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THE EARLY HISTORY OF FLOYD COUNTY

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CLAUDE V. HALL



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THE EARLY
HISTORY OF FLOYD COUNTY

by

CLAUDE V. HALL



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GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES AND
POLITICAL CHANGES1. *The Four Surface Regions of Texas*

Geographically Texas is divided into four great surface regions, namely, the Trans-Pecos Country, the Coastal Plain, the Central Region, and the Great Plains Province. The Great Plains Province is the southern continuation and termination of what is known as the Great Plains of the United States. From the Rocky Mountains to the Gulf of Mexico the surface is a gentle slope. How the Great Plains Province came into existence is an interesting story.

Geologists assert that the Great Plains Province was many millions of years in process of formation. First there was an upheaval in the Rocky Mountain region, accompanied by a depression of the area now occupied by the Great Plains of the United States. A few millions of years later another elevation of the Rocky Mountain region took place, and at the same time a second subsidence of the Great Plains area occurred. The surface changes resulted in the extension of a great northern lake¹ into North Texas. This was a vast fresh water lake, into which washed down sediments from the elevations on the west. Millions of years later this once fresh water lake was obliterated by a great continental elevation, whereby the Great Plains region was formed. Therefore the Great Plains Province of Texas is non-marine in origin and structure.

The Great Plains Province of Texas is composed of two sections or divisions. The one to the north is the Llano Estacado, or the Staked Plains, and the other to the south is the Edwards Plateau.² There is no structural break between the Staked Plains and the Edwards Plateau, the one region blending imperceptibly into the other. The provincial

¹ Alexander Deussen in *Texas Almanac* for 1904, 74.

² Simonds, *Geography of Texas*, 23.

boundary line is fixed through Midland, Upton, and Crane counties. The Staked Plains and the Edwards Plateau together constitute a vast quadrangular tableland, "bordered on three sides by escarpments of erosion, and on the other by an escarpment of faulting."³ The escarpments of erosion are known as the breaks of the plains.

There are two kinds of plains. One is built-up, constructional; the other, worn down, destructional. The Staked Plains is the built-up sort.⁴ This region while accompanied with a slight dip towards the southeast, is "so level as to produce the appearance of being uphill in every direction."⁵

Some confusion exists as to the area or extent of the Panhandle of Texas. West Texas is often perfunctorily referred to as the Texas Panhandle, but the Panhandle of Texas has well defined limits. The strip of country in Northwest Texas projecting like the handle of a frying-pan has its beginning on the south with the tier of counties running west from Childress County. Briscoe County, which lies just north of Floyd County, is a part of the Texas Panhandle, while Floyd County is just without the Panhandle of Texas.

Lying east of the Staked Plains is the Breaks Country, which contains deep ravines, abrupt elevations, and picturesque valleys. This is predominantly a grazing country, although there is much land in the valleys susceptible of cultivation. Then, too, there are in some localities the celebrated shinnery lands, which rate high for agricultural purposes. The soil of these shinneries is a coarse sand with a clay foundation. The lands get this name from the thick growth of bushes of the oak family not more than eighteen inches high. These sprouts, or shin oaks, bear crops of acorns valuable as food for hogs.

The Breaks Country contains some timbers, such as mesquite, liveoak, cottonwood, hackberry, red and white cedars, and other kinds indigenous to the vegetable life zones of this

³ Alexander Deussen in the *Texas Almanac* for 1904, 75.

⁴ Alexander Duessen in the *Texas Almanac* for 1904, 74.

⁵ Simonds, *Geography of Texas*, 23.

region. Besides these timbers, wild plums and grapes grow profusely in some localities. Here nature provides plants with small leaves and large root systems that they may successfully resist the droughts for which this country is noted.

There is in the Breaks Country an abundance of surface water afforded by springs and water courses. The springs, with some noteworthy exceptions, are periodical in their flow. Roaring Springs, in Motley County, has a large and constant waterfall of several feet. The creeks are subject to overflow in times of copious rains, and also to a great diminution of volume in dry seasons. Tongue River, a branch of Pease River, has its source in Floyd County. It is the first stream south of Quitaque Creek and flows into the North Pease in Motley County. Tongue River is an interesting stream⁶ because of the way in which it acquired its name. Captain Henry Strong,⁷ of Wichita Falls, who was Colonel Mackenzie's guide when the famous battle of Palo Duro Canyon was fought September 26, 1874, says that during a long time previous to the extermination of the Indians from this section of Texas the Comanches and Kiowas, who had reservations in the Indian Territory, made frequent "incursions in Texas, where they killed ranchers, burned their homes, and stole their livestock." He says further:

According to Charles Goodnight,⁸ parties of traders came along trails from the west and sojourned in the broad valleys of the Tongue River to engage in the traffic of livestock. The Indians usually stole these horses and cattle from the settlers living on the borders of civilization. The participants in these trade meetings spoke several different languages. The Spanish term *Las Linguas*, signified *those tongues*, and this term

⁶ Judge J. N. Browning to J. L. DeGroot, November, 1920.

⁷ *The Fort Worth Star Telegram*, June 19, 1921.

There were no settlers in the Texas Panhandle then, and it was used as trading grounds, where stolen horses and cattle were disposed of. American, Mexican, and Indian outlaws and cattle rustlers made this region their headquarters. More horses and cattle changed hands in this region than in all the rest of Texas, all of which were stolen.

⁸ J. N. Browning to J. L. DeGroot, November, 1920.

was Anglicized and eventually became the name applied to this stream.

Floyd County is situated on the eastern border of the Staked Plains. The eastern portion of the county lies partly in the Breaks Country. Floyd County is crossed by the draws of Quitaque, Runningwater, and Crawfish. Blanco Canyon has its origin in Floyd County.

Floyd County contains 1,036 square miles,^o—663,040 acres, of which about 500,000 acres are arable. The county is 30 miles wide and about 34 miles long, from north to south.

Floyd County was named in honor of Doniphan Floyd, one of the martyrs along with Travis, Crockett, and Bowie of the Alamo¹⁰ in its fall on March 6, 1836.

2. *Political Changes in the Map of Texas*

A study of the various maps of Texas since 1835 reveals much interesting information pertaining to the political changes wrought at the hands of the Texas law-makers from time to time. The changes effected in the political map of Western Texas are particularly noticeable. They have been rapid and pronounced.

The Map of Texas, compiled by Stephen F. Austin, and published by H. S. Tanner of Philadelphia, in 1835, just before Texas accomplished an existence separate from Mexican control, furnishes rather meager information of the regions lying towards the West. This map represents the western lands as merely occupying space. Austin was temperamentally a cautious man. He had no knowledge of the geography of Western Texas, and he did not venture to make any representation based upon the contrivances of a fertile imagination. In fact, this map devotes nearly as much space to the country lying beyond the Rio Grande as to that on this side. The map, however, does give a rough representation of the various grants for the establishment of colonies. Then, too,

^o *Year Book Texas Department of Agriculture for 1909*, 497.
¹⁰ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, VIII, 1083.

this map contains the probable sources of the larger known streams in the settled regions. In an indefinite way "Level Prairies" and "Immense Herds of Buffaloes" are shown.

J. H. Young's map of Texas, published in 1853 by Thomas, Cowperthwait & Company, of Philadelphia, makes a sincere attempt to present fully the political and physical features of Texas. The westernmost counties of Texas at this time are Cooke, Tarrant, Ellis, Navarro, McLennan, Bell, Travis, Williamson, Gillespie, Comal, Bexar, Medina, Uvalde, and Kinney. Some of these counties have subsequently been materially reduced in size and changed in form. Cooke County's south boundary line was an extension westward of the north boundary line of Tarrant County, and her west boundary line was about seventy miles west of Denton County. Her size then was about ten times that of her present limits. The country lying west of the counties above mentioned is not represented as subject of any jurisdiction. The courses of the streams are faithfully presented. The topography between the larger streams is described as "Rolling Table Lands," and that north of the Brazos as "Salt Plains," and west of the "Salt Plains" the eye greets the words "El Llano Estacado or Staked Plains," accompanied with this description: "El Ilano Estacado (Staked Plains) is an elevated, desert plain of considerable extent, across which a traveling route was at one time marked by wooden stakes driven at short intervals into the ground." About midway between Laredo and Eagle Pass on the Rio Grande, Kingsbury's Rapids appear, described as two hundred feet in length with a fall of four feet. This point is noted as the "Head of Stream Navigation" on the Rio Grande. At a point on the Rio Grande slightly east of the east boundary line of New Mexico is Grand Indian crossing, described as "a shallow place in the Rio Grande 1,000 miles from its mouth, with four feet water." Here the "Comanche War Trail" crosses the Rio Grande from the northern part of Texas into Mexico. North of the Canadian River in the Panhandle is the home of the

Apaches, while south of this river is occupied by the Comanches. All the Trans-Pecos region is embraced in the two unorganized counties of Presidio and El Paso. This entire region is designated as occupied by Apaches. South of the Conchos is the abode of both Comanches and Lipans. Across the State is Captain Marcy's road from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Dona Ana, New Mexico, a settlement on the Rio Grande not far to the northwest of El Paso. This road crosses the the Red River at Preston in Grayson County, passes south of the Double Mountains, Big Spring, and El Paso. The length of this road is put down as 960 miles. From Santa Fe, New Mexico, along the Canadian Valley of the Texas Panhandle to Fort Smith, Arkansas, is marked another road, which is 820 miles in length.

In 1861 was published *De Cordova's Map of the State of Texas*, which was "compiled from the records of the general Land Office of the State by Robert Creuzleur." In the eight years since Young's map was published the political geography of Texas had undergone a marked change. Many new counties in the west had been created. The counties farthest west were Hardeman, Knox, Haskell, Jones, Taylor, Runnels, Concho, Menard, Kimble, and Edwards, which were established by the Seventh Legislature in 1858. The west boundary lines of these counties are near the one hundredth meridian. All the region lying west except the Trans-Pecos Country, and Dawson and Kinney to the south, is indicated as Bexar County, although the nearest point of this area was about one hundred miles from the limits of Bexar County, proper. One transcontinental United States mail line passed through Sherman, Fort Belknap, Fort Phantom Hill, and El Paso.

During the Civil War and Reconstruction the development of Texas was very much retarded. A large-scale *Traveler's Map of the State of Texas*, "compiled from the records of the General Land Office, the maps of the Coast Survey, the reports of the Boundary Commission, and various other mili-

tary surveys and reconnoissances," by Charles W. Pressler, 1867. This map designates, as Young Territory, to the north a line running about the middle of the west boundary of Taylor County due west to New Mexico. All the region south of Young Territory as far as Kinney County on the south and southwest to the Pecos River was known as Bexar Territory. Bexar Territory was about one-half the area of Young Territory. Thus will be seen that all of Texas west of the one hundredth meridian was composed of Young Territory, Bexar Territory, Kinney County, Maverick County, and the two Trans-Pecos counties of Presidio and El Paso. Not one of the present counties west of the one hundredth meridian was organized, and Uvalde was the only border county that was organized at that time. Her organization took place April 21, 1856.¹¹

Pressler's map contains the projected Memphis, El Paso & Pacific Railroad, entering Texas at Texarkana and passing through the towns of Paris, Denton, Palo Pinto and the southern portion of Jones County, in direct line towards El Paso.

Colton's *New Map of the State of Texas*, 1872, presents only a few changes in the political features of the State. West of the one hundredth meridian only one new county had been created during the preceding five years, and that was Pecos County, which was carved out of Presidio County, May 3, 1871.¹² Instead of the projected Memphis, El Paso & Pacific Railroad this map shows a successor, to be known as the Southern Pacific Railroad. This railroad enters Texas near Marshall and passes through Dallas, Fort Worth, Weatherford, Palo Pinto, and along the route of the abandoned Memphis, El Paso & Pacific Railroad. A branch enters Texas at Texarkana, passes through Clarksville, Paris and McKinney, and terminates at Fort Worth. This branch of the proposed Southern Pacific is called the Transcontinental Railroad.

¹¹ *Year Book Texas Department of Agriculture for 1909*, 644.

¹² Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, VI, 895.

