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Early Days In Texas and Rains County

BY W. O. HEBISON

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BY W. O. HEBISON
EMORY, TEXAS

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Dedicatory Preface.

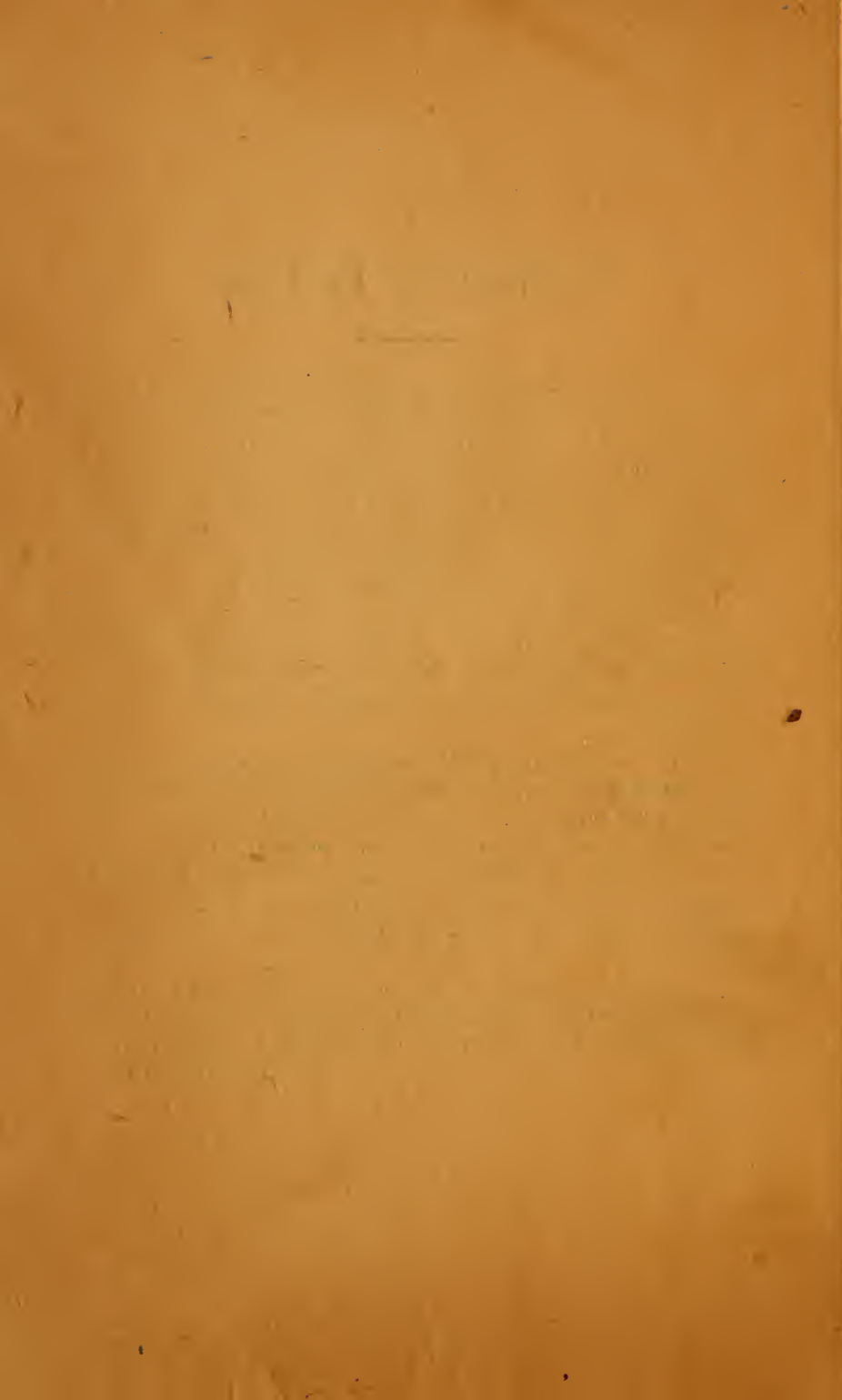
A history of the early settlement of Texas and Rains County, could it have been written as things happened would be a story full of fascination and interest for the old and young of this, or any other generation that may come, for it would be a story of deeds of heroism, of stern persistence, of deprivation of the comforts of life, of a struggle that finally resulted in the establishment of homes in the wilderness of what is now our great State and County.

A large majority of the first settlers were descendants of men who had made for our country a history showing that they had a strong sense of justice and of individual liberty, for which they unyieldingly contended, regardless of consequences.

After we have passed the meridian of life and are facing the sunset, we are wont to take a retrospective view of our lives and tell how it all happened. And as the books, public prints and files of newspapers of the present must be relied upon by future historians for data to aid them in giving a correct account of the past, it behooves us to give as correctly as possible the facts as nearly as we can ascertain them.

With this, I dedicate this work to the pioneers—who suffered and toiled to pave the way for our present comforts of civilization—and present it to the reader for judgment.

W. O. HEBISON.



EARLY DAYS IN TEXAS

Then and Now.

We are living in a new age. Within the last fifty years the inventive genius of man has been rampant. From his prolific brain have come the telephone, the electric light, the self-binder, the phonograph, the automobile, the flying machine, the linotype and wireless telegraphy. It is difficult for anyone living in this modern time to realize the conditions of life here in the early times. To get some idea of the wonderful changes that have taken place, and note a few of the things that our parents and grandparents did not have which we have today, let us go back say to the eighteen forties.

They did not have any canned fruits and vegetables, such as we are accustomed now to eating almost every day, because there were no tin cans. Oranges, bananas and other tropical fruits were unknown at the little cross-roads stores of that day. Dinners were cooked on fire-places, as there were no cook stoves or ranges of any kind. The only cooking utensils known to our mothers were the hearth oven, the skillet and the pot. Housewives had no prepared breakfast foods. All the coffee had to be roasted and ground at home. There were no clothes wringers, nor washing machines, nor wire clothes lines. Neither had they refrigerators nor ice cream freezers. Nobody wore rubbers, because there were no rubber goods of any kind on the market. Fireplaces were the only means of keeping a room warm. Here and there a wealthy farmer owned a wood-burning stove—a rare luxury. If anyone ventured out at night he carried his own light with him—a lantern with a candle in it. Electricity and gas and coal oil had not yet come into use, so the flickering tallow candle was the best light they had, and the

moon was the best illuminant a town could have at night. All travel was done on horseback or by stage coach. The ox wagon was the only means by which our fathers could convey their produce to the markets, but now we have the fast freights. Then the double team of fiery "broomtails" and heavy buggy or wagon bore them from place to place. Now the smoking automobile bears them swiftly on, leaving the streaky dust cloud behind. Where the long-horned cow roamed you find the peaceful Jersey or Hereford now. Letters were written with quill pens. There were no fountain pens, no blotters, no typewriters. Our fathers went trudging after the shovel plow, now a boy is riding in the shade sometimes half asleep or whistling "Ragtime," or "The Girl I Left Behind Me." Often the enterprising newspaper of that day to get the news from the great capitol of the United States, must needs print what occurred three or four months previously. Today we know the happenings of the world within twenty-four hours after it occurs.

Grandmother used to save the tallow and make the candles, or, at a little later day, fill the lamps, clean the chimneys and trim the wicks. Now she turns on the gas and strikes a match, or, if truly up-to-date, she eliminates the match and merely switches on the electric light. Who would exchange electric, gas, or even modern oil lamps for the candles moulded at home, and which furnished the lights for the church when the minister announced that services would begin "at early candle light?"

In the old days, too, father with his sweetheart perched behind him on the family horse, took a little trip to church, a spelling match, or a social dance, now the young man tries to make up his mind whether Anna and Mable or Rose and Helen shall accompany him in his handsome automobile. Look back, if you please, and view our mothers and grandmothers carding, spinning and weaving the cloth of which the family clothes were made. Today we do not think of clothes until we need them, and then we just step into a dry goods store and have them fit in a few minutes and go on our way, rejoicing or sorrowing.

I sometimes wonder whether our parents and grand parents were not happier in the days when they had none of these modern improvements that now make living so much easier, but more expensive. They had good times then, and did not know what it was to miss the new things that we prize so much now.

In early times the women were producers and the men had more leisure because their duties were more or less seasonal and were largely performed as sport or adventure. With the development of the country the men were given a larger share in the treadmill process. When manufacturing came in men and women were still producers. This continued so long as the industry held its place in the home, to the close of the handicraft era.

But now changes have come in the home. The flax and cotton are no longer there for preparation. The butter is churned at the creamery. The spinning has migrated to the factory. Oil, gas and electricity leave no room for candle making. There are no more sacks of dried apples and peaches in the attic. There is no longer leaching of ashes or boiling of soap to be done in the back yard. The steam laundry cleanses and irons for us, and fades out and wears out for us the garments the factories have provided.

The electric sweeper cleans our floors, the dry cleaner cares for our suits and gowns. The mother no longer teaches her child at her knee. And yet, somehow, with all its old occupations gone the home is still a busy place, and our women folks grown worn and tired with its burdens. Ill health, dyspepsia and nervous breakdowns are increasing. The crowning beauty of human life, the 80 and 90 year young grandmothers, the placid, wise pioneer veterans, glory-crowned by hardship and struggle, are visible only in the picture galleries of an earlier and more vigorous generation.

What a glamour of glory the remembrance of childhood throw around the times and conditions of twenty-five to fifty years ago. Fond recollection of the old home and parental love and care envelope the past in a splendor that only time

can give, and impel the reference to "the good old days." It is the care-freeness and the exuberance of youthful days that enshrouds the past in a halo of beauty. There is probably no one who would be willing to exchange the circumstances and conditions of the present for "the good old days," so far as convenience and methods of various kinds are concerned. It can hardly be questioned successfully that more substantial progress has been made in a material way during the last half century than a thousand years anterior thereto. Few men would be willing to see their wives carding, spinning and weaving cloth as their mothers did, or would be willing that their children should wear clothes made from such cloth with its copers tint; or would exchange electric, gas, or even modern oil lamps for the candles moulded at home.

Few farmers would supplant the up-to-date ginning equipments with the old wooden-screw gin, which turned out five or six bales of cotton a day. The log school houses furnished with split-log benches and stick and dirt chimneys would hardly be looked upon by the child of today as a fit place to study. The harvester who uses the twentieth century self-binder would not listen a minute to the suggestions to go back to the old time "reap-hook," such as Ruth used in the field of Boaz four thousand years ago, and which was in general use in this country fifty years ago and even later. Women of today who do their own laundering would doubtless feel aggrieved had they to go back to the rubbing by hand and lye soap of their grandmothers.

