighborhood before he met this young lady. A courtship sprang up and it was not many months before John McCrury saddled his horse and rode over to Mr. Ward's; John and Miss Edie were married before a justice of the peace on June 22, 1848. She got her belongings together, tied them up in a sack, mounted the horse behind him, and they rode over to his place.

This story is set against the background of pioneer struggle to carve a home out of a wilderness, beginning in the 1840s and stretching to the Civil War, and the tragic time of the reconstruction days following the conflict, and ends in a more modern day.

John McCrury's land bordered on the north side of Sulphur River, extending up on the hill above the bottom. After his marriage, John McCrury set about to build his bride a home, and selected a spot on the rise, one mile north of the river, overlooking the bottom, on the old Paris-Jefferson Road. It was a double log house, two very large rooms in front with wide hall between, and perhaps other rooms at the the back. He hewed the logs himself, used pegs for nails, split boards for the roof, made the flooring, and a stick-and-dirt-chimney for the fireplace. It was considered a very fine house in its day, and for its location. When it was completed, they moved in, and a new family was established.

John McCrury farmed a large section of his land, raised cattle, hogs, sheep, goats, and horses. The bottom was full of all kinds of wild game such as bear, deer, turkeys, prairie chickens, ducks, and quail. He also planted a large orchard, consisting of peaches, pears, plums, apples, grapes, and blackberries. John McCrury built a toll-bridge across Sulphur, and hewed the lumber out of the tall mulberry trees which grew in abundance near the river. This was

McCrury: Very little is known about the history of the early pioneer settlers of the southwest part of Red River County, Texas, only the land surveys that are recorded in the Clerk's office give us the names of a few, -in 1861 a woman by the name of Patsy Kitchen pre-empted a large tract of land on Sulphur River. And in 1863 the records show that she pre-empted a large tract in the northern part of the county on Red River. There is no information that she ever built a home on the Sulphur River Tract.

In 1859 Abraham Ringo took out a patent for a tract of land west of the McCrury Survey. He built a home there and raised a family. In later years the land and home were occupied his son, Bob Ringo. There is a small family cemetery on this land which is now in pasture and is fenced. It contains the graves of several of the Ringo family, which are marked with stones. The Ringos operated a ferry across Sulphur which was on the old Clarksville-Sulphur Springs Road.

Another family who took out land grants in this remote and wild section of the county was the McCrury family, for whom the community was named. Brothers, John, Wilson and Sam McCrury

the first bridge in Red River County ever to span the river. Also near his home he built a store and sold provisions of all kinds, including whiskey, to the travelers who had a thirst for it. Out of his fine orchard of apples, he brewed his whiskey, making it of very fine quality. It was not against the law in those days to make liquor on your premises, if the occasion arose.

John McCrury farmed a large section of his land, raised cattle, hogs, sheep, goats, and horses. The bottom was full of all kinds of wild game such as bear, deer, turkeys, prairie chickens, ducks, and quail. He also planted a large orchard, consisting of peaches, pears, plums, apples, grapes, and blackberries. John McCrury built a toll-bridge across Sulphur, and hewed the lumber out of the tall mulberry trees which grew in abundance near the river. This was

Eight children were born to John and Edie McCrury. Two died in infancy and the others lived to old age. One child, a daughter, Celia, married back into the Ward family. After William Ward died, she married Robert Forester.

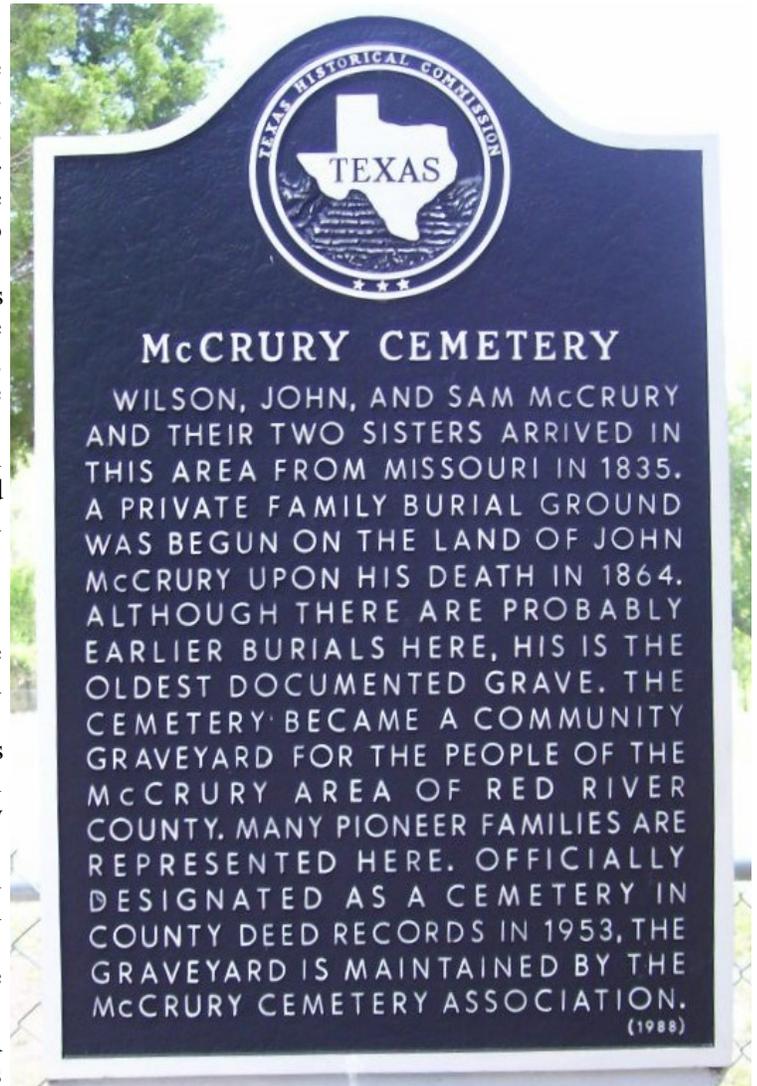
The John McCrury family and their relatives lived well and prospered until the Civil War came on in 1861. Hard times came in 1863 when John McCrury died, leaving Edie McCrury with six small children. The war also made orphans of other children, and, in addition to her own, she took in six of her nieces and nephews to raise, and later on took six of her grandchildren into her home when their parents died within three weeks of each other.

According to a southern mountain saying, "A tall woman casts a long shadow." Such a woman was Edie Ward McCrury. A woman of strong determination, whose courage was an inspiration to her family and neighbors through times of physical hardship, danger, and anxiety. She was forced to live in a harsh environment, unprotected, but did the best she could under the circumstances, and lived a life of self-giving for her family and those under her care.

After John McCrury's death, two of Edie's nephews came to live with her: Ben Blanton and Sam Ward, who were half-brothers. They were teenagers but Blanton was old enough for service in the Confederate Army. Blanton had no yearning for military duty and did not want to go. So he hid out in the large barn behind the house when strangers would approach. Ward would take him food whenever he had to hide. The home guard tried to find him and came around several times looking for him. They would question the family but could find out nothing as to his whereabouts.

On one occasion one of the men tied a rope around Sam Ward and drew him up in a tree in an effort to find out where his half-brother was hiding. But Sam told them nothing and they finally lowered him and went their way. This hanging high in the tree so enraged Ward that he vowed vengeance, which he took when he became a man. One night he took his shotgun and went to the home of the man who attempted to hang him and shot at the man through the windows. The man was not seriously hurt, and the law did nothing to Sam Ward for taking this potshot against his "enemy".

There was a woman, name unknown, who was called "the Yankee woman". She was teaching school at Glendale, about two miles north of McCrury. She came to the McCrury home one day and offered to help the draft-dodger escape. The story goes that she dressed him up in woman's clothes and took him on horseback to the community of Blackjack, in Hopkins County, which later became the town of Cumby. He remained in Blackjack for the duration of the war, and he never served a day. (Editor's note: remember that Red River County representatives had voted against secession in 1861 and loyalty to the union was strong in this region of Texas.)



Historical Marker at McCrury Cemetery



After the war ended there were many men, some good and some bad, who came to this community. Some of them settled down and made good citizens. They had left their native states mostly because they could not endure carpetbag rule, which at times was very harsh and unjust. There were others, of course, who were renegades and criminals. Sometimes a band of these renegades would come along the road pretending to be Yankee soldiers. They would rob Edee McCrury's bees, then destroy the hives; feed their horses out of her corn crib; then take a sizable amount of her corn with them when they left. Later on she would find out that they were not

Early Example of Ferry Crossing on Red River Courtesy of The Fannin County Museum of History

Yankee soldiers at all. Bear in mind, Mrs. McCrury had no protection from such depredation, and when they discovered this they took charge of the place.

One day a band of these renegades stopped at her home while she and the children were killing hogs for the winter. They rode up on their horses and one of them said: "Well, I see you have been stealing hogs -whereupon Mrs. McCrury picked up the head of a hog and stuck it in the man's face, displaying the mark with which she had all her stock identified, and said: "Damn you, does this look like it has been stolen?"

It was necessary to get a little tough sometimes with such men, in order to handle them and beat them at their own game. Mrs. McCrury's gun was nearby. She grabbed it and stuck it into the man's stomach and he left in a hurry, the others in hot pursuit, Mrs. McCrury shooting a few times over their heads as they made their sudden departure. Being located on this main road from Paris to Jefferson made her home an easy mark for such renegades.