A. R. Roessler's *Latest Map of the State of Texas*, "compiled and drawn by M. Y. Mettendorfer, C. E., 1874," is prepared on a rather comprehensive plan. The compiler and draughtsman sets out in clear detail the argicultural districts, the timbered regions, the mineral resources, prairie and swamp lands, post offices, mail routes, wagon roads, and railroads projected and finished. This map presents the newly created counties of Wegefath and Tom Green. Wegefath, created by an act approved June 2, 1873, was named in honor of C. Wegefath, president of the Texas Immigrant Aid Supply Company. Wegefath County adjoined Greer County on the west and lay north of the Prairie Dog Town Fork of Red River. Created out of Young Territory, Wegefath County was sixty miles square. The act creating Wegefath County provided in some detail for its organization, with C. Wegefath, L. P. Seiker, and Lewis T. Valente commissioned with plenary powers to effect the organization.¹³ Tom Green County was created out of that portion of Bexar Territory which lies north of a line running due west from the southwest corner of Concho County to the Pecos River,¹⁴ by an act approved March 13, 1874. The creation of Tom Green County reduced the area of Bexar Territory to about one-third its former extent.

Roessler's map designates that portion lying north of a line running east and west nearly with the north boundary line of Wegefath County as Bexar Territory, while Young Territory intervened between Bexar Territory and Tom Green County. Young Territory is described as a "Great Belt of Gypsum." This statement occurs: "2,500 to 3,000 feet above the level of the sea. Soil sandy, but arable, owing to the fertility of the Gypsum with which it is impregnated, covered by coarse grass, destitute of water and timber." The proposed Southern Pacific Railroad of the map of 1872 is here laid down on the same route as the "Pecos Division Texas

¹³ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, VII, 619.

¹⁴ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, VIII, 24.

Pacific Railroad." A proposed Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Railroad coursed from Belton through Haskell and Knox counties, the southwest corner of Hardeman County, in a northwesterly direction through Young Territory towards Santa Fe, New Mexico. From Fort Griffin slightly north of west to Cat Fish Creek in the vicinity of Canon Blanco is Mackenzie's Trail. No mail routes yet pass into Young Territory. A twice-a-week mail service was maintained from Denton to Fort Chadbourne, by the way of Fort Belknap, in Young County, Fort Griffin, in Shackelford County, and Fort Phantom Hill, in Jones County.

3. *Movements Presaging Settlement*

During the years from 1870 to 1876 events took place which foretold the early settlement of the hitherto unoccupied regions embraced in Young and Bexar Territories. The vast herds of buffalo were being exterminated, and the hordes of marauding Indians were being driven back to their reservations. Thus this great expanse of country was made ready for settlement. The Legislature of Texas at once saw the expediency of converting Young and Bexar Territories into new counties. Besides, the present Constitution of Texas was being put into effect. All hindrances to the rapid development of Texas had fled. Fifty-five new counties were created in short order. By an act approved January 22, 1875, Crockett County¹⁵ was created out of the portion of Bexar which lay south of Tom Green County. The following year the last vestige of the so-called territories of Bexar and Young was removed by the act approved August 21, 1876, whereby the present counties of Lipscomb, Ochiltree, Hansford, Sherman, Dallam, Hartley, Moore, Hutchinson, Roberts, Hemphill, Wheeler, Gray, Carson, Potter, Oldham, Deaf Smith, Randall, Armstrong, Donley, Collingsworth, Childress, Hall, Briscoe, Swisher, Castro, Parmer, Cottle, Motley, Floyd, Hale, Lamb, Bailey, Cochran, Hockley, Lubbock, Crosby,

¹⁵ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, VIII, 374.

Dickens, King, Stonewall, Kent, Garza, Lynn, Terry, Yoakum, Fisher, Scurry, Borden, Dawson, Gaines, Andrews, Martin, Howard, Mitchell, and Nolan. This act repealed that by which Wegefarth County was created in 1873.¹⁶ It made provisions for the judicial and land business of the new counties thereby created. Hale, Motley, Floyd, Briscoe, Swisher, and other counties "were attached to the County of Jack for judicial, surveying, and all other purposes." The counties of Dickens and Crosby, along with other counties were attached to Young County for land and judicial reasons or purposes.

After the organization of Donley County, March 22, 1882,¹⁷ it was manifest that the counties in its vicinity could be benefitted by the transaction of their land business nearer home. Therefore, by act approved April 9, 1883, the Donley Land District composed of the counties of Donley, Carson, Armstrong, Swisher, Randall, Floyd, Briscoe, Hall, and Childress, was created. By the terms of this act, "the county surveyor of Donley County shall be the surveyor of said district; he shall keep his office at the county seat of said Donley County, and the records of all files and surveys of land in said district shall be kept in said office."¹⁸

4. *Significance of Bexar County*

The accounts of the establishment of new counties in Western Texas usually contain the words "created from Bexar Territory." This expression is due to the fact that the Department of Bexar was an original political unit at the time Texas severed her relations with Mexico in 1836. Bexar County embraced an immense area of Western Texas. San Antonio, the county seat, was in the southeast corner of the Bexar County of that time. As a matter of fact, Bexar County has been diminished to its present size by the Legislature's carving out of Bexar County, or Bexar Territory, from year

¹⁶ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, Vol. 8, 1974, et seq.

¹⁷ *Year Book Texas Department of Agriculture*, 1909, 466.

¹⁸ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IX, 358.

to year, the great number of counties now found on the map of Western Texas. The reduction of area and the transformation in the shape of Bexar County were wrought from 1836 to 1876, a period of forty years. Bexar County is also styled as Bexar Territory and Bexar District. These last two designations are probably the outcome of the popular conception that, since vast portions had become so far removed from the county seat and separated from that part of Bexar County primarily known as the unit of county government, these remote sections possessed few, if any, of the attributes of a municipal corporation.

5. *Young County's Relation to West Texas*

Young County figures prominently in the historical movements in Northwest Texas. This County is included in what was known as the Peters Colony. A great portion of the lands not within Young County was located by the Texas Emigration and Land Company, about 1853.¹⁹

Young County was created by an act approved February 2, 1856, and its organization was effected soon thereafter, as "Young County was settled some five years in advance of the surrounding country."²⁰ Fort Belknap was the county seat during the early period. Fort Belknap was then something of a rendezvous for surveying and exploring parties. But with the great Civil War, together with the demoralization that attends and follows wars, as well as the proximity to hostile Indian tribes and lack of protection against Indian incursion, Young County became almost depopulated. Organization as a county government was abandoned, and reorganization did not take place until April, 1874.²¹

The act of the legislature creating Young County in 1856 further provided that:

For Judicial purposes the territory north from the northeast corner of said county to Red River; thence west with said stream to the United States territory;

¹⁹ *Texas Almanac* for 1858, 176.

²⁰ *Texas Almanac* for 1858, 176.

²¹ *Year Book Department of Texas Agriculture*, 1909, 666.

thence south to a point west from the southern source of the Clearfork of the Brazos; thence east to the source of said stream, and down the same to the main Brazos; and thence in a direct line to the southeast corner of said county; thence north to the place of beginning, shall be under the jurisdiction of said county, and when said county is created into a land district, it shall embrace the above described territory.²²

But the contemplated act of the Legislature to create Young County into a land district was held in obedience until April 29, 1874, when the three land districts of Young County, Jack County, and Palo Pinto County were created. By this act the Young Land District included the counties of Young, Throckmorton and Haskell, and all the territory within the following described limits:

Beginning at northwest corner of Haskell county, thence north along the west boundary line of the counties of Knox and Hardeman, to the thirty-fourth parallel of latitude; thence along said thirty-fourth parallel of latitude to the east boundary line of the territory of New Mexico, thence south along said east boundary line of the territory of New Mexico to a point due west from the corner of Haskell county; thence in a straight line east to the south-west corner of Haskell county.

All that section of Bexar County extending from the south line of the Young Land District to a northeasterly line running from the Horsehead Crossing on the Pecos River to the southwest corner of Runnels County was, by this law, attached to Palo Pinto County for land purposes. All that section of Young and Bexar territories which include the Panhandle of Texas; that is, all the region north of the thirty-fourth parallel of latitude, was, by the same act, attached to Jack County for land purposes.²³ In this connection, it is well to observe that the thirty-fourth parallel of latitude passed through the country which was two years later incorporated into Floyd County. Because of this condition the south portion of Floyd County at the time of its creation was in the Young Land District, and the north portion was in the Jack Land District. Thus when Floyd County was created by the act of August 21, 1876, the limits of the county were within two land districts, and the Legislature saw fit to attach Floyd County to Jack County "for judicial, surveying, and all other purposes."²⁴

²² Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IV, 459.

²³ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, VIII, 163.

²⁴ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, VIII, 1073.

6. *Conditions of Settlement in Texas Contrasted.*

Thus have been traced the changes made prior to 1876 in the political maps of Western Texas. While these changes were numerous as well as marked, still they do not necessarily imply fickleness and instability on the part of the State's law-makers. Most of the changes were logical and unavoidable. Unusual conditions prevailed. The pioneers of the East Texas settlements could subsist without capital and without commercial facilities. Austin's colony could get along quite well without friction matches, barbed wire, and imported household articles, but West Texas presented an entirely different environment. The scarcity of timber and surface water, the extremes of climate and temperature, and the variability of the winds and of the rainfall presented problems not encountered in other sections. Every movement of settlement westward was followed by a falling back. These forward and backward movements were concomitant with the country's development. These successive advances and retreats served as a schoolmaster unto the mastering of the Great West. As a child learns to do a thing by trial and success or, to put it another way, by effort and failure, so did the pioneers who converted West Texas into a habitable country.

Chapter II

INDIAN OUTBREAKS AND CAMPAIGNS

1. *Why the Indians Were a Menace to Settlers*

Western Texas, together with Colorado, New Mexico, Western Kansas, and Indian Territory, constituted an Indian country up to 1874, when the United States military forces succeeded in forcing the Indians to submission and in driving them back to their reservations. During these years the settlers in the westernmost counties in Texas, along the one hundredth meridian, suffered great losses because of the incursions of marauding bands of hostile Indians. At no time did the Indians feel resigned to remain within their reservations. The unrest and growing hostility of the Indians may be accounted for as follows:

1. Life on the reservations remote from civilization was not favorable to the moral and cultural development of an inherently savage race of people. In their reservations the Indians were under no control, restraint, or influence stronger than those exercised by a single agent of the Government. This agent frequently held his position because of political influence, and he oftentimes failed to deal fairly and justly towards the Government's wards.

2. The Indians saw only the worst features of the white people's civilization. The ruffians were usually in the majority in the frontier regions, and the Indians reasoned that since honor was lacking among the whites whom he knew it was characteristically lacking among all.

3. The Indians believed it was noble to kill and degrading to labor. They regarded the white people as their inferiors. The Indians could not respect those who lived by digging in the ground.¹ They regarded the life of the miner as that of a gopher.

¹ Nelson A. Miller, *Serving the Republic*, 119.

4. The Government sometimes failed to comply with the treaty stipulations to supply the Indians with food, shelter, and clothing. Having been removed from their natural source of supply, they were almost wholly dependent upon the allowances which were occasionally exhausted before others reached them. A half-starved condition quite naturally tended to arouse in them a spirit of unrest and dissatisfaction.

5. Railway construction and town building were to the Indians prophetic of their impending doom. Besides, along the transcontinental railways west of the Mississippi the white man destroyed the trees in the branches of which reposed the remains of their dead. This was particularly the case in Western Kansas when that country was being settled.² These sepultures were most sacred to the Indians, and the wanton destruction of their cemeteries so outraged them that they resolutely contrived the relentless murder of the whites.

6. The ruthless destruction of the buffaloes invited upon the whites the wrath of the Indians, as the Indians relied upon the buffaloes for food, raiment, and shelter.

2. *The Buffalo Slaughter*

The Indians strenuously opposed the slaughter of the buffaloes. The chiefs earnestly implored the Government not to permit railroad construction through what they termed their country, because railroads would drive away the buffaloes and thus leave the Indians in a state of destitution.³ The Indians protested that the bison belonged to them. To the wild tribes it was a hideous thought that they should become settled agriculturists. The sympathetic appeals of the Indians created a sentiment against the merciless slaughter of the buffaloes. Both whites and Indians influenced the legislatures of Kansas and Colorado to take steps to prevent the utter extinction of the buffaloes. Even the Texas Legislature under the Reconstruction regime was about to put a stop to the ruthless slaughter of buffaloes on the Staked Plains, but

² Miles, *Personal Recollections of Nelson A. Miles*, 157.

³ Olive K. Dixon, *Life of Billy Dixon*, 59.

