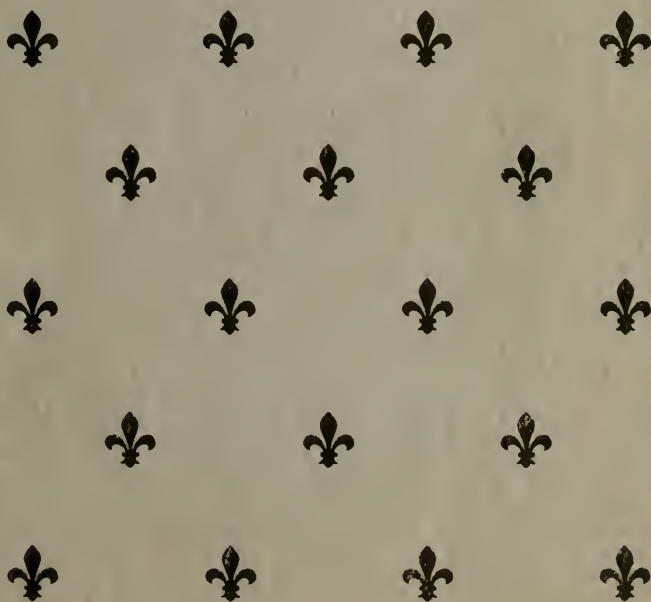


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Pioneer Sketches

NEBRASKA and TEXAS



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PIONEERS COMING TO NUCKOLLS COUNTY, NEBRASKA.

Pioneer Sketches

NEBRASKA and TEXAS



Straley, W
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HICO, TEXAS
HICO PRINTING CO.
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FOREWORD

This little volume was begun while the compiler was editor of the Nuckolls County Herald, Nelson, Nebraska, in the spring of 1910, and was reprinted from a series of papers published in that newspaper. In May of that year, I moved to Hico, Texas, where I was elected editor of the News-Review. After entering my editorial duties in the latter office I resumed the publication of the sketches, but concerning Texas history only.

These sketches are not as complete as they might have been, but are just as the articles appeared in the two above papers. It was not our intention to make a volume beautiful, but merely to record and preserve these items of history for future generations to read.

If these chapters have entertained you, and incidentally instructed you, we feel repaid for our efforts.

W. STRALEY.

Hico, Texas, October 21, 1915.

I.—OX TEAM DAYS.



IN the days prior to the placing of the county seat of Nuckolls county at Nelson, in fact before Nelson was even large enough to scarcely be called a hamlet, there moved to this section from the eastern part of the state one Joseph VanValin together with his family, consisting of a wife and three sons. This was in '73.

Mr. VanValin settled on a tract one mile east of Nelson, which he put into cultivation.

In those days a house in this section was a luxury enjoyed by a few. The dug-out was the usual place of abode, and in such Mr. VanValin and family continued to reside for some six years. These dug-out dwellings were not very substantially built, nor were they as rainproof as the modern houses which are now our homes. In speaking of those days, long since past, with the estimable wife of the pioneer, she laughed at the many "soakings" they received during those six years, as the scenes of by-gone days passed before her mind. Every rain played havoc with the dirt roof until finally Mr. Van Valin went to Edgar and procured lumber and shingles and built a much better roof to his under-ground home.

In those days horses were scarce, and the hardy pioneer used oxen in their stead. An ox team now would be an interesting and amusing sight to the present inhabitants of Nelson and vicinity. But in the 70's the ox was it. So, of course, Mr. Van Valin had such a team; one of which was "muly"—had no horns.

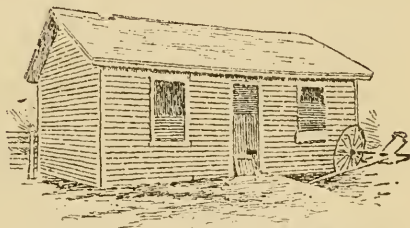
During one nice day in the summer of '74 Messrs. Van Valin and Byron Adkisson were to work the public road about two miles west of our present Nelson. On the way as they passed through the little settlement, Mrs. VanValin accompanying them, they went to each house and gathered up the women folks to go along and spend the day with the wife of Mr. R. M. Gourley, who lived near where the road work was to be done.

The entire female population of the little burg were soon on the ox-wagon excursion—viz: Mesdames Adkisson, Ritterbush and Follmer and Miss Josie Adkisson (now the wife of Judge Hall).

The start was made and everything was going smoothly until the team started down the hill near the Gray place a mile west of Nelson, when something happened. In going down hill the oxen tried to hold back, and as the "muly" one pulled back the absence of the horns let the yoke slip over his head, which put the party in a very peculiar predicament, and caused the two gentlemen quite a bit of trouble in getting the ox back in place and moving the wagon safely down the hill. But all were glad that the accident did not prove disastrous. They continued the journey, spent an enjoyable day with Mrs. Gourley and in the evening returned home, each feeling refreshed by the outing and a chance to enjoy a few hours together socially.

Game was quite plentiful at that time—deer, turkeys, prairie chickens, quail, etc. One evening Mr. VanValin while on his way home passed the place east of town now owned by Mr. Scherzinger when he saw a number of wild turkeys alight in a tree, and not having a gun to shoot them with he proceeded to throw a club at them and succeeded in knocking one out, which he secured and took home with him and on the next day had turkey for dinner.

Now the dug-out is gone; the game is here no more; and the oxen has been replaced by the horse and foul smelling automobile.



FIRST FRAME HOUSE IN NELSON
Courtesy Nelson Gazette.

II.—TRYING TIMES IN 1873.



THE following sketch was handed us by Mr. D. W. Wright of Nelson. He has pictured the experiences his father's family underwent in Nuckolls county in the year 1873. His father, W. B. Wright, is now living on the old homestead southeast of Nelson.

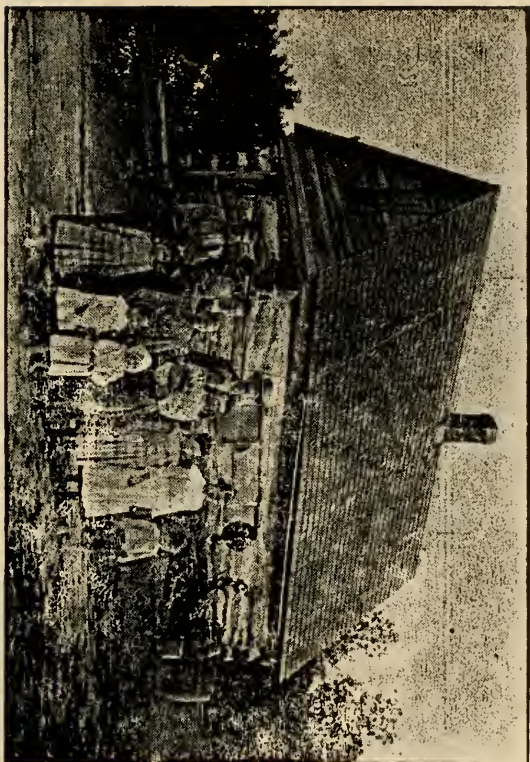
"We started from near Otomway, Iowa, with a good team of horses and a few cattle, and landed at Beatrice in the latter part of September, 1872, where we wintered, as they said there was nothing to do for a living farther west.

"During our stay in Beatrice, father hauled rock for some of the best buildings there.

"He paid \$300 for the right of a homestead to C. J. Jacobs, Alfred Harsis' father-in-law. Then we traded for two yoke of oxen to begin life right in the West.

"We arrived at our homestead in Nuckolls county, May 10, 1873. There were ten acres of broken land on the place and 9x12 'dug-out' on the southeast corner of the tract. This 'dug-out' had a half window in the gabled front. There were six of us in the family, and we had a bed, stove, table and several boxes in this 9x12 room. Sister and I slept on the table, and were always sure of our bed being made.

"Father had \$7 in money to build and do all the improving with, and with which to keep up a sickly wife and a family of helpless children.



W. B. WRIGHT'S LOG MANSION BUILT IN '73 - PHOTO BY WRIGHT.

"His machinery consisted of a wagon, breaking plow, harrow, scythe, axe, hoe and a $1\frac{1}{8}$ -inch auger.

"Our nearest neighbor on the east was Alfred Harris, two miles; on the north, Mr. Alender, one and a half miles; on the west they said twenty miles—but we never saw him.

"We sowed the ten acres in wheat the first year, cut it with a cradle and threshed it with a flail.

"Father began to break prairie, and soon the plow blade got dull. He cold-hammered it out on a piece of railroad rail about eight inches long for an anvil. This did not do very well, so he built a furnace out of sod in which to heat his lays. He used wood instead of coal to heat them with. His cutter broke and he could not weld it, so he carried it about twelve miles distant to a man who had a forge and coal to get it mended.

"We planted some sod corn. Father took the axe and I the corn; he drove the axe through the sod and I dropped in the corn, and then another lick with the axe and the seed was covered.

"When it did not rain enough to fill the ponds (buffalo wallows) to water the cattle, sister and I drove them once a day to a pond in a draw two miles east of us, where there was water. We were afraid and disliked it very much, but it had to be done. When the wiggle-tails were too thick to strain out of the water from the little holes in the draws, father hauled water in a barrel on a sled from Mr. Alender's.