Mrs. McCrury was a very shrewd business woman. She marked all her livestock with a certain brand, as they ran loose in the woods with the neighbors' stock. Many of her horses were stolen, and people told her (those who had traveled into Oklahoma) that they had seen many of her horses in Indian Territory.

One night two renegades came to the McCrury home, made Mrs. McCrury give them their supper, then started drinking and finally got into an argument at the table where they ate. One of them had an old-fashioned cap and ball pistol. The family was terrified but could do nothing. Finally, one man shot at the other but missed, and a spark from the pistol went wild and lodged in the hair of Celia, Mrs. McCrury's teenage daughter, and set it on fire. Mrs. McCrury quickly extinguished the fire without very much damage being done except Celia lost some of her beautiful hair.

It was not an uncommon occurrence for renegades to come to the McCrury home, take possession, eat all the food, and make the children and Mrs. McCrury stand back until their appetites were satisfied. The cooking was all done on a huge fireplace in one end of one of the big rooms, as was the custom in those days, before cookstoves were invented. Sometimes they would force Mrs. McCrury to cook them a good meal after they discovered she had no protection.

After the war the toll bridge on Sulphur burned, and for many years Sulphur River was forded. Then the Ringo family established a ferry on their place, about two miles west of the McCrury place and it was operated by them until Red River and Franklin Counties combined to build a bridge across Sulphur in the 1890s. The Ringo ferry was on the old Clarksville-Sulphur Springs road.

There was a mail route established on the Clarksville-Sulphur Springs road in the late 1860s. John Ward, brother of Edie McCrury, carried the mail for several years. Then later a post office was established in 1868 at the home of J.W. Horton. It was known as Hortonville. This was 3 miles northwest of the community of McCrury, and it served the needs of the people of the area for several years. Then a rural route was established out of Bogata which is in operation at the present time.

While John Ward was carrying the mail, he also carried passengers occasionally. One day he was transporting two ladies to their destination and a shower of rain came up. They took shelter inside a building near the roadside. Mr. Ward was carrying a pint of liquor in his boot. In order to test the ladies he said, "This would sure be a good time to take a drink, wouldn't it?" And to his surprise one of the ladies said, "It sure would." Whereupon, he produced his pint and they all took a drink while waiting for the rain to cease, afterwards proceeding on their journey.

Edie McCrury's grandson, Amos McCrury moved to Hagansport. One spring day in the 1880s Amos attempted to cross Sulphur River on horseback in order to visit his grandmother. The river was up and rising. The horse made it to high land on the north side, but Amos was washed off by the swift current. Eleven days later his body was found in a treetop one-half mile down the river where the high water had left it. Thus, another sad blow was given this pioneer family.

There were many wild animals in the woods near the McCrury home in the early days. One day Edie McCrury and her brother John Ward were trying to drive up a drove of hogs when they encountered a large bear. It ran up a leaning tree which was near the house. Edie McCrury obtained a gun from the house and killed the bear. Deer were so plentiful that they ran with the cows. The land was very fertile and all kinds of crops grew in abundance and were stored in the large barns for winter. In addition to her other duties, Mrs. McCrury spun the cloth for all their clothes and made them on her fingers.

Pioneer people had to be resourceful, meeting their trials and problems in the best way they could. When roads were impassable, they could not get to any settlement for needed supplies. Edie McCrury donated the ceiling in rooms of her home for lumber to make coffins when a death occurred in the community. Tient McCrury remembers when he was a very small child, seeing men remove the last planks in order to make a coffin. This is a far cry from the elaborate funerals we have today.

As was customary in those days, a private cemetery was established near the home on a knoll overlooking the bottom. The first grave was placed there in the early 1850s, and later became the burial ground for the earliest settlers, including for John McCrury who died in 1864. It has been a public burying ground for several years. The cemetery is located on the new FM Highway 196, leaving from Highway 37 west to Cunningham. Many pioneer settlers are buried in this sacred spot.

Horse thieves were well organized in an early day, and practiced their depredations frequently upon the unsuspecting citizens. They maintained large pastures in Indian Territory (Oklahoma), and would take the horses stolen on this side of Red River to their pastures and keep them until they were sold. It was big business. It is interesting to know how they worked their thievery. For instance, they would send a man into a community to live for a while. It was his job to spot the horses for others who would drive into the community, contact the man, find out where the horses were, then steal them late in the day, or at night. The citizens would not miss the horses for sometimes 3 or 4 days, and by that time the horse thieves with the horses would be in the Indian Territory.

One such spotter came into the community one day. He established residence, took part in the community affairs, attending church and singings, sometimes leading the singings and got acquainted with all the citizens, finding out where their pastures were, and where they kept their horses. As soon as he came, horses began to disappear, but they never suspected that he was the man who was the contact for the thieves. After a large number of horses had disappeared and after waiting several weeks, the man quietly left that community and was never heard from again. Later it was learned that he had aided the thieves in locating the horses.

In those days, the citizens hardly ever waited for the law to deal with horse thieves, but they dealt the punishment which was usually hanging by the neck to a tree until dead. A man might get away with murdering another, but no horse thief that was ever caught escaped punishment.

A man by the name of Don Knowles had a still about half a mile north of the Sulphur River in which he made whiskey for the market. There was a man who represented himself as being a government revenue man who was supposed to test the whiskey to see if it were safe for human consumption. He was given a key to the still and no one else except Knowles had a key. After the man began testing the whiskey, it began to disappear. Mr. Knowles stood watch one night to see if he could find out who was taking the whiskey. He caught the revenue man red-handed and promptly shot and killed him. The law did nothing about it; perhaps it was never reported to Clarksville authorities. The residents in that part of the county in those days were their own judge and jury when it came to dealing out punishment.

The story goes that a woman by the name of Jennie Wade and her young daughter ran a sort of "establishment", or we would call it "night club" today, where people came, danced and drank, which was located up on the hillside not far from the still, and it was rumored that the revenue man was taking the whiskey to Jennie's

place, and they were doing a lucrative business selling it to customers.

The Ringos were early day settlers of this community. Bob Ringo, who lived in later years on his father's grant of land just west of the McCrury land, ran a ferry across Sulphur after the McCrury bridge burned. A man by the name of Bownam ran the ferry for Ringo and worked some of his land on the halves. One fall Mr. Ringo took all the cotton to Clarksville and sold it. The next day he returned home. He left Clarksville very early in the morning and got to Glendale long before sundown, but stopped there and visited with Mr. Joel Quinton and stayed until dark, then proceeded on his way home. When he got home, he went on down to the ferry where Bowman was working and killed him with a shotgun. Ringo told the story that some robbers came along, robbed him of the cotton money, then killed Bowman, but a jury in Clarksville didn't believe his story, and they sent him to the penitentiary for 99 years. After several years, Ringo was given a pardon, came back to his home and spent the rest of his life there. Some settler carved the date of this killing and the names of the parties on an oak tree which stood until about 20 years ago. It was rumored that Ringo had two reasons for killing Bowman. One reason was that he wanted all of the cotton money and the other was that Bowman was batting at his wife. At least, the jury did not believe the robbery story.

There used to be a large lake on the land owned by the Ringos and was called Ringo Lake. It was a favorite place to fish even after the turn of the century. Brushy Creek has changed its course and plowed right through the middle of the lake and is now a part of the creek.

The earliest school that served this community was built at "Stump Toe". It was used several years, then a new school house was built in a different location and the name changed to Glendale. Glendale and McCrury were in the same school district, but Glendale failed to grow in population like McCrury so the district was finally divided and a school was built at McCrury for one teacher (in the 1890s). This building was also used for church services. In the early 1920s a 4-teacher school was built at McCrury and the old building was used for religious services. In summertime they had revivals under brush arbors, which the citizens would erect out of the abundance of timber close by. It was during one of these revival meetings in the early 1890s that Edie McCrury offered to give land on which to build a church. The church was not built though, until 1900. Both the church and school buildings were on the same block of land, which was a part of the old McCrury survey. Both buildings are gone now, the school having consolidated with the Bogata School in 1955.

There was also a general store at McCrury for many years. But after the school consolidated with Bogata, the community began to die. The store closed and people began to leave until at the present time there are not more than 6 or 8 families living near the vicinity. In 1922 the levee on Sulphur was completed and the community grew to approximately 300 population at one time.

A very fine highway has recently been completed which runs from Highway 37 west to Cunningham, which runs right through the community, and in front of the old cemetery. These hardy pioneer settlers waded and pulled through muddy ruts, never dreaming of such a convenience as a paved road in front of their homes.

Robert Forester, whose mother was a Fulbright, came to the vicinity in the 1880s, and in 1887, married Celia McCrury Ward, daughter of John and Edie McCrury. He eventually owned a very large acreage of land, and engaged in farming and ranching raising hogs principally. He built a large comfortable home on his land and he and his wife moved in. They had five children of their own and raised six others, and their home was a stopping place for neighbors and friends, as Mrs. Forester had a reputation for being a very fine cook. Food was always plentiful at the Forester home. Mr. Forester was an honorable, upright citizen and did a great deal to rid the community of horse thieves, and undesirable citizens who had drifted in to molest the sturdy pioneers. Mrs. Forester passed away in 1943 and Mr. Forester died in 1952.