All these things, however, are less impressive than the great use and pleasure of facilities for transportation—railroad trains instead of stage coaches, and automobiles instead of ordinary horse-drawn vehicles, as compared with those of a few decades ago. Half a century ago one could not think of taking a trip of a thousand miles or more during a vacation of two or three weeks, not only because of the time required, but also because of the expense. Where could one have gone in the early days on a railway ticket costing \$40? The cheapness, comfort and safety of modern travel make it

possible for those in most moderate circumstances to visit some of the greatest scenic wonders of the world. Certainly, too, no one wants to exchange telephones for messenger boys, nor wireless telegraphy for ships or carrier pigeons.

Few indeed are those who would exchange the conditions and comfort of the present for those of the good old days, good though they were in many respects.

Modes of Travel and Time.

In that early time, when the absence of bridges, the badness of roads, and the primitive character of vehicular devices so greatly emphasized overland distances, Shreveport, La., Jefferson and Marshall, Texas, were the great outlet and inlet of travel. The remoteness of the different parts of the country from each other in those days is difficult to understand, or even fairly to imagine now. There were no telegraphs available, the mails were irregular, uncertain and unsafe. The wagons, called stage coaches that carried them, were subject to capture and looting at the hands of robber bands who infested many parts of the country, having their headquarters usually at some town where roads converge. So in those days the perils of the roads were many; the coach might overturn; the driver was always armed with a "blunderbus" (a short single-barreled shotgun), but the traveler had to take care of himself in case of attack. In those times one thought nothing of knocking a fellow down, and horse-whippings were every day affairs. If annoyed by a stranger, you would give him your card, and, if he was a gentleman, he would give you satisfaction in a duel.

But the Bowie knife was the weapon most in vogue, and it may not be interesting here to state that the greater number of these weapons were manufactured in Sheffield and Birmingham, England. It is said that those manufactured by Bunting & Son, of Sheffield, had a blade eighteen inches long and was ornamented in beautiful tracery on the steel as "The Genuine Texas Toothpick." Often when an agent

offered one for sale he would hint that it ought to bring him a dollar more than he demanded as he could assure the purchaser that it had tasted blood. A writer of that day suggested that members of the Texas Congress should be well paid for their services to compensate them for the risk they run of being "bowie knifed" during debate, a custom of by no means rare occurrence.

Sometimes we hear a man kicking nowadays about the delay of trains and mail matters. But he has forgotten the time when the citizens of this part of the country only received mail semi-occasionally—perhaps once a month, and when their kinfolks came to see them they had to wait sometimes several weeks for the stage to arrive. And he has forgotten that in the good old days a week or two was so inconsequential a period of time that nobody complained if the mail lingered that long on the way. It was all right to wait a month or two for a reply to an important business letter. Sometimes grandpa had to wait six months for his war news, and as for getting the returns from a Presidential election two months was plenty soon enough to hear who was the successful candidate. But everybody was happy, although in some respects things were a little inconvenient.

But those were patient days. There was no need of a speed limit. The stage coach was looked upon with awe by reason of its haste, and the driver who sat upon its box and hit the grit at the rate of nine miles an hour was a regular dare-devil. Oh happy days, oh leisurely days, oh days of rest and summers of sweet repose! Your like will never be seen again on this earth. In fifty years the minds of men have sped further forward than in all the ages that preceded. No more for mankind the ancient inertia nor the primitive state of mind. Whether for better or for worse, man has chosen to hurry and never again will he be content to sit leisurely by and dream dreams while digestion performs its perfect work on the dinner within him.

"Man today is full of hurry,
Full of haste and rush and worry.
And he hasn't time to either live or die;
If he laughs at something funny,
He reflects that time is money
And the fountain of his merriment goes dry."

Brevity may or may not be the "soul of wit," but there is no question in regard to brevity's being the soul of conversation nowadays. The aim of the up-to-the-second conversationalist is to cut all corners and get there in the shortest possible time. But in days of yore a man was polite under all circumstances, no matter how much time it consumed. Then he would say, "My dear sir, I desire that you understand thoroughly that I comprehend fully and in all detail the information that you are endeavoring to impart to me." Now he says, "Gotcha!"

But this is an era of short cuts and rapid processes, and the decay of good manners is to be ascribed to the rush and hurry. The leisurely dignity of the old days is practically unknown. It takes more time to treat with circumspection than it does to rush through life, but it pays to be polite, and the person is imperfectly schooled who has not learned that invaluable lesson.

So the trouble with us today is that we are living too fast. We are all living too fast—every one of us. It is such a rush and hurry and push and scramble until one scarcely knows what he is about. This reminds me of what an old pioneer told me while he was recounting some doings of early days in Texas. The things that were done seemed to me to have consumed a great deal of time, and when I ask him how people found time for so much travel from place to place when it required a month or more to take a trip, that we grumble if it requires more than a day or two now, he said: "Why, man, people had plenty of time then, more time than anything else." The world is moving and we must keep on the jump to keep up with it. Nobody wants to tail the procession. If it requires working far into the night, why we are going to do it—do anything rather than get out of the going.

Early Day Farm and Cost of Living.

In view of the modern day high cost of living, I wish to recall some of the living conditions and methods used on the old-time farm. The farm consisted of a small clearing in the woods, stocked with ten or fifteen cows, a yoke or two of oxen, about twenty sheep, an old white horse, a dozen razor

back hogs, and flocks of chickens, turkeys, geese and ducks.

Food was plentiful and cheap. Fresh meat from the wild game then so abundant in the woods, and fish from the rivers and smaller streams that traversed the country. Half a dozen hogs killed off the range each year gave plenty of bacon, ham, lard and salt pork. The hams and bacon were hung up in the smoke-house—a small log building with no opening except the door. A small fire produced more smoke than heat, but gave the hams and bacon a very delicious flavor. Garden vegetables were abundant. Potatoes, beets, cabbages, pumpkins for pies, apples—from which cider and vinegar were made, and also a cider champagne. There were plenty of chickens for roasting and pot-pies and eggs, turkeys for Thanksgiving and Christmas, and occasionally a roast goose with apple sauce. From the cows' milk both butter and cheese were made. Butter sold at the cross-roads stores, sometimes, at 10 cents a pound, and cheese at 5 or 6 cents; eggs at 5 cents a dozen, but often they "literally went a begging. The skins of animals was legal tender.

Several cows were killed each year. There was a tannery in each community where the skins were tanned. Home made boots were worn instead of shoes in those days. It is said that to be stylish they were made too small and gave much trouble and pain. All the clothes were made by hand. The flax cut and laid down until the fiber loosened from the woody part was put through a heckle worked by hand and then spun and woven. This strong linen cloth was used for summer clothing, towels, etc. The seed was saved to make flax seed tea (a medicine), or poultice for bruises. The sheep furnished the wool, and some cotton was raised on the little farms. At home the wool and cotton was carded and spun into yarn, and woven on a hand loom. For beds it was left white, but for clothing it was dyed any color desired. The house wife made dyes of logwood, indigo and cochineal. The white and black wool were mixed to produce a gray like the Confederate uniform. Caps with ear-flaps were of rabbit skins. There was no knitted underwear, but socks and stockings were knitted at home, as

well as mittens. Alas! so were the carpets, the candles, the soap, the mattresses and the chairs and tables made at home.

Every family made dripping lye-soap. It was called soft soap in those days. It was soft, but very strong, and took the dirt off your hands and face very thoroughly, and some skin, also, unless you were careful in your ablutions. So, they did not have store-bought soap and washing powders in those days; they just simply had "battling-stick," lye-soap and elbow grease. Store-bought soap cannot compare in quality with the lye-soap made by our grandmothers.

Every family had an ash-hopper, too, and how the children dreaded the light nights in March, as that was the time their mothers made soap, and they had to carry water and pour on the old ash-hopper. This ash-hopper was made by the old settler securing from the forest a hollow log the right size to make a pig trough. Two low forks were then placed in the ground and the trough placed on them. Around this was built the frame, and long split boards or palings were placed in the trough, slanting on the two sides, but the ends were boarded straight upright. After putting in the ashes, grandmother put water on them and let soak until it began to drip. This drip was caught in a wooden trough, and if it was dense enough to bear up an egg, she brought the lye to boiling. Then if it was strong enough to eat up a feather, she would put the grease scraps saved during the winter into the lye and boil again until the lye ate up the grease and the soap was made. And grandmother always made soap by the time in the moon, and always stirred the contents in the pot with a sassafras stick for good luck.

When hogs were scarce, or not to be had to make soap grease, grandfather caught fat 'possums, and skinned and hung them up in a tree as he caught them. As soon as 15 or 20 had been accumulated, grandmother was ready to make soap.

In the days of the spinning-wheel, the loom, the fat boiler, the ash-hopper, the dipping pot and mold, everything was saved. When the housewife was not saving fats and suets for soap, she was saving them for tallow and for

"dips." It was the age of candle-light and the home that could boast of "molds" instead of "dips" was the home that was socially conspicuous in the community.

It would be a great reduction of the high cost of living now if those old-time home economies could only be revived. In two or three days the housewife of that time would make enough soap and candles to supply the family for months, and this from material that now is often wasted. But to revive these things and some others, such as carding and spinning, weaving and knitting, would be to bring about a complete change of the present day mode of living. No housewife could be expected to card and spin and make soap and candles now, as she could not take the time from the thousand and one present day activities that make demands upon her. The years cannot be turned backward. The old things have been left behind, and the face of the housewife, like the face of humanity in general, is turned toward the new things that concern us all now, and it is our duty to see to it that they are truly improvements on the old.

"'The Old is Better.' I mean to write a sermon on this text sometime," said the prettiest woman in the group. "We are all going crazy nowadays over novelty—new fashions, new inventions, seeing new places—but I tell you the old things are half the time better. The old friends always; the old furniture, which is so often discarded for newer patterns, not half so really good. And I love a good old dress that I am used to and that has become a sort of a part of me. And old shoes: 'Is there any thing on earth quite so comfortable as a pair of soft, flexible old shoes."