"When we went visiting we rode on a sled. In the summer-time the wagon-bed was set off on some blocks, as that was the only means of keeping the clothing dry, as it had a good cover, and the 'dug-out' leaked—and there was not room to put the things and live there too.

"Father had to build a house, so during the summer he

cut logs on the creeks from far and near, as the right lengths were hard to find. The logs were twenty-eight feet long and so crooked that when one end was on the wagon the other was laying on the ground—some of them had to be swung under the wagon and hauled home in that manner. In the fall we had a log raising. Among those who helped to raise the house were: Fred and Alfred Harris, —. Alender, T. J. Hewett, E. L. Downing, and others. We used mud for mortar to fill the cracks between the logs, and chunks of wood in the holes formed by the crooked timbers. The house was covered with a series of ribs, over which was put a layer of willows, which in turn was covered with grass, then a final covering of earth on top of all—not a board was used in the entire building. At first we hung up a piece of old carpet for a door—the building also had two half windows. When a door was finally put in, the lumber and nails came from Sutton, about forty miles distant. The grass was knee-high under the bed for a year or two, as we did not get to tramp it off there.

“Father made us a bedstead, split from a log. He made us shoes out of the tops of old boots which had been brought along in case of necessity; and the soles were made out of saddle skirts, as we did not need the saddles—our oxen not being broke to ride.

“In the summer while we were in the ‘dug-out’ father heard a terrible noise which sounded like some one in deep distress; he went out and listened, and it proved to be a bunch of Texas cattle¹ which had stampeded. A man was on a pony ahead of the cattle hollowing as loud as he could, endeavoring to attract the cattle so that he could turn them to stop—get them to mill, as we say, or come into the back

¹ These cattle were being herded here at that time.

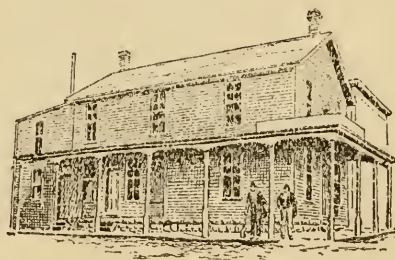
part of the herd, when they would run in a circle and then break up. About ninety head lost their horns during the stampede, caused by striking against one another in the run.

"There were lots of deer and antelope here in those days. One day mother and I saw animals coming into our corn so we took the dog and chased them off; they proved to be deer. Father saw a few buffalo. There were lots of prairie chickens on the prairie, but no quail.

"In August the county was devastated by a prairie fire.

"The up-land hay was no good, and what was secured had to be cut in the draws.

"We were ready for winter in our new home, the largest log house in the county, and we thought it a mansion—dirt floor and roof. We had a cross log to hold up the long logs in the roof, the cross logs being about five feet above the floor. These cross logs felt many a soft head that bumped them. Ask Will Welch if he ever felt the soft side of one of these logs."



NUCKOLLS COUNTY'S FIRST COURT HOUSE.
Courtesy Nelson Gazette.

III.—EARLY DAYS IN NUCKOLLS COUNTY.

NARRATED BY MR. D. W. SMITH.



SETTLED on a homestead in Nuckolls county, Nebraska, in April, 1872; my wife¹ coming to me six months later. We bore the inconveniences incident to pioneer life together, ever striving for the betterment of our home and community.

Luxuries of life were few.

We saw the buffalo here in 1873.

We broke up the wild prairie; cultivated and planted with our own hands the first fruit tree—watched it grow until it produced the long-looked for fruit, that we might eat and enjoy the fruits of our own hands.

We helped to organize and build school houses and churches in which our children and grand-children could be educated and taught "the way of Life," that they may be good and useful citizens of the county and community in which they live.

We have often asked this question: "Have we done any good?" Children and grand-children, take a walk with us over the roads, wade the rivers, walk the streets of our county seat on the native sod as we did not so many years ago. Yet, some of us are still here to walk with you on graded roads, cross the rivers over good bridges, and walk on paved walks in our county seat. "Have we done any

¹ Mrs. Smith died at Hastings, Nebraska, February 2, 1910.—En.



MR. AND MRS. D. W. SMITH.—PHOTO BY WRIGHT.

good?" We abide by your verdict, for it will not be long until our story will pass into the history of the past.

We claim the distinction of being the parents of the first white children born in Nuckolls county after the organization. On November 19, 1872, twins were born to us, viz: Hiram W. Smith and Katy B. (now the wife of Mr. R. F. Harriett)—all continue to reside in the county.

I am one who voted to locate the county seat at Nelson.

Personally I claim ancestral pioneer blood—my grandfather was among the first settlers who crossed the Ohio river where Stubenville now stands, and helped to build the first stockade there for defense against the Indians. From there with eighteen other men he migrated to near where Wooster, in Wayne county, Ohio, now is, and where my father, John M. Smith, was born in October, 1817. The Indians were plentiful in those days and had to be watched closely. Many are the stories of Indian butchery of those days which have been told me. I was born near Wooster, June 9, 1844. In 1850, I, with my father's family, removed to Allen county, Indiana, where on August 9, 1862, I enlisted in Company H 89th Indiana Infantry to take a three-year course in a "military school"—and was tutored in genuine instead of sham battles.

I have not had any fights with the Indians since coming to Nebraska, yet they have camped on my farm here many times during the early settlement of the county. I am not a friend to the Red Man.

I might tell many stories of my camping out on the prairie, fording swollen streams, traveling through rain and snow storms with well auger, and later with corn sheller and threshing machine.

During the early days here the people were kind and very hospitable, but often the little shanty would not ac-

commode all the guests, when they would go to the sheds, hay and straw stacks and arrange for a night's rest and sleep as best they could. I will give one such incident. At one place where we were threshing the crowd was too large to be accommodated in the shanty for the night, so the good woman gave us a quilt, which we took and arranged our bed on top of the threshed grain in a bin which had no roof. We were awakened in the night by the flashes of lightning and peals of thunder, and we had to change beds on short notice or get a good soaking. As the grain bin and straw stacks were no safe shelter from such a rain as was approaching, we took our quilts and got down under the bin, where we drove out an old sow and her pigs and occupied her bed 'till morning. But, oh! the fleas! If you want a witness to this story call on J. L. Donahoo or Ed. LaBounty.



IV.—RECOLLECTIONS OF PIONEER LIFE.

NARRATED BY MRS. ALICE HENBY-SAVIN.



WHEN my father, Willis Henby, with his family settled in Nuckolls county in 1870 the county was not organized, and was inhabited by Indians and wild animals.

Our transportation from Iowa was with one team of horses and one of oxen hitched to emigrant wagons containing our family and all our household goods; three good cows were brought

with us.

The first thing in the way of improvements when we landed on the homestead was the making of a "dug-out" (that's a house dug in the side of a bank); it was 12x16 with one window and one door; a fire-place was built in one end with a sod chimney; the floor was of dirt; the roof was covered with poles and brush, then sod and dirt on top. Our house was comfortable, but very dark when the door was closed, as the one window was just one sash. We lived in this house five years, then built a two-story house 18x24, which looked almost like a mansion in that day. But how happy we were to get out of the old "dug-out" and live on top of the ground once more.

My father went to Blue Springs the first winter we lived here and traded his ox team for flour and provisions to supply us the first year. Although he needed them to break out his claim, as oxen were used mostly for that kind of work,

but his family had to have bread, and there was no other way to get it and hold down the homestead.

The first winter we spent here was very mild (no snow) and our cows lived on the buffalo grass and looked well. But in the spring, when the wild flowers were in bloom, I think it was in April, we experienced a three days' blizzard that did much damage. All stock that was loose drifted with the storm and perished, and some were drifted under in sheds and smothered. We had some young calves, and having no place of shelter for them, we put them in our covered wagon and they came through alright.

One incident of that blizzard we have often laughed about, my father wore a high silk hat (such as they wore at that time); he thought he would see how things were and when he stuck his head out of the door the wind struck his hat with such force as to carry it over in Thayer county, where it was found after the snow went off.

Our greatest dread and fear the first year was Indians and prairie fires.

The Indians had made a raid through this country the spring before, killing a man living near the Blue river and took his team, then had a fight with the soldiers half a mile from our home. The soldiers shot down their own ponies to make a breast-work for defense during the fight. Of course the settlers expected the Indians any time the following spring. Many false rumors were started about the Indians coming. An Englishman who was getting wood on Spring creek came rushing in, much excited, and informed us that the Indians were coming. He said, "Hi knew they weren't hantalope, for hi see their 'eads!". But they proved to be men looking up land. The Indians did not bother us, and all alarms proved false.

But we did have some experience with prairie fires. Once

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MR. AND MRS. WILLIS HENBY.—PHOTO BY WRIGHT.
Mr. Henby died in 1890, aged 78. Mrs. Henby died in 1905, aged 78.

they swept Spring creek, burned out our corrals and stampeded our cattle. Father went to look for them and night overtook him causing him to lose his way and wander around all night, and morning found him in Kansas, near the White Rock mounds. He knew where he was then, and returned home, finding the cattle had come home before him. For days the timber burning on the creek made it almost suffocating for us.