Ringo Arrested.

MOUNT VERNON, Tex., Feb. 5.—Bob Ringo, jr., was brought here and jailed on the charge of killing Jim Bowman, who was shot within about 250 yards of the Ringo ferry on Sulphur, about fifteen miles northwest from this place. Deceased and Ringo had been to Paris to sell cotton for deceased.

Defendant Ringo says that as they approached the ferry, about 8 p. m., the defendant was riding ahead and heard a couple of shots behind him, and immediately some one stepped out of the woods and demanded his money, which he gave to him. Defendant came on, procured help and went back. When they arrived at the scene of the killing they found Bowman lying on the ground with a bullet hole in his head and two holes from the same gun in his body.

Bob Ringo's Arrest Report from The Galveston Daily News February 6, 1893

Mr. J.C. Seltzer with his family, came to the McCrury neighborhood from North Carolina in the early 1890s. He and his partner had bargained for 2,000 acres of land at \$1.25 per acre. For some reason his partner was unable to go through with his part of the deal, so Mr. Setzer ended up buying 1,000 acres at \$1.50 an acre. The same land today would bring from \$80.00 to \$100.00 per acre.

The Art Tyson family settled in the Glendale community, as did the Quintons, Keiths, Hardens and others. Our information on Glendale is vague, but they did build a school house, as above stated, which was also used as a church. Protracted meetings were held here and the preachers who served were on a missionary basis. Two of these early day preachers were: Rev. George Ferguson and Rev. Pearson.

In 1897 the old McCrury home burned down and the widowed Edie McCrury lost all of her furnishings. This old home had a stick and dirt chimney and it is supposed that it caught from a hole in the old chimney, as the house had been built for more than fifty years. She immediately set to work having another home built on the same spot. It took several months to rebuild the house so she and her young grandsons stayed with her daughter, Mrs. Robert Forester, while the work went on. But by the time the house was finished, her health had failed to such an extent that she was not able to maintain a home. So she never lived in the new home but passed away in 1899. It was subsequently filled with tenants, from time to time, who worked her land. This last home was recently torn down, and there is nothing left to indicate that there was ever a home on this lot. Only the memories of her trials and triumphs will live on in the hearts of her descendants.

Eighteen of Mrs. McCrury's grandchildren and great-grandchildren have served their country in two world wars. William Forester, her grandson, died in France of the dreaded "flu" plague, in February 1919, after the war ended, but he was on the battlefield for 21 days just before the armistice.

A great-grandson, Bill Forester, was killed in Italy April 29, 1945, by a sniper after the Americans had taken a town. He was shot in the back.

Fifteen other great-grandsons served in World War II, in all parts of the world, and one great-granddaughter served in the Navy, being a Lieutenant in the Waves.

At present time there are 16 of her great-grandchildren who are teaching school - in Paris, Texas; Austin, Odessa, and other cities of Texas. One grandson works in the Texarkana School System.

Thus is shown that the qualities of self-reliance, courage and determination of this pioneer woman have been handed down to the present generation of patriotic, law-abiding citizens of the highest type.

All of these pioneer people filled a place in history just as presidents and other men whom the world calls great. They went into the bare prairies and trackless forests with only their strong hands, an axe and rifle, and made the way safe for others to follow. These hardy pioneers laid the groundwork for the culture of self-reliance and physical strength, as well as a culture of mind and manner. It would indeed be an ungrateful Texan who did not attest appreciation of these pioneers who have made Texas great.



MOUNT VERNON MAIN STREET REPORT

Annetta Hamilton

Good day from Mount Vernon Main Street! Lots of activities during the last quarter of 2022. The Mount Vernon Key Club hosted the 47th Country Fest which brought a significant number of visitors to our Main Street area. There was entertainment, vendors, kid activities, stew cook off, car show, and much more! One of the newest additions to Country Fest this year was the sugar cane press and cooking at the Historical Association grounds. This drew a crowd!

The Glove Factory was a winner in the Texas Downtown Association's Peoples Choice Awards for Best Renovation /Rehabilitation/Restoration. Jon & Crystal Copeland accepted the award along with Main Street manager Annetta Hamilton at the President's Gala in San Marcos. The building was built by the Wells Lamont Glove Company in 1951. After several years of being vacant, the Copelands purchased the building in 2020. The Copelands began the extensive renovation on what locals still call "The Glove Factory" while reusing as much of the original materials to keep the building as historic as possible. One of the building's best features is the multitude of windowpanes that allow natural lighting. The Glove Factory is instrumental in bringing in events that generate a lot of visitors who also shop, eat, and buy in the other retail and restaurants located in the Main Street area.

Main Street has been busy with events and activities planned by other organizations as well. The Rotary Club hosted their annual Catfish and Cornhole event for scholarships. Dueling Pianos came to the Glove Factory and Trick or Treat was around the square area businesses. We have also had Pinkalicious Horse Flea Christmas event at the Glove Factory. On December 3 prior to the lighted Christmas parade, Main Street will host a "Craft with Mrs. Claus." This Christmas parade promises to be the best yet!

PRESIDENTIAL MUSING - B.F. Hicks

CHRIS HICKS AND THE BRUSHY COMMUNITY AND OUR ARCHIVES:

Presidential Musing: I'm still working on archives. We have a wealth of photographic material. The photo archive we now have on the website originates with my efforts at organization. The effort to organize genealogical materials, letters, business records and photographic materials. As family members passed on and I inherited boxes (plural) of documents and photographs I realized that many related to public places in Mt. Vernon and the county (rural school teachers, community activities, sports) and the family and public materials all become jumbled.

With maternal and paternal aunts (-my dad's sister Ivey and my mom's sister Virgie Beth), aunts with a real interest in history and tied in with business people in the town and county, saving photographs.

And my maternal grandfather's sister, Mae Hughes Masters Milam, sold tombstones across a five county area; talk about interest in history; and she had a wealth of photographs. So: all of these materials; and I had started scanning and had about 1,000 photographs scanned and it made sense to just let that become the basis for the photos now loaded on our website. Please forgive the family emphasis; as we load more photographs from other contributors we will have a broader base.

With that background, we are working to organize the archival historical articles and photographs on the website. We have a lot of school history relating to schools in the county. Most of the handwritten notes are long discarded because we took the notes and typeset them for publication in the numerous county histories we have. So: my surprise – to chance on an article about the Brushy school and to find two pages from a legal pad in my mother's distinct hand. And I have her interview notes of Mr. Ross Elliott regarding the Brushy Community.

So, where is Brushy, you might ask. Think a location maybe one-half mile north of the I-30 Rest Area about 3 miles west of Mt. Vernon. That's great for now. But the rest area was recently demolished and relocated west of Sulphur Springs in Hopkins County. I guess I need to go locate latitude and longitudinal bearings. And in 1910 or so, long before construction of the interstate, Brushy would have been on some rambling county road running north and south. Brushy would have been on that road, running south of The Bankhead Highway (think present day US Hwy 67) – some 3 miles west of Mt. Vernon. Maybe some landmarks remain. Dana and Fred Barton live out at Brushy; I can tell you that much.

My mother and dad loved local history. Both were born here and both graduated from Mt. Vernon High School. My mom helped with research for the Charlie Brown 1964 History of Franklin County; my dad started the program to mark century-old homes in the town, a program which continues to the present.

At some point, she decided to interview Ross Elliott and her scattered notes got folded up with some other records and I found them recently; tucked away since the mid 1960's. Mr. Elliott tells her that there were three separate schools over the years at Brushy. Who am I to question this. I am proud to chance on the physical record of her labor. My parents loved history and my dad was determined to mark the houses and he would be surprised that the project he and his sister Ivey commenced has grown to recognize over 70 homes. And here is the physical record of my mother's efforts as she was out recording history in those early days when my parents' generation organized the Historical Association. People ask about my interest in history and I reply that I come by it naturally.

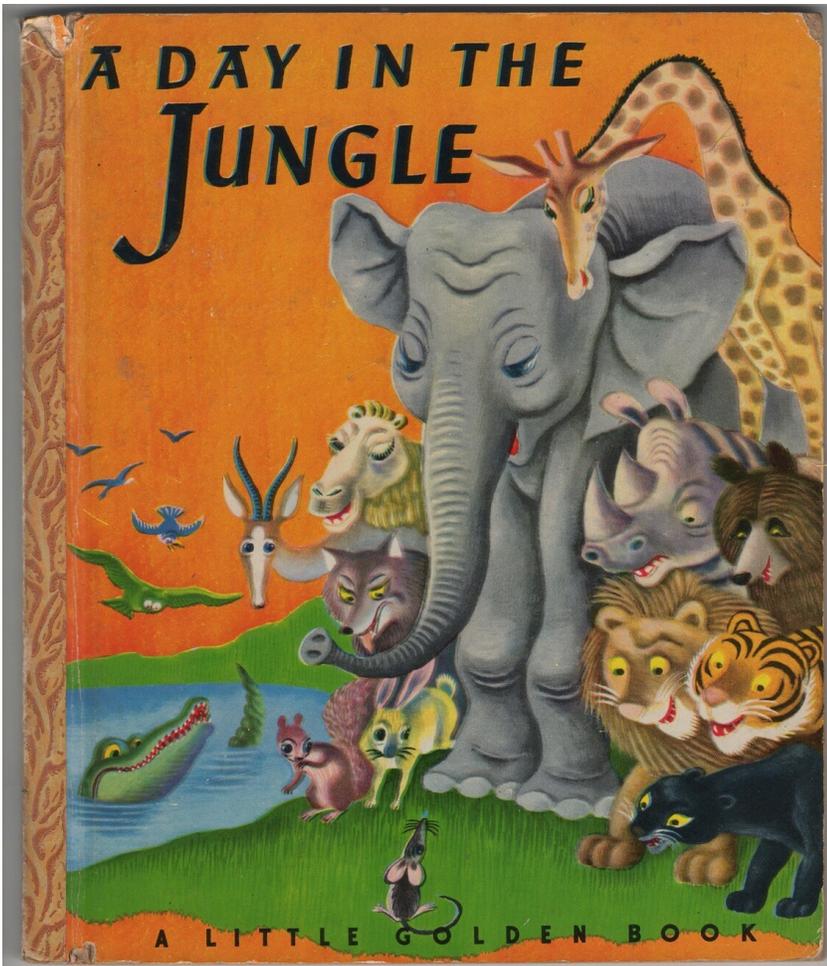
And then every so often something unexpected surfaces. Our new association manager pulls up a photograph