General Phil. Sheridan, who was at San Antonio in command of the Military Department of the Southwest, importuned the State and National Governments to encourage the buffalo hunters to continue their sport. General Sheridan said:

These men [the buffalo hunters] have done more to settle the vexed Indian question than the entire regular army has done in the last thirty years. They are destroying the Indians commissary; and it is a well known fact that an army losing its base of supplies is placed at a great disadvantage. Send them powder and lead if you will; but, for the sake of lasting peace, let them kill, skin, and sell until the buffaloes are exterminated. Then your prairies can be covered with speckled cattle, and the festive cowboy, who follows the hunter as a second forerunner of an advanced civilization.⁴

No section of the Indian country suffered more from Indian raids in the early seventies than the frontiers of North-west Texas. Whatever sentiments in behalf of the preservation of the buffalo herds might have been entertained, the Texas frontiersmen readily waived in the hope that with their disappearance the Comanches, the Kiowas, the Apaches, the Arapahoes, and the Cheyennes would cease their plundering visits into Texas. The Texas Legislature applied the doctrine of *laissez faire* in this matter.

Only a few years were consumed in bringing about the utter extermination of the buffaloes, as thousands of men were rushed to the plains and made a business of killing these animals. Several causes contributed towards the buffalo slaughter; namely, (1) the Government's sanction, (2) the profits derived from the sale of buffalo hides, (3) the satisfaction of the spirit of adventure, and (4) the unemployment of hundreds of men because railway construction had ceased just before the panic of 1873.

Colonel Richard Irving Dodge states that in the year 1873 alone 754,339⁵ buffalo skins, exclusive of robes, were shipped east, and that during the three years, 1872, 1873, and 1874 buffaloes to the number of 4,375,730 were killed. This enumeration takes account of only the hides shipped over the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, the Kansas and Pacific, and the Union Pacific railways. It leaves out those killed by hunters who came into the buffalo range from the frontier and

⁵ Dodge, *The Plains of the West*, 142.

⁴ Olive K. Dixon, *Life of Billy Dixon*, 56-57.

transported the hides by means of wagons. In other words most of the hunters from Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, and Indian Territory were not included in Colonel Dodge's estimate.

3. *Government's Tardiness in Providing Frontier Protection*

Before the buffalo slaughter had begun in its most destructive aspects the stockmen along the border counties of Western Texas suffered constant losses of cattle and horses through the stealthy, whirlwind expeditions of Indians from their reservations north of Red River. The cowmen of those days on the Texas frontier led a life of privation and adventure. His cattle ran at large upon a vast range. His duties upon the range were likely at any moment to bring him into conflict with hostile Indians. He therefore had oftentimes to fight for his life. He had to be a walking or riding arsenal.⁶ His was, indeed, a daily struggle for existence during the Indian days. However, he was familiar with danger and inured to the elements.

To the frontiersmen of Texas the Government seemed tardy and indifferent about their protection against Indian raids from the reservations north of the Red River. Following the Civil War the problem of dealing with the South as a "conquered province" seemed uppermost in the minds of the Radicals then in political power. The following comment appearing in *The Flea*, a small periodical published by H. H. McConnell of the Sixth Cavalry and printed at Weatherford through a series of six issues during 1869⁷, well illustrates the feeling that existed on the frontier of Texas relative to the Government's apparent neglect:

The fact that this is a frontier does not seem to be known by the authorities at Washington or elsewhere. In 1867, when the blazing dwellings of the pioneers of Texas lighted up the sky from the Red River to the Rio Grande; when desolated homes, murdered women, and captured children were every-day occurrences along our whole frontier, General Sheridan in a report stated that "no Indian difficulties of any importance had occurred in his department; that the Red River was a sort of dead-line over which neither Indian nor Texan dared to cross, owing to the hostility of one to the other;" and, in fact, intimating

⁶ McConnell, *Five Years a Cavalryman*, 117.

⁷ McConnell, *Five Years a Cavalryman*, 173

that the Texas frontiersman was generally the aggressor—this, too, at a time when the garrison at Buffalo Springs was being besieged for days by five hundred Indians, and when appeal after appeal had been sent to General Sheridan for arms and ammunition.

From 1865 to 1869 the Fourth and Sixth Cavalries^a were doing on the Texas frontier "more scouting, more fighting, more arduous service than any other troops in the army," and the writer adds, "no credit is given, no one knows of their services;" but they were not strong enough to make any material improvement in frontier conditions. In this connection it is interesting to note that in the Autumn of 1870 occurred Colonel Mackenzie's pursuit of the Quahadas, tribes under the leadership of the noted Quanah Parker, and the formation of Mackenzie's Trail, which courses from Fort Griffin, through Crosby and Floyd Counties. An interesting combination of circumstances brought about this expedition.^{ba}

In *The National Tribune*, Washington, D. C., July 8 to August 26, 1920, appeared a detailed sketch of Mackenzie's campaign of 1870, by R. G. Carter, captain of the Fourth United States Cavalry, who accompanied Mackenzie on this expedition.

4. *The Mackenzie Expedition of 1870*

On August 12, 1870, the Quaker Indian Agent, Lowrie Tatum, who was at Fort Sill, in the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache reservation, addressed a letter to Colonel Benjamin Henry Grierson, who in 1866 received the appointment of Colonel of the Tenth United States Cavalry and was now on duty in the Southwest. This letter requested that Colonel Grierson and Colonel Mackenzie "induce Mow-way and his band to come in to the reservation and behave." Mow-way had taken captive a little child, for whose rescue Tatum felt much concern. When this letter reached Colonel Mackenzie, who was at Fort Richardson, a Government military post at Jacksboro, Jack County, from 1868 to 1878, he resolved to pursue Mow-way and to recover the captured child. Mackenzie's forces for this campaign were concentrated at Camp Cooper, about five miles from Fort Griffin. Subsequently, on September 25, of the same year, while eight companies of the Fourth Cavalry and two companies of the Eleventh Infan-

^a McConnell, *Five Years a Cavalryman*, 214.

^{ba} In a series of articles under the caption of *Winning the West*, published in

try, together with about twenty Tonkawa scouts, were waiting in camp for orders to proceed on the campaign, a large band of Indians visited Murphy's Ranch, twenty-eight miles from Camp Cooper, and captured 128 head of cattle and 12 head of horses. Two citizens, Stockton and James, part owners of the stolen animals, joined Mackenzie's forces to assist in apprehending the Indians and identifying their stock. But the troops could not go forward until Mackenzie's arrival from Fort Richardson. On October 3 the Army moved out on its march towards the Panhandle Country. Thus the celebrated Mackenzie's Trail had its beginning.

5. *Life and Public Services of Mackenzie*

Something in the life and public services of the commander is necessary to lend clearness to the account of his campaign against the Indians at this particular time. Colonel Ronald Slidell Mackenzie was born in Westchester County, New York, in 1840, and died at Staten Island, New York, in 1889. He was the son of Alexander Slidell Mackenzie, who was an officer in the United States Navy. Colonel Mackenzie's father assumed the name of Mackenzie at the request of a maternal uncle of that name. Colonel Mackenzie graduated from West Point in 1862, and entered the engineer corps of the Union Army. He was in the battles of Manassas, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg, and because of services in these actions he received the successive brevets of first lieutenant, captain, and major. The promotion of captain of the engineer and lieutenant-colonel came later. After the Civil War he received the appointment of colonel of the Fourth United States Cavalry. His field of activity was on the Western frontier, where he "performed efficient service against the hostile Indian tribes."⁹ Besides his effective campaigns from 1870 to 1874 on the frontier of Texas, he participated in the campaigns against the Sioux tribes in the Northwest. After he took command in Texas he made quick work of driving the Indians back to their reservations, and in making safe the

⁹ *The New International Encyclopedia*, XIV, 587.

lives and properties of the settlers, and in rendering unnecessary the further occupancy of the military posts by Federal troops. In 1882 he became Brigadier-General in the regular army of the United States, and retired from active service in 1884.

6. *The Army's March to Mount Blanco*

In the march towards the Panhandle in October, 1870, Mackenzie had about six hundred men and nearly one hundred pack mules. On October 7 he reached Duck Creek, where he established a supply camp. On the night of October 8 he parked the wagons, packed the mules, and set out on a quick march under cover of darkness. On the following night the army reached a point near Mount Blanco, in Blanco Canyon. The day just past had been attended with much excitement. The deep mire of White River, or Catfish Creek, had presented some difficulties. The Tonkawa scouts had run unexpectedly upon the Comanche braves, and a chase had ensued. Traveling had been most difficult and fatiguing to both men and horses. The soldiers realized that they were in the vicinity of the Indians, and that an attack might at any moment occur. All were in a state of suspense and expectancy.

7. *The Fight at Mount Blanco*

At midnight the attack came. It was the plan of the Indians to stampede the horses by riding at full speed, shaking dried buffalo hides, and yelling and shrieking with satanic madness. The whites and their Tankawa scouts had their hands full in bringing their frenzied horses under control. To make a long story short, it was found, when the alarm was over, that about seventy out of six hundred horses were missing. Captain Heyl, Lieutenant Carter, and Lieutenant Hemphill, with a few privates, while hunting for stray horses before dawn, found themselves in a perilous situation at a distance of more than two miles from the camp, as a horde of savages confronted the few soldiers. Since no escape was possible the only alternative was to fight, or die. The soldiers formed two groups

for opposing the Indians, seven men under Captain Heyl on the right, and five under Lieutenant Carter on the left. Both divisions opened rapid fire with their carbines on the Indians. But under the stress of circumstances, Heyl lost his self-composure, and he and his seven men fell back precipitately. Carter and his five men alone had to resist the charge of a hundred or more Indians. How Lieutenantt Carter, Sergeant Jenkins, and Privates Melville, Downey, Foley, and Gregg held their ground is an interesting story, and was a deed deserving to be graven on stone. They used their carbines so effectively that the Indians recoiled, with the loss of a few lives. At this juncture Carter ordered his men to make a dash for their lives. Gregg's horse being fagged, the unfortunate man fell behind, and the Indians, seeing their opportunity, closed in upon him. Quannah Parker led the attack in person, and he shot Gregg dead. As Gregg fell, the main army, having heard the firing, came up for battle in Blanco Canyon; but at the approach of the soldiers the Indians hastily retreated. From the sides of Mount Blanco and its summit the Indians fired their old target rifles. Lieutenant Carter and Lieutenant Boehm, with a dozen men from the line, charged the Indians by ascending to the top of the mountain; but the Indians hastily withdrew and concealed themselves in the hills and ravines that led to the plateau of the Staked Plains. Thus ended the battle of Mount Blanco on the morning of October 10, 1870.

8. *Preparations for the Pursuit*

The body of Private Gregg was buried at the southwest approach of Mount Blanco. The funeral rites were the simplest form of a soldier's burial. On the mound of the grave heavy stones were placed, that the body might be secure from the wolves infesting that region.

Preparations were made in quick order for the pursuit of the retreating Indians. The men who lost their horses by the stampede of the night before were unable to accompany the mounted men. Mackenzie placed Lieutenant Vernon in

command of these and ordered them back to the supply camp on Duck Creek, forty miles away. On the following morning, October 11, the mounted forces and the dismounted men separated, moving in opposite directions.

9. *Pursuit of the Quahadas*

Mackenzie's pursuing column spent the entire day marching up the canyon to find that the departing Indians were practicing various ruses to delay the soldiers. Finally it was concluded that the wily enemy had reversed his course, and the soldiers countermarched and moved back down the canyon to Mount Blanco. The following morning the Tonkawa scouts found the lost trail leading over an apparently impassable barrier in scaling the caprock of the Staked Plains. This point was about one mile west of Mount Blanco. After much effort the soldiers made the ascent, and before their eyes spread out a vast expanse of grassy plain. The air was cold and piercing to men clad for a summer campaign. The trail was followed until about noon, when it turned and again entered the canyon at the present ranch home of J. J. Day, about seven miles southwest of Floydada. At this crossing the Indians again attempted their ruses by forming various trails, but the Tonkawas soon found the true trail ascending the bluff on the opposite or north side. Scaling the precipitous sides of the canyon, Mackenzie's army was now on a distinct horse trail leading towards the west and northwest, and the soldiers were not long in observing in the distance the moving body of Comanches, or Quahadas, together with their women, children, and two thousand or more head of stock. Mackenzie's column steadily gained on the Quahadas. The cold was increasing, but the soldiers were elated at the prospect at soon engaging the enemy. The Indians again resorted to wiles in an effort to divert the soldiers. Comanche braves sallied to the right and to the left, circled here and there, and sought in every way possible to check Mackenzie's men; but Mackenzie heeded the advice of his Tonkawa chief and kept steadily in pursuit of the flee-

ing band. Having failed to decoy the soldiers into a side attack, the Indians began preparations for a real battle. Mackenzie knew that the Comanches would fight with fiendish fury in defense of their families. However, the evening was fast approaching, and as the time was near at hand for Mackenzie to order a charge, the elements became dark, followed by rain, sleet, and snow. Why Mackenzie did not engage the Quahadas at this juncture cannot be satisfactorily explained. Lieutenant Carter was of the opinion that he lost the opportunity for a great victory. The soldiers were keenly disappointed.