There was much wild game here—buffalo, deer, elk and antelope. Every spring my father would kill enough buffalo to supply our summer's meat, which was cured and dried, and very good, we thought. Through the season we would often have fresh antelope meat, which tasted something like mutton. Elk and deer were somewhat scarce at times.

My brother, Will, caught a young antelope in the grass, where it had been hid by its mother, and was just a few days old; we made a pet of it—called him "Bob." He soon learned his name, and would drink milk from our hands. This animal was a beauty, but when his antlers grew he proved worse than a "billy goat" to butt, and the only way we could get rid of his charges on us was to set the dogs after him; no dog could catch him, but he would give them a merry chase. He got so he would run away and people would shoot at him, and caused us so much trouble that brother sold him.

Once when my brother, Oscar, and I were herding the cattle we heard a rumbling noise that sounded like distant thunder. In a moment we knew what it was. I said, "Let's run for home;" but he (boylike) said, "No, let's hide behind a hill and see them!" It was a bunch of nine buffalo, bellowing and pawing the earth, for they were closely pursued by hunters, and some of them were wounded. We did not realize the danger we were in at the time, because if the

buffalo had scented us there would have been no one left to tell this story.

Our first Sunday schools were held from house to house, and although some had to walk or drive oxen they would go for miles to attend and have a social time together.

There was no preaching for several years.

Our nearest railroad station was Nebraska City, 150 miles away.

Our postoffice was Hebron, 20 miles distant, where we got our mail once a week.

The first wheat we raised we took to a flouring mill in Jefferson county, some 35 miles distant. It took three days to make the round trip. Once we got out of breadstuff before father could make the trip, so we used potatoes instead.

The first school I attended in Nebraska was in a little 10x12 "dug-out" with rude benches for seats. We furnished our own books; and there were three pupils in attendance. We had a spelling school one night. My! what a grand affair we thought it. People came for miles; one family walked five miles and back that night. Everyone took part in the spelling match. That seemed to be a beginning of interest along educational lines.

I might tell of hardships and privations we met from grasshoppers, hailstorms and drouths, but my story is long enough, so I will leave that for others to tell.



MR AND MRS. JOSEPH VAN VALIN.—PHOTO BY WRIGHT.
Mr. VanValin died in 1905, aged 69.

V.—SOME FIRST THINGS.

NARRATED BY MRS. JOSEPH VANVALIN.



WE came to Saunders county, Nebraska, in 1871, and removed to Nuckolls county in September, 1873; making the trip overland with two wagons, one being drawn by oxen; was eight days on the road.

Mr. VanValin had been here during the summer breaking and planting the ground to sod corn. The next year he planted wheat and corn. The wheat was securely stacked when the grasshoppers came and deliberately robbed us of every bit of corn and garden truck, except parts of several cabbage heads, which, after considering my safety to venture forth into such an army, I gathered a wash boiler full of the remains of the garden.

Frank Thompson stated that one of the big grasshoppers had the audacity to ask him for a chew of tobacco. They certainly were saucy enough to do anything.

The school house in District No. 14, two miles east of Nelson, was built that fall, and the first teacher was Miss Ola Carlon, afterwards Mrs. Ethan Parker, who is well known here by the older citizens.

The first church building was erected by the members of different denominations, but owned by the so-called Christian church.

It is interesting to settle on the frontier and watch the progress and development in the different stages.

What we considered the greatest thing with which we had to contend was the prairie fires.

Despite the struggles and privations there were pleasures on every hand, if we would but look on the bright side.

F. A. Long conducted the first hotel in Nelson.

The first newspaper, *The Inter Ocean*, was established by Dr. Case, assisted by a young man named Oakey Mamey. Dr. Case was Nelson's first physician.

The first legal light was Dan Barker.





NUCKOLLS COUNTY COURT HOUSE.



D. W. WRIGHT

VI.—REMINISCENCES OF 1873-4.

NARRATED BY MR. D. W. WRIGHT.



URING one cold night in the winter of 1873-4 the squall of a chicken woke father, and he yelled so loud that the wolf which was after the chicken left it. But in a short time the animal tried to get the fowl again, and once more father yelled, which caused the intruder to leave. The fowl was found next morning to be unharmed. For some reason the dog was not at home.

During this winter we dug a well. It was 63 feet deep and was walled up with stone for about 15 feet, and was never walled any farther. This well did not cave so long as the water was kept from running in at the top. We drew the water with a windless, which was used to take out the dirt while digging the well, and was a rather slow process. But sister and I could draw the water by having a handle at each end of the rope beam. The first summer this well was in use we kept it covered with boards—the sideboards off the wagon. At one time a sow with her pigs were in the yard, and while the dog was chasing her away she ran across one end of the boards titlting up the other end under which one of the little pigs ran into the well. We heard the splash. The little fellow swam around until we got the half barrel, which had been used to haul the dirt up in, which we lowered into the water and the pig swam into the tub and was hoisted out unhurt, after a fall of 63 feet. It

was a happy pig, and glad to get back to its mamma. This well was also used as a refrigerator in which we kept our butter firm and cool—by lowering the pail containing the cakes down quite a distance attached to a cord.

We lost the best yoke of oxen we had during the winter. They were of the long horn Texas variety. They threw themselves one night, and becoming chilled their legs were soon frozen, and they would not try to get up. These animals were brown and each had a set of horns which measured some four feet from tip to tip. I used to feel very small when they would stick up their heads and look wild-like at me. I could not do anything with them unless they were yoked up, as they were not very tame.

We had the native yoke of cattle left, but they were old.

We put in our crop of corn and began to break out more land.

In the summer we could see the grasshoppers flying north, and they were so thick that a person could look at the sun at noonday without dazzling the eyes.

Our corn was a little late, and one afternoon about four o'clock the 'hoppers began to light in on us from the north, and in half an hour the yard was completely covered with them, as also was the corn. They made a roaring noise in eating the corn plants. The next day there wasn't a blade left. The garden was eaten up too—nothing but the holes where the turnips and onions were planted were left.

We had no wheat that year; but those who did had a good crop.

We planted squash when we planted the corn, and the grasshoppers almost destroyed the vines, but after the 'hoppers left we were blessed with several good rains, and the vines began to bloom nicely and finally made a good yield.

We put the squashes away in a dug-out for winter; father also sold \$25 worth at 10 cents each.

We did not have butter to put on our squash, as we had no feed to keep the cattle up. So father thought the cows would do better to let them go through the winter without giving milk, and they were turned dry in the fall—consequently we had neither butter or milk. To our surprise the cattle kept fat all winter from running on the buffalo grass on the prairies. When there was no snow on the ground the stock would go out and pick the buffalo grass like it was summer—they would not eat nice bright hay when they could get the buffalo grass—and there was plenty of it, as the upland had very little of any other kind.

During the fall we had to butcher the two or three hogs we had to keep them from starving to death, and they were so poor that they did not contain grease enough to fry themselves in.

Other states sent aid to this section during the winter. Our distributing point was Edgar. Father would go after a load early in the morning and make the trip in a day. He would start from Edgar with 2000 pounds of supplies, and by the time he reached home he had made a trip of about 40 miles, and they would set him out a 50lb sack of corn meal for his day's work. We had to sift out the mouse nests from some of it before we could eat. We always had plenty of such, as it was to keep from starving, but it was cornbread seven days in the week. We often had callers who were as hungry as we to share the cornbread with, but had nothing with which to pay for what they ate, yet no one was turned away hungry or refused a night's lodging; every man was a brother whether we had ever seen him before or not.

Father traded a neckyoke to a neighbor for a bushel of

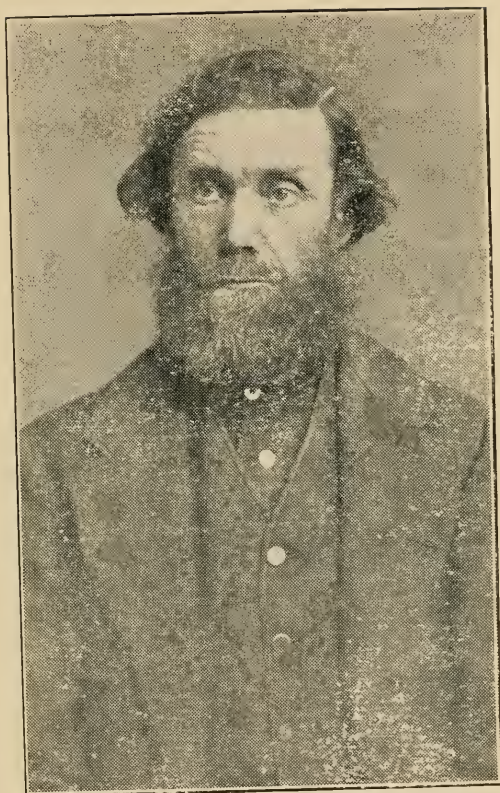
potatoes. Mother would boil one or two for the younger children, and the older ones would eat the peelings; this would make mother cry, but we did not know we were hurting her feelings by potato peelings.

Sometime in the latter part of the winter or early spring father traded his oxen and wagon for a team of horses and and wagon—just changed drivers.

The nearest grist mill was at Hebron, thirty miles away.