Left to Right: Harris St. Clair, Emile Borne, Sam Harvey

of a young Mt. Vernon mayor Sam Harvey in 1953 with civic leader J. Harris St. Clair, standing with a corporate man from Acme Brick visiting Mt. Vernon. They are standing on the sidewalk (south side of the square) in front of Parchman and Meredith Dry Goods Store, think the present Genealogy Society offices. The photo was online taken from files of the Fort Worth Star Telegram. What a wealth of material we have available. You may not be able to find Brushy; but I guarantee there are pictures of the community on our website; check them out. And enjoy the published photograph from the Acme Brick recruitment effort of the early 1950's.

THE TUESDAY BOOK CLUB – PART 2
By Kay Howell



very own desk, and was very happy. After the closing bell rang, I walked the short distance from school to my father's store as Mother instructed me.

Daddy was standing behind the counter, and Mr. Allen was putting new books in the racks of his stand. He looked up when I walked near him to look at the books.

"Well, Kay, I hear you started to school today. Did they give you a book?"

I shook my head and looked longingly at his magazine stand.

"Well, if you're going to school, you have to have a book. Would you like to have this one?" He selected a Little Golden Book and handed it to me.

"Oh," I said, taking the book and hanging on to it with both hands, "thank you."

Daddy walked up behind me. "If you went to school, you ought to be able to read, so read the book to Mr. Allen."

I heard the mocking tone in my father's voice. I looked up at him and saw the smirk on his face. He had teased me like this before, and I didn't like it. I thought he was calling me stupid.

"Okay," I said. I opened the book and began to read as Mr. Allen looked over my shoulder. I stumbled over the word 'antelope.' I'll never forget that word. Mr. Allen pronounced the word for me, and I kept reading.

After I had read about three pages, my father interrupted. "Is she really reading that?" he asked Mr. Allen.

"Yes, sir, she sure is, and she's doing a good job."

Daddy sort of grunted and turned away. "Come on, Kay, I'll take you home."

I turned to Mr. Allen and leaned toward him. "Thank you," I whispered.

Mr. Allen had a big grin on his face. "You're welcome," he whispered back.

I hugged the book to my chest and followed my father to the car. He didn't say anything on the way home, and neither did I. After supper Mother and Daddy had a little argument about me. I took my new book and hid behind the couch and listened. Daddy accused Mother of teaching me to read and not telling him. He said I embarrassed him when he teased me about now knowing how to read, and I read to him in front of Mr. Allen.

In the third quarter newsletter for 2022 I told you how Mr. Deberry, everybody's grandfather in our neighborhood, discovered my secret: I could read, but I didn't know how I learned. I didn't want Mother to know because I liked it when she read to me. Mr. Deberry kept my secret, but I eventually admitted the truth myself. Very much later an expert explained to me how I learned to read. Here's the story:

My father came home from the war and opened his grocery store on Main Street. Gordon Allen put his business, a well-stocked magazine and news stand, in one of the front windows of the store. I wanted to read every one of the books, but Daddy warned me to leave them alone because they belonged to Mr. Allen.

Mother and Daddy built their dream house on Clarksville Street. Every morning I watched the school bus go by and begged to go to school. The law or the rules of the state—I don't know which—said a child had to be six years old on September 1 before he or she could enroll in public school. My birthday is in October, so I was almost seven before I could ride that school bus and take a seat at my desk in the first grade.

Finally that longed-for first day of school arrived. I rode the school bus, sat at my

Mother insisted she did not teach me. She just read to me every day while he was gone. Then she hissed something that I didn't understand.

Two weeks later Mrs. Bryson, my teacher, stopped me at the door after the closing bell rang. She waited until the classroom emptied and leaned down. "Tell your mother that Miss Craddock and I are coming to visit with her and your father after supper." Miss Craddock was the second grade teacher.

I looked at her anxiously. "Don't be scared," she smiled. "We're going to talk about something good."

I told Mother what Mrs. Bryson said as soon as I got home, and Mother told Daddy at the supper table.

Daddy looked at me with a big frown. "What have you done now?"

I opened my mouth to protest, but Mother interrupted. "She's done nothing wrong. Now you quit looking for any little thing to scold her about. That's not the way to raise kids."

"I just want her to behave."

"She is behaving. Stop treating her that way."

Nobody said anything after that. When Mrs. Bryson and Miss Craddock arrived, Mother sent me to my room. I obeyed her, but then I hid behind the door and listened.

The gist of the conversation was that there was nothing taught in the first grade for me to learn. The principal was going to promote me to the second grade. The teachers wanted to send me to the third grade, but I needed help learning addition and subtraction because I counted on my fingers. That was true. I did.

My father protested. Mrs. Bryson told him that yesterday she and Miss Craddock had asked me to read to them from a sixth grade reader, and I did. I just needed instruction on math. So Daddy quit arguing, and the next day I moved up to the second grade. But nobody could explain how I learned to read.

The answer would come more than thirty years later. During those thirty years I attended college and court reporting school and worked as Official Court Reporter for the United States in the Houston U.S. District Court. Because I had no children and could travel, occasionally I worked temporarily in the federal courts in Brownsville, Corpus Christi, and Laredo when the regular court reporter could not serve.

On one occasion I worked for several weeks in Brownsville while the regular court reporter recovered from a heart attack. A prolonged trial of a civil suit involving bilingual education in public schools was in progress. I found the testimony of the experts interesting, and particularly one lady who talked about the struggles of Spanish-speaking children trying to understand the instructions of English-speaking teachers.

On the day of her testimony I saw my chance to speak to her during the afternoon recess. "Dr. Branard," I said as I approached her, "would you talk to me for a moment?"

"Sure," she said, "as long as I'm not breaking any rules."

"It's a personal matter, nothing to do with the trial." I explained that I couldn't remember anyone teaching me, but from my earliest memories I could read. How did I learn that?

She thought for a moment and smiled. "I think I know, but I have a couple of questions. Did your mother read to you?"

"Yes, almost every day."

"And when you were a little girl, did you like to draw or color in your coloring book?"

"Yes, and later I took painting lessons. I guess you could call me an artist."

"There are two basic ways that children learn to read, either vocal or visual. If they learn vocally, they pronounce the individual letters or phrases and put them together to form a word. Sometimes they learn by rote, pronouncing the words written on the board after their teacher points to each one and says it for them.

"The other way is visually. Your mother probably pointed to each word as she read, and you watched the words as she pointed to them. Most children's books are repetitious; so you would see, for instance, the word 'puppy' printed many times. After she finished reading the book, you would recognize the printed word 'puppy.'" You probably started learning to read simple words as early as two years old. As your spoken vocabulary grew, your reading ability grew, too. Young children have wonderful brains. They absorb everything they see and hear and remember most of it."

I looked at her in wonder. "So Mother was teaching me to read, but she didn't know it. I was learning to read, but didn't realize what I was doing."

Dr. Branard nodded. "That's right. Also, I think once in a while you pointed to a word and asked her what it said."

"Yes, I did. Now that you've mentioned it, I remember doing it." I drew a deep breath. "Dr. Branard, thank you so much. I've wondered all my life how I learned to read. I thought I was a freak."

"You're not a freak. You were just a bright little girl who was hungry to learn. Glad to be of help." She turned and walked toward the courtroom.

She called me a bright little girl. Now that I'm an old lady, I don't think I'm so bright. But thanks to the kindness of a brilliant educator, I know how I learned to read.

THE TIGER MITES

By Ralph Banks

THE SCENE

It was September 1953 and we wanna-be Mt Vernon high school football players were sitting or standing around under the several large post-oak trees that shaded the small wood frame building, with inside walls of bare-wood planking, that served as the club field house and dressing room. This building included a small walled off section for the visiting team players. Player lockers consisted of wood benches along the walls with large nails driven in to the wall planking on which the player hung his uniform, gear and street clothes. But, the building did have a concrete floor with showers



1953 Mt. Vernon Tiger Squad

for both the home and visiting teams and actually were better facilities than some we saw as visitors at other towns during the season. The coaches stored extra equipment up in the partially floored “attic” area.