The storm which had been gathering all day came on at nightfall. The men dismounted and formed a defensive circle. All efforts to shield themselves and the horses were unavailing. To keep warm was out of the question. In their haste to overtake the Quahadas the men had not taken the time for noon lunch, and now the preparations for supper were impossible. Sleep and repose were not possible. To wear out such a night on an immense tableland was a dismal experience for the hungry, exhausted, and disappointed soldiers. However, the following morning a complete change in the weather had taken place. A clear, warm day greeted the men. But what was to be the day's program for the army? It was soon ascertained that the Indians had kept moving all night. The nearest military post was Fort Sumner, in New Mexico. With horses jaded to the point of exhaustion and provisions running low, it was deemed prudent to abandon the pursuit and return over the trail of the previous day.

10. *The Return Home*

The return march was not wholly without event or interest. While crossing Blanco Canyon two wandering Comanches were discovered and killed. Two Indians sought refuge in a ravine. While Mackenzie was in person directing a squad of men in the attack on the Indians, an arrow buried itself in the fleshy part of his leg. In the action a farrier was shot through the bowels. After the Quahadas were dead the Ton-

kawas, in accordance with their custom, shot some bullets into the dead bodies, removed the scalps, ears and all, and cut a piece of skin from each dead savage's breast as a token of good luck. This, when dried and worn next to the person, was considered a certain safeguard against misfortune. As there was not a vehicle of any sort with the army, poles were leashed on either side of the pack saddles of two mules traveling tandem. Cross pieces were attached to the poles in the rear of the croup of one mule and in the front of the breast of the other. The condition of the man traveling by means of this litter was indeed critical. The bullet cut his intestines and passed out at his back. No one thought that he could possibly recover, but through the professional skill and persevering attention of the army surgeon, Dr. Rufus Culver, the wound eventually healed.

On the afternoon of October 14 Mackenzie and his men again pitched camp at Mount Blanco. Here they remained ten days, resting and recuperating. The horses were greatly reduced in flesh, and some of them died here. On October 24 Mackenzie moved his force in two sections. All disabled and dismounted men and broken down horses and mules he sent to the Duck Creek supply camp. He surmised that Quanah Parker and his moving village would soon return from the west and move upon one of their well-known haunts on Pease River, and he determined to send the remainder of his army into the Pease River country in search of the Quahadas. In a few days, however, his own wound became too painful for the expedition, and on October 29, leaving his Pease River column under Major Mauck, he joined the Duck Creek camp for medical treatment. The Duck Creek camp was abandoned for another at Cottonwood Springs, on the double Mountain Fork, with Lieutenant Carter in command. Here Carter was to remain until Major Mauck's return, which was on November 6 in a cold and piercing snowstorm. The cold was so fierce that many horses died at the picket line. Cowmen and soldiers in Northwest Texas, remember vividly that the

winter of 1870-1871 was one of the severest ever known in that section. To get back to snug winter quarters was seen to be the most expedient thing to do.

11. *The Historical Significance of the Expedition*

Thus ended the fruitless, but exciting, Mackenzie expedition against the Quahadas; albeit the campaign was not without historic significance. The trail thus marked out by Mackenzie was doubtless during August and September, 1872, traveled by him in an expedition across the staked plains to New Mexico.¹⁰ He went over the same route in the expedition in which he effected a permanent peace with the Indians in September, 1874. This trail served as a highway for travel from Fort Griffin to the Staked Plains.¹¹ Therefore it can be seen that the soil which was afterwards within the limits of Crosby and Floyd Counties was hallowed with the blood of those who had begun the struggle which ultimately ended in exterminating the savage hordes and thus making the country safe for prosperous settlements and a flourishing civilization.

12. *Peace Treaty with Indians Futile*

Up to 1874 the fires of the Indian's enmity towards the palefaces had been smouldering. The raids upon white settlements had been merely for the sake of plunder. Only small bands escaped from their reservations and formed moving villages. Before the unrest and hostility of the Indians had reached the most acute stage efforts in the nature of peace treaties were resorted to. At Medicine Lodge, in Kansas, a party of peace commissioners met in 1867 with authority¹² to treat with the main plains tribes. The commissioner and the Indian chiefs agreed on certain terms of treaty. The treaty contained one provision to the effect that the Indians should keep themselves south of the Arkansas River and that the whites were to refrain from intruding on the Indian's country.

¹⁰ Robert C. Davis, Acting Adjutant General, Washington, D. C., to Marvin Jones, M. C., July 1, 1922.

¹¹ Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, February 7, 1922.

¹² Olive K. Dixon, *Life of Billy Dixon*, 65.

This treaty, however, even had it been lasting, did not settle very definitely the Indian problem in the uninhabited area of Northwest Texas. From the standpoint of the Indian he could in good faith lay claim to the plains of Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado as his country, together with the buffaloes, antelopes, and wild horses that roamed thereon. Still treaties with the Indians were not usually observed with the utmost scrupulousness by either white men or red men. It was extremely difficult for the Indians to live up to the letter and spirit of their treaties, for conditions were not favorable. The Indians were beset on all sides by a frontier population, and these people always had cause to harbor feelings of distrust and ill-will towards the Indians. Again, peace treaties could not be followed out with other than bad results, as the treaties encouraged the most daring chiefs to defy the Government. When the Government failed to strike back, or failed to act promptly, the Indians did not hesitate to go on raids. Captain Randolph B. Marcy, who served thirty years with the army on the border, observed that the Indians of the plains of the west did "not comprehend" the motive which dictates an act of benevolence or charity," and that, when these merciless freebooters misbehaved, the Government should strike them "such a blow as will be felt for a long time" and thus show them its superiority over them in war. The Government, however, did not follow a consistent and aggressive policy until 1871, when General W. T. Sherman, accompanied by Captain Marcy, visited Fort Richardson, Fort Belknap, and other points. On May 17, 1871, Marcy wrote in his journal on his way from Fort Belknap to Fort Richardson:

This rich and beautiful section of country does not contain today as many white people as it did when I was stationed here eighteen years ago, and if the Indian marauders are not punished, the whole country seems to be in a fair way of becoming depopulated.¹⁴

While on this trip General Sherman carefully studied frontier conditions in the southwest. He saw clearly the injustice of the Government's policy of allowing the Indians

¹³ Marcy, *The Prairie Traveller*, 208.

¹⁴ McConnell, *Five Years a Cavalryman*, 274.

to leave their reservations, and he at once set about to remedy the prevailing conditions.

13. *The Expedition Against the Indians in 1874*

In 1873 the commissioner of Indian affairs at Fort Sill demanded the arrest and surrender of certain Comanche warriors who had been raiding in Texas.¹⁵ The Indians wholly ignored this order, and a band left immediately for the Staked Plains. To compel compliance would require a long campaign, and the order was suspended. This was the precursor of outbreaks far more serious to occur in due time. The following year about seven hundred warriors of the Fort Sill country grew hostile and, together with their families and possessions, left their reservations for the Texas Panhandle. Of these Quannah Parker and Big Bow were Comanche chieftains, Lone Wolf was a leader of the Kiowas, and Little Robe and White Shield led the Cheyennes.¹⁶ On June 27, 1874, these Indians made a series of charges on a party of twenty-eight buffalo hunters gathered at Adobe Walls, a trading post on the Canadian River. Nearly thirty Indians were killed outright and about twice as many others were wounded.¹⁷ The battle of Adobe Walls was the immediate cause of the Government's waging a vigorous war against the nomads who spurned the role of good Indians. Sherman as general-in-chief of the United States Army, re-enforced the commands at the various military posts on the frontier for the purpose of putting an end to the Indians' attempting to lead the feral life outside of their reservations. Four columns of attack were ordered. Brevet Major General Miles moved south from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; Colonel Davidson, west from Fort Sill, Indian Territory; Colonel Price, east from New Mexico; and Colonel Mackenzie, north from Fort Clark, Texas. The commands of Miles, Davidson, and Price met with more or less success, but they failed to discover the main camp of Indians that were roving at large in the

¹⁵ Olive K. Dixon, *Life of Billy Dixon*, 67.

¹⁶ Olive K. Dixon, *Life of Billy Dixon*, 208.

¹⁷ *Personal Recollections of Nelson A. Miles*, 160.

Panhandle of Texas. Colonel Mackenzie's band was the one that fought the decisive battle of this short but fierce Indian war.

14. *The Battle of Palo Duro*

Colonel Mackenzie's command consisted of seven troops of the Fourth Cavalry, five companies of the Tenth Infantry, thirty-five Seminole scouts, and a half-breed Mexican scout of the name of Johnson, who was familiar with the topography of the Panhandle country. Early in September this command reached Blanco Canyon and established a supply camp near Mount Blanco, where four years before Mackenzie had bivouacked in his pursuit of the Quahadas. At this point Mackenzie received his supplies from Fort Griffin, one hundred eighty miles east. He chose this place because both wood and water abounded there.¹⁸ From the camp he sent out scouting parties in all directions in search of the Indians.^{18b} Failing to locate the Indians in the vicinity of Blanco Canyon, Mackenzie proceeded North to the Quitaque country, near which he ascended the Staked Plains and marched westward. Mackenzie, with the Seminole scouts and four of his troops, went ahead of his wagon train. A few days before, Johnson, the expert scout, had been sent out alone, and he located the Indians in Palo Duro Canyon, about thirty-five miles northwest of Mackenzie and his advancing troops. At ten o'clock on the evening of September 24 the full force of the Indians made an attack on Mackenzie's troops encamped at the head of a small draw, a tributary of the Tule Canyon. The troops, waiting in expectation of the attack, delivered such an effective fire that the Indians had to fall back. Firing was kept up all night by both sides, but there were no casualties among Mackenzie's men. On the morning of September 25 Captain Boehm, who had distinguished himself in the Blanco Canyon fight four

¹⁸ Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, February 7, 1922.

^{18b} There are numerous sources of information pertaining to the Mackenzie campaign of 1874, but the account given by Chas. A. P. Hatfield, Colonel of the United States Army, retired, furnished by the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society, seems to be the best account published. Hatfield's account is the document relied on.—Claude V. Hall.

years before, led an attack against the Indians. Supposing that Boehm was followed by the remainder of the command, the six hundred Indians fled towards the southwest for the purpose of drawing the company away from the Indian camp in the Palo Duro Canyon. Mackenzie's command followed the retiring Indians leisurely, but that night everything changed. Under Johnson's guidance, the command marched rapidly northwest for the Palo Duro Canyon. The Indians surmising that they had eluded their white foes, had returned to their camp in the Palo Duro Canyon. On the following morning Mackenzie's troops descended the Canyon, and the battle of Palo Duro Canyon, September 26, 1874, ensued. The Indians were settled in a snug winter camp. They had drawn ample provisions from the Indian Department of the Government. Mackenzie set fire to their camps and utterly destroyed their provisions, including flour, sugar, and dried buffalo meat. He captured seventeen hundred of their horses and drove them back to their camp at the head of Tule Canyon. Two hundred fifty of these horses were given to the scouts and to the soldiers to replace horses worn out by the hardships of the campaign.. The remaining fourteen hundred fifty were shot, as it was dangerous for Mackenzie to try to keep them. To render complete the extremity of the Indians was the aim. With their tepees, provisions, and horses gone, the Indians were unable to hazard the winter of the plains, and their only recourse was to return to their reservations in the Fort Sill Country. Mackenzie, after he was sure that the Indians were no longer a menace to the Panhandle of Texas, returned his command to Fort Concho, Fort Griffin, and other posts for the winter. When he reached Fort Griffin his horses were very weak.¹⁹ Many died before he reached Fort Griffin.

In the following spring Mackenzie was in command at Fort Sill, where his positive course with the Indians kept them under complete subjection. Never since has there been an

¹⁹ Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, January 4, 1922.

Indian outbreak in this section, and no more campaigns against the Indians in Texas were necessary. Thus it was that the Indian frontier of Texas became a memory, and thus it was possible for the Staked Plains to become the growing and prosperous section that it is today.