We had no corn or oats with which to feed the horses, so we got some wheat through the "aid," which we boiled and gave to each animal a quart at a feed, and they did nicely on this ration. Today, what could we do with one small team for breaking prairie and raising a crop? Then, in a short time, we traded for a span of small mules, but they had been overheat and when warm weather came were not much force; these we traded for another team of horses, one of which was said to be balky, but we never saw him balk—these animals were small, in fact most all the horses here at that time were small; I do not remember seeing a team that would weigh over 1200.

The grasshoppers had laid their eggs in the sod in the fall, and during a warm spell of weather the following spring they hatched out, and then we had about three weeks of cold, chilly, rainy weather which caused the 'hoppers to perish. During that time father was setting back the sod, and the young 'hoppers would get into the furrow for shelter and by the time the team came around in plowing the 'hoppers were so thick they would cause the horses to slip. If they had been full grown they would have filled the furrow. In the winter we placed a pod of the eggs on a fire-shovel and then poured boiling water on the eggs, and, instead of cooking them, in five minutes we had a full-formed 'hopper in each egg.

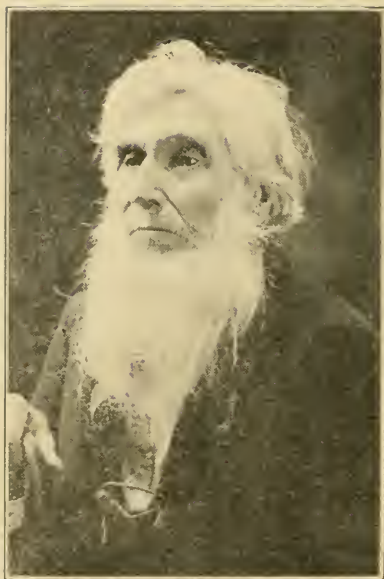


W. B. WRIGHT.

During the first year we were here Indian relics were so common we did not take any notice of them. We found lots of arrow-heads and stones for grinding food; we also found brass rings, buckels, a canteen, arrow-points and empty cartridge hulls around the carcass' of the buffalo; in those days many deer and elk horns were quite plentiful, which today would be valuable as relics, but we never thought of saving them, and they lay around the house until lost or picked up by people visiting from other states.

The first five years, from '73 to '78, were the trying times. We never heard a sermon for four years, and had no Bible schools until years after. You look at this country now and see the wealth and everything civilization brings, but you can never realize the cost of it all to the pioneer. I feel like taking off my hat when I meet these old men of courage who had hearts of steel, and who always gave a warm welcome to the stranger in need of food or shelter. In these men and women still is found the greatest hospitality today. There are very few exceptions to these principles of the pioneer life. We cannot show to high appreciation for what they have done for us.

<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>



JAMES PARKERSON

DEATH OF JAMES PARKERSON, AGED 118 YEARS.¹

WE are called upon this week to chronicle an event which very seldom falls to the lot of the average editor—publish the obituary of a citizen who has lived one full century and in part of two others; but such is our duty today. The town was shocked when word went out that the oldest citizen of the city had “crossed over the river,” and the news was received with much regret.

James Parkerson was born in the State of Tennessee, October 22, 1793, and died in Hico, Texas, November 17, 1911, at the advance age of 118 years, 1 month and 26 days. His faithful companion, who is past 92 years of age, was with him at the time his spirit took its departure.

The funeral was conducted at the residence at 1 o'clock Saturday afternoon, Rev. Britton Ross, pastor of the Baptist church, performing the last sad rites. Interment was made in the Hico cemetery.

We deem it a privilege to have known a man who had such vitality and vim to master Old Father Time as did this man, but regret that we have not taken the opportunities to learn some of his interesting history. However, through the kindness of Mr. G. Fisk, editor of the *Osco Round-Up*, we are permitted to reprint the following sketch which appeared in a special edition of that excellent

¹ Reprinted from The Hico (Texas) News-Review, date of November 24, 1911.

paper issued some two years ago, at which time Mr. Parkerson was a resident of Cisco:

James Parkerson, living near Cisco, is said to be the oldest man living. He was born on the 22nd day of October, 1793, in the State of Tennessee. He has lived in three centuries, and has fought in every one of our country's wars since 1812. As shown by government and veteran pension rolls he served in the Black Hawk war, Mexican war and the Texas Independence war, and draws a pension, \$16.00 per month, from the Black Hawk war. He was with Hickory Jackson in his wars and in the New Orleans battle. He lived in Eastland county before the war, on the Leon. Being a Confederate soldier he attends the Eastland county reunion, and is sure from year to year that he will attend the next meeting. He is the father of eight children, has thirty grand-children living, and he does not know how many great-grand-children. His second wife, now ninety years old, is still living. Two of his sisters, each over one hundred years old, live in Fort Smith, Arkansas. It is remarkable to say he has never worn glasses, can read without them. Having used tobacco for about twenty years, he is not a slave to it. Over fifty years ago he joined the Baptist church and has lived the consistent life of a christian ever since. Very few of his teeth have been given to the dentist, and his hair is only medium grey. Has a heavy beard, is quite erect in figure, walks with a cane, and it takes a young man to keep apace with him. In conversation with him as to how he had fared through life, he said he had been hungry many times, living on pop corn for a week at a time, but at the hard intervals in life he gave very little thought to something for himself, it was always for others. After a conversation with him it should make the young of today take on new aspirations, and strive to live as long as this old man has, and at his extreme age be as active.

THE FAMOUS DOVE CREEK FIGHT.¹



THROUGH the courtesy of some of the few survivors of the famous Dove Creek fight, we give below a sketch of the marches and history of the fight from the time march was taken up until it ended.

Mr. George Scrutchfield of Clifton has furnished us with data taken from the diary of his father, the late Judge Scrutchfield, who was a member of the party. Judge Scrutchfield kept tab on the dates and many interesting incidents that the students of today have not heard of, and which are not only a part of the history of Texas, but are interesting to read.

There are only six survivors of this fight that are now living in Comanche county, these being Jack Wright, John Anderson, George Jaynes, Aaron Cunningham, Dave Cunningham, Dick Cunningham.

We are pleased to be able to give our readers an account of this expedition, which was the biggest Indian fight that ever took place in Texas, and while not written in the Texas histories, it was a turning point in her history. Without the Dove Creek fight Texas' history would no doubt have been different from what has been recorded. The following is taken from the diary of Judge Scrutchfield:

"Friday, Dec. 16, 1864. Order came for the militia to

¹ Reprinted from *The Comanche (Texas) Chief*, date of November 25, 1911.

meet at Meridian on the 18th. Capt. Gillintine had discovered a camp and trail of Indians on the Clear Fork of the Brazos, 35 miles above Fort Phantom Hill. Capt. Totton and I started to Waco in the evening and rode until late in the night.

"Dec. 17. We got to Waco, bought 6,000 caps, got four Tonks for trailers. Captain left that night for home. I stayed.

"Dec. 18. Came home with the Indians.

"Dec. 19. Reached Meridian at 9 o'clock in the night in the rain.

"Dec. 20. Reached Wiley's store in the snow.

"Dec. 21. Reached Stephenville. Snow deep.

"Dec. 22. Camped 6 miles above Stephenville.

"Dec. 23. Marched to Jamison's Peak and camped, horses stampeded in the night.

"Dec. 24. Stayed in camp all day. Hunted horses.

"Dec. 25. Marched all day; camped above Flanigan's ranch.

"Dec. 26. Reached Camp Salmon. Company organized. Whole strength, 500 men.

"Dec. 27. Marched all day and camped at night in mesquite flat on Hubbard's Creek.

"Dec. 28. Left camp in the evening and marched five miles and camped.

"Dec. 29. Marched three miles and camped.

"Dec. 30. March all day. Camp on the Clear Fork. No grass. Very cold.

"Dec. 31. March half day to grass. Kill several buffaloes.

"Jan. 1, 1865. Marched to Elm Creek, close to Indian trail. Camped and killed several buffaloes in the evening.

"Jan. 2. Marched to Little Elm Creek on the trail. Went out in the evening and killed a buffalo. Saw the Double Mountains, high topped hills on the head of the Brazos.

"Jan. 3. March on trail to head of Elm Creek and camp in a flat.

"Jan. 4. March on trail to Oak Creek.

"Jan. 5. Reached the Colorado.

"Jan. 6. (Manuscript to dim to decipher.)

"Jan. 7. Camped on the Concho. At 9 o'clock express came from Capt. Fossett that the Indians' camp was discovered 35 miles distant. In saddle in ten minutes. March until 2 o'clock. Halt, form a line and issue caps. March on until day the 8th, dismount, load guns, mount and ride on across Spring Creek. Join Fossett with 200 men. Made the attack. Got whipped. Twenty men killed and 25 wounded. Fell back 6 miles to Spring Creek, a running creek.

"Jan. 9. Stayed in camp; snow 15 inches deep.

"Jan. 10. Marched down the Concho carrying the wounded on litters—snow deep—starvation in the camp. Camped on the Concho.

"Jan. 11. March all day.

"Jan. 12. Stayed in camp and sold the Indian horses. Two men dead; still carrying corpses on litters.

"Jan. 13. March all day and camp at night in the bed of a creek.

"Jan. 14. Reach settlement on the Concho.