The squad that year consisted of 30 to 35 players with only a few of us freshmen. The high school in those days was unable to also support a junior varsity or B-team program. We freshmen were dressed in “left-over” uniforms after the upper-classmen players had been out-fitted that morning. Some of us even had to wear the old 1940’s-vintage leather helmets, commonly worn by teams back then. And, only one or two of the squad’s helmets, old or newer, had face masks.

As we had filed out of the field house that early morning, our first stop was in front of the local newspaper publisher who took our picture for the upcoming issue of the weekly paper. Then, the next stop was at the newspaper publisher’s automobile where in the front passenger seat sat the publisher’s pretty, blue-eyed, blond, middle daughter, with a clipboard who for each of us recorded our name, weight and high school classification.

THE COACHES

Eventually, the head and assistant coaches appeared from the field house doorway. Both coaches were previous graduates of the same high school with college careers interrupted with Navy service during World War II. But, after their military service, both had subsequently gone on to college with the head coach playing varsity basketball at East Texas State College (now Texas A&M University at Commerce) and the assistant coach playing varsity football and perhaps baseball at the University of Houston. The head coach was fiery, intense and “whip-lash lanky”, of medium height and very agile, who was dressed in a pair of old purple and white basketball warm-up pants, white sweat-shirt with sleeves cut off at the shoulder and an old well-worn purple baseball cap that may have been left over from the by then defunct Mount Vernon Lions semi-pro baseball days. The assistant coach was also fiery, but well-read and very knowledgeable of football, who was short in stature, but was “well-knit”, compact and athletic, very quick-footed and mobile with “burr-cut” sandy hair, dressed in gray baseball pants, white tee-shirt, and no cap. Both coaches wore steel-cleated baseball shoes.

WORKOUTS BEGIN

As the head coach blew loudly on a whistle he commanded “let’s go, let’s be mighty mites”! So, the squad then hustled out onto the nearby practice field for a long lap around it, with many of us wondering just how we all of a sudden we were the “mighty mites”, since our athletics teams had always been known as Tigers?

But, our attention was then promptly re-focused with the Assistant Coach sharply ordering us into formation for calisthenics, in 4 or 5 ranks with seniors on the front rank and us freshmen on the back row. The Assistant Coach then led the squad in 30 or more minutes of calisthenics himself that first morning as he would do for just about each workout session all season.

Calisthenics were then followed by various drills for blocking, tackling, handoffs, passing, etc., with the workout finally ending in a great many wind sprints. About the same routine was followed for workouts during the rest of the season, except that most of the evening and afternoon workouts included lengthy scrimmages before the concluding wind sprints.

On that first morning after wind sprints we were allowed to “cool off” kneeling and sitting under the large post oak trees in front of the field house during which the Head Coach handed out mimeographed playbooks and conducted a “chalk talk” of the offenses and defenses he expected the team to be using during the season. And, to emphasize various points he used chalk and a large wood-frame supported blackboard.

Basically, our team was to use the split-T offense, but with some use of the TCU spread offense. In this spread offense the ball was snapped back 4 to 5 yards to the quarterback (called a tailback in this position) who could run, pass or quick-kick; the ends were spread along the line of scrimmage out about 10 yards, and the fullback and halfbacks were stationed out in the slots between the tackles and ends. In some instances one of the backs would be stationed as a blocking back in front of and just to the side of the quarterback/tailback. In present days such spread offenses are commonly referred to as “shot-gun offenses”.

MIGHTY MITES REVEALED

But, just before the “chalk talk” ended that first morning the head coach explained to us just who the original “Mighty Mites” were. This was the name under which the 1930’s Ft Worth Masonic Orphans Home football team was known, a team that almost completely dominated high school football in Texas throughout those years. Year after year during both the regular season and the State playoffs, the Mighty Mites frequently defeated teams from the largest and better-equipped high schools in the State. This little group of orphans, despite usually having only just enough players to field the requisite eleven and scant equipment and facilities, and had to commute to games on an old flat-bed truck of hay, did this through a combination of inspiration, desire, skills acquired by frequent and hard practices, toughness and just plain guttiness. And, our head coach throughout the season would remind us that we needed to be like “those mighty mites”, that even though we had much better equipment and many more players to work with than the Mighty Mites had, we still did not have as much as many of the teams we would be playing, but could certainly make up the differences through inspiration and desire just like those Masonic orphans home teams of old did.

THE REGULAR SEASON

Mt Vernon began the season that year with handily winning over Clarksville, Atlanta, Paris Reserves (Junior Varsity) and Mineola.

The Mt Pleasant game was played at “Old Mt Pleasant Tiger Stadium” in Mt Pleasant with Mt Vernon narrowly coming out with a 6-0 win. On the Mt Pleasant team I remember there was a big tackle with the last name of “Traylor” who went on to play college ball for the Arkansas Razorbacks, and it was probably largely due to Traylor that Mt Vernon’s split-T and spread offensive team was not able to score more. Another Mt Pleasant player, I remember was Roger Durant who played in the line as well as doing some of the place kicking. Still another Mt Pleasant player was running back, Billy Liles.

Then, after narrowly winning over Mt Pleasant, Mt Vernon had a more substantial win over Winnsboro the next week.

But then, the Pittsburg Pirates came to town with a gritty, well-drilled single-wing offense that included big, tough linemen and fast, talented and shifty backs. It was a dreary rainy night that was made even more foggy and disagreeable due to smoke from a pile of burning discarded railroad cross-ties on the railroad right of way that passed along the south boundary of the stadium site. And, during the game even more smoke and noise were added by the passing of a long, slow freight train that included the rear brakeman sitting high in the caboose cupola blowing his whistle at the fans and the action on the field. Mt Vernon scored first when early in the first quarter, the Tiger fullback took the ball off-tackle for a 45-yard touchdown. But, during the rest of the half the game got much tougher, with one of Mt Vernon’s tackles (the biggest man on the team at 200 pounds) sustaining a broken nose and having to leave the game entirely. And, subsequently the quarterback and one of the guards sustained what may have been concussions, and only played sparingly the rest of the game.

Then, late in the fourth quarter near the end of the game with the score tied 6-6, Pittsburg drove down to about Mt Vernon’s 5-yard line, using mostly running plays, but then scored with their tailback taking the snap from center deep, and lofting a lazy pass to an end out in the flat in front of our defensive halfback, but just across the goal line. The game ended on a sad note for Mt Vernon with a Pittsburg win of 13-6.

Mt Vernon then came back strong during the rest of the regular season with big wins over Sulphur Springs, Bonham and Commerce. These games included strong play by the recovered quarterback and guard, as well as the big tackle who had sustained a broken nose during the Pittsburg game. Only, the big tackle’s helmet had been equipped with one of the new fangled “bird cage-like” facemasks that later became common to the present day for offensive and defensive linemen.

DISTRICT CHAMPS

As of the end of the regular season, Mt Vernon had defeated Mt Pleasant but had lost to Pittsburg; Mt Pleasant had lost to Mt Vernon but had won over Pittsburg, and Pittsburg had won over Mt Vernon but lost to Mt Pleasant, resulting in the three teams tying for first place in District play, making them “District Tri-Champs”. So, late on the Friday night of the season after the concluding games had each been played earlier in the evening, representa-

-tives of the three tying champion schools met at the Alps Café, located at the intersection of Highways 67 and 271 in Mt Pleasant to decide who would represent the District in the Bi-District playoff. The decision was made by a drawing with Mt Vernon the winner.

PREPARING FOR THE BI-DISTRICT GAME

Immediately on knowing Mt Vernon would be representing the District our Head Coach contacted our opponent to exchange films of games played during the regular season. Mt Vernon then received films of two of our opponent's games which the Coaches made sure the squad got to view, several times. The usual workout day routine was for the squad to meet promptly at 2 p.m. in a classroom after the daily classes to view the films as narrated by our coaches, then report to the field house and practice field for the daily workout. These workouts were long and hard as usual to try to get ready for our opponent, with them often ending either in the dark or under the field lights.

Mt Vernon had been lucky that season in not having any more injuries than they had, but one day their luck in this regard ran out. A couple of days before the big game one of the wide receivers had his season ended with a broken collar bone.

EPILOGUE:

Mt Vernon met the Terrell Tigers in bi-district play which was played on the subsequent Thanksgiving Day afternoon at East Texas State Memorial Stadium in Commerce. Terrell had won the Class AA State Championship the previous year, and were favored by many to win the same State title again.

The game day was sunny and windy with the squad riding to Commerce by school bus, driven by the assistant coach. On arrival at the gate to the stadium dressing rooms the players filed off the bus and clustered around the small "on-loan" Newsom Packing Company panel truck that carried the player uniforms and gear. During this momentary interval, the head coach glancing down the way toward the opponent team's entry gate, casually mentioned that the opponent Terrell team had ridden to the game in a charter bus. This, to which Mt Vernon's quarterback emphatically, exclaimed, "Well, we rode in a school bus!"