Chapter III

AS AN EXCLUSIVELY RANCH COUNTRY

1. *The Dawning of a New Day*

After the buffaloes were exterminated and the marauding tribes of Indians were driven back to their reservations, a new day in the history of Northwest Texas dawned. At one stroke the Legislature of Texas, on August 21, 1876, transformed the last vestiges of Young and Bexar Territories into fifty-four new counties. Capital and enterprise could now with safety and promise of success convert a vast region from a fallow condition into a productive state. The way was at last clear to usher in a period of cattle ranching on a large scale.

Men of means and experience engaged in cattle ranching for the reasons that it was (1) profitable, with grass free, taxation of no consequence, and cost of operation comparatively small; (2) a means for men to recoup their losses incurred elsewhere by Indian raids, protracted droughts, or mismanagement; and (3) a form of adventure, which men of the border country learned to love. There were two stages as well as two kinds of ranching that marked this period. The first stage was that of free water and free grass; the second, that of land enclosure and elaborate improvements. No specific date marks the end of free range conditions and the beginning of the complex system under land ownership, with enclosures and improvements. While the simple method was receding, the complex was approaching. Neither could, however, control the destinies of the country. Ranching might delay, but it could not block settlement on small tracts, town building, and law and order conditions.

Previous to 1877 the only cattle to be found in the South Plains country were typical longhorns which had drifted into that region with buffalo herds. These cattle were without marks and brands,¹ and were five or six years old. In the sum-

¹ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

mer of 1877 H. C. Smith drove into Blanco Canyon five or six hundred head of cattle with which to stock the Tasker Ranch which was being established.² When Smith located the Tasker Ranch at Mount Blanco, Tasker agreed to lease the Eastland County school lands in Floyd and Crosby Counties. He failed to do this, and Smith himself took up the lease, which Wiley and Coggins sub-leased from him the following year. Wiley and Coggins stocked this range with a big herd of cattle from New Mexico, but two years later they shifted their cattle to the Wolf Creek country in the breaks east of Mount Blanco.

In 1879 numerous cow outfits located in the South Plains Country. Since no land promoter owned the land he grazed, it was necessary that cattlemen should establish certain rules and customs for their guidance. Statutory laws and the means for their enforcement were too remote to avail landless ranchmen. These people enforced their range rights by means of powder and lead. Each ranchman established his range by occupation, and other ranchmen acknowledged³ his possession, though his cattle ran at large promiscuously. The country was open. The ranchmen settled upon a range where wood and permanent water were accessible. There were no wells, for they were expensive, and, besides, little was known of the underground water supply. The owner put his cattle under his mark and brand, turned them loose on his range, and saw to it by periodical round-ups that they did not become entirely lost. For a clear understanding of the conditions under which a free ranch existed a brief history of the Matador Ranch in its early days is herewith presented^{3b}

1. *The Matador Ranch Established*

In the summer of 1879 five men established the Matador Cattle Company. They were: A. M. Britton, of Fort Worth,

² H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

³ Roger M. Basset in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

^{3b} The writer is under obligations to Harry H. Campbell and his mother for the information regarding the early history of the Matador Ranch. This information was communicated under date of October 22, 1921.

as president; S. W. Lomax, of Fort Worth, as secretary and treasurer; H. H. Campbell, of Ellis County, as manager; John Nicholds, president of the City National Bank of Fort Worth; and a Mr. Cata, of New York. Each one subscribed ten thousand dollars. This Company adopted "50M" as a brand for both cattle and horses, but upon purchasing a large herd of cattle of the V brand from Tom Dawson, the son-in-law of John Nicholds, this brand was thenceforth adopted as the company's cattle brand, while the "50M", signifying fifty thousand, the original capital stock of the company, remained the brand for the horses.

The Matador Cattle Company received the Dawson herd on the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos, and on December 25, 1879, turned the cattle loose on the Matador Range. These cattle were from South Texas and of inferior grade. In the parlance of cattlemen, it was said that the cowboys in charge of a herd of cattle were sold with the cattle when the entire brand changed hands was true in this instance. John Smith, now of Roaring Springs, and J. H. Harrison, at present a citizen of Panhandle, quitted the service of Dawson, when he sold the V herd, and became Matador cowboys. Harrison became sub-manager for H. H. Campbell, and Smith was noted as the company's range boss. Smith had charge of trail outfits when the company sent its two-year-old steers north each year in May to be matured on the Montana and Wyoming ranges. Smith made, all told, about fifteen of these trips. His first trip for the Matadors was in 1885, when the home range was becoming overstocked.⁴ He had previously made a trip in 1876 to Dakota with contract beeves for the Standing Rock Indians, who participated in the Custer massacre, which Smith first learned about when he crossed the Big Missouri.

The next purchases for the Matador range were as follows: (1) in May, 1880, a man named Berry, in Taylor County, sold a herd of inferior grade, but the Matadors

⁴ J. H. Smith to Claude V. Hall, February 15, 1922.

obtained no cowboys with this purchase; (2) in May, 1881, Wiley and Coggins sold the Jingle Bob herd of Durhams, together with the range occupied in the southwest part of Motley County. Jingle Bob was the name given this herd because of the manner in which the earmark was cut. No men went to the Matadors in this transaction; (3) in 1882 the next cattle purchased were from Lemonds and Houston, of Gonzales County. These were typical South Texas cattle of that time. They were delivered by Lemonds and Houston. The Matadors acquired the services of Jim Livingston and Morgan Livingston in this purchase.

The Matador Cattle Company's first acquisition of land was a half section claim held by Joe Browning, a brother of the late James N. Browning of Amarillo. This land was known as Ballard Springs, and is at the site of the present Matador Ranch headquarters. It is presumed that Browning was using this land for a hog ranch, for many hogs ranged in the shinneries where, for a number of years thereafter, the Matador men killed them for lard.

In the spring of 1880 Hall's Ranch which occupied the range just east of the caprock, in Floyd and Motley counties, was moved south, and the range thus vacated became that of the Matador Cattle Company. When Hall's ranch changed locations, three of its hands, J. D. Starks, now of Floydada, John Beasley, residing at present at Merkel, and Jeff Harkey, now living at Dickens, became a part of the Matador Cattle Company's working force. The following year George Walker joined the Matador ranks. Each of these four men acted as range or trail boss. Among the old-time Matador cowboys were Frank Leonard, now of Matador, and Van Leonard, now a resident of Floydada.

Until 1882, when the Texas and Pacific Railway reached Colorado City, the Matador Ranch obtained its supplies from Fort Worth, three hundred miles east. The distance to Colorado was 130 miles due south. The freighting for the Matador Ranch was by wagons drawn by ox teams. It

requires no strain of the imagination to perceive that these trips were usually fraught with vexatious delays.

3. *Some Early Incidents in Motley County*

The first house built on the Matador Ranch was of lumber freighted from Fort Griffin, in Shackelford County. When the lumber arrived one plank was lacking to complete the wall. The shortage was covered by making wide spaces between the planks.

The early days at the Matador Ranch were not wholly without incidents, oftentimes interesting as well as sometimes ludicrous. It takes all kind of people to make a world; likewise it takes many kinds of events to make gossip. Marriages and festivals were celebrated, births and deaths took place.

The first ranch festival was given by Manager Campbell and his wife in the spring of 1882. As a matter of fact, a cowboys' ball was a feature of the occasion. Six ladies were in attendance. They came from other counties. Each could have ten cowboys as her partners. Thereafter it was the established practice to give the cowboys a ball and supper each winter. It was looked forward to with great joy and anticipation. Young ladies from a distance of one hundred miles or more attended. Mrs. J. L. Moore, now of Spur, Mrs. J. D. Morriss, at present of Matador, and Mrs. J. B. Bartley and Mrs. J. D. Starks, now living at Floydada, were belles of some of the Matador ranch festivals. Judge and Mrs. Campbell, upon leaving the ranch in the winter of 1890-1891, gave the cowboys a farewell ball which lasted two days and nights.

The first two deaths in Motley County were not on the Matador Ranch. In October, 1877, a couple of elderly people named Council, were keeping camp for Joe Browning at Ballard Springs. Mrs. Council became entangled in a rope attached to a vicious yearling. She died in a few days from the injuries suffered. Lumber for a casket was not forthcoming. Goods boxes at Tepee City were obtained, but the material contained in these boxes was inadequate. A box

large enough to contain only a portion of her body was the best that could be provided, and she was interred with her feet projecting out of the improvised coffin. The other known death was in July, 1879, near Tepee City. A party of fortune seekers from Dallas were on their way to Cripple Creek, Colorado. Teepee City was a general store for the convenience of buffalo hunters and surveying parties. While in camp near there some rustlers ran into the camp with the intention of robbing the travelers. A man named Anderson was of the traveling party. In attempting to run from the rustlers he was shot in the heel. The shot was supposedly in the nature of a prank. Lockjaw set up, and the wounded man died. His remains were buried at Tepee City, but later they were removed to Dallas.

The first white child born in Motley County was Harry H. Campbell, the son of Judge and Mrs. H. H. Campbell. This event took place May 15, 1881, on the Matador Ranch. The attending physician was from Fort Griffin. He traveled more than one hundred fifty miles, and arrived at the ranch on the 5th day of May. This son is still residing in Motley County. In the fullest measure, he is a substantial citizen. No worthy enterprise goes without his support, moral and financial. His family consists of a wife, a daughter, and two sons. His home is one of genial hospitality. His inheritance, natural and social, render it impossible for him to have the slightest semblance of littleness. Good blood and ranch life cannot produce a social misfit.

4. *An Appreciation of the Campbells.*

No history of the section embracing the Matador range would be complete without respectful mention of Judge H. H. Campbell, the first manager and one of the founders of the Matador Ranch. Although he was born in Cumberland County, North Carolina, he was in every other respect a one hundred per cent Texan. He came to Texas with his parents in 1840, while Texas was yet a Republic. For six years he

resided in Walker County, and from 1860 to 1879 Ellis County was his home. In 1860 Ellis County was on the frontier. Home supplies were hauled from Houston. In the "War of Sections", as Henry Watterson so aptly termed our great internecine strife, Judge Campbell, for four years, rendered unfaltering service in the Confederate cause. In early life he evinced a strong inclination for the cattle industry. As a boy he began buying cattle in Central Texas for delivery in the markets of New Orleans, Louisiana, and Dodge City, Kansas. His schooling was limited, but his great common sense and close application to his pursuit enabled him to master the details of stock growing. His ambition was to found a large ranch for the breeding of cattle. Before this was done, it fell to his lot to drive a herd of cattle to California. In making this journey he passed through Western Texas, Southern New Mexico, and Arizona, and availed himself of the opportunity to search for his ideal of a breeding country. On the return trip he crossed Utah, Nebraska, Kansas, and Indian Territory. He finally decided upon the country lying between the Brazos on the south and the Red River on the north, and about twenty-five miles east of the caprock of the Staked Plains. Therefore the founding of the Matador Ranch was not a merely fortuitous event. In 1891 Judge Campbell resigned from the company because he did not approve of its opposition to the settlement of the country by small farmers. He took an active part in the organization of Motley County, and was called to serve as its first county judge, a position he filled for five years. He died in 1911.

Mrs. L. B. Campbell, wife of H. H. Campbell, was born in Navarro County, but spent much of her childhood in Ellis County. All her life her habitat has been on the frontier. Her nearest neighbors, on the Matador Ranch, were Mrs. A. B. Cooper of Tepee City, and Mrs. H. C. Smith, of Mount Blanco, and the distances were so great that neighborly visits could not be frequently interchanged. But Mrs. Campbell cordially supported her husband's choice of a home. Hers

had been a life spent in the performance of womanly duties, in the rearing of her son, in adorning home life, in ministering to the sick, in encouraging the despondent, and in perusing a wide range of literature. Mrs. Campbell, at all times, kept a stock of medicines, bandages, and other supplies for treating the ills that befall man and beast. She did not set herself up as an expert diagnostician, but she was so good at making guesses from symptoms that had she passed as a physician with a dozen diplomas she would have scored as a successful practitioner. She measured out medicine to the sick, set and bandaged limbs and collar bones, took stitches in cuts, and on one occasion she actually cut out a bullet from a wound. Through her influence, the Matador Ranch Company paid a Methodist minister to preach once a month to the cowboys. Her extensive reading has given her a great fund of information and a fine command of English. A number of years she was postmaster at Matador. In recent years she has lost her sight, but she has so accustomed herself to taking a cheerful view of all situations that she bears her misfortune with wonderful fortitude.