Recently, after paying the monthly bill, it occurred to me that we were spending more for living expenses now than we used to spend. Today we look upon many things as necessities that our parents looked upon as luxuries. We just simply live higher these days than they did in the past. Not only is there a great difference in what folks wear, but the things they eat is more expensive. Either this, or we did not get the best when we were growing up. Time was, when if we got a few dishes of ice cream a year we were

contented, but now it is almost an every day affair. Now we have to have electric lights, the daily papers, the county paper, the religious journal, and a magazine. And we need them, too. We cannot well do without the telephone in these days, but the telephone is responsible for many expenses our parents knew nothing about. Its so easy to telephone to the store and order anything we happen to think of—and the merchant manages to remind us of a few things we never thought about. And the women folks, God bless them, unless one of them is fortunate enough to have a sealskin jacket, the husband is due to buy a new cloak every year or two. Our grandmothers wore the same shawl for a score of successive winters, and our mothers used to wear the same good warm shawl winter after winter. And if father paid over \$7.50 for a suit of clothes for me I was prouder than a king, while now it costs \$18 to \$20 for a suit that is not a bit better, although rather more sightly. Many families now spend more for amusements than its grandparents spent for clothing. Of course, amusements are necessary, but not more necessary in our day than clothes were in grandad's.

Then, you remember, how you used to go bare-footed until it became so cold that the frozen clods cut into your feet, and then your father used to take you down to the village store and buy you a pair of "brogan" shoes for \$1.25, and they were better than we get for \$4.00, even if they didn't look quite so "swell." That pair of shoes had to last you until the green got back in the trees. Sometimes I had to make them last nearly two winters. But these days with four romping, growing girls, it seems as if I average four pairs a month—and its aggravating, too, because it does seem as if every one of the four demand a new pair at the same time.

I do not know whether we live any better than our parents did, for they seemed to thrive and enjoy life, but we are spending more for luxuries. Some of our necessities now would have appalled them, then. And we do not think about it as being extravagant until the first of the month when we begin trying to make the previous month's income cover the expense. While we are trying it we are complain-

ing of the high cost of living. Let's forget it! If we are not content to live as our parents lived, and must have a lot of things they never dreamed of, let's pay the bill without grumbling.

If our children add as much to the cost of living as we have added to what it used to cost, the married man of the next generation can never hope to have a new suit of clothes. He will have to keep his wedding suit to wear when his daughters are married. And he may have a world of trouble marrying them off. It is claimed that the high cost of groceries, dress goods and cosmetics already has made many young men bear their heart's ills rather than fly to others that their married brethren have told them about.

Nowadays you can hardly go into a home where there are not several bottles of dressings of one kind and another intended to make food taste better, but it was not that way in our grandmother's time. And there were no expensive canned goods used then. When one of the family was sick a squirrel or chicken was killed and soup was made. Now a can of tomatoes or peaches is bought. And when we go home now and ask if dinner is ready, she usually says: "Yes, in a minute—just as soon as I can open it up."

Speaking of dressings to make food taste better causes me to remember that in my boyhood days I was visiting at the home of a friend who had a large family. One day for dinner, he brought home a bottle of tomato ketchup—the first one that came to his house, but as several of the children were at school it was decided that it should not be opened until supper. It seemed to me that it was the longest afternoon we ever spent. Several times we climbed up in a chair so we could see the bottle of ketchup on the highest shelf. Finally the family gathered at the table for supper. The every day red oilcloth had been replaced by the white one that was used on Sundays and when the minister came. Before the boy, who was first to the ketchup, had poured a particle on his plate, one of the older boys spoke up and said: "Now, remember, that is not gravy—you just want to take a little bit of it." As the bottle went around each was warned

that he should not take too much. The one who was to receive it last remarked several times that he did not think there would be any left when it got to him.

And the matter of hotels and restaurants. In the old days you paid 25 cents for a room at a hotel. Now you pay a dollar or a dollar and a half if you are a bit extravagant. And if any "swell" hotel in the early days charged 50 cents for a meal there was a yell loud enough to be heard over in the next county. A quarter was the average price for a meal then, but a quarter will not buy more than coffee and a chili now. Today when you go into a restaurant the waiter hands you a napkin, hustles a glass of water, hands you a bill of fare and rearranges all the things on the table while you scan the menu: "Steak 50 cents," "potatoes, any style, 20 cents," "coffee 10 cents," and so on. If you are not very hungry you escapè on a dollar.

In old settler days the doctor's bill for the birth of a child was \$2. Another visit or two from the doctor with his leather saddle bags, a few visits from neighboring housewives, a little paregoric, and the crisis was passed—"mother and child doing well." Frequently now the mother goes to the Sanitarium—\$25 a week for the room, \$25 for a trained nurse; \$100 instead of \$2 for the doctor. When an old settler died the cost did not exceed \$10. A good pine coffin made by the neighbors, or local woodshop—no undertaker, no hired carriages, no dismal trappings and funeral properties—the coffin taken to the graveyard in a farmer's wagon, the grave dug by the hands of neighbors, and all was over.

But the old homely ways have gone and the higher-priced new ways have come. Today, for example, when a youngster makes his advent into this vale of tears he is likely to bankrupt his parents by being born, and if he dies the funeral expenses will impoverish his heirs. If your stomach aches you are referred from higher-priced specialist to higher-priced specialist and you must go to the Sanitarium and have trained nurses. So one had better think twice, or thrice, before indulging in these things. The cost of living

is no higher than the cost of birth or death, or stomach ache, its a fight, and a good one, from the cradle to the grave—largely because we have abandoned the simple life of our fathers for a life of extravagance and foolishness.

The Old Settlers.

The old settlers who laid the foundation for our present prosperity were a noble class of men and women. They had come to this country from the older States, some to obtain homes, some in quest of health, and others to live easily. They were as a rule industrious, economical and in a true sense neighborly. They worked shoulder to shoulder. There were no privileged classes—all met on common ground and shared each others troubles. The latchstring always hung on the outside of the door to their neighbors and hospitality was only bounden by ability. They lived in rude huts, built of logs. They were hardy pioneers, half farmer and half hunter, as game was then so abundant. With a roof of oak or pine boards to protect from the weather, they were happy and contented and produced on their little farms corn and wheat for bread and wool and cotton and flax necessary to clothe them.

I have been requested to write concerning Texas' great men. As I wrote the first line the thought came to my mind that most great men owe much of their greatness to women, so I added women. Many citizens of Texas have been elevated to high positions in the State in their respective fields of labor, but the number is too large to enumerate here. But I merely mention this to raise the question, who are great men and women? In my estimation the greatest men and women that Texas has produced are the men and women that produced Texas. Those who built our schools and churches and established law-abiding communities of peaceable citizens. The men who are law-abiding citizens are often greater than the men who make, or execute the laws. The men and women who have borne their part in building up a law-abiding, intelligent, moral and church

going communities are the benefactors of the State, and are the truly great citizens. While the old settlers were not all of one mind religiously yet they were one in their desire for a moral and religious citizenship, and they all met together at church services. The descendants of these early settlers as a rule have proven worthy of their parents and have maintained the high standard of their communities. These men and women were great because they were peaceable, loving, neighborly, God fearing people. These women were real mothers, rearing their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." They were keepers of homes and true helpmates for their husbands. They were the "uncrowned queens" of our State.

Sometimes I dream of all the splendid men
 And glorious women of the long ago;
 They pass before me in a shadowy row
 To meet life's battles as they met them then,
 From the old days when Houston bled and fought
 What mighty men have lived, what great deeds done.
 How many fair, proud women has the sun
 Illumed and blessed, what wondrous deeds they wrought.
 And still great men, brave women live today,
 And toil for all the suffering and oppressed;
 Yet must they follow, in the self-same way,
 Those who in cycles past found peace and rest.

Looking back at pioneer days, I see an old settler building the house in the woods to which he is to bring the family. It is made of logs, and the places between the logs are filled with clay. That house is crude compared with the gorgeous palaces of these days, but when it is completed and the family moves into it, filled with the spirit of home, it is a haven of rest—it is heaven—

"For there, the nights were blessed with quiet sleep.
 The days were filled with happy cares;
 And there the skies seemed evermore to keep
 A time for peace and prayers.
 There, youth and laughter, joy and hope and love
 Sang in my heart a happy song;
 Ah, me! the song is hushed forever more
 And lost the streets among.

And now I stand and gaze with heavy heart.
 Across dear fields in longing sore;
 To where another woman, happier far,
 Looks from the low, gray door.
 Oh, little farm house, old and brown and sweet,
 I wake, when all the world's at rest,
 And dream of you, and long for the old peace
 And the untroubled breast!"

EARLY DAYS IN TEXAS

It was in the old-time home that the old-fashioned mother got up in the early morning, made the fire and cooked breakfast, and when everything was ready she called father, and he arose to a warm repast that fitted him for the arduous labors of the day. When evening came and he returned from the field, all he had to do was to take the harness off his horses and feed them. Then his supper was ready for him, all hot and sizzling from the kitchen fire place. After supper all he had to do was sit on a bench in front of the house and pick the sandburs and thistles out of his feet, while mother milked the cows and slopped the pigs. In those days mother helped to make the wheels go round.

When we look back at those halcyon days and review the lives of the noble men and women, and recognize their honesty of purpose and uprightness of soul, we can but lament their passing. The old-fashioned father who gave good counsel and set a good example to his children was found all over the land. The old-fashioned mother, whose self-sacrificing devotion covered her loved ones as with a garment, was to be found in every home and thronged the aisles of every country church. The sweet girl of the old-time; the youth of great ambition—the people who unselfishly loved home and country, and who revered truth and justice—all these were the real nobility of earth then as well as now.

"It singeth low in every heart,
We hear it each and all—
A song of those who answer not,
However we may call.
They throng the silence of the breast;
We see them as of yore—
The kind, the true, the brave, the sweet,
Who walk with us no more.

'Tis hard to take the burden up
When these have laid it down;
They brighten all the joy of life,
They soften every frown.
But, oh! 'tis good to think of them
When we are troubled sore;
Thanks be to God that such have been,
Although they are no more!"

It is a common saying now that the old-fashioned hospitality, as it existed in the old-time home, is almost a lost

virtue. Certain it is that the spare room and the open house are not such popular institutions as in the early days, and the latchstring does not always hang ready for the wayfarer's touch. Today there is a great deal of social entertaining, but not enough of ungrudging hospitality, as in the early days, to those who have no other claim than that of guest, and who cannot return our favors in kind.