"Jan. 15. Bury the dead and cross Colorado River and camp on Elm Creek.

"Jan. 16. Camp on Muke Water.

"Jan. 17. Cross Pecan Bayou.

"Jan. 18. Cross the mountains.

"Jan. 19. Cross the Leon.

"Jan. 20. Reach Mills Creek.

"Jan. 21. Reach home."

The following was told to us by Uncle John Anderson, who is well known to the people of Comanche, and who has displayed his wonderful memory in giving the sketch as he has, which follows:

"James H. Mabry and Capt. Gillintine are buried one mile above the mouth of the Concho, at Bruce McCain's. After the battle was over we marched to the mouth of the Concho, where we pitched camp. I was acquainted with Bruce McCain, and I went to him and asked if he would let us have some lumber to make coffins for our comrades; he stated that he would let us have the lumber, but that he would have to take it from the walls of his house, which he did. He tore a petition from the house to furnish us the lumber to bury the two dead.

"Gillintine was killed in the Dove Creek fight. He, Capt. Cunningham and myself were behind a second bank, side by side loading our guns, and Gillintine walked behind us and said he was going to get upon the bank and said he was going to get a shot at the Indians. We tried to get him not to do it, that he would get killed, and he said he was going to try one shot. He got up there and walked about one step and his gun fired. He turned and handed his gun to me, and I asked him if he was hurt, and he said: 'John, I am a dead man.' I let him down. I took his gun and let the hammer down and started with him and

met some of his men and turned him over to them, and I went back to where Capt. Cunningham was, and he had moved, and they all commenced falling back into the valley.

"We were then right in range of the Indians, and I told Scrutchfield that there was no use for us to sit there in line as targets for those Indians. They had long-range guns and overshot us was all that saved us. He said: 'I won't move without Capt. Cunningham moves.' I said: 'I will see the Captain,' and I went and told him how the thing was. He said: 'Totton will rally the men, I never will.' And some of the men spoke up and said: 'We had better get away from here;' and Ike Richardson came along and said: 'John, I want a drink,' and I said: 'I do, too.' I sent my canteen to Mabry and we started up the creek, and I cast my eyes into the thicket to our left and told Ike to look into that thicket. When he did, he turned to me and said: 'Ha! ha! I don't want any water either.' And we didn't go on after the water. We went on up on the hill and there were eight or ten boys stopped, and it was right from there that I killed two Indians, and I think I killed the one that had killed Noah Bibbes.

"Capt. Gillintine died Monday evening just as the sun went down. Sam Burnes was left in the thicket. They went back later and got him and buried him. A number were sent back to the battle field the next day to bury the dead that he had left. Among these I remember, Ike Richardson, who afterward died at Hamilton; Dave Smith, who was once sheriff of Hamilton, and who died there; Bill Poole of Falls county and Jim McCabe, Capt. Totten, probably Sam Powers, and several others I cannot recall. I met them as they reached the top of the hill, and Totten

asked me if I wanted to go with them. I told him I would if there was no more running, and he stated there would positively be no running this time. And I went. The dead were buried on the Concho river just about one mile above where it runs into the Colorado river.

"George Jaynes, who now resides in Comanche, was cut off from the crowd by the Indians, and left on the battle field, though not wounded. I met John Jaynes going back to hunt him that evening, and I told him that George was not killed. He slipped into camp after dark that night. He said the Indians were packing up to leave when he left there.

"Some have the mistaken idea that Capt. Totten was a stranger in this county at the time of this expedition, and that he was a coward. I was with him during the march and in the battle, and no braver man has ever faced the enemy upon any battle field. I had known Capt. Totten several years before this time, he having been one of the boys of this country. He did not know the meaning of the word surrender, and, in fact, was too determined in the fight. While he was a modest man and had plenty of friends, he believed that he was fighting for his friends and his country, and was a stayer all the way through. After the war he went to Brazil, and I understand that since that time he came back and went to Illinois. I do not know whether he is still living."

Uncle Dave Cunningham, who needs no introduction to you, shows a remarkable recollection in the following history of this fight; his account parallels the two preceeding, and is as follows:

"In December, 1864, Capt. Gillintine, Erath county,

with a scout of rangers, while on the upper Brazos discovered a large Indian trail leading off in a southwesterly direction. He followed the trail until he satisfied himself that they were too strong for his small force, and also that their presence in the country, he believed, meant disturbance and trouble. He immediately gave the alarm throughout the settlements, and all the available force in the counties of Erath, Johnson, Bosque, Coryell, Hamilton, Comanche, Brown and Coleman were mustered with orders to meet at Camp Selman on Deep Creek, now in Stephens county.

"When Capt. Gillintine returned home he dispatched word to Capt. Barry, who at the time was on the frontier with troops. Barry forthwith sent a squad of his men into the Colorado country to watch the movement of the Indians until Gillentine could get his force ready, which took several days. We started from Comanche on the 21st of December with forty men under command of James Cunningham, with Lieut. J. A. Wright and Jessie Greene, and succeeded in reaching Camp Selman three or four days later, where reinforcements from the several counties before mentioned rallied. Our force numbered about four hundred strong. With Capt. Totten in command, we resumed our march. We struck the trail on the Clear Fork of the Brazos. It lead in a southwesterly direction and crossed the Colorado about where Colorado City is now located, thence to the North Concho.

"After several days travel, and when in camp on North Concho, one night about 9 o'clock a courier rode in from Barry's men who were under command of Barry's men who were under command of Capt. Fossett, and reported that the Indians were encamped on Dove Creek about forty

miles distance. Orders were given to saddle at once. A detail was ordered to take care of the pack mules and to follow on the next morning. Fossett sent word for us to be there two hours by sun or we would be too late for the fight. A forced march all night, facing the coldest south wind that mortal man ever experienced, brought us to the place where Barry's men were camped about 8 o'clock on the morning of January 8, 1865.

"On our arrival we found Fossett's command located and secreted in a clump of timber, within a mile and a half of the Indians' camp. A war council was held by our officers and the plan of attack quickly agreed upon. The Indian encampment was on a creek and was about three quarters of a mile in extent. The plan agreed upon was that Fossett should attack on the west or upper encampment, and Totten the lower or eastern division. All things in readiness, with about five hundred men, the attack was made, and Fossett captured between six hundred and a thousand horses upon his first charge into the Indians' camp, and detailed a few of his men to hold them in the valley until the fight was over. But the fight was not over as soon as the captain supposed it would be, for in his first charge he lost several men, killed and wounded, together with several horses. In fact, the fight was so hot that Capt. Fossett had to retreat. He took a position on a hill, but the Indians soon made him leave. All this time Capt. Totten's men were fighting down the creek, but to little purpose, as the Indians being well fortified in a dense thicket, we had to dismount and leave our horses some distance north of the Indians' encampment and wade Dove Creek, which was from knee to waist deep, to get at the Indians. This we did several times, and in conse-

quence suffered great loss, as we were laboring under great disadvantages.

"On account of this the men became very much discouraged and a stampede was imminent.

"Capt. Fossett was completely cut off from us. We had lost heavily. The Indians had recaptured their horses. It was thought best to retreat, which we did. But it was a hard matter to make us do so in order, Capt. Cunningham's company bring up the rear of the retreat.

"Dr. Bateman took position on a little mountain north of the Indians' encampment so he could receive and care for the wounded men as they fell back to the rear, which he did with promptness. He said he fought five hours and thirty minutes before the retreat commenced. While we were retreating, the Indians flanked us on both sides and came up in the rear. They used long range guns and killed several of our men on the retreat. After traveling about one mile, we halted and made another fight, and drove the Indians back to their camp, this being the last attack made by Totten's men.

"All this time Capt. Fossett was fighting on the creek above (or west) of us. We then moved north to Spring Creek, carrying our wounded on blankets and horses as best we could. We struck camp about sunset. Capt. Fossett fought in self defense nearly all day. He was cut off from Totten's command early in the engagement and never saw any chance to join us during the day. Fossett came into our camp between sundown and dark, with his men terribly cut up. They had fought like demons all day.

"After we were all in camp, an examination showed that we had lost and left twenty-six killed on the battleground, and sixty wounded, of which several died after-

wards. We lost sixty or seventy horses killed and disabled in the fight.

"Just after dark it set in to snowing and snowed all night. The following morning the ground was covered from a depth of one to three feet with the fleecy covering. Our pack mules were completely cut off from us by the storm. We were out of provisions and started to travel, but the snow was so deep we could not, so we had to return to our camp-fires and await the melting of the snow. We had nothing to subsist on but horse meat. Our pack had some provisions, but were completely hemmed in by storm some thirty miles distant. After the snow had melted a little, we moved down the Concho as best we could, carrying our wounded or litters made of two poles strapped to two mules or horses. About the third day we intercepted our pack mules. They had enough provisions to give us a fine supper.

"While we were in the Colorado country it was thought best to have some beeves, and a detail was made to go to the nearest cattle and follow on. Rev. S. H. Powers was put in command of the detail for that purpose. He went and procured the beeves and followed on until the snow storm, which obliterated our trail until he too, as the pack mules did, had to take his own course. But luck was on our side. The beef men struck our trail after the snow storm and followed on until they overtook us, which was about three days. They secured eighteen or twenty beeves which were killed, and the most of them eaten that night.