Terrell featured a crisp, quick hitting and well-balanced Split-T offense together with a 40-plus squad that allowed mostly two-platooning and sub-stitution with frequent resting of its regulars. Mt Vernon did have a mostly stalwart eleven in their first string but this same eleven mostly had to play both ways. However, Mt Vernon was pretty competitive during the first half of the game with Terrell leading by only 12-0 at the half and Mt Vernon scoring a touchdown during the early second half. But, all in all Mt Vernon was literally outmanned and overpowered in this game, with Terrell winning 46-7. High points of the game for Mt Vernon included many short passes completed by the quarterback from the spread offense. But, as mentioned earlier Mt Vernon had lost one of its wide receivers to injury the week before. For this bi-district game there was a group of Mt Pleasant players in their black and gold letter jackets there to support the Mt Vernon team led by Roger Durant.

The characters mentioned included: Wayne Pierce, head coach; Robby Campbell, assistant coach; Charles Brown, tackle, who after earning all-District honors went on to play for SMU and the University of Houston, and professional football; Don Orren, the guard hurt in the Pittsburg game, probably was about the smallest on the starting 11, but was named that year to all-State honorable mention; Dalton Banks, the fullback who scored the lone touchdown in the Pittsburg game, earned all-District honors the following year; George Turner, wide receiver, who sustained a season-ending injury just a few days before the bi-district game did recover in time for the basketball season and earned all-State honors in that sport; and Don Meredith, the quarterback, subsequently was named all-District and State several times before finishing his high school athletic career, and went on to play for SMU and play for several years of professional football for the Dallas Cowboys.

Terrell was defeated in the next round of playoffs that year by the Henderson Hornets.

The newspaper publisher was Jim Bass, and the pretty middle daughter of his was Jane Bass. The field house and large Post-Oak trees were located as part of Old Tiger Field located on Oak Street just off West Main in Mt Vernon. Recently I saw that the big oak trees are still there but the old field house is long gone as only one of our fond memories of wonderful days gone by.

AUTHOR'S NOTES:

Recently I read a book by Jim Dent entitled "Twelve Mighty Orphans", which chronicles the heroic Fort Worth Masonic Orphans Home high school football teams of the 1930's, who largely dominated Texas high school football during that era and who were known as "The Mighty Mites". I then realized that I actually was involved in a connection between those outstanding Masonic Home teams featured in the book, and the great 1953 Mt Vernon high school Tiger football squad of which I was privileged to have been a member. Thus, I titled this piece "The Tiger Mites". Reportedly a major motion picture is in the process of being produced based on Jim Dent's inspiring book.

Ralph K. Banks, MVHS Class of 1957

Austin, Texas

(Published by The Mount Pleasant Daily Tribune, 26 September 2010.)



ARCHIVAL FACILITY PLANS

By Lauren Lewis, staff manager and newsletter editor

Officers and directors of the Franklin County Historical Association have retained local contractor Bob Stinson to supervise construction of an archival storage facility on the west side of the Association's blacksmith shop.

The building will cost about \$240,000.00 and shelving and interior furnishings will add a projected additional

\$15,000.00 to the cost.

The Association holds collections of Franklin County historic memorabilia donated over the past forty (40) years. The Association was organized in 1974 as an unincorporated association. County Agent Charlie Brown had worked with the Key Club in 1964 to publish a history of the county. In the following decade, Charlie Brown, Dr. David Stinson, and other civic leaders worked to preserve historic elements of the town's past. By 1971, Doris Meek chaired a committee to organize an annual Mt. Vernon Day celebration around the George Washington birthday anniversary with displays of historic memorabilia on display in shop windows throughout the town. In 1975, with the Franklin County Centennial at hand, Doris Meek, Virgie Beth Hughes and Dorothy Long organized a formal committee to celebrate the county's heritage. A centennial celebration coordinated by Ron Barker was a precursor to Barker's later annual productions which raised money for public causes as The Franklin Follies.

Many historic items were given in this time frame and Doris Meek organized archival records and by 1985, she had procured a room for historic material storage in the upstairs of the Franklin County Library. Other charter members included Genie Hague, Frank and Christine Hicks, Otto and Lucy Walling, Ivey Hicks Smith, Jean Barker Cannady, Margaret Sears, Mary Hamilton Moore, Carl Newsom, Virginia Newsom Rutledge, and many other local citizens. The Franklin County Genealogy Society and the Franklin County Arts Alliance both commenced organization as divisions operated under the charitable status of the Historical Association.

In 1990, Bob and Linda Ross Smith gave the Smith family home on Holbrook Street to the Association. In that year, the association filed for public nonprofit corporate status and obtained federal tax status as a public charity.

Presidents over the years included Doris Meek, John Stephenson, Ron Milton, J.D. Baumgardner, and current president B.F. Hicks.

In 1995, the Association moved from the Ross-Smith Home to the Majors-Parchman House on South Kaufman Street and adapted a smaller frame house gifted by the Gertrude Smith Estate (Mildred Tally Brown, heir, and executor) as a storage facility. In this same decade, the First National Bank of Mt. Vernon gave the old city hall (Fire Station Museum) to the Association; the Bill Campbell Family gave the 1894 railroad depot; the Geraldine Hill Styles Estate gave the Henry Clay Thruston House; and the Mary Dupree Scovell Family gave the land now serving as Dupree Park.

With over 5,000 antique photographs and documents – most over 100 years old, over 150 storage cartons of antique clothing and military uniforms (dating from the Spanish American War through World Wars I and II, and more recent wars and conflicts), textiles and fabrics and quilts, over 100 paintings by Franklin County artists with the earliest dating from the Art Institute of 1869 (and held each summer thereafter through 1946), local Indian artifacts, and over 40 cartons of memorabilia of the Don Meredith family (donated by Don and Susan Meredith commencing in 2005), the association needs a facility which can properly and securely house its collections. This listing is not inclusive. The Association holds over 1,000 wooden carvings by the master whittler Harry Smith and 27 of his violins.

The Smith handicraft was displayed in the 1936 Texas Centennial exhibition. And there are bird eggs and butterflies and antique tools and a good assortment of antique kitchen items and children's toys.

From the inception of the fire station museum (following a gift of \$50,000 from the Estate of Rhema Odum Arthur, a \$30,000 grant from the Meadows Foundation, and substantial gifts from the Estate of Ceil W. Moore (widow of wildcatter in the Permian Basin – John I. Moore – and by Dorothy Collins (widow of U.S. Congressman Jim Collins), and tremendous financial support over many years by Jimmy St. Clair of Houston in memory of his parents J. Harris and Irene St. Clair – the Association has worked to improve facilities, maintain elevators, air conditioning, roofs and many other challenges related to maintenance of older buildings, while striving to change out exhibits to show the collections and offer something new for visitors who might not otherwise return. We have never wanted people to say: “oh, I was there last year.” We want people to say: “we need to go see what's new at the museum this visit.”

To properly allow display of the artifacts in a changing environment AND in order to allow access to the holdings (currently stacked in cartons and crates and somewhat inaccessible) the directors commenced inquiries this past year and arranged multiple sessions with Bob Stinson to design a facility which could properly hold the various collections while allowing access for research.

The collections are held in older homes and buildings, subject to drafts, moisture, extreme temperature, and the elements.

The Board approved designs for a secure facility that will be within walking distance of the Fire Station Museum on Scott Street. By coordinating a primary office in the Fire Station Museum, a staff member on duty can then retrieve specific items if a member of the Harry Smith family comes through Mt. Vernon and wants to see items from the Smith collection; or wants to review Meredith newspaper coverage which is kept in the climate-controlled facility maintained just a short distance from the Fire Station.

A student of fashion might want to inspect purses, gloves, scarves, pill box hats or wedding dresses from 1870.

The structure is designed for ready access while offering humidity and temperature control. The 30x40 building is a two-story structure filled with modular compartments which can be tailored to specific storage needs.

The building will provide ample room for the current collections and will have some additional space as well as the structural design for additional construction on the south side in the future. The structure was designed with longevity and low cost, easy maintenance in mind. Mr. Stinson has selected a low maintenance sealed concrete floor and a long-lasting leak resistant standing seam metal roof. The building is well insulated to keep heating and cooling costs low. And while it is technically a storage facility Mr. Stinson helped create an aesthetically pleasing exterior that meets the local City Landmark building code guidelines with neutral exterior colors, cement board and batt with a neutral manufactured stone skirting.

The present collections are registered in computer documents. Once relocated, at some time before year-end 2023, the association should be in a position to move to sell the two houses (Parchman and Gertrude Smith), placing housing back on the market in Mt. Vernon and allowing the Association to more efficiently serve its public from a central location near the town center.



J. P. Stanley, M.S.

The goal is to make collections more accessible and usable for our members, visitors, and researchers. Members and visitors wanting to examine items held in the archives will be able to search indexed files and documents can retrieve materials from the facility to allow for supervised inspection and study.

This project is a huge undertaking, and it would not have been possible without several large contributions. The Association was awarded two hotel/motel occupancy tax grants through the city and county governments in September 2022: \$20,000 from the City of Mt. Vernon and \$25,000 from Franklin County. In this same time frame, the Estate of J.P. Stanley, Jr. provided \$125,000.00 toward the cost of the building. Mr. Stanley served as a former county judge and was a long-time cattleman and schoolteacher in the Mt. Vernon Schools. His estate provided for life-time income for his daughter, Roseanne Stanley Bankhead who died in February 2022, with the provision that upon her death, his home would be sole, and the proceeds divided between the Association and the First Baptist Church of Mt. Vernon. We are proud stewards of our heritage and will continue to do so for many generations to come. Your membership validates the interest in preservation of our cultural heritage. Let us know of your interest; come visit; and come inspect the progress as we commence construction of the new facility.