The early settlers of our State had their fun and pastimes. There are plenty of trees yet standing in Texas with bullets of lead in them that were shot out of old flint-lock rifles. In those days they would get together on Saturdays and shoot for beef—that is, some man would put up a beef somewhat after the fashion of ladies putting up a quilt to be raffled off at the present day. The best shot took choice quarter, second best second choice, third best shot third choice, fourth best shot got the hide and tallow. They formed beef clubs, and some one member of the club would kill each week and divide with all the others, each getting the piece due him until he had received the amount due him.

In those early days they usually had large families and when one neighbor conceived the idea of paying a visit to another neighbor he would get up old Broad and Bright, or Lep and Loge, and yoke them up, hitch them to an old tarpole wagon, while his wife would wash the children clean and nice, put on their pretty home-spun linsey dresses, with a piece of red, blue or yellow ribbon tied in their hair, for the girls, and the new coperas "britches" for the boys. All hands would load into the wagon, and about the middle of the afternoon on Saturday evening they would drive up to neighbor Smith's, unload the precious load of humanity, hobble and bell the steers, turn them out on the grass and then they were ready for fun until late Sunday evening or early Monday morning.

The men would go "fire hunting" at night, kill from two to a dozen deer, or go out with their dogs and catch anywhere from five to twenty-five 'possums, while the women folks would get together and talk of the things that concerned them. The visiting lady would go into the kitchen or

smoke or cow pen with her neighbor while the children would play and romp, and have their fun playing "Molly, Molly Bright," "Hiding Switch," "William a Trimbletoe," "Chickany, Chickany, Crany Crow, went to the well to wash my toe, when I came back one of my chickens was gone, what o'clock old witch?" "Puss in the Corner," "Hide and Seek," and so on. Now, dear reader, if one of your neighbors should visit you on Saturday with ten or fifteen children to stay until Monday morning, you would be tempted to leave home or commit suicide.

The good women of today would not know how to prepare sleeping quarters for so many, but our grandmothers knew. They would make down a pallet covering the entire floor, and the children would tumble down and go to sleep as they tired of their play. These people were the happiest people that ever lived. And their religion was of the plain, unvarnished kind. They worshiped God with loving, trusting hearts. They loved their God and they loved their neighbors.

Imagine their freedom from annoyance by agents—lightning rod agent, sewing machine agent, book agent, patent medicine agent, stove repairers, clock tinkers, scissors' sharpener, tombstone agent, fruit tree agent, newspaper agent, life and fire insurance agent, and all other pestiferous classes, who are swarming up and down the world today, "seeking whom they may devour."

Many funny things happened in those days. People were as full of mischief as they could be. Many a poor tenderfoot, green from the States, has served his apprenticeship snipe hunting. Imagine him from Georgia, or Alabama either, coming out to Texas to teach school, practice law, or run for office as was most generally the case, sitting on the end of a log, in the bed of a creek with a sack, which had a loop fixed in it to keep the mouth of the sack open, with a piece of tallow candle about an inch long, while his comrades, supposed to have gone up the creek to drive the snipes, have in reality gone home. Does he not look wonderfully dignified and intelligent? And as he watches and waits, as his little

candle is burning low, he is contemplating a race for County Judge, County Clerk, or Sheriff, or anything that comes along.

There were few church houses in those days, but all school houses were used for the preaching, and the different religious bodies had their day. When the time came for revival meetings a brush arbor was built and the meeting held out of doors. People went to meeting on foot, horseback or in wagons—a buggy was almost unknown to the people in the country. At that time the men sat on one side of the house and the women on the other. This prevented your whispering to your girl during service, but you could “cast a sheep’s eye” at her across the room. The father and his small boys sat together while the mother cared for the girls. With the uncomfortable log and plank seats people would sit still and hear a discourse for an hour and a half and sometimes two hours, as it was unsafe to go to sleep while sitting on the backless seats. Besides, the preacher pounded upon his stand to keep you roused up. He would read the hymn from a book without musical notes, as note books in church service were not known then, and some brother would lead the tune. People sometimes gave a preacher money in those days, but more often his pay was in socks and things really good to eat.

The little church with clapboard roof and split-log walls
Has always seemed a better place than stately marble hall
In which to talk with Him who walked among the poor and low,
And didn’t watch subscription lists to give a man a show.
It always seemed to me that he would rather stand aloof
When he His message had to send down through a mortgaged roof.

Many of the old settlers opposed instrumental music in the church. They fought against an organ in the choir and stood out staunchly against a piano. It was not that they believed there was anything wicked in an organ or a piano, but they objected to the introduction of mechanisms into their worship. They believed it was sincerity rather than sound that the Lord wants.

There are people now who do not get religion just like they did when I was a boy. They are very quiet about it.

But when I was a boy if a man got religion, something happened at once, as he proceeded to shout loud enough to be heard by the whole neighborhood. Sometimes, during a paroxysm of religion, it required several able-bodied men to hold him down.

But the old-time preacher and most of his congregation have passed to their rewards. These pioneer servants of God preached His gospel for the love of His cause. They knew little of the art of saying much and meaning little. They were a little behind on grammar and a big salary, but they were never behind in the service of their Master.

"At church with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And those who came to scoff remained to pray."

The old-time "sings" at the church and school houses and in the home, with father and mother and the youngsters singing in unison is a recollection that many a person cherishes today. These "sings" would nearly always come on Sunday evening and, if in the home, the neighbors were invited to come in and take part in them. There is nothing like the recollection of an old tune that we whistled and hummed in childhood. It would be difficult to estimate the influence of many of the old time songs. To them belong the credit of the sweeter influences and the sweeter experiences in many a man's life.

"There's a lot of music in 'em, the hymns of long ago
And when some gray-haired brother sings the ones I used to know.
I sorter want to take a hand, I think of days gone by.
'On Jordan's stormy banks I stand and cast a wistful eye!"

We never needed singing books in them old days—we knew
The words—the tunes of every one—the dear old hymn book through!
We didn't have no trumpets then, no organs built for show,
We only sang and 'praised the Lord from whom all blessings flow,"

What a sweet memory was the old-fashioned, mid-week prayer meeting of our boyhood days, with father sitting up in front and mother over in the corner with some fidgety boys by her side. Mother and father would join in singing that grand old song that we hear too seldom in these days:

EARLY DAYS IN TEXAS

"Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
That calls me from a world of care;
And bids me at my Father's throne
Make all my wants and wishes known."

And I recall with fond memories the custom of daily family prayer in my father's house. We were always on time at breakfast then, in order that there might be no delay of prayer. It would have taken a catastrophe to have interrupted the custom, and it grew to be a part of our lives. It gave an upward look to the whole day.

The old-time schools were of the primary grade, school houses few and far apart, and the conveniences few. Let our present day teachers contrast present conditions with those that confronted the teachers then and decide what they would do under such circumstances. The typical school house of that day had a door in the east end and chimney in the west, with split logs for seats, and no desks. The half logs were hewed smooth on the split side to save the mothers some patching of pants. Holes were bored in the round side at an angle and pins driven in for legs. These would get loose and some boy, full of fun, seeing his opportunity, would pull one out and down would come those seated on it. In those days the boys and girls enjoyed the recesses and the noon hour and many games were played. They played marbles, mumble peg, bull pen, base and town ball, while the girls had play houses, swings and ropes to jump. The teacher executed the law with a long switch. Most of the teachers of that day were men; woman's day had not yet come.

In one of the schools that I attended when I was a boy the teacher had a dunce cap. It was a long, pointed, paper contrivance used for the purpose of subjecting a victim to the gibes and persecutions of the other scholars round about him. It must have been invented to save teachers the hard work of whipping students who do not progress. But times change and the school teachers of today have cast the dunce cap into the scrap heap of horrid memories. Still the capless dunce remains and he cannot easily be thrown aside. He goes to school session after session and grows up, buds

into citizenship and bears fruit—but the fruit is a fool. Nevertheless he is happy. Nature has made him an optimist, and come what may his ignorance will insure him a good time.

Whenever I look in memory's glass
What pictures there may be,
And views of doings of bygone days,
This one thing puzzles me:
Why the things and scenes I would most recall
Have vanished clear away;
While the times I have made a fool of myself
Are as fresh as yesterday.

Fifty years ago the common salutation among neighbors was, "How are youens today?" And the reply came, "Weuns are well." In those days they produced most that they used on the farm and did not trade much, going to market, often one hundred miles distant, once or twice a year for sugar, coffee and salt. The tobacco that was chewed and smoked at that time was home raised, and the devil had not invented the cigarette. There were no saloons, but whiskey was sold by the grocers by the gallon. The purchaser took his jug home and had his morning toddy or spiked his coffee. The farming tools were made at the local blacksmith and wood shops, and riding plows were unheard of. Small grain was cut with scythe and cradle and bound by hand.

Speaking of harvesting small grain reminds me of what an old settler once told me. He said: "People in Tennessee could not harvest their grain without whiskey. When they stopped to rest and whet their blades they would take their toddy." And the following is proof that his father, who came here from Tennessee, must have brought this custom with him to Texas. Continuing the old settler said: "I remember that during one harvest when I was about fourteen years old my father sent my brother Jim with me to a grocer to get a gallon jug filled with whiskey. We had to go about a mile, and on the way back we began to discuss the question as to whether the jug was full or not. We called a halt and I drew the cob stopper out and touched the end to my tongue to see if it was wet. I decided that the grocer

had given us good measure and placed the cob back. We came on our journey until we reached the harvest hands. About the first question asked by my grandfather was: "Boys, did you drink any?" I replied, "No Sir." He then said to my brother, "Jim, did you boys not drink some?" He replied, "No Sir, but Bob, he licked the stopper."

"Speaking of whiskey makes me remember that when I was "sticking" type for a newspaper in the early days, a man by the name of Moon married a women by the name of Star. It consumated a long courtship during which Moon had been mooning along seeing stars in day time. The moon spent a happy honeymoon. After awhile Mrs. Moon presented Mr. Moon with a new Moon, which so elated him that he got drunk on "Old Kentucky" whiskey. That was a "full Moon." When he sobered up he had only 25 cents left, and that was the "last quarter." When he arrived at home that night his mother-in-law was acting as "evening star." She met him at the door and there was a total eclipse of the Moon.