"The next day we marched on down the Concho, reaching Chism ranch about two days later. There we obtained some provisions and camped that night.

"The following day Capt. Totten with about fifty men went back to the battle-grounds, gathered up the dead and buried them the best they could.

"The night after the battle the Indians built fires all over the encampment, packed up and started across the staked plains in the worst snow storm that we have any history of in this part of Texas. They must have suffered terribly with cold, as I learned afterwards that the loss they sustained in the fight and their travel across the plains that night was seventy or eighty; our loss being, as before stated, twenty-six left on the battle-field, several dying afterwards.

"We captured about seventy-five head of horses. The four Tonkawa Indians, that we had with us, deserve the credit for this, for when they saw that it was a bad fight, they gathered the stock and pushed for the pack mules.

"We made our way home from the Chism ranch at the mouth of the Concho River as best we could, gathering up just such provision as we could get.

"Thus the Dove Creek expedition and fight was ended.

"The battle was fought on the 8th day of January, 1865, between five hundred Texas Rangers and fifteen hundred or two thousand Indian warriors, on the lonely plains south of Dove Creek, and on this battle-ground lie the remains of twenty noble braves, there to await the call of the Master at the resurrection."

MURDER OF ANN WHITNEY AND AMANDA HOWARD'S BRAVERY.¹

BY CAPT. A. J. SOWELL, AN EX-RANGER.

THERE stood (in 1867) on the south bank of the Leon river in Hamilton county, a small log school house. A beautiful valley three-quarters of a mile wide and one and one-half miles long spread out in front—free from obstruction to view. This was called "Worlene Valley." The Howards lived half a mile west and John Baggott half a mile east of the school house. Ezekiel Manning and Alexander Powers lived one and a half miles south, but behind a hill. The Massengills, Ganns, Strangelines, Cole Kuykendall and James Kuykendall lived up the river within two miles. J. B. Hendrix and sons, Crockett and Abe, lived two miles below the river, Judge D. C. Snow and Nel Livingston, three and four miles down stream. The town of Hamilton was six miles southwest of the school house.

At the time the incident related here took place, Miss Ann Whitney was teaching in this border school. It was on Thursday, 2 p. m., July 11, 1867. The logs of the school house were unhewn and the spaces between were left open

¹ This account of the heroic death of Miss Whitney, written by Capt. A. J. Sowell, appeared in the Houston Post several years ago. In 1902 it was republished in the Hamilton Rustler and some years later was again reproduced in the Hamilton Herald at the request of L. V. Manning, a citizen of Hamilton county, who was one of the pupils in Miss Whitney's school when his teacher was so cruelly murdered by Indians. We reproduce the story from The El Paso Morning Times, February 29, 1912.

so that it was an easy matter for any one outside to see the inside of the building and to shoot at any one there if they wished to. There was a small window cut in the north side, and this was without a shutter. Olivia Barbee, about 12 years old, daughter of John Barbee, who lived northeast, about ten or twelve miles, was boarding in the neighborhood. Her father was a stockman and was expected to come after her that week while out stock hunting.

On this day at the hour mentioned, a daughter of Alexander Powers was at the door, which was on the south side of the house, overlooking the valley. While there she discovered a party of men on horseback, rapidly approaching, and was almost certain they were Indians. Miss Whitney seeing her standing at the door and looking so steadily, ask her what she saw. The reply was that she was looking at some mounted men in the valley who were coming toward the school house and she thought they were Indians. The school mistress told her to come away and be seated, and not to be so foolish as to talk about Indians, as the men were cow hunters.

Miss Whitney believed that it was Mr. Bagbee and others and did not look to see anything about them. The Powers girl, however, was still uneasy and soon went to the door again and took another look, crying out as she did so: "They are Indians," and running back, took her brother by the hand and getting out of the window, ran away. Miss Whitney then went to the door and after seeing the men told her children they were Indians and that they were taking Mary. Mary was the name of a fine saddle animal, the pet and property of Miss Whitney. She often made the remark, "If the Indians ever take Mary I want them to take me too."

When she became satisfied who the men were, she shut the door and told the children to escape by the window, so the Indians could not see them as they were coming up in front. All did this except Mary Jane, a daughter of Ezekiel Manning, who was sick, and two small sons and a little daughter of James M. Kuykendall. Miss Whitney was very large and fleshy, weighing about 230 pounds, and could neither get out of the window or hope to escape by running out at the door.

Many of the children, instead of seeking safety in the distance, crawled under the house, and there witnessed the terrible scene which was enacted in the bui'ding. The Indians soon surrounded the house and many ugly faces were seen at the cracks between the logs. One fellow indulged in a few oaths in broken English.

Reading her doom in the blood-thirsty looks of the savages, Miss Whitney's thoughts turned to the little ones that were in her care and addressing the Indian who had spoken the words in English, begged him to let her death satisfy them and permit the children to go unharmed.

The Indian addressed, held up three fingers to the balance and they commenced shooting between the logs. The sick little Manning girl clung to the skirts of her teacher's dress, as arrow after arrow struck her, until her life blood began to pour upon the floor and run through upon those under it. Miss Whitney walked from side to side of the room, marking every footstep with blood, and all the time entreating for the lives of the children.

The Indians finally came in front and commenced breaking in the door and Miss Whitney, although reeling and staggering in death, assisted the two little girls in getting out of the window, but Miss Kuykendall received an arrow

in the back as she went through, by an Indian who had at that time entered. This left the teacher and the two Kuykendall boys in the house and another Indian entered to complete the work, but too late to do any further harm to the young woman. She was gasping her last, meeting death heroically.

The Indian who could speak English was now called and when he entered asked the two boys if they wished to go with them. One, in his fright, said "yes" and the other said "no." Strange to say, the one who said "no," was rudely pushed down on a seat and left in the house, while the other was taken out placed on a horse and carried away. This was John Kuykendall.

In the meantime one of the redskins called into the house had discovered some of the children under the floor and had pulled Olivia Barbee out and was putting her up behind him when summoned to speak to the boys. This circumstance saved her from death or captivity for when the Indians left her she ran away and gained the woods. On the following day she was found by John Massengill, but the poor child was crazed with fright, and ran, so that he had to chase and run her down before bringing her in. She, however, soon recovered.

About the time the Indians made the attack on the school house two women rode into the valley from the south. They were Miss Amanda Howard and Mrs. Sarah Howard, the latter being the wife of Voley Howard, Miss Amanda's brother. They saw the Indians at the school house and at first took them to be cow hunters. They were discovered by the Indians before they had ridden far up the valley and two of them rode to meet them.

Fortunately the ladies soon saw their mistake and turn-

ed to the house of Mr. Baggett, toward the east which was nearer than their own home on the west side, the Indians coming in hot pursuit of them. Miss Howard had some difficulty in turning and starting her young horse, but when she had succeeded in doing so, the Indians were close upon her. She, however, was a brave young lady and never once lost her presence of mind.

Plying the whip vigorously, she dashed away from her pursuers and headed straight for Baggett's fence, determined to make her horse leap it if she could. For this purpose she lashed him furiously, and he cleared it at a single bound, carrying his burden to safety in Baggett's house. Mrs. Sarah Howard did not fare so well; her horse shied and turned suddenly to one side just as the fence was reached. She was thrown headlong over the fence and the Indians got her horse. However, she was not badly hurt, and springing to her feet, also escaped to Mr. Baggett's home.

While Miss Whitney was being killed at the school house and the other two women pursued, Mr. Strangeline entered at the west end of the valley at the Howard place and had proceeded about half way across the valley when he was attacked by some of the Indians who were leaving. Mr. Strangeline was moving and had his family with him. He was killed but not scalped. His wife and two children were wounded.

About this time Miss Amanda Howard, seeing what was going on, formed the bold design to warn the settlers of the presence of the Indians. To do this she would have to ride in the direction of the Indians and outride them in getting to the road that crossed the high hill to the south that led to the other settlement. Having determined upon this,

she mounted her half wild steed and commenced her dangerous ride.

Dashing furiously at the fence she again cleared it, and putting the whip to her horse, she urged him to his best speed. Miss Howard was well started before the Indians discovered what her aim was, and when they did, they left off the attack upon Strangeline's family and rushed at full speed to head off the young woman. Miss Howard's mission was an heroic undertaking for any man to attempt, even a fearless Texas ranger, on a fast and well trained horse. She was riding into the very jaws of death, without a weapon of defense, depending on her skill alone in managing an unbroken horse, not bridle-wise, and the speed that she might be able to get out of him to carry the news to distant settlements of the fearful scenes enacted in the valley. Happily, she won the race a few rods and swept past the Indians, gaining the road and turning east; while the Indians hurriedly turned west and left the valley, carrying the Kuykendall boy with them.

The daring of Miss Howard, a beautiful and intelligent young woman, scarcely seventeen years of age, no doubt saved many lives. Her first act, when she made the horse leap the fence to gain Baggett's house, drew the Indians away from the school house, and when she made the run to reach the road, so as to carry the news out of the valley, she drew them away from the Strangelines, and once more from the school house. All hail the name of Miss Amanda Howard, and may her memory ever be kept green in the minds of her countrymen.