FCHA Memorials & Honorariums

Donated By:

Sid & Pat Hudson
Tom & Sandy Tower
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James A. Moyers
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In Memory Of:

Richard Howell
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Thomas Ramsay
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MUSEUM HOURS



The Fire Station Museum is OPEN
Tue-Fri: 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Sat: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM
AND other times by appointment.

Call **903-537-9300** or **903-537-2264** and let us know how we can accommodate you or your group. This is a free service in our community; we hope to see you!

If you would like to join our team of docents to volunteer for a few hours at the museums each month or on any of our ongoing projects, please call **903-537-9300** to let us know. We'd love to have you as part of our team!



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Nature in Music
Mount Vernon Music Hall
Saturday January 14, 2023 at 7:30 PM

THE NATURE OF AN EARLIER TEXAS

By Matt White

As a naturalist and historian I am interested in early written accounts that provide insight into the natural history of Northeast Texas. One of my favorites was given to us by Anthony Glass, an intrepid traveler whose sojourn through Texas in 1808-09 provides a fascinating glimpse at the grassy hills surrounding the Sulphur River and its three forks during the administration of President Thomas Jefferson

A bit of background:

Our third president had a strong desire to explore and to map North America—its peoples, its waters, its natural resources—even before he purchased Louisiana from Napoleon in 1803.

His desire was heightened after the opposite bank of the Mississippi was in the hands of the United States. As students of history may well recall, Napoleon insisted France take possession of Louisiana from Spain before he transferred it to the United States after it was bought for \$15 million. France had ceded Louisiana to Spain at the end of the French and Indian War in 1763 so that it not fall into the hands of the English. In 1800 Napoleon demanded it back and Spain complied yet Spanish officials were still on duty there and Napoleon had never taken control of it.

After being forced to hand over Louisiana, Spain was none too thrilled that France sold it to the United States. To add insult to injury Spain was livid when Jefferson informed them the United States would be sending explorers to investigate and map what it had just purchased.

When Jefferson’s ministers were negotiating with Napoleon, they asked that the boundaries be a bit more clearly defined. Napoleon demurred suggesting that even if they had been, they should make them less so.

Spain and the United States agreed to establish a boundary commission. However, soon after the Louisiana Purchase was finalized President Jefferson wrote to friends that he had bought all the waters that drain into the Mississippi River from its western tributaries. This understanding means that that a major international boundary once ran almost right down the middle of Franklin County. The purchase had included all the waters that flow into the Mississippi River. Rainwater from Mount Vernon flows northward into White Oak Creek then into the Sulphur River, and then into the Red River and finally into the Mississippi River before discharging into the Gulf of Mexico. South of Mount Vernon the waters flow ultimately to the Sabine River.

When the famed German polymath Alexander von Humboldt visited Jefferson after spending several years in South and Central America he’d told the scientist president that the Red River would lead them to Santa Fe. The crown jewel of Spain’s Northern Provinces Santa Fe had been in existence since the early Seventeenth Century and Americans were as eager to establish trade networks there as Spain was committed to prevent them from doing so. Jefferson called Custis and Freeman his Grand Expedition and it would attempt to explore the Red River to its source and then visit Santa Fe. The Expedition would also set up a base among the Wichita/Taovoya Indians in modern-day Montague County where they would attempt to purchase horses in order to make exploring the upper regions of the river easier.



Jefferson hired Peter Custis, a relative of Martha Custis, the first, first lady and Thomas Freeman. They were given an allocation of \$5,000—twice that given to Meriwether Lewis and William Clark which Jefferson called simply the Corps of Discovery—and some 50 men. They were asked to secure permission from the Spanish first—and the ex-governor of Louisiana issued them a passport. But the governor of Texas, Captain Francisco Viana, was livid and determined to stop them.

In May 1806 the party pushed out into the Red River and began heading north. The Spanish governor of Texas began marching overland to rendezvous with them. Jefferson was well aware the Spanish might try to stop them—instructing the explorers to stand down if confronted. Sure enough, on July 28, 1806, after traveling up the Red River for some 615 miles, Custis and Freeman were stopped by Viana and his men a few miles north of what is now New Boston in modern-day Bowie County. Custis and Freeman followed Jefferson's orders and politely turned back down the river. President Jefferson, not wanting to admit defeat, took the journals they'd kept and secreted them away where they were found many years later among his papers in the Library of Congress.

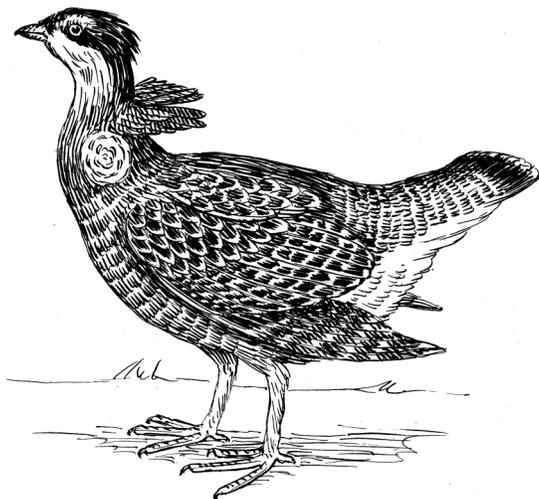
This brings us to Anthony Glass: It appears that since an official entourage would cause trouble with the Spanish Jefferson turned to private contractors—Jefferson turned to what some have called quasi-agents—to explore not just the Red River but Texas as well.

Perhaps this is because a few months after suggesting to friends that the Louisiana Purchase's southern boundary was the waters of the Mississippi Jefferson changed his tune and began insisting that the Rio Bravo was in fact the border. Texas—all of it—was what Jefferson now claimed. It should be explored.

Glass, originally from Pennsylvania had moved to what is now Vicksburg around the time of the Revolutionary War and was a leading citizen of that area. On July 6, 1808 Glass set off from Louisiana toward Indian villages on the Red River. He then turned south and made giant loop through central Texas. Fortunately for us he kept a journal providing a rare glimpse into what is now Franklin County—and the surrounding areas. The journal is reproduced in *Journal of an Indian Trader: Anthony Glass and the Texas Trading Frontier, 1790-1810* edited by Dan L. Flores and published by Texas A & M University Press in 1985. The accounts are eye-opening. Especially interesting to me are the account of prairie in Northeastern Texas.

The party followed the bluffs of the Sulphur River westward—looking down the river bottom. “Immense Bodies of Rich land are on this River & the three Branches of it.” It is clear these are White Oak Creek, and the South and North Sulphur rivers. The entire region he wrote was notable for its prairies—which he spelled prararies. “The country all allong [sic] here pretty much timbered with Ash Oak Hickory and the soil good here and there interspersed with Rich handsome prararies containing from 50 to 2 or 300 acres affording beautiful situations.”

On July 27 his party encountered prairie chickens and large mounds like those on the Daphne Prairie in northeastern Franklin County. He wrote “... all this day we passed small mounds innumerable Elevated 5 or 6 feet they are generally 15 or 20 feet in diameter and rising perpendicularly. We saw this day great numbers of Prararie Hens killed several...”



North American Prairie Hen

Soon the Prairie Chickens were gone from this part of Texas. Three days later Glass encountered prairie chickens after he'd crossed the South Sulphur probably in what is now southern Lamar County. His description leaves no doubt but causes us to mourn the loss of wildlife. Wildlife biologist would later claim that prairie chickens had never ranged east of the 98th Meridian 200 miles west... What else have we lost? And more importantly what will we lose before our grandchildren can see them. Our region is today facing the greatest threat in its history as vast areas are sacrificed to short term profits in a perhaps well-meaning attempt to prevent climate change. To me, after much thought the real problem facing humanity is habitat loss and the eradication of species including birds, bugs, butterflies and bees. We need to wake up.

Matt White is a naturalist and historian. He teaches American History at Paris Junior College in Greenville and lives in an old farmhouse—built in 1916—that was dragged by horses over giant post oak trunks a few years later so it would be on the newly-constructed Bankhead Highway, the first paved transcontinental route through the South. He is the author of *Birds of Northeast Texas* and *Prairie Time* and an occasional blogger on moreprairietime.wordpress.com. He can be reached at: vernonia628@gmail.com

2023 FCHA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Following is a list of our current member base if your name does not indicate a credit for your 2023 dues with an asterisk, please send in a renewal or advise if we need to check our records. We appreciate the support of all our members and we strive to meet your expectations.