The old settlers frequently used jagged words and I must confess to a liking for them, although I have never been allowed to use them—especially at home. The smooth-spoken folks of today who insist on using "large" instead of "big," and "limb" in place of "leg," appear to get shaky at the sound of a good old-fashioned word. The man who invented the word "limbs" for "legs" ought to feel sadly ashamed of himself. He would no more think of calling a wooden leg a limb than he would go up to his butcher and ask how much a pound that "limb of mutton" was. Homeliness—honest homeliness, has something that rather tugs at my fancy, because experience with mules, and furniture, and folks teaches me that in homeliness there is strength. Come to think of it, though, I take back what I said about mules. They are homely enough, and strong enough; but I was speaking of honest homeliness, and there is nothing honest about the mule's kick. There are a lot of folks who reckon the value of a word and the rattle of a snake alike—

by the number of joints there are in it; but they are not so sickening as those folks who "perspire" at hard work, and suffer from "indigestion" when other folks would be owning up to old-fashioned stomach ache like the old settlers had in their day.

In the days of our grandfathers a couple of thousand words were about all a man could afford. In those days any man could hammer out enough words in his own home to give himself a large and lurid vocabulary, and home-made words were more popular than the dictionary kind, and when a man who mixed up his own language met a man who dug his out of the dictionary with the aid of a few pale, spectacled professors of English and style, the two frequently had to talk to each other by signs. But most of the slang expressions of today are business "short cuts." For instance, the use of the word "boss" for employer and "job" for position. When a busy employer, these days, tells his stenographer to "kill" a letter he has just dictated, he does not have to go into a long explanation and she does not have to ask a question. She does not even smile at his funny remark, but simply does as she is told and kills the letter.

There are few old settlers here today who can remember the first cooking stove brought into their neighborhood. But as young as I am, I can remember the first kerosene lamp brought to our house. Father bought one of them as we were running short of candles and tallow was scarce. It was a brass lamp with a little slender neck and had a little brass cap that fitted over the wick when not in use. It held about a gill of oil and with one extra wick cost 25 cents. Mother filled the lamp with oil and made us children stand back while she proceeded to light it. I remember the feeling of awe that came over me when mother lighted the lamp and told us not to get too close to it, as it might bust at any time. But it was not long until everybody was using the little brass lamp, as it furnished a cheaper light than candles. Highly prized as the little brass lamp was then, it would give a very poor light if filled with the low grade oil we are using these days.

Sometimes in the early days the pioneers had to stand back, or hide in the swamp, while the Indians came and took their best horses, corn and other things if they wanted them. When a young couple got married they started out with a brand-new log house, not completed. The new married couple were rich if they had a barrel of flour. Their doors were not even hung, so they would take one door and lay it on a barrel for a table. The bed was made on the floor, with the pillows set by the wall. They had only one towel. If the young wife had a red plaid dress to work in she felt very grand.

The building of a log house was a job of some magnitude, as there were no saw mills or shingle mills here. The settlers had to select straight-bodied trees (they were plentiful, as the timber had not been "cut over" then as it is now), chop them down and cut off the logs the lengths they wanted, drag them with a yoke of oxen to the place they had selected to build their house, and then with such help as they could get, raise the logs, put them in place and notch them down. A large, straight-grained oak or pine tree was next felled, blocks generally three feet long sawed off, out of which boards were made to cover the house. Often "weight" poles were put on top of the boards to hold them in place until nails could be secured from a distant market to nail them on with. A "puncheon" floor was next made, and to make this trees were selected that would split straight. After the logs had been split open an adze was used to smooth the surface of the split side. They were then laid on the sills and fitted close together.

It was no uncommon sight in those days to see girls going to church walking or horse-back, wearing bonnets and white aprons with long strings hanging down their backs. But times have changed. No more do we see the girls going to church with their shoes and their stockings in their hands, as they did then, and just before they got to the church house they sat down and put them on. Their beaux would go home with them and all would sit around the one fire, and that is where and how they entertained them every

Sunday. Now they have to go car riding evening and nights to spark. All a boy has to do is to toot his auto horn at the gate and the girl comes running. She may be only slightly acquainted with him and does not know whether he can drive a car or not, but why does that matter so long as she gets to go.

In pioneer days it was home-spun jeans, linsey and cotton checks or plaids—all woven on the loom at home. Now its—oh! pshaw, I cannot commence to name the stuff, but it costs like rip and is made to sell, wear a few times and be cast aside. Then you have got to buy more, make it or have it made and wear it or be relegated to the shades of "Old Foggy," or "Tightwad," and frowned or snickered out of modern society.

Where are we drifting? In the early days the pioneers were poor and knew it; we are poor and do not know it. Today we try to ape the rich, who are able to dress in extreme fashion, regardless of our means, which has led many families to financial shipwreck. I love to see people dress respectably and enjoy themselves, but there is a happy mien in all these things, and when that is passed in the direction of extravagance, we distress and enslave ourselves. For the sake of keeping up with the styles many people harass themselves with debt, wear themselves out, and keep themselves in a constant nervous strain by giving fashionable dinners, fashionable entertaining, and making fashionable calls. How much better is a plain, quiet home, where all is peace and cordiality, the neighbors heartily welcome to come and go at will, and freed from the pestering, senseless conventionalities of fashionable life.

Women, it seems, have ever delighted in styles that change with the season and with the years, but return again in cycles that appear to have no beginning and to approach no end. She and her clothes are the joint symbols of the truth that nothing is so immutable as mutability. But why single out women for the crime of beautifying themselves and making use of senseless vanities? How many fond husbands would be willing to have their wives put aside the means that

keep them attractive? The modern man wants to be proud of his good-looking wife, and if she requires face powder and any other "deceiving" aids to that end he cheerfully pays the bill and endures the powder marks on his coat shoulder.

Today we want an automobile when we are only able to own a horse and and buggy; we want a fine suit of clothes when we can only afford a plain one for service. When our boys are 15 or 17 years old they must have tailored clothes and a dinky hat; their noses turn up at a "hand-me-down" suit. And girls are not satisfied unless they are stylishly toggged up until they look like exclamation points turned upside down. The old-timer who is still living today deplores modern degeneracy and looks back to the frontier damsels of fifty years ago as much superior to the modern belle arrayed in "store fixins." I incline to the belief that the old-timer is "kerrect"—that girls look best with a figure all their own, as they used to appear when they dressed with a sensible view.

I'm thankful I lived in the good old days
 When the boys were boys sure enough,
 When the girls disdained all padding and stays,
 But sometimes took a little snuff.
 No hankering then for the wasp-like waist
 And the "Deputant Slouch" was unknown—
 When a boy met a girl suiting his taste
 He knew her "shape" was all her own.
 The boys then had good reason to know
 When they went hunting for a bride,
 That they would not find her a "scare-crow"
 When togs and pads were laid aside.

Where is the old-fashioned boy? The boy who sweated his collar down while calling on his sweetheart on the coldest day, and in his embarrassment could think of no topic of conversation except the weather? And where is the old-fashioned boy who courted three or four years before he could muster up sufficient courage to ask the girl to marry him? Boys have changed, and girls too. In pioneer days they lived under primitive conditions, seldom meeting in a social way. But in spite of their bashfulness they proposed marriage at an early age, and an equal number of girls were brave enough to accept them. Now the boys and girls lack

the timidity of their grandparents, but as a rule they are not bold enough to marry before they get grown.

In the early days they would sit up late at night, card and spin and knit stockings by a pine knot light. If they got their task done before bedtime they could read awhile. As newspapers were scarce they read the Bible. But the old time practice of spinning and weaving is no more. The old hand machines will never again be called upon to supply the wearing apparel of the household. But the home-spun, home-dyed coverlet, counterpanes, carpets and rugs of those days possessed wonderful wearing qualities when compared with the present day commercial article. And they were frequently made a real work of art. Who has not treasured some of those home-made articles for their serviceability, their beauty and their individuality.

Wives and mothers of fifty years ago were proud to exhibit the result of their industry in the manufacture of cloth and the making of garments for their families. There is no call for any such work in our day, yet there are enough calls to duty in every home to keep the housekeeper busy. But in the cities and larger towns today home to many women means nothing more than a place where they take their clothes to be washed and ironed; to the man a place to eat and sleep, their evenings being spent at clubs and other places of amusement. Societies of various kinds occupy much of their time. The old-fashioned home-keepers have become almost a lost quantity. The children are sent to school at the age of six and the mothers are at liberty to flit about until they return at noon when the lunch of food, prepared outside the home, is placed before the family.

And when a woman now puts what days she is at home to callers in one corner of her card, it is a sign that her husband is making money, and that her friend is no longer at liberty to wrap a white apron and her sewing up in a paper, go over in the afternoon, leaving word for her husband to come at six and stay to tea. She likes her friend as ever, but society demands too much of her time these days, for her to give an entire afternoon to one visitor. Would it not

be better for the ladies to return to the good old days, as they were before society stole from them all their brightness and pleasure.

Looking back at the early days, I wonder what has become of the dear mother who was proud of the neat patch she could put on the seat of her boy's pants, who made hickory suspenders and lined the boy's straw hat with cambric? And where is the old-fashioned father who set out his boots for his son to black on Saturday, and also furnished him with a sharp(?)axe to cut up a wagon load of green hickory poles for the Sunday fire? What has become of the man whose shoes squeaked as he walked cautiously down the church aisle in the old-time "meeting house?" And the old settler who could hear a cow bell in the distance and determine by the sound of the bell whether Blossom was grazing or coming home? And the girl wearing a bonnet, a real cloth bonnet, not a hat—who swept the yard Saturday afternoon in anticipation of Sunday company? And the boy who used a slate as a book shelf between the school house and his home? And the young man who tipped his hat to his elders? And the housewife who knew how many holes a quilting frame should have? And the girl who never got on the left side of a cow to milk her? And the boy who carved his initials on a sweetgum tree and watched the letters disappear by the time he put on long pants?

Whenever I see a bare-foot boy (which is uncommon these days), one foot tied up in a rag, stumping along the road or sidewalk on one foot and the heel of the injured one, he recalls many recollections of my bare-foot boyhood days, common to all men who read this. How terrible was the affliction of a sore toe, then, but the memory of it is sweet, because it brings back memories of days long fled when hope ran high. What man is there among my readers who does not remember those glorious days of his childhood when stumped toes were daily companions, and life seemed dull when fishing trips and ball games were spoiled by inclement weather? "Blessings on thee, little man, bare-foot boy with face of tan," who is soon to take his place among

the men who are to run this great country, and on whose shoulders will rest the responsibilities of society. No matter how great the bare-foot boy may become, how high his station, he will always hold sacred and hallowed those "sore toe" days.