We must not, however, forget the dead young lady at the school house whose bloody form was stiffening in death. Time and again she begged the Indians to kill her and let

the little ones go, and with her last remaining strength, her body, full of arrows and bathed in blood, she assisted two of them to get through the window while the Indians were breaking in the door.

Miss Howard reached the Manning and Power ranches and warned them; then sped on to see Mr. Hendrix, who at once sent his son, Abe, to the Pearson ranch for bloodhounds. Pearson called his dogs and with the Howards, Mr. Hendrix and several others, took the trail which led into the mountains, where the Indians separated. The day was hot and there was no water to be had. The dogs finally failed, owing to the fact that their feet were bruised and swollen. A man whose horse had given out, was sent back with them, and the chase continued until night put an end to it. The men had ridden more than one hundred miles without stopping. The Indians were well mounted, but had bandoned all of the horses they were driving and gave all of their attention to making their escape.

The Kuykendall boy remained with the Indians about two years, and was finally purchased from them and restored to his father.



THE BEAUTIFUL STEER.¹

Oh, the steer, the beautiful steer,
Kicking the fleas from the point of his ear,
Flapping its tail in its frolicsome glee,
Hopping about like a Snake-river flea.

Bellowing!

Roaring!

Thundering along!

Filling the air with its steerical song,
Till the rumble from its lung-laden pits
Scares timid jack-rabbits and wolves into fits,
To me there is nothing on earth half so dear
As the long-horned, slim-bodied Texican steer.

How often I wish that I was a steer,
With a long shiny horn at the butt of each ear;
With a clear, fearless eye, and a tapering tail
That would snap like a whip in the maddening gale.

How I'd beller

And roar!

And paw up the ground!

And lope over the hills with a thundering sound,
And snort like a terror, and hump up my back
When I saw the wild cow-boy pursuing my track—
And I'd laugh at his oaths as he fell to the rear,
Oh, I'd be a Jo-dandy if I was a steer!

¹ The author of this poem, Miss Ella Paxton, known as the "Cow-girl of the Panhandle," several years ago favored an enlightened western audience with the above original production, which, in her introductory remarks, she styled a "paradox on "Beautiful Snow." She also stated that it was "paradoxed" while sitting on her horse on day-herd on her father's ranch in the Panhandle, situated about three miles from Mobetlo, Texas. We copy same from a clipping in a scrap book which we made several years ago.

I once roped a beautiful steer—but I fell,
Fell from my pony with ear piercing yell!
Fell with the lariat fast to my wrist!
Fell to be dragged through the grass wet with mist.

Bumping!

Rolling!

Grunting I went!

A full mile a minute, or I don't want a cent.
The gravel and grass yanked the hide from my nose
And ruined a pair of forty-cent hose;
Aye, even my bustle was thrown out of gear
By the frolicsome freaks of that beautiful steer.



INTERESTING EVENTS OF EARLY DAYS.¹



N interesting visitor called at the Times-Herald office yesterday afternoon in the person of G. Mercer ("Pet") Smith. He was given the name of "Pet" by his father, way back in Missouri, when he strayed from home, as a little chap, and was lost in the woods.

Mr. Smith now lives at Walnut Springs, and this is his second visit to Waco since 1878. It's hardly necessary to state that he found some changes, and he was astonished by the spirit of progressiveness he encountered on every hand. Mr. Smith is a most interesting speaker, and he gave an entertaining summary of early days in this vicinity.

He came to Waco the first time in about 1876, and he drove the stage from Waco to Gatesville. One day, near the East Bosque, the stage was held up and robbed by a lone highwayman. There were five passengers in the stage at that time, and two of these recalled by Mr. Smith were Bob Cumby of Gatesville and a Mr. Stovall² of Hamilton. The robber took all the money and valuables in the possession of the passengers. The same man a short time later, robbed the stage operating between San Antonio and Rockdale, and also the one utilized on another

¹ Printed in the Waco Times-Herald, March 30, 1913, and reprinted in the Hico News-Review, April 4, 1913.

² This Mr. Stovall was a brother of J. W. Stovall of Hico, who is now deceased. He was at one time a citizen of both Hico and Hamilton.

line in that immediate neighborhood. There were four soldiers aboard the stage coach, who had declared they would like to see the one man that could rob them; they saw him, and he robbed them, too. Mr. Smith said the party who perpetrated the robbery was later captured and given a term of 99 years.

When he first began driving the stage, Mr. Smith said he secured a six-shooter, but he was advised by one of the oldtimers, a stage driver, also, to leave off his shooting iron. This party told him that it would result in him being killed, as he was paid to carry the mails not to sacrifice his life to protect such mail matter as might be entrusted to him.

There are many of the older citizens here who recall Mr. Smith, and two of those with whom he is well acquainted are Messrs. Ed Rotan and T. J. Primm.



FIRST WAGON THROUGH TOWN OF INDIAN GAP.



IN the early part of 1913 the *Arrow* was established at Indian Gap, Hamilton county, Texas, by Mr. O. G. Campbell of Gustine, with Clyde Hammers of Dublin as editor, and was the first newspaper venture in this little burg. One of the first issues contained the following bit of interesting history of that section:

"Known all over Texas for the picturesque beauty of its location, unsurpassed in grandure by the Pyrenean range of France, clinging to the sides and on top of the surrounding hills, Indian Gap, is indeed, to be envied.

"A little more than fifty years ago a party of early settlers, who had settled near where Newburg now stands, organized a party to cut a road from there to Lampasas and as the gap in the mountain where Indian Gap is now located was in their path, a road was cut through the gap, then heavily covered with timber and matted with underbrush. Among the party was Aaron Cunningham, now living at Comanche, who, according to his statement, was the first man to drive a wagon through the gap, the surrounding country at that time being unfenced and to a certain extent unknown.

"It was many years after before the cocks crow ever broke the morning stillness, or the woodchoppers ax echoed against the hills that are now covered with a growing town, but the black, rolling prairies, stretching away on every side as far as the eye can see, were too rich and too

valuable to remain long untilled after the early settlers had seen and heard of it, and it was during the late 60's that cabins began to dot the valleys along the Cowhouse, and the settler's ax cleared out little patches in the rich cover on the mountains."

The Comanche Chief, under date of February 15, at greater length describes this first wagon through Indian Gap:

"Referring to the story of Aaron Cunningham of Comanche; this is a true story, and we are indeed grateful to the *Arrow* for placing it upon the pages of their history. It was in the year 1856 that the incident above referred to occurred. Mr. Cunningham and nine others, including his father, Capt. James Cunningham, T. J. Holmsley, Dave Cunningham, his brother, Mr. Bonds, Bill Reed, Dave Parks, Mr. Mercer, from whom Mercer creek got its name, and the others, the names of whom have been forgotten. Aaron Cunningham was driving the first wagon, and it was by this reason that he was the first man to move a wagon between the two mountains.

"The company depended upon securing groceries and other necessities of life from Williamson county. Heretofore, they had been forced to travel the government road by way of Gatesville, and it was for shortening the distance to market that the new road was cut through this section. They passed through Indian Gap to a distance of about one and a half miles, crossed the ridge between School-land Cove and the branch where the Gerald's settled, and from School-land Cove they followed the Lampasas river to Hart's ranch, and from there to Gillette's

ranch. From this point a road had already been prepared. On reaching the end of the old road all the crowd, except Aaron Cunningham and Dave Parks, returned home, the latter two proceeding on to Williamson county for groceries. A crossing was made on Cowhouse creek just above the homestead of the Prices, which road is used for a crossing at this time.

“In those days this was one of the best sections for wild game in this portion of the state—deer abounding across those prairies in great herds, plenty of bear and buffaloes, besides all kinds of small game.”



FIRST ELECTION HELD IN BOSQUE COUNTY.¹

THE people of Clifton and surrounding country seem very much interested in the historic spot where the first election was held in this precinct, which was under the large live oak tree near the home of Tom M. Pool, at the roadside in his pasture, and are considering seriously the erection of a monument to the memory of these worthy people of our country by placing their names thereon and also the names of the first county officers elected at this memorable election, which were as follows: County Judge, L. H. Scrutcherfield; County Clerk, J. N. Mabry; Sheriff, Presley Bryant; Tax Assessor, Isaac Gary; Treasurer, Archie Kell.

Mr. M. F. Kell has given the people of Clifton some interesting history of the first election held in Bosque county. There were but three voting boxes in the county at the first election, which were as follows: One at Meridian; one at Van Hagens, on the Brazos river just below the mouth of Steel's creek; and the other under a large live oak tree on Tom M. Pool's farm, about three miles south of Clifton; and it is the last place mentioned that Clifton people are so vitally interested in.

It is with much satisfaction to our people that Mr. Kell is able to give from memory all names of those who voted in this precinct under the oak at the first election which was held on the first Monday in August, 1854. J. K. Hel-

¹ Reprinted from the Clifton Record, April, 1913.

ton was the presiding officer, and there were nineteen votes cast and their names were as follows: Captain Underhill, J. N. Mabry, Jas. Mabry, L. H. Scrutchfield, Wm. Gary, Gafey Gary, Isaac Gary, Mat Gary, John Roberson, John Thomas, F. M. Kell, Archie Kell, Wm. McCurry, Jack McCurry, Lum McCurry, Samuel Locker, J. P. Locker, Nathaniel Morgan and J. K. Helton.