5. *Other Ranches Founded*

From 1879 to 1884 there was great activity in the establishment of ranches where the Indians and the buffaloes had but yesterday roamed. In 1879 Will and John Slaughter founded what was afterwards known as the Half Circle S Ranch^{4b} in the southern part of Crosby County. Three years later George Edwards, Cass Edwards, and W. T. Petty located a ranch just east of the Slaughters. In 1883 the Kyle and Dalton Brothers ranch was located in the southwestern part of Crosby County. In 1883 George Wolffarth, Bill Sanders, Van Sanders, Joe Sherman, and John Hensley came out from Jack County and located a ranch on McDonald Creek and the Salt Fork in Crosby County. The same year Sam Gohlson, Bill Moore, and an Illinoisan started the LANG Ranch on the Yellow House in Lubbock County, and about this time the

Kidwells located the KID Ranch farther up the Yellow House. East of the LANG Ranch was the Holmes sheep ranch, north of which was the 22 Ranch, managed by Felix Franklin. At this period Jim Baker located the famous Quitaque Ranch in the northeast corner of Floyd County. By 1884 the establishment of cattle ranches had passed its crest, and the big concerns began to absorb the small ones.

In 1883 D. W. Owens and C. W. Marseilles moved from a point three miles west of the present site of Amarillo a drove of 5,000 sheep to a place within thirty miles North of Colorado for the purpose of selling them. M. V. Duncan was in the employ of Owens and Marseilles. Marseilles, Duncan, and some Mexicans drove the herd of sheep in a leisurely way through the present site of Canyon, reached Runningwater Draw in the Northwestern part of Hale County, followed Runningwater Draw down to the head of Blanco Canyon. They did not find a single habitation until they reached the home of H. C. Smith at Mount Blanco. There was no market for the sheep at Colorado, and they were driven back to Blanco Canyon.⁵ Owens and Marseilles located a sheepcamp here below the Mackenzie Crossing. Duncan returned that fall to his home in Montague County, but returned in the spring of 1884 and bought an interest in the Owens and Marseilles sheep business, which continued until the spring of 1886. Ed Duncan, a brother of W. V. Duncan, was in the employ of this concern as sheep herder. In those days it was quite easy for one to become lost on the Staked Plains. The sheep herders built numerous monuments of buffalo bones to guide them back to ranch headquarters when they followed the sheep far out of sight of any other objects. +

In 1884 the I O A people, the Matador Cattle Company, the Espuela Cattle Company, which owned the Spur Ranch, practically monopolized the cattle business of this section.⁶

4b The information pertaining to the establishment of the cattle ranches herein listed was furnished by H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review* of February 28, 1912.

⁵ W. V. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, December 13, 1921.

⁶ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

A change in the ranch business was being forced in two ways. First, the avarice of the big concerns cast covetous eyes upon the land used by their little neighbors. Second, the realization that the open range was enormously uneconomical slowly dawned upon the powerful companies. Following a blizzard the plains would frequently be strewn with thousands of carcasses of the cattle which had fled before it with nothing to check their flight.⁷ Then a scramble for the purchase of land set in; and there was a lean period of large expenditures and curtailed profits. Competition became sharp. In the struggle for existence, indeed, only the mightiest survived.

6. *The Two Buckle as a Type of Land-Owned Ranch*

The sketch of the Matador Ranch, as already set forth, was now illustrative of the free range ranch and its operation. It is now in order to present the account of a land-owned ranch with elaborate improvements. The Kentucky Cattle Company's venture in Crosby and Dickens counties, strikingly typifies such a ranch. In 1884 some bankers and other business men in Louisville⁸ created the Kentucky Cattle Company, with ample capital for operating on a gigantic scale. It acquired 160,000 acres, partly in Blanco Canyon, and stocked the land with cattle under the Two Buckle Brand. On its land the company placed strong fences, drilled wells and set up windmills, and erected stone buildings. The ranch was operated successfully under the management of Claude Tilford and Major Johnson,⁹ both of Kentucky. During the ten years it owned and operated the Two Buckle Ranch, the company made some serious attempts at farming.¹⁰ It put five hundred acres in cultivation, but the result was disappointing. In its operation there was no lack of enthusiasm; however, experience with ranching in that section of the country, the thing most needed was lacking, and the enterprise unavoidably ran aground. In 1886 this ranch rendered 12,000 head of

⁷ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

⁸ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

⁹ Roger M. Basset in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

¹⁰ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

cattle for taxes, but in 1894 only 4300 remained." In 1895 the Two Buckle property was leased to Snead and Perryman, of Dallas, and during the following year the lower part of the pasture was sold to Hudson and Shultz, and the upper part was leased to the Corlitos Company of El Paso. Not long thereafter the Corlitos owners opened for sale their land through competitive bidding. The C. B. Live Stock Company¹² obtained it with the highest bid, which was \$1.56 per acre.

7. *The H Bar L Ranch in Floyd County*

Mention has been made of the open range sheep ranch established in Blanco Canyon, in Floyd County, by Owens, Marseilles, and Duncan from 1883 to 1886. The year preceding the location of this ranch M. V. Blacker and A. J. Tisdall, both of Irish birth, established the H Bar L Ranch lower down the canyon near the Crosby County line. A little later two other Irishmen, Guy Orme and Ross A. Smythe, became connected with this enterprise. All four were British subjects. They raised both sheep and cattle. They continued their residence in Floyd County until after the County's organization in 1890.¹³ This ranch is now the property of Thomas Montgomery, and is known as the T M— Ranch, on which cattle are still grown. Blacker, one of the founders of the H Bar L Ranch, was educated in British schools, and the traditional conservatism of his country characterized his demeanor while a resident of Floyd County. Upon his return to Ireland he married the daughter of Lord Douglass, who, having no son and wishing to perpetuate his name and title, provided that the name of his son-in-law should be legally changed to M. V. Blacker Douglass, "by which name," as an affidavit¹⁴ recites, "I am now known where I reside at Bellevere Park, Killiney, County of Dublin, Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland." M. V. Blacker Douglass, who suc-

¹¹ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

¹² Roger M. Basset in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

¹³ Arthur B. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, February 8, 1922.

¹⁴ *Deed Records of Floyd County*, XI, 491.

ceeded to the title of Lord Douglass upon the demise of his father-in-law, owned twelve and one half sections of Floyd County land, which he sold in the early part of 1905.

8. *C. U. Connellee and Charles Goodnight*

C. U. Connellee, of Eastland, established a small cattle ranch where Crawfish Draw empties into Blanco Canyon.¹⁵ The cow camp was in Crosby County, but the range was partly in Floyd County. Connellee had considerable acquaintance with this section of Western Texas, as he was a land surveyor, a locator of land certificates, and a business man of diversified interests. He was educated in private schools and at Transylvania University of Lexington, Kentucky. He came to Texas in 1874.¹⁶ In 1875 he became a member of the firm of Dougherty, Connellee and Ammerman, whose "business was to trade and sell land certificates and locate them for the owners."¹⁷ He was a member of the Texas Legislature from 1888 to 1892. He maintained his ranch on Crawfish Draw only a few years.

The Goodnight High Grade Cattle Company in the early eighties established the "F" Ranch in the northeast corner of Floyd County. This company, in keeping with its title, has introduced into this country different strains of blooded cattle, including Durhams and Herefords. Charles Goodnight, the manager of the JA Ranch on the Palo Duro Canyon, in Armstrong County, has been closely identified with Northwestern Texas since 1856. Born in Illinois in 1836, he came to Texas with his widowed mother,¹⁸ two young sisters, and a brother. He worked upon farms in Milam and McLennan counties, and paid for the first pair of oxen he owned by splitting rails. In 1856 Charles Goodnight and J. W. Sheek moved some cattle to Johnson County where they wintered. The following year they moved their cattle to Palo Pinto

¹⁵ C. U. Connellee to Claude V. Hall, December 12, 1921.

¹⁶ Daniel, *Types of Successful Men of 1889*, 303.

¹⁷ *Transcript of Record, Smither vs. Smith*, U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit, 1908, 74.

¹⁸ Daniel, *Personnel of the Texas State Government, With Sketches of Distinguished Texans*, 1887, 217.

County, which had then not more than twenty-five white inhabitants. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Goodnight joined Curretson's company of Texas Rangers for the protection of the frontier. As a scout and a guide he served the Confederacy for four years. When not in active service he was stationed at Fort Belknap. While in the frontier service he moved about three thousand cattle to that section afterwards incorporated into Shackelford County. Most of these were lost because of Indian depredations. In 1866 he formed a partnership with Oliver Loving. These two determined to drive some cattle to New Mexico or Colorado. On this drive they went up the Pecos River four hundred miles, and continued the trip through New Mexico and Colorado, and finally reached near the foot of the Black Hills, the present site of Cheyenne. The way thus blazed out was known as the Goodnight Trail. A second trip was attempted in 1867, but while on the Clear Fork of the Brazos, as preparations were being made for the drive, the Indians made a series of attacks, with the result that some men were wounded and about three hundred cattle lost. In New Mexico on this drive, Loving, Goodnight's partner, was mortally wounded in an attack from the Indians. Goodnight resided at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, until 1871, when he married Miss Mary Ann Dyer, daughter of General Dyer, of Jackson, Tennessee. From his marriage until 1875 he lived at Pueblo, Colorado, where he engaged in banking, stock-raising, and farming by irrigation. Financial disasters struck him during the panic that began in 1873. In 1876 he returned to the section of Texas which he had traversed as scout and guide. He formed a partnership with John G. Adair, of Ireland. From the ranch in the Palo Duro Canyon the nearest group of white men was at Fort Elliott, one hundred miles away, and the nearest white settlement was over two hundred miles. Mrs. Goodnight and Mrs. Willingham were the only women on the ranch in 1877.¹⁹ Both were women of unusual refinement and intelligence.

¹⁹ Olive K. Dixon, *Life of Billy Dixon*, 297.

Mrs. Willingham's husband was afterwards manager of the Turkey Track Ranch in the North Panhandle Country.

9. *Western People Highly Intelligent and Cosmopolitan*

It is remarkable how cosmopolitan Northwest Texas was in the days when it was a purely stock-raising country. The few people who were on the ranches came from all directions. A large proportion were from the British Isles. Scotch Noblemen visited the Matador and other ranches in which they had an interest. Lord Adair, the owner of the JA Ranch,²⁰ died in this country.

Some might be inclined to marvel at the unusual standard of intelligence that prevailed among ranchmen and their wives. But it should be borne in mind that only people of much initiative and mental acumen could brave the vicissitudes of a country so new and untried and so completely adapt themselves as to achieve success. Coupled with native ability these people had much time to devote to reading. Most of them possessed respectable libraries.

10. *The Clash Between Little and Big Cattle Interests*

The change from the open range to the enclosed pasture was attended with no little friction. Too many interests were disturbed. The cattlemen of limited means resented the aggressive encroachment of barbed wire upon free grass and tried to resist their oppressors. The popular wrath against large enclosures was not wholly without justification, for they included much public land. The owner of a small tract within was without ingress to and egress from his possession. Naturally the worst was to be expected. From 1881 to 1883 was a period of fence cutting. The owners of large fences had great difficulty in preserving their property. It was almost impossible to apprehend the fence cutters. Besides, the statutory laws did not afford an adequate remedy either in the regulation of enclosures or the punishment of the fence cutters. Again, there had grown up, in the language of ex-Governor O. M. Roberts, "a sort of common law established by custom on the

²⁰ Roger M. Basset in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

frontier that those who have undergone the hardships and privations of frontier life have a right to appropriate to their own use the grass and timber on large tracts owned by people at a distance."²¹ Attitudes thus established during free range experiences were slow in giving way before new and different conditions. To deal with a really critical situation Governor Ireland called a special session of the Legislature on January 8, 1884, and submitted this vexed question, with others, for consideration. The Legislature passed a law that all public roads must be left open; that every three miles of fence must contain a gate; that private owners whose lands were enclosed must be fully redressed; and that the wanton destruction of fences constituted a felony to be punished with from one to five years imprisonment in the State penitentiary.²² This legislation served as a sort of palliative, and the sentiment that had been engendered ran its course. New sets of experience ultimately produced sentiments to fit the changes wrought. It came to be recognized that the fence had come to stay and that free grass was a memory of the defunct past.

²¹ Wooten, editor, *A Comprehensive History of Texas*, II, 261.

²² Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IX, 550, 566, 569.