The neighborly spirit of the early days! Have we visited our new neighbors? Have we visited the sick and clothed the naked? But we do not have time now. And so the old-time friendly visitors no more darken our doors, nor do we enjoy life as we once did. We are not ourselves. We have not the time to call and see why so and so was not in his accustomed place. Then if he was sick it was in the paper, we read about it and possibly commented upon the fact that he had a good doctor and would get well and be at his place in a short time. But a short call to see how he is, would put new life into him, and he would feel better by knowing that some one besides his family is interested in him. But, alas! we must seek our fortune and then we shall have plenty and not need our old-time friends. Had we not better stop and see why it is that we are running through life and do not have the time to seek the friendship of our neighbors that they had in the olden days.

It is said that necessity is the mother of invention and this was often true of the old settlers. A good friend of mine, who was in Texas before I came into the world, tells me how he and his brother made a place to scald some hogs, which they had purchased and slaughtered away from home. They dug a hole in the ground like a grave and filled it nearly full of water and then heated it with hot rocks out of a log fire near by. He says that he never saw nicer cleaned hogs. In the early days when the settlers had failed to bring a "wash pot" with them from the old States, they would go out in the woods and select a hollow tree about three feet through, chop it down and fashion it like a log hog trough. After heading it up, they would bury it in the ground and fill it nearly full of water. They would use long hickory withes, looped, to get the hot rocks out of the fire and into the trough. In the minds of the old settlers this made a

most excellent vat for scalding hogs, but we of today would think that it was a poor makeshift, compared to our vats, with furnace underneath for heating the water.

Speaking of hogs reminds me of a story that was related to me of a man who was going through the woods one day in the olden times, who saw a gang of hogs rushing to and fro. He watched them for a time and passing on saw an old-timer leaning on a rail fence, approached him and asked what was the matter with the swine. The old settler replied in a cracked voice that he had formerly called his hogs as other people do, but during a tussle with the "Grippe" the fall before lost his voice, but trained his hogs to come all right by knocking on the fence. "That worked all right," said the old-timer, "all winter, but this spring when the pecker-woods got busy they are running my fool hogs to death." That is the way with many of us nowadays. When we hear a woodpecker knock over here, we rush this way, and when he knocks over there we are there, when the red-headed bird is not knocking for us or for principle, but for the bug under the chip.

Even the rich man of fifty years ago had fewer comforts around him than the poor man has today. The well was usually about fifty yards from the house, and the spring was often half a mile off. The tallow candles that were used for lighting purposes gave a very poor light, and it was customary for tired and sleepy boys to wash their feet in the horse-trough before they went to bed. But times have changed. Instead of the boy of today washing his feet in the horse-trough, he thinks it a hardship if he has to use a bath tub which is not attached to his own bed room. Now the well is located at the edge of the back gallery. If the town is of any size it has waterworks and hot water is supplied, as well as cold. In my boyhood days when we wanted to wash the dishes we had to heat water in a pot on the fire. And as for water earlier in the morning, in winter we woke to find not only no hot water, but the water in the bucket frozen.

Another sign of the times is the passing of the parlor and the making of the best room in the house the living

room. Among the well-to-do in the early days the parlor was like a new suit of clothes, only to be used on special occasions. It was usually furnished with uncomfortable chairs that were covered up during the week and used on Sunday. Times have changed, however, and people are furnishing rooms, instead of parlors. Today we find the piano and big, comfortable chairs, that are ready for use all the time. So in the average home the living room has taken the place of the parlor. People today are realizing the importance of having a house furnished in real homelike fashion for service.

One of the advantages in the good old times was that a man could carry a quarter in his pocket for a month without seeing anything he wanted to spend it for. And it used to be said, "Save the nickels and dimes, and the dollars will take care of themselves. Now it is, "Spend the nickels and dimes and you will never have dollars to bother you." There used to be more or less chance to save the nickels and dimes, but there has come a change in times, wherein the owners of nickels and dimes finding that it requires dollars to buy anything, save up just enough of them to make a dollar, and then spend it for something a nickel or dime used to buy, for times are not like they once were.

If there ever was a man who earned his money it was the early day doctor. He was much in the saddle and frequently followed cow trails through the brush and woods, and his charges were unusually light compared with this day and time. He may not have been as well up in medicine as the doctor of today, but often his practice extended over a territory two or three times as big as a county, and to cover this he had to go in a gallop. Today when the services of a doctor are needed the telephone is used to call one and in about thirty minutes the honk of his auto is heard as he turns the corner of the yard fence in front of the house. How different it was with the early day doctor. In those days there were no telephones and autos had not been thought of. Instead of a ring from his telephone announcing that his services were needed at the house of Bill Jones, distant about three miles, he would be yelled at by an old settler, who came

at full speed on a Spanish pony, and told that Mrs. Smith, who lived on Elm creek, ten or twenty miles away, was having hard fits, and to come at once as fast as he could. Often, when a boy, have I seen the doctor pass our house under whip and spur, his whiskers flying in the wind and his saddle-bags flopping up and down.

"How firm was our faith in the old-fashioned doctor,
 Who came with his remedies ready to use,
 And cured us of fever and ague and headache
 With forty nine bottles of different hues;
 With capsules and pellets, pills, powders and sirups.
 In doses colossal, sweet, bitter and sour,
 And poured the things down us in rapid succession,
 Explicitly ordering more in an hour."

But the doctor of today comes in an aura of sunshine and cheerfulness and hope. He investigates matters and writes a prescription. Orders fresh air, less tobacco and coffee, more sleep, plain diet and exercise. The poet has said:

"The doctor he comes a smiling and he holds my weary hand,
 And he says I'll soon get better, and soon that he will let me stand;
 He promises the roses to my cheeks shall come again,
 And he laughs away the fever, and he jokes away the pain.

The doctor he is clever, sure and certain to his skill,
 And his people long have praised him for his work among the ill;
 But its not his wisdom only that the life of us insures,
 And its not his pills and tonics, but the heart of him that cures."

In the early days they did not know they had an appendix, and some died with billious colic before appendicitis was discovered. Once it was thought that every organ in our body was necessary for our welfare, but the doctors now are removing more and more of our organs until some of us have few left. Our forefathers did not worry about germs because they did not know there were such things, but science now claims that in the tangled fastness of the old-timer's whiskers there were enough germs to start an epidemic. But he was strong and well and able to drink six bottles of wine without falling under the table, and we are not. So I think their freedom from germ theories was what counted most. Even in our time, if we cut our finger we used to run right to the germiest corner of the stable and haul down a fuzzy handful of cobwebs and slap on the cut. We didn't die from it, either.

People of today expatiate long and loud over the virtues of buttermilk, but to my mind persimmon beer that is properly brewed and thoroughly aged, outshines, outsparkles, outstrips and outclasses all the other beverages as a soothing, soul-satisfying and health invigorating drink. If people only had persimmon beer to drink now (as in my boyhood days), prohibitionists would cease to proclaim and the antis would cease their antics.

There are people who think sassafras tea is largely a fake, something like the Irish potato cure for rheumatism, (which I believe in and practice). For a long time it has been fixed in the minds of many people that sassafras tea is a poor man's drink, and that the poorer he gets the more he drinks of it. But a man of that class ought not to be ashamed of it. I know men who are in constant dread for fear people will find out they are not well fixed in this world's goods. So to keep down suspicion they buy coffee two pounds to the dollar and green tea one pound for \$1.25. They buy nothing but the highest priced goods. Some of our grocers have learned that when certain customers come into the store they must raise the price to that customer or lose a sale. Now then, to think of drinking sassafras tea without price and without cost brings a shock to the entire system. Not so long ago a man, who drank sassafras tea when he was a boy, was caught burying sassafras roots in his back yard through fear that if caught with the goods what little credit the family had would be gone. I long to see the time return when it will not be regarded as a proof of poverty to drink a little sassafras tea for the stomach's sake. We all want it, and some of us really need it. I drank it when I was a boy, and the old pioneers of Texas banked on it to thin their blood in the spring of the year.

Almost everything is being sacrificed nowadays to the spirit of practicability. Old love letters are destroyed because desk room is needed. The spreading oak that marked for decades the turn of the road is destroyed to give room for a modern sign that tells the same story. The baby's first pair of shoes, wee, dainty and soft as they are, are

thrown in the trash pile that there may be room in the top drawer for the powder box. All of this destruction of old time sentiment and the basis of reminiscence is all wrong. The most interesting spot in or near the capitol city of our nation is Mount Vernon. The most magnificent square in Philadelphia is Independence Hall. The most valuable spot in Texas is the Old Alamo at San Antonio, the most memorable places in our communities are the cemeteries where the old pioneers sleep the dreamless sleep, after spending their lives nobly battling to clear the way for the civilization we enjoy today. Such places as these contain history, and the citizen who views, and thinks while viewing—and no one can view without thinking—becomes instantly a patriot, likewise a better husband and a better father.

EARLY DAYS IN RAINS COUNTY

Excerpts from "Reminiscences of Sixty Years Ago," by Rev. Ambrose Fitzgerald.

(NOTE.—The late venerable Rev. Ambrose Fitzgerald came to Texas at an early day—1846—and settled in the boundaries of what is now Rains County while it was still in what was known as the Nacogdoches Land District. In 1846 Van Zandt County was created. When but 19 years of age, Rev. Fitzgerald was elected first Clerk of that County. In 1850, responsive to a legislative fiat, Wood County was created from Van Zandt County. He was elected first Clerk of that County, which office he held until the Civil War, when he resigned his office to accept a Captain's commission in Col. R. B. Hubbard's regiment, Confederate army. After peace was restored he was again elected Clerk of the County Court of Wood County, which office he continued to hold until Rains County was spoken into being in 1870, Rains including his habitat. Very soon thereafter he was elected Assessor and Collector of Taxes for Rains County, and later District and County Clerk, which position he held during life. Rev. Fitzgerald was the intimate friend and associate of many of the great men of Texas, who helped to lay the foundation for the future greatness of his adopted State. For forty years a minister of the Baptist Church, he was said to have baptized more converts during his ministry than any other preacher in so sparsely a settled country. He died June 15, 1893.)