Much praise is due to these nineteen frontiersmen that faced the hardships of a frontier country and laid the foundations for civilization in this section. These noble patriots have all gone to reap their reward in that land where frontier life is unknown, with the exception of F. M. Kell of this city, who is now in his eighty-first year.

Mr. Tom M. Pool has volunteered to give several acres of land around this old oak tree for the purpose of being made into a public park and a monument erected to the memory of those noble men who participated in the above mentioned election. This move is gaining much interest with our people and it is thought there will be no trouble in pushing it to completion.



EARLY SCHOOLS OF DUBLIN, TEXAS.¹



VERY soon in its life as a community the little settlement of "Doubling" began to pay attention to educational matters. In 1859 the tiny collection of pioneers augmented by the removal from Cow creek of the families of Wm. (Big Bill) Keith, and G. W. O'Neal, about twenty in number, had its very first school under the management of Mrs. Sarah Keith O'Neal. This bride, for she had married C. M. O'Neal on July 4, 1859, thus inaugurated the schools of what we call Dubiin. Succeeding her came her uncle, "Jim" Keith. This man is worthy of special mention, because he was possessed of a true pedagogic spirit.

At that time the same Indians, who had by their "full o' the moon" horse-stealing raids, broken up the Cow creek homes, and driven them to Resley's creek, because more convenient for "doubling up," rendered it very unsafe for children to traverse the prairies alone. Two miles east of Dublin lived a widow, Mrs. Burnett, who wished to send her children to this school—"everybody, big and little, old and young, was going to it." "Jim" Keith trudged over that two miles each morning and afternoon that these fatherless children might be accompanied to school, and kept safe from the red marauders over whose fresh trails they often passed.

Very primitive and crude were the equipments of the

¹ Paper read by Mrs. S. C. Lattimore at the laying of the corner-stone of the new High School building, Dublin, April 3, 1913

day, but they did the best they could. They provided a log school room, added to it when needed. The earth supplied the floor, and logs split in two—puncheons—furnished the seats. The infant town of Stephenville, and the more distant one of Meridian, were the depots for supplies of “blue-backed spellers,” “Smith’s Grammars,” and “Modern Geographies.” On a teacher’s certificate a few years later than this immediate period, one will find the subjects, “Spanish, French, and German.”

Three of these log school houses were used at different times—one under the big live oaks now standing not far from Nick Keith’s former home; one in Nick Keith’s yard, to be used as his kitchen when not required for school; and one over in what is now a bare field, but the location is still determined by an old well, being where “Grandpa Keith” once lived. If needed for a dwelling the teacher and pupils moved out beneath the convenient live oaks.

One of these earliest teachers, Miss Adelia Burnett, still lives with us as Mrs. Blackstock, and delights to recall the experiences of those days. Mr. Elliott was also among the early school masters.

In 1876 Mr. Wm. Keith and his good wife bought the lumber, having it hauled from the three nearest big towns—Waco, Fort Worth and Dallas—and gave it to the town, after having the two-storied frame structure erected. It was the Baptist church, but furnished with desks and seats for school use. The second story was a Masonic hall. The bell, bought in St. Louis, and brought on train *free of charge* to Fort Worth, was also their gift. This historic bell perished in the flames which destroyed the Baptist church on the night of January 10, 1913.

In this house Mr. Morris taught the first public school

in Dublin. He was succeeded by Mrs. Cannon, who here taught one hundred and one pupils, assisted by four of them—Misses Cava Coleman, Josie Arthur, Joe Leslie, and Pallie Keith, now Mrs. Ben Higginbotham of Stephenville. She was followed by Miss Mina Everette, whose dramatic conversion from an atheistic belief to a fervent, active missionary spirit and life, forms one of the principal events in the religious history of Dublin. There were a few teachers whose names I have not been able to obtain. Rev. Ruben Ross, for a long time pastor of the Baptist church, was at one time teacher in the school in the years immediately following the Civil war.

The school in the old town ceased to have a separate existence when the Fort Worth & Rio Grande (now Frisco) right-of-way passing through the school building caused its removal and destruction. Messrs. Wiley and Gibson were among the latest teachers there.

One of the first schools on the north side of the Central railroad was taught by a Mr. Pelham. Several of his pupils are in Dublin now, and delight to recall his custom of wearing carpet slippers, which were convenient to hurl at any offending culprit, accompanied by dire threats, never executed.

In 1883 Rev. Mr. McIlhany taught in the unpainted "box" building recently purchased from the Presbyterians by the Baptists. He was assisted by Miss Willie Durham, now Mrs. John W. Higginbotham. A curtain divided the space into two rooms. The spring of 1884, Miss May Caswell, afterwards Mrs. J. H. Latham, taught a private school of three months in the same building.

The Dublin Public school may be said to have had its birth in September, 1884, when Rev. J. L. Lattimore was

employed for a ten months' term by the trustees—F. C. Oldham, W. B. Davis, W. J. Davies, Joe Bishop and A. W. Townsend. Mr. Lattimore was assisted by his wife, Mrs. S. C. Lattimore, and daughter, Kate, now Mrs. R. B. Spencer, of Waco. Under the direction of Mr. Lattimore, in 1896, ground was purchased and a two-storied, four-room building erected. This structure was afterward enlarged by the addition of six more rooms and was used until its destruction by fire in 1900.

In 1901 the present handsome structure replaced the rather unsightly old house, which, however, had served long and well.

In 1886 Mr. W. J. Clay became superintendent and held his office many years. Succeeding him have been C. G. Foust, E. I. Hall, G. H. Read and J. W. Dunlap. The progress of the school has been continuous and gratifying, and we "know not what it shall be."



DEATH OF PROF. ALBERT D. WALLACE.¹



HERE died in the home hospital here [Austin] February 7 a veteran whose death I chronicled at the time, but who was worthy of more than passing notice and a more extensive paragraph than I devoted to his demise at the time. In the person of the gentleman whose name heads this

sketch, Albert David Wallace was born in Alabama and grew to manhood in and near Auburn in that state. He had just reached his majority when the call to arms came in 1861, and he was among the first to respond to that call, enlisting in a company made up in and around Auburn, which became company G, Sixth Alabama infantry, which regiment was perhaps better known at the beginning of the war as the Louchapoka Rifles. The first colonel of the regiment was the gallant and dashing John B. Gordon, who later attained the rank of major general and who after the war was governor of Georgia and served several terms in the United States congress. As soon as the regiment was organized, it proceeded at once to the seat of war in Virginia, where it became a part of the Army of Northern Virginia. Of course, the reader of history need not be told that after the first battle the fighting in Virginia became fast and furious as well as desperate and bloody. For a long time Virginia was the battle ground between the contending forces and battles followed each other in quick

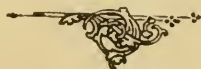
¹ From "Tales Told by a Johnny Reb" by Taylor Thompson in Fort Worth (Texas) Record, February 28, 1915.

succession. The command to which Mr. Wallace belonged took part in nearly all of the big battles in Virginia and Mr. Wallace was always in his place in the ranks in every battle in which his command participated, and strange as it may seem, he passed through all those scenes of danger unscratched, as if he had borne a charmed life. I saw a statement somewhere recently to the effect that there had been more men killed within a radius of thirty miles, taking Petersburg, Va., as a center, than on the same extent of territory anywhere in the world. That, however, was prior to the beginning of the present gigantic European war. I believe North Carolina furnished more men to the Confederate army than any other state, and I have little doubt that Alabama was second or third in the list as to the number of men furnished. At any rate, she furnished a large number, and the troops from Alabama were noted for their courage and soldierly bearing.

Mr. Wallace stayed with the cause until it was lost and the last gun had been fired. When the fatal hour came when Lee's battered legions stacked arms and surrendered, Mr. Wallace was color-bearer of his regiment. When the surrender came he tore the flag he bore from its staff, tore the flag into two pieces, gave one piece to Major Culver and tore the other piece into several pieces and distributed them among his comrades. Mrs. Wallace, wife of deceased, told me a few days ago that she had a letter from Major Culver in which that gentleman stated that he still had in his possession a piece of the flag which Mr. Wallace gave him at that time.

At the close of hostilities Mr. Wallace returned to his home, and in 1870 came to Texas. After a year spent in this state he went back to Alabama, but in 1873 returned

to Texas and has resided here ever since. He first located at Marlin, but had resided at various other points, but located permanently at Marlin about twenty years ago. In 1877 he was married at Hico to Miss Lucie Stinnett, and his estimable wife survives him. Soon after coming to Texas Mr. Wallace began the work of teaching, continuing in that work as long as he was able to follow any occupation, and he was well and favorably known as an educator wherever he taught, and in whatever community he resided in commanded the respect and esteem of all who knew him. For the past seven years he had been bed ridden, owing to paralysis and in 1913 he was admitted to the home. He was a consistent member of the Methodist church, was a gentleman of culture and refinement, and on many a battle-field half a century ago he displayed that daring and courage which go to make up the brave and gallant soldier. His trials and sufferings are ended now, and I have no doubt that when he reached the pearly gates of the celestial city there was no question as to his admission.



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