Adams, Debra *	Clinton, Ron and Suzan	Hanson, David and Sandra
Allen, Betty Sue	Coe, Joe and Janet *	Harper, Michael and Sharon *
Andrews, Jan	Coleman, Larry and Nancy *	Harper, Sue Ann
Armstrong, Chuck and Nicki	Coleman, Larry and Nancy *	Harvey, Dr. Edythe *
Ashmore, Lou	Cooper, Frankie	Harvey, Scott
Averitt, Ruth	Cooper, Jerry *	Hatcher, Gary and Daphne
	Copeland, Donna	Hauptmann, Eugene
Bailey, Rebecca *	Copeland, Jon and Crystal	Haynes, Gary and Karla
Ballard, James and Christina	Copeland, Dr. Kenneth	Helton, Wayne and Debby *
Banks, Ralph	Cowser, Robert	Henderson, Emily
Barker, Sue	Craig, Tom	Herman, Lauren
Barnard, Ronnie *	Crawford, David and Cindy	Hicks, B.F. *
Bautista, Langdon	Crisp, Jimmy	Hicks, Johnny
Bennett, Jaime	Crow, Lanny and Sandra *	Hicks, Caleb
Bennoy, Warren and Sue		Hicks, Daniel *
Benson, Paul and Pam	Daniel, Sherry	Hill, Diane
Birdsong, Minnie Jane *	Davis, Gary and Mary Ann	Hively, Fannie *
Birdsong, Sarah *	Davis, Ronnie and Missy	Hoke, Dan and Myrna
Black, Cassandra *	Deal, Johanna	Holder, Nora *
Blake, Steve and Rosewitta *	Delaney, Dan and Bettye	Hope, Randy and Jenny
Bliss, Lindsay	DeWitt, Paula	Horton, Eileen *
Boatner, John and Julann	Dihle, Joel and Laurie	Houtz, Bob
Bolduc, Nancy	Divin, Sheryl and Kelly Briley *	Howard, Kim Kirk
Bolin, Kenneth and Sue		Howell, Kay
Bolin, Anthony (K.A.)	Easterling, Donald	Hubbell, Jerry and Elease *
Borders, James and Karen	Edmondson, Bert and Linda	Huddleston, Mark *
Borders, Jason and Elizabeth	Eggen, Alexandra	Hudson, Sid and Pat
Boyd, Curt	Emmerson, Charlie *	Hughes, Joe *
Brady, Patrick and Mary *	Evetts, Anne	Hursh, Kelly Kirk
Breard, Michael		Hyman, Brad and Stephanie *
Brooks, Dorothy	Favors, Aaron	Jaggers, Ellen
Brown, Phyllis Kaye	Fite, Keres	Jancosek, Joe and Jenny Dennis
Burgdorf, Theodore *	Fletcher, Paul and Victoria	Johnson, Ray Loyd
Burnaman, Genea *	Fountain, Keitron and Tina	Jones, Freddie Ray and Alice
Burnett, Sally Thomas *	Franks, Carolyn	Jones, Ricky and Sheleace Gann
Bush-Reves, Lillie	Frazier, Kay *	Jordan, Dale
Bussell, Brooke *	Furman, Jean	Jordan, Janet
		Jordan, Josh
Calvert, Clint and Laura	Gibbs, Nat Paul and Shirley *	Jumper, Elva
Calvert, Kenneth and Xerlene Alexander	Gibson, Hal and Georgia	Jumper, Resy *
Campbell, Favi	Gittemeier, Paul and Kathy	
Cannon, Terry and Sarah	Godfrey, Toby *	Keefe, Sean and Catherine
Carr, Greg	Green, J.D. and Debi Whitworth *	Kelley, Beverly
Casad, Mary Brooke	Green, Robert	Keys, Mary *
Cason, Harold	Greer, Ken	Kirk, Earl *
Cassidy, Tracy	Griffith, Michael and LaManda	Kirk, Kendal and Stephanie *
Cates, Randy		Kirk, Kenneth and Linda *
Caudle, Dan	Hamilton, Kelly and Annetta *	Kirk, Kyle and Kelli
Chaddick, Rodney	Hammond, Jerry and Linda	Klein, Betty *
Christensen, Knute *	Hammons, Amy *	LaBella, Julia
Clark, Craig and Christina	Hamrick James	Lange, Larry and Mary
Clark, Jim	Hamrick, Richard and Sarah	Lavender, Jim and Sue *
Clark, Suzanne Kelley		Lee, Scott *
Caudle, Dan *		

Lewis, Jason and Lauren *	Ostertag, Greg and Shannon	Stretcher, Kelly
Lightfoot, Harold and Betty *	Overstreet, Mike and Lynn *	Stringer, Inona
Lily, Samantha		Stutts, Cindy *
Lindauer, Jared and Kim	Pamplin, Jean and Ed	Stutts, Peggy *
Lindley, Todd		Swanson, Mark and Linda
Loftis, Cynthia	Rader, Mike and Susan	Switzer, Chuck and Jan *
Long, Jim and Sara *	Reed, Mary Gail *	
Lovier, Kathy *	Reed, Michael and Meredith *	Tatum, James
Lowry, Len *	Richmond, John	Teague, Carolyn
Lowry, Lisa	Ritter, Randall and Jan *	Templeton, Jeanne
Lucid, Dr. Emily	Roberson, Shereilyn *	Thomas, Elaine
Lunsford, George and Reba	Roberts, Danielle *	Thompson, Amy
	Ross, Justin	Tom, Larkin
Marshall, Jean Ann (life status – no dues payable) *	Rutherford, Charles and Annette	Tower, Tom and Sandy
Martin, Jo Ann	Rutledge, Billy Jack and Sherri	
Martin, Russell and Janet	Rutledge, Kim and Lee Dykes	Van de Laar, Walter
McFarland, Bob and Donna		Van Dieden, Arnie
McGill, Connie	St. Clair, Jimmy *	Vavra, Brent and Eve
McGrady, Amy *	Sanders, Robin	Vickers, Rona
McPherson, Jim and Beverly	Saragusa, Michael and Annette	
Meek, Jim	Schaefer, Derick and Claudia	Wallace, Ava
Meredith, Michel and Amit *	Scott, Judy	Weatherbie, David
Millender, Michael	Scott, Larry and Yvonne	Welch, Tommy
Miller, Jacque	Scovell, John and Diane	Wesson, Hal and Jamie *
Miller, Mark and Ute	Sears, Margaret *	West, Cody
Monzingo, Vivian Dennis *	Sellers, John *	White, Bryan
Moore, Bennie and Avery	Sellers, Tom and Pam *	White, Marla *
Moses, Linda *	Shafer, Charles and Judy	White, Matt *
Mowery, Jerald and Russell, Mary Lou *	Shelton, Glen and Dianna	Williams, David F. *
Mowrey, Robert and Nancy	Shelton, Kathy	Wilson, Charlie and Bill
Moyers, James CPA *	Smith, Karen	Wiman, Janet *
Mueller, Jim	Smith, Martha	Wims, Tim and Teresia
Myers, Helen *	Smith, Scott *	Winston, William A.
	Snapka, Ernie	Wright, Patricia Bass
Neely, Ruby	Sortor, Carolyn *	Wright, Steve and Patsy
Newsome, Johnny	Speaks, Ronald and Regina	Wylie, Alan and Gaye
Newsom, Ricky	Spearman, Robert *	
Newsom, Rodney and Debbie	Stanley, John *	Yates, Chuck and Marcy *
Newsome, Billy Bert and Mary Jean	Stempel, Jackie and Judd Scott	
Norman, Audrey	Stinson, David	Zachary, Glen and Betty
Norman, David and Deborah *	Stinson, Ozella *	
Norris, Rex	Stinson, Ramona	
	Stretcher, Gary	

**A snippet of Mt. Vernon history from the December 22, 1950 archived Optic-Herald:
ASSURANCE OF FACTORY IS BROUGHT HOME SIGNED**

“Chamber of Commerce President Harris St. Clair and Mayor Sam Harvey brought a big Christmas present for Mt. Vernon home with them from Chicago Tuesday night in the form of a written agreement from the Wells-Lamont Company to establish a glove factory here.

Headed by Santa Claus riding the fire truck, escorted by Sheriff R. S. McGill, and welcomed by band music and the blast of fireworks a motorcade brought the Mt. Vernon officials into town to be greeted by a crowd of more than 500 gathered on the Square. The city representatives came home by car from Dallas after flying there from Chicago Tuesday afternoon.

The Mt. Vernon High School band played, carols were broadcast over the loud speaker systems, and County Agent Charlie Brown gave a brief address to the returning travelers. Mr. St. Clair took the microphone to report on the trip.

Praising the cooperative attitude of the Wells-Lamont officials, Mr. St. Clair reported he had a letter of assurance that the glove factory would be located here in a building by local capital. The formal contract in which the company will promise a ten-year payroll equaling each year the cost of the building will be signed as soon as the raising of the construction fund is completed.”

2023

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
Franklin County Historical Association
P. O. Box 289
Mount Vernon, TX 75457
903-537-4760

Memberships are based on the calendar year.
Members joining mid-year will receive all publications for that year.

Name _____	Class of Membership & Dues:
Address _____	Individual—\$15.00
City, State, Zip _____	Family—\$25.00
Phone: _____	Patron—\$50.00
Email: _____	Sponsor—\$100.00

I would like to receive my newsletter via email. Check here. _____

Indicate your membership class and mail your dues check to:
FCHA, P.O. Box 289, Mt. Vernon, TX 75457

2023 DUES

Please fill in the above contact information. Circle membership class.

Dues for 2023 (Includes subscription to newsletter) \$ _____

Special tax-deductible contribution for operations and maintenance: \$ _____

Special contributions may be designated as memorials or honorariums. Please list the name of the person memorialized or honored, and the name and address of the receipt for notice of your donation:

In Memory/In Honor of: _____

Notice to: _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

We need volunteers! Could you work an occasional four-hour shift at one of our museums or a few hours in the office? _____ If Yes, call 903-537-4760 to schedule a day and time.