A short time since this writer stood by the side of an old antiquated chimney bank about two and a half miles northeast of Emory. And as he stood there musing solitary and alone, he felt sad and reflective. He remembered this identical spot forty-four years ago was the termination of a long and wearisome journey from a distant state on the part of himself; then an inexperienced, moneyless, but married boy, still in his teens, with his brave, girlish wife, two years his junior, by his side, deposited for a time a very small amount of earthly goods (but all they possessed) in the little unpretending log cabin indicated by this bank; which cabin by long use, and the wear of time and decay, like the dear one then by my side, and many others very dear, have passed from observation, but not from memory. My old time friend

now of Emory, I. C. A. and myself, are about all the living witnesses here now of those days. In my musings I remembered that this was then Nacogdoches; afterwards Henderson, Van Zandt and Wood, but now Rains county, and that there is very little similarity in the appearance of the face of the country now and then. The same applies to the people and the seasons of "now and then." Then, mostly uninhabited except by wild animals, such as the Mustang horse, wild cattle, bear, wild cats, deer and turkeys, etc. in abundance, from which source the few people here obtained their meats for family supplies for a long while; and by the aid of a mortor and pestle, or steel mill run by hand, they manufactured their bread; and those who could afford the luxury of coffee would travel a long distance over the almost roadless country and barter deer skins for that article. A better range country there was never known; large cane brakes, almost impenetrable, covered the creek and branch bottoms ten or twelve feet high in places where now there are no indications that a cane stalk ever grew. As to markets and trading points, we had none, and gave ourselves no trouble about that inconvenience. The people were poor, but they were contented and comparatively happy: yet in their poverty a kinder and more benevolent people never lived; they would share any and everything they had with their neighbors. Though their cabins were often ten miles apart, the same courtesy was in like manner extended to all strangers; and realizing these things as I then did, I cannot refrain from exclaiming way down in my heart, "God bless every old Texan!"

And as I stood by that old chimney mound, which occasion put in motion this train of thought, I remembered and recognized the place in the gulch, or branch, where wife and I obtained our water supply, which was then very scarce, and where I nursed the baby—our first born—while she would wash a few garments.

And on kneeling down to get a drink,
Dear Ike I startled so
To see how sadly I had changed
Since forty years ago;

My lids have long been dry, dear Ike,
But tears came in my eyes;
I thought of those we loved so well,
Those early broken ties.
And when our time shall come, dear Ike,
And we are called to go,
I hope they'll lay us not far from where
We suffered full sixty years ago.

Van Zandt county was created from the territory of Henderson county by an act of the Legislature, March 20, 1848, and its limits as defined embraced its present territory, as well as that of Wood, and nearly all of the present county of Rains. Jordan Saline (now Grand Saline) was designated by the Act as the county capitol for the period of two years. The election of county officers was held on the first Monday in August, 1848, nearly, if not quite every voter in the county exercised his franchise privilege on that occasion, polling in the aggregate 87 votes, all told. The following were the county officers elected, towit: Gilbert Yarborough, Chief Justice, (nearly corresponding to the office of County Judge at present); John Jordan, Thomas Horsley, Joseph Fisher, and Isham Clark, County Commissioners; P. S. Benton, Sheriff; Dr. James D. Wright, District Clerk; A. Fitzgerald, County Clerk; W. C. Greer, Assessor and Collector of Taxes; Cary L. Rice, Surveyor, and Peter Kukendall, County Treasurer. Under the provisions of the law the election returns were to be made to the Chief Justice of Henderson; consequently John Jordan, Commissioner, (at the time principal owner of the Saline), and the writer hereof, mounted each on an average mustang pony, with lasso attached, and filled up with the usual camp equipage, common in those days, set out with our elections returns for the capitol of Henderson county, which we found to be a little clapboard shanty of an apology for a town, called Buffalo, on the bank of the Trinity river, and delivered our certificate of election, being each sworn into our respective offices, and returned home and finished up our organization of the county. On this trip we saw an abundance of wild game—antelopes, deer, turkeys, wolves, etc., and a small herd of buffalo had crossed our path the night before we passed.

On our trip to the capitol of Henderson county with our election returns, our friend Jordan conducted us several miles off our route (for we were governed more by course than roads), to call on his old-time friend, Jacob Dooeey, Esq., in order to sit under his cooling bower, and talk up their past and break bread with him. The writer was impressed that on our arrival at Mr. Dooeey's, we would find things shaped up in something like "Old State style," but on nearing his residence we observed a round log, eight-cornered, low-roofed construction, which proved to have only a dirt floor, and which the writer supposed to be a sheep house, having seen some built after that style. Here we were met and most cordially and kindly received by the occupant, whom the writer at the time took to be the roughest and toughest looking specimen of humanity he had ever met: bare-headed, bare-footed, sun-burnt, hair unkempt, and standing out in almost every direction, his coarse Lowell pants frazzled at the bottom, with one suspender only across his shoulders, which seemed to have been sworn in to do its best; but a kinder welcome and more hospitable treatment we could not have received; it came with a free good will. Mr. Dooeey's wife being dead, himself and his two very small girls soon prepared dinner for us, and we ate, that is Mr. Jordan did, and seemed to relish and enjoy the creature comforts; but the writer's stomach at the time seemed to be a little off its base, and he touched lightly. Yet it was said that this old pioneer's stock of all kind numbered thousands, and some ready cash in his coffers, and was respected by his few neighbors. I afterwards on two occasions saw this old Texan pass Jordan's Saline with almost a caravan of fine ox teams, hauling goods and groceries from Shreveport; still bare-headed, bare-footed—the crack of his ox-whip could be heard for a mile—his brain seeming to be impervious to the scorching, burning rays of the sun, and his feet likewise to the "sand-briars "

This writer does not by any means mention this old reminiscence in a disparaging way, or to reflect in anywise upon Mr. Dooeey, who, I suppose, was an extreme type of the

first settlers in that section of the country; for this writer himself is an old Texan, and cherishes the utmost regard for that class of early pioneers who so cheerfully endured hardships, trials and sufferings to open up the way for the development and occupancy of the greatest and grandest country on earth:

Immediately after the officers of Van Zandt county were qualified, a term of the Commissioners' Court was held at the Saline, and provisions made for the building of the round log cabin, some 16 feet square, (but not honored with a fireplace), and which was located about one-half mile south of the Saline, near Saline creek, to be used as a Clerk's office and courthouse. At the same time provisions were made for some blank record books, paper, seal, etc., which I think was finally procured from New Orleans. The first records were made on loose sheets of paper and afterwards transcribed, and a private seal used by the Clerk. It was several months before we were furnished with any statutory laws. The writer had just passed his twenty-first mile post, was inexperienced, and had no recollection at the time of ever having seen the inside of a law book of any kind. The writer, as Clerk, in the absence of any law on the subject, and to make things doubly sure and safe, required the first several parties applying for marriage license to give bond and security for the faithful performance of the contract. How it was that we, the officers elect, in the absence of any law—in our ignorance—by main strength and awkwardness, moved the county affairs along without committing any very serious blunder, still remains one of the mysteries.

About this time on a certain morning the writer was passing to his office in company with his "chum," (a paddy who happened to be living with him at the time), and who was first in discovering a respectable sized alligator stretched out in front of the office door, and remarked in his Irish brogue: "There seems to be a shentleman after his license." But not believing that to be his business I required no bond. If such could have been his intentions, I am satisfied that his intended never saw him again, for after having much

sport out of him with two very severe dogs, which came off second best in the fight, we dispatch him. Wife and I could then account for our chickens being carried off from under the floor of our cabin wherein we slept, for several nights previous, leaving an appearance in the sand as if a small log had been dragged along. These animals abounded in all the waters and water courses here in those days. On another occasion I happened on a very large monster of this species on a blue jack ridge, evidently passing from one water to another, and not feeling any inclination to engage him in a personal combat in the absence of any fire-arms, or other formidable weapon, and supposing that his pass was right, he had my permission to pass on for further explorations.

About this time wife made some trouble at home on the "soap question." There was no concentrated lye in those days, and to keep down further trouble this writer repaired to the woods, a few hundred yards distant, and burned several bushels of ashes from old decayed blackjack logs and trees, and on a certain warm morning carried them, turn by turn, on his shoulder in an old hamper basket. The exercise caused free perspiration, and the ashes sifting out and settling on the beardless countenance of the carrier and over his person generally, caused him to present quite a comical appearance; while in this plight as he neared his cabin with a turn of ashes on his shoulder he was met by three fine looking gentlemen, well mounted, and who proved to be Gov. J. Pinckney Henderson, John A. Greer, at one time Lieutenant Governor, and Capt. Wheeler, I think of San Augustine county. They inquired for the Clerk, and was informed that he would be on hand in a short time; the apology for Clerk, after dumping his load of ashes, did not take time to shake himself, or irrigate his countenance, but repaired at once to his office, unlocked at once the clapboard door shutter and had the gentlemen seated. The Governor soon had his papers out, and again looked around and inquired for the Clerk, and was informed, "I am Clerk here"; but said he: "Where is the Principal?" and was informed, "I am Principal and all—I am running the whole thing."

These gentlemen surveyed the party before them from head to foot for a few moments, and apologized and begged his pardon, having discovered that their title papers should be recorded in Titus county, and not in Van Zandt county. About one month afterwards these papers came by mail addressed to the Clerk, and were recorded and returned.

You see from the above that it is all a hoax about what used to be said that the Clerk was unable to unlock his office door on the occasion above alluded to, from the fact that he used the key that day for a clapper to the cow bell. That was another "feller."

Van Zandt county being within the limits designated in colonization contract, made the 29th day of January, 1844, between Sam Houston, President of the Republic, and Chas. Fenton Mercer and his associates, under the Act of February 4, 1841. Our citizens proved up and obtained their land certificates, 640 acres to each head of a family, and to each single or unmarried man 320 acres, at Jordan Saline on the 6th day of May, 1850, and afterwards on the 24th day of June following, from J. M. Crockett, Commissioner for said colony. Very few of these old veteran grantees are now left among us. If they and their heirs had judiciously located their certificates at that time on the abundance of vacant lands, and improved, and held on to the same, they would all now have good homes and pleasant surroundings, whereas a large majority of their children can truthfully sing, "Not a foot of land do I now possess," in what was then this vast howling wilderness; but such are some of the mistakes of life. Many of these certificates were actually transferred for a cow and calf, or a Mexican pony.