Chapter IV

MOVEMENTS PREPARING THE WAY FOR SETTLEMENT

1. *The Coming of the Settler of Limited Resources*

In the heyday of the cattlemen it was thought that the Staked Plains would never sustain populous communities. According to the conception of the cattle-raisers, this country was nothing else, and never could be anything else, than a veritable waste. To convert a purely stock-raising country into an agricultural region was, to the rancher, as unthinkable as for a leopard to change his spots. The down-and-outer who sought a cheap home in the West was both a rainbow chaser and an intolerable nuisance. Thus it followed that those who did come and were able to remain were men of more than ordinary fortitude and persistence. The welcome they received at the hands of the stockmen already on the front did not contribute to their mental peace and bodily security. But these restless and resistless souls insisted on obtruding themselves into the midst of the ranch people. They exemplified the proverbial spirit of the Western pioneers. Their Americanism quailed at no threats, and they could not be intimidated. Once convinced of their rights, they did not fear to assert them, even at the point of a gun, if need be. In fact, these first settlers, while they came with peace in their hearts, usually equipped themselves with means to repel their adversaries. It was written in the Book of Fate that just as the Staked Plains had ceased to be an exclusively Indian country it would likewise cease to be an exclusively ranch country. The coming of the small stock-farmer was inevitable, and his remaining soon passed the stage of conjecture.

There were various factors which occasioned the coming of the stock-farmer, namely, (1) homestead of one hundred sixty acres out of the public domain¹ could be located at a nominal cost in fees; (2) barbed wire, because of its cheap-

¹ *Revised Statutes of Texas*, 1895, Art. 4160, et seq.

ness and convenience, went a great way towards enabling the settlers to improve a home in a country so isolated; (3) love of novelty and adventure, together with the migratory instinct prevalent in human nature, prompted many to try their fortunes in the West; (4) in the old, settled sections many, despairing of owning homes and gaining a competency for old age, saw in the West a land of opportunities; (5) there were those who were inured to pioneer conditions in sections which were fast becoming fixed and staid and who longed to live again close to nature; and (6) State lands set aside for the benefit of the State School Fund were on the market at prices considered very low and on terms obviously liberal and alluring, as the school land legislation hereinafter set forth will show. To impose obstructions to the coming of actual settlers was indeed equivalent to defying the laws of nature or interfering with the course of a popular craze.

2. *The Evolution of School Land Laws*

A review of the school land legislation throws much light on the settlement of the Staked Plains as well as the country adjacent thereto. Laws concerning school land underwent a remarkable evolution from 1874 to 1897. It is evident that the Texas lawmakers of a generation ago were not sufficiently prophetic to divine the conditions under which the West would reach a high state of development.

An act approved April 24, 1874,² provided that an applicant might purchase a tract of one hundred sixty acres of school land by the payment of one tenth of its assessed value and by obligating himself to pay ten percent interest and one-tenth of the principal on the first day of March in each year until the entire obligation was extinguished. This, however, was not all the law required of the settler. He further obligated himself to settle upon and improve within twelve months the land he purchased, if he had not already done so. This act did not, as it could not, work well either for the school fund or for settlers, and after ample time to see that such

² Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, VIII, 144.

legislation was abortive, the legislature passed an amendatory act, approved February 25, 1877, extending for ten years the payment of the principal of the purchase price.³ But this afforded no perceptible relief for the purchaser, as he still had to pay annually ten per cent interest on deferred payments. A tract so small as one hundred sixty acres was found to be entirely too small to attract purchasers. The legislature, reposed two years longer before it could see its blunder, and then it repeated its mistake with a slight modification. The new act,⁴ approved July 8, 1879, provided for the sale of six hundred forty acres, but almost on the same terms as provided in the previous act; however, in case the school land was classified as suitable only for grazing purposes the purchaser could obtain as much as three sections. This enabled him to buy a larger body of land, but it in no wise lightened the purchase price, and this was the fundamental obstacle to the success of the enterprise, a discovery which did not dawn upon an ever-changing, but desultory, body of law makers until a number of years had elapsed.

For a long time the public domain in the West was regarded as only of nominal value, except when school lands were put on the market. Lavish grants had been made in order primarily that the more populous eastern settlements might receive material improvements. In 1856 the legislature had passed a law,⁵ providing that for every mile of railroad constructed in Texas sixteen sections of land—ten thousand, two hundred forty acres—should be granted to the company, not to mention grants for other purposes. This law remained in effect until its repeal by the Legislature, April 22, 1882.⁶ Trading and selling land certificates and locating them for⁷ their owners was a lucrative business for many land surveyors and speculating firms. Finally the Legislature awoke to the

³ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IX, 805.

⁴ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IX, 23.

⁵ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, III, 1455.

⁶ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IX, 263.

⁷ C. U. Connelley's testimony in *Smithers vs. Smith et al.*, in Circuit Court of the United States for the Northern District of Texas, 1908, *Transcript of Record*.

fact that the policy of liberal grants had fulfilled its aim and that the time had come to call a halt. Then was passed the act repealing all laws granting lands or land certificates "to any person, corporation, or company for the construction of railroads, canals, and ditches." Thus at one fell stroke the legislature ended what had become largely the despoilation of the public domain.

One year later the legislature made a somewhat sweeping change in the laws authorizing the sale and lease of public school lands. This law was approved April 12, 1883.⁸ It created a land board, composed of the elected heads of the State departments, and fixed a minimum price of two dollars per acre for lands classified as fit only for grazing purposes; provided that one-thirtieth of the principal should be paid upon filing for the land purchased, with interest at five per centum per annum; that sales should be effected through competitive bids; that public school lands should be leased at not less than four cents per acre per annum, and for a period not exceeding ten years; and that purchasers should have the preference over leasers, when there was application for the same land for both. The land board was charged with the duty of classifying and appraising the public school lands, but no money was appropriated by the legislature for the accomplishment of these ends. At first the land board made classifications based on affidavits of parties residing in the county where the lands were located, and the affidavits were uniformly to the effect that the lands filed on were unfit for agricultural purposes, and false classifications resulted, as a maximum of seven sections⁹ of land classified as "fit only for grazing" could be purchased by a single applicant. To shut off frauds and to conserve the public interest the land board treated all land offered for sale as agricultural. By so ruling, the board allowed only one section to be sold to an actual settler in case of sale,

⁸ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IX, 391.

⁹ *Report of the Attorney General of Texas*, 1886, 18.

and it thereby kept the letter and spirit of the law from being violated.

3. *The School Land Enclosure Act*

The provision relative to the leasing of the public school lands was defective in failing to prescribe adequate penalties against those who grazed or enclosed these lands without leasing them from the State. To cure this defect, the Governor a year later submitted the subject to a called session of the legislature, whereupon was passed an act, approved February 7, 1884, prohibiting the unlawful fencing or enclosing of the lands¹⁰ of another, or lands belonging to the public schools, the university, and the asylums, and provided penalties for the violation of the same. This act was the occasion of much friction. As a matter of fact, among the large stock-raising interests there was a pronounced sentiment against the payment of fees for the use of the State's school, university, and asylum lands.¹¹ While there was no more justification for the use of public lands for stock raising than for corn or cotton growing, still the cattlemen felt emboldened to demand free land and to defy the land enclosure act. According to the Attorney General's report for 1885-1886, there were numerous violations of this act by the big ranch interests in general and a persistent determination on their part that it should be a dead letter. The JA Ranch was perhaps the most conspicuous in this practice because of the notoriety gained as defendant in the district court at Clarendon in July, 1886. The land board sent out special representatives of the General Land Office to investigate violations of this law. They were known as grass commissioners, and were regarded as interlopers. In 1885 the General Land Office sent out George M. Swink, of Dallas, as grass commissioner for the country embracing Crosby, Floyd, Donley and other counties, to force payment for the use of school lands by ranchmen.¹² He succeeded to some ex-

¹⁰ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IX, 600.

¹¹ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

¹² H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

tent where the State lands were fenced, but where they were not fenced the stockmen refused to pay, and, in the words of H. C. Smith, "declared that if the State wanted to protect its grass it would have to fence the land." In determining the acreage of school land enclosed Swink drove over the country in a buckboard, with a rodometer attached to a wheel. After calculating the number of acres enclosed he would mark off the alternate sections as school land and demand payment for their use. He devoted two years to this work, and his efforts had the effect of putting violations of the public land enclosure law before the grand jury of the district court of Donley County.

In the Thirty-First Judicial District, composed of Floyd, Donley, and twenty-seven other counties, including and overlapping the Panhandle, where over 6,000,000 acres of school land were situated. This was about one-fourth the entire school land acreage of the State. Of the 6,000,000 acres in the Thirty-First Judicial District, 1,500,000 acres were reported by Grass Commissioner Swink as unlawfully enclosed and occupied by cattlemen.¹³ John D. Templeton, just before the expiration of his term of office as Attorney General, in his report to the Governor, set forth a detailed statement of what he described as "farcial judicial proceedings carried on under the professed pretext, of course, of punishing the enclosure of these (school) lands, but in fact for the real purpose of securing immunity against punishment by preordained verdicts of not guilty."¹⁴ The Attorney General made bold to declare that the "sentiment hostile to paying for the use of school lands controls in the election of the officers, judicial and others;" and that this sentiment "goes, doubtless, with the juries in the jury box, and it is present with the grand jurors in their deliberations, and while the judge may preside over the court, this sentiment presides over the judge in at least one district in this State, and that is a district wherein a very large part of

¹³ *Report of the Attorney General of Texas, 1885-1886, 20.*

¹⁴ *Report of the Attorney General of Texas, 1885-1886, 20.*

the most desirable school land is situated;" that is, the Thirty-First. The Attorney General justified his assertions by reciting that at the January term, 1886, at Clarendon, the grand jury presented indictments against five of its own members. The land enclosure act had been in effect eighteen months. Three months of unlawful enclosure constituted a separate offense. To cover the whole period of violation six indictments were presented against each offender. Six of the petit jury trying one prominent defendant was composed of his own employees. Most of these cases were disposed of at the same term with the result that each defendant was acquitted. Judge Willis demanded at the regular session of the Twentieth Legislature an investigation,¹⁵ because the "report of the Attorney General very much reflected upon his integrity." James S. Hogg, who succeeded Templeton as Attorney General, prosecuted the investigation of Judge Willis with great vigor. The effort was made, under the provisions of the State constitution,¹⁶ to remove Judge Willis by address. The House carried the resolution by a vote of sixty-seven ayes and twenty-one nays, but the Senate, largely by the leadership of Senator Temple Houston, a son of General Sam Houston, of Mobeetie, voted five yeas and twenty-two nays.¹⁷ The prosecution failed to secure the removal of Judge Willis, but it doubtless had a wholesome effect in directing popular attention to the struggle that was going on between settlers and cattlemen. Little by little ranchmen were losing power, and little by little the settlers were gaining a foothold.

4. *The Forty Years Purchase Act*

Since the land board did not encourage the sale of public lands classified as "grazing lands", the act¹⁸ approved April 1, 1887, was the greatest forward step taken by the Legislature in the matter of school lands up to that time. This act contained, among others, provisions for the appointment of

¹⁵ *House Journal*, Twentieth Legislature, 105.

¹⁶ *Constitution of Texas*, Art. XV, Sec. 8.

¹⁷ *Senate Journal*, Twentieth Legislature, 684.

¹⁸ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IX, 881.

competent agents to classify public school lands; for the sale of school lands to actual settlers only; that no lands should be sold at less than two dollars per acre; that the purchaser must reside on land purchased for three consecutive years; and that he should pay one-fortieth of the price at the time of filing, with five per cent interest on deferred payments. The purchaser had the privilege of paying it in full after three years' occupancy, or any part annually. Immediately following the passage of this act the westward stream of immigration perceptibly increased in volume. The population of Floyd County in 1880 was 3; in 1890, 519; and in 1900, 2020.