It was in the fall of this year that a footman, a stranger who called himself Reed, was arrested on a charge of having knocked down a Norwegian about six miles west of the Saline, on the Shreveport and Dallas road, and relieved him of his pocket change; and in the examining court of Esq. Braughman was held to abide the decision of the Grand Jury therein, and being unable to give bond was taken by Peter S. Benton, Sheriff, to his home, three miles distant, and a chain

fasten around his leg, and sent out in the woods with the Sheriff's boys to help them make rails, and thus pay his way without further expense to the county. At the meeting of the court the Grand Jury returned a bill against this party, and he was immediately put on trial and plead guilty; waived a jury, and begged the clemency of the court, and was fined one dollar and one hour's imprisonment; to perfect which he was chained or tied to a hickory tree that stood in front of the courthouse for that length of time. It has been said that he paid the fine, and that the court and officers sent off the money and bought a gallon or so of "Tangle-foot," and got on a big "tare;" most of which the writer does not believe to be the case, for he has a distinct recollection that he got no part of the juice to help his Liver Disease,

Cotton Marketing in the Long Ago.

Perhaps it might interest the boys of this generation (and some of the "old boys," too, for that matter), to know something of the ups and downs their grandsires had in getting their cotton to market, as told by Uncle Joe Jefferson of Van Zandt county—Rains being a part of Van Zandt in the early days. In those days Shreveport, La., Jefferson and Marshall, Texas, was to them what their home towns are to the farmers of Rains and Van Zandt now, or in other words they were their "home markets." Old settlers use to say that it took from 20 to 30 days to make the trip—the time depending on the distance to the place they went to. This meant, too, when they had good luck. If they broke down, bogged down, or lost some of their oxen the old lady and children were awful glad when the old man returned.

They did not know how to mortgage cotton then, for they had never heard of the like; therefore they could very easily lay their cotton aside and wait 'till spring to sell. They did this for two reasons; They wanted better camping weather and also grass for their oxen, as corn was scarce and high in price—\$1 to \$1.50 per bushel.

"When grass was good we could drive all day and bell, hobble and turn our teams out at night and save buying corn. When half a dozen or more ox teams were turned out at night, and every other ox with a bell on—big bells, little bells, coarse bells and fine bells—what music it did make! In imagination I can hear them over across the branch just now.

One among his last trips with a long ox team is going to be mighty hard for Uncle Joe Jefferson to forget. It was just after the break of the war. Father had raised a little cotton each year all through the war, for he said cotton was going to be a big price when the war ended.

When the boys were all back and the cotton market

straightened out, he put it upon your Uncle Joe and an older brother to carry to market seven bales of cotton which he had stored away, or rather penned up, for he couldn't get it ginned until the war was over.

There had been no road working done for four or five years, for the road hands were all off in the army, and hence the highways were next to impassable. But cotton at from 20 to 30 cents per pound was some inducement to a fellow to go to market over the head of all opposition. We hitched our big stout yokes of oxen (two yoked together was called a yoke), to a big old wooden ox wagon, rolled on the seven bales of cotton and set out for Marshall. We didn't go to Shreveport this time, for as many can remember it was but a short time after the surrender 'til the T. & P. Ry. was completed up to Marshall.

First day we got along pretty well, and camped just below Edom. Next morning we hadn't gone far until we came to a red, slick hillside, and in spite of all precautions—over went wagon, cotton and all. We had a big slick, muddy job in getting things untangled, straightened out and reloaded. But we did it, and went on a few miles until we came to the old Lollar bridge on the Neches river. The big rains had overflowed the bottom and the water was well nigh up to the bridge. The bridge itself was in a rickety condition. We soon decided it would never do to drive four yokes of oxen and a seven bale load of cotton on that bridge. What should we do? This: Just at the end of the bridge was a little mound the water hadn't covered. Onto that island we drove, and throwed off the cotton; then carried over the oxen—one yoke at a time until three yokes were safely over the old bridge. Then with the remaining yoke we carried over the empty wagon—leaving it just at the other end of the bridge. Then bale by bale across that long and nearly rotten bridge, we rolled the cotton. How the old thing did shake, especially when we were pounding over with 500 pound weights, right over the current of the river. But we got all things over safe, the cotton back on the wagon and drove to the top of the hill beyond the bottom and camped. Twice we had

loaded our cotton on that day and we certainly felt like resting, but the situation was made more gloomy by an all night's rain on us.

Next day our cotton frame broke smack in two, and just beyond Tyler and a little distance this side of the Old Stockade. We again rolled off the cotton, borrowed tools from old Major Rushing, made a new frame, loaded up again and rolled on. As we passed through the town of Tyler (I believe it is a city now), a merchant came out and without any inquiry as to quality or weight of the cotton, proposed to give us seven hundred dollars for the seven bales. We didn't even stop to talk to him about it.

As we moved on we soon began to meet parties who would tell us hair-raising stories about "Duncan's Creek bottom." "You can't cross that bottom," they'd tell us, "with that team and load." Joe Jefferson began to feel pretty blue, but his brother was late from the war, where he had seen many sights—and had ever been a teamster there—so he screwed up his courage and also gave his brother Joe a few turns by telling me he could "pull the old scratch off his roost with that team."

Late in the evening we reached the bottom and decided to go through and camp on the hill beyond, or "stick up" trying. Right through we went without a bobble and camped with joy and gladness on the hills beyond. Now we're all right, though, Alas! no good news came up the road for us.

We began meeting fellows who'd tell us that the Sabine river was a mile wide and we couldn't get across at all. One fellow said, even if the ferryman would take us over he'd charge us \$25. This fellow had left his wagon and was returning leading his mules. Joe Jefferson's courage sank below zero. If his brother's did he didn't let me know it. The river bottom was wide, but sure enough the water was from hill to hill.

The ferryman didn't want his job. He first suggested that the wagon wheels would bog so deep into the mud that when they struck the boat tunnel they wouldn't make the rise. His next fear was that even if we got on the boat we'd

"ground" it, meaning that the weight of the team and load would bury the boat so deep in the mud that he couldn't move it away. After parleying awhile he agreed to risk it if we would. It was an old-fashioned flat boat. We got our team and load onto it without much trouble, but sure enough we "grounded" it. With all his might the ferryman tried to loose anchor, but the boat was there both sure and steadfast. My heroic brother picked up a pole which lay in the boat and stepped out into the water near waist deep and began surging, prising and heaving at the old flat until at last she loosed her anchorage and began to move. Fear always had torments and now I conjectured that about the main current of the river something was going to happen. For once I was strongly opposed to "deep water." The hill on the far side was at last reached, and once more we were on dry land.

When the Red Sea was crossed, the army of Israel sang the song of deliverance; I too might have sang, but while that mighty host were never to pass that way any more, Joe Jefferson well knew that his fair Canaan was 'way up in Van Zandt while Sabine rolled between.

The worst is yet to come! We made it on to Marshall all right so far as rivers and roads were concerned, but what think ye? We hadn't been in town two hours 'til somebody stole old "Ich," my good coon dog. No joke, boys, they got him. How I did miss him of moon-light nights when I got back home.

We stored the cotton for shipment according to our orders. I have forgotten the exact price it brought when sold, but my recollection is that it was close about \$800 for the seven bales. Our load being light on our return, we made it back without serious trouble."

Organization of Rains County and First Officers.

Rains County was organized in 1870 out of territory taken from Wood, Hunt, Hopkins and Van Zandt Counties. It embraces an area of 252 square miles, and is situated upon the parallel of 32 degrees and 50 minutes north latitude. The County is bounded on the north by Hopkins and Hunt Counties, on the east by Wood, on the west by Hunt, and on the south by Van Zandt. The County site was located at Emory, known as Springville before the County was organized. Both the County of Rains and the town of Emory were named for an early pioneer, the late venerable Judge Emory Rains, who first represented the County in the State Legislature.

The first instrument was filed for record December 9, 1870, and on November 9, 1879, all the County records were destroyed by a fire which consumed the temporary courthouse—a small wooden structure, located near where the present court house stands. This fact “cuts me off” from getting up a fuller history of the County during this important and eventful period.

Among the first County Officers were:

John D. Rains, District Clerk; Thos. M. Allred Deputy.

P. P. (Press) Rains, Sheriff.

E. P. Kearby, County Judge.

H. W. Martin, County Attorney.

James Gary, County Treasurer.

Levi Simpson, Chief Justice and County Commissioner, Precinct No. 1.

There were no such offices as District Judge, County Judge, County Attorney or County Treasurer when the

County was organized. They were created by the New Constitution adopted by the people of Texas in 1876. Until that time the District Clerk was also County Clerk, and the office of Justice of the Peace at the County site nearly corresponded with that of County Judge at the present time.

Among the pioneer heroes who braved savage opposition by settling in Rains County "with the Bible in one hand and the rifle in the other" were Elijah Tollett, Wm. Leggett, Johnathan MaMahan, J. W. Hooker, John Montgomery, Rev. Ambrose Fitzgerald, Isaac C. Alexander, Mabry Wafer, Isham Lynch, Micajah Reeder, Gilbert Yarborough, Jesse Montgomery, Sr., Levi Simpson, O. S. Forbis, James Gary, Pary Taylor, Elijah Magee, Jas. H. Flowers, Thos. Bryant, and many others.

Rains County has gradually increased in wealth and population. Comprising an area of 252 square miles, with a diversity of soil capable of producing everything necessary to sustain life and please the taste of those who settled in her borders, her people have by economy and industry, acquired for themselves happy and comfortable homes, and their thrift induced the immigrant to push into their midst.

In 1910 her population was 6,797. Since then—in the last seven years—it has been estimated that her population has increased 75 per cent, showing clearly that when the next census is taken in 1920, her population will be more than doubled. This rapid increase of population is attributed to the enterprise of her citizens, the rapid development of the rich agricultural lands in the County, as well as the superior educational facilities which her citizens have fostered and carefully guarded.

The taxable property of Rains County for the year 1917 amounts to \$3,265,021. Her people produce about 7,000 bales of cotton annually—which, at the present price of 25 to 30 cents per pound, will give to each man, woman and child within her borders, about \$60. While cotton is the leading staple to bring this vast amount of money into general circulation, it is by no means the only source of wealth here. Corn, potatoes, peas, sugar cane, wheat, oats, rye, barley,

and vegetables of many kinds and varieties are produced in the greatest abundance. As a fruit growing region, it is one of the finest in the State, and her people have for some years past received a considerable revenue from this industry. The time will come, if our people take advantage of their opportunities and spray their orchards, when the revenue from fruit culture in Rains County, will very near, if not equal the cotton crop. Only a willing hand and economical management of one's affairs is needed to set a man up in a business that will give him an annual income sufficient to supply all the necessities of life, and to place all the luxuries in reach, to be plucked and gathered and enjoyed by an enterprising, thriving and contented people.



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