5. *Early Surveys and the Location of Land Blocks*

Much historical significance is attached to the extermination of the buffaloes and to the quelling of the Indians just before the Legislature created the fifty-four new counties out of Young and Bexar Territories on August 21, 1876; but, important as these events are, they should not completely overshadow the surveying of the unappropriated public lands. Before the State, by an act of April 22, 1882, ceased to make land grants to encourage the construction of railroads, canals, and ditches, a vast number of land certificates had been issued. As long as a land certificate was unlocated it constituted nothing more than personal property. It became real property only when located.¹⁹ An unlocated land certificate could be transferred by parol—just as any article or chattel might change ownership. Speculation in land certificates was rampant. Many people in other States acquired, at a nominal price, lands in North West Texas through the purchase of land certificates. Surveying parties for the location of land certificates became numerous. Stores established at various points—specifically the Tepee City store in the northeastern part of Motley County and Singer's Store where Lubbock is located.—for the purpose of selling supplies to buffalo hunters were likewise patronized by surveying parties. For every section of land located by certificate the section next to

¹⁹ Jones vs. Lee, 86 *Texas Reports*, 31, 49.

it was designated as a school section; that is, each odd numbered section was located for and patented to the holder of the certificate, and each even numbered section was set aside for the benefit of the public school fund. A group of sections thus located and surveyed usually constituted a block with some sort of designation for the purpose of description. Some land blocks thus laid out occupied a large area, while others embraced only a few sections. As an illustration, in Floyd County, Block 1 contains 136 sections, while Block C includes only four sections. More than a score of land blocks were located in Floyd County. Ofttimes a land block when laid out and designated was cut by county boundary lines. Another Block C, containing more than one hundred sections, covers large areas of Crosby and Lubbock counties and small areas of Floyd and Hale counties, as shown by the land maps of these counties. Blocks were irregular in form because of the varying conditions existing when the surveying was done. Only school lands and patented lands, in equal quantities, were found in each block; that is, if a block contained one hundred sections, half of them were located for the holders of land certificates, while the remaining fifty were designated as school lands, no school section lying next to another school section, nor patented section next to another patented section. Besides the land blocks just described, there were other bodies of land usually found in Western Texas, namely, county schools lands, and vacant or unappropriated public domain subject to homestead settlement;²⁰ that is, every head of a family without a homestead was entitled to 160 acres and every single man eighteen years of age was entitled to eighty acres, on condition of three years' occupancy and the payment of required fees. Each county when organized was allowed to locate four leagues—17,712 acres—of land for a permanent county school fund. These tracts were located in those western counties that had sufficient State lands not already appropriated. Eastland County located her school lands partly in

²⁰ *Revised Statutes of Texas*, 1895, Art. 4160. et seq.

Floyd and partly in Crosby counties. Callahan County found her quota in Floyd and Hale counties. The strip or bodies of land lying among or outside of the land blocks, in which were located the School and patented sections, constituted the homestead or preemption lands. Some surveys were made in Young and Bexar Territories before the act of August 21, 1876, when they were converted into fifty-four new counties. Surveying parties did not, and generally could not, concern themselves much about county boundary lines, as these were not often established before the organization of the counties to which they pertained.

In 1908, in the United State Circuit Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit, at Fort Worth, Texas, the Block G Land Slide Suit was tried. In the *Transcript of Record* of this suit is the testimony of George E. Spiller, J. B. Ammerman, and C. U. Connellee, who made early surveys in Floyd, Crosby, and Hale counties. Spiller was, in 1875, deputy surveyor of Young County, afterwards district deputy surveyor of Young Land District, and subsequently State surveyor. Ammerman came to Texas in 1870, and from 1876 to 1881 was a member of the firm of Daugherty, Connellee & Ammerman. This firm engaged in surveying for the holders of land certificates. Connellee resided at Eastland and was active as a surveyor.

Spiller located Block 4, in the northeast corner of Floyd County, and other surveys in Floyd County.²¹ In 1873, three years before Floyd and Crosby counties were created. Spiller was employed by William Nelson to do field surveying. A man named Berkley, also an expert surveyor, located survey No. 141, in Block 2, in Crosby County. Survey No. 141 is in Blanco Canyon, southeast from Crosbyton approximately eight or nine miles distant therefrom. From the northwest corner of this survey these men ran a transverse line along the Mackenzie Trail up White River, or Crawfish Creek, to Dewey's Lake, a sheet of water about 400 varas long and 200 varas wide. Berkley was at the time very much in love with a

²¹ Arthur B. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, February 8, 1922.

Miss Dewey, and the lake was named in her honor. The party left Dewey's Lake for the Canadian River, in the North Panhandle, to locate some other surveys. Berkley was afterwards superintendent of the Seaboard Airline Railroad, with headquarters at Atlanta, Georgia. He died in 1907.

The firm in which Connellee and Ammerman were members was interested in the location of land certificates, so that none of the members could act as district deputy surveyor. That this firm might secure the location of certificates, it employed O. W. Williams as district deputy surveyor of the Jack Land District to do the surveying. In June, 1877, Ammerman and Williams ran a transverse line up the Mackenzie Trail from Dewey's Lake into Floyd County. Near the line between Floyd and Crosby counties, Ammerman and Williams established a mound for an observation point. This was done so that it would not be necessary to run back to Dewey's Lake for a connecting point. In 1876 Ammerman located Block 1, from the Quitaque corner. The following year O. W. Calloway, deputy surveyor of the Jack Land District, located Block P, between Block 1 and Block G, in Floyd County from the Quitaque corner. Later in the same year C. U. Connellee located the Callahan County school lands and put in Block U. These surveys were made with reference to the observation point on the Crosby County line and the northwest corner of survey 1, in Block C. In locating the Eastland County school land he used the northwest corner of Survey 141, in Block 2, in Crosby County, as the connecting point.

To present further instances in which surveying parties located lands would be superfluous as well as tiresome. The purpose in discussing a few of the surveys is to throw light on the way in which the country was being prepared for the coming of the settler. In Floyd County alone 304,156 acres of State School Land—something near 475 sections—was located during the later seventies, and the same number of

acres was located and patented by virtue of land certificates. One league of Eastland County school land and about two and one-half leagues of Callahan County School land—approximately 15,000 acres—were located in Floyd County. There were probably 30,000 acres of vacant public land subject to preemption settlement—enough to provide about 800 families with nominally free homes. Indeed the land system of a county makes a most interesting study, and assuredly the early surveyor and certificate locater, as well as the buffalo hunter and the Indian fighter, contributed measurably towards putting the country in readiness for settlement.

Chapter V

THE COMING OF THE FIRST SETTLERS

1. *First Settlement in Blanco Canyon*

The first settlers within the region of the Staked Plains took up their abode in the canyons and escarpments for the obvious reasons that they afforded protection against storms. They also furnished running water and timber for both fuel and building. Homes could be provided with little expense because they were built with sod and native timbers. In the early days of the settlement of Floyd and Crosby counties Blanco Canyon was an ideal place in which to live. It courses in a southeasterly direction through the south part of Floyd County and the northeast portion of Crosby County, varying in width from a few hundred yards to four or five miles. It has its source in Running Water Draw. This draw runs through Hale County and enters Floyd County about the middle of the boundary line of these two counties. Its banks are gently sloping, and numerous springs feed it after it enters Hale County.¹ After flowing a distance of about fifteen miles the water sinks into the ground. This is why it is called Running Water Draw. It merges into Blanco Canyon about eight miles southwest of Floydada. In the canyon there is a stream fed by springs. This is known geographically as White River, although some authorities designate it as Catfish Creek. It is a tributary of the Salt Fork of the Brazos River. In Spanish the word *blanco* signifies *white*. It will thus be seen that the names of the canyon and the stream it contains have the same meaning. The gradient of the draw and the stream is about four or five hundred feet for about one hundred miles—sufficient to produce a swift current in times of much precipitation.

2. *The Coming of H. C. Smith*

The first settler in Blanco Canyon was H. C. Smith who in the fall of 1877, located near Mount Blanco, in Crosby

¹ *Year Book, Texas Department of Agriculture, 1909, 514.*

County, the scene of the fight between Colonel Mackenzie's troops and Quanah Parker's warriors seven years before. Smith first visited this region in the early part of 1876 with a view of establishing a cattle ranch for a man bearing the assumed name of Charles Tasker, and for an Irish lord of the name of Jamison.² Jamison had ample funds of his own for the enterprise, but Tasker was to be aided by an uncle, who was a rich manufacturer. In the latter part of 1876 Smith in company with Judge John Schimerhorn and three other men, including a Mexican, spent some time prospecting for a location for the contemplated Tasker-Jamison ranch. It was on this trip that Schimerhorn Mountain, in Floyd County, was christened. Judge Schimerhorn attempted to kill a buffalo bull with a pepper-box gun. The animal being enraged, Judge Schimerhorn fled to the eminence for protection. The sportive companions of the Judge named the mountain in honor of the refugee.

The exploring party returned to Fort Griffin, and Smith recommended the Mount Blanco country as suitable for the projected ranch. Tasker and Jamison started to visit Mount Blanco in person; but on the way Jamison's hand was accidentally shot off, and he returned to Fort Griffin for medical treatment. He declined to go further with the enterprise, but Tasker continued with the project. To make a long story short, Tasker placed some cattle and horses on the ranch and started work on a stone house, but his habits as a spendthrift and plunger led his uncle to sever further business relations with him. Smith furnished supplies for Tasker's project to the extent of about eleven thousand dollars, but finally the crash overtook Tasker. In his extremity Tasker left the country, and his creditors seized on such property as he left. Smith obtained the unfinished stone house, which only in part compensated him for his advances.³ He now had on his hands something he could not drop, and to avoid total loss he moved

² H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

³ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 27, 1912.

his family to the ranch in the autumn of 1877. Thus Smith undesignedly became a nester in Crosby County.

Smith finished the construction of the two-story stone residence. The celebrated caprock stone, composed of magnesia limestone, was used. The lime for the mortar was obtained from stone in the canyon. Two Irish stone masons of Fort Worth did the work. The building cost approximately \$3300, but it was as cheap as a lumber house of the same dimensions could have been erected there, as Fort Worth was, at that time, the nearest shipping point from which lumber could be obtained. The Texas & Pacific Railroad had just reached Fort Worth. Lumber sold at Fort Worth at \$40 per thousand board feet, and the cost of freighting would have been \$90 more.

At that time Crosby County was attached to Young County for land purposes, and flour at Graham sold at \$6 per hundred pounds, and freight was \$2.50 more. The prices of the Great World War certainly obtained in the West in those days.

Those who first lived in the Mount Blanco stone residence were Mr. and Mrs. Smith, their son, George, who was two years old, and their daughter Leila, two months old, Charles Hawes and two other men.⁴ When the Smiths first moved to Mount Blanco their "nearest neighbor" was S. T. Peppers, who lived fifty miles southeast on Duck Creek.⁵ The nearest ranch was that of Jim Reed, a man with one arm, a hundred miles southeast, in Stonewall County. There were a few buffalo camps in the country, namely, that of George Causey at Buffalo Springs, in Yellow House Canyon; that of Dockum and Thompson, twenty-five miles southeast in Dickens County, afterwards known as Dockum's Ranch and Post Office; and that of Ruth and Hartman, northwest at the Mackenzie crossing of Blanco Canyon, in Floyd County. There were then thousands of turkeys, antelopes, and wolves,

⁴ Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, November 1, 1921.

⁵ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

and a few deer; but the buffalo slaughter was accompanied by the extermination of much of the game. Smith has somewhat humorously observed that "not a few of our cows, without our permission, went to feed hungry, gameless hunters" A few buffaloes were in the country when the Smiths came. Shortly afterwards they moved to Mount Blanco, in the winter of 1877-1878, George Causey's hunting outfit killed fourteen buffaloes two miles from the Smith home. The buffaloes were too poor for human food, and the carcasses were fed to hogs. Mrs. Smith⁶ states that she has seen as many as a hundred buffaloes advance within close range of the residence to quench their thirst, and as many wild horses along the edge of the caprock of the Plains.

On September 29, 1879, the Federal Government created Mount Blanco Post Office, and Mrs. Elizabeth Smith received the appointment as post master, a position she filled for thirty-nine years. Mount Blanco received mail twice a week from Fort Griffin. The distance was approximately one hundred sixty miles, and Fort Griffin was supplied from Fort Worth, a distance of one hundred fifty miles. The patrons of Mount Blanco post office scarcely reached one hundred in number, mostly cowboys from ranches in Lubbock, Donley, and other far-away counties. When the mail route from Fort Griffin to Mount Blanco⁷ was established, a post office was established on Duck Creek, in Dickens County. S. T. Peppers declined the appointment as postmaster, but W. C. Dockum accepted, and his store then became known as Dockum's Ranch post office.

3. *Brief Sketch of Smith's Life, et al*

If all the events of H. C. Smith's life of about sixty years on the western frontiers could be collected and graphically written into a book, it would be a most interesting volume. No man has done more in bringing about the development of the South Plains country. He was born in Baden, Germany,

⁶ Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, November 1, 1921.

⁷ Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, January 4, 1922.

August 14, 1836, and he died at his home at Mount Blanco, May 19, 1912, aged 75 years, nine months, and five days. When he was twelve years of age he came to the United States, and for three years made his home with a married sister in Ohio. The remainder of his life he spent in the West. Before the Civil War he worked in gold mines in California. During the war he served the Confederacy.⁸ Being able to read and speak Spanish, he was appointed to carry mail and dispatches from one military post to another in Arizona and New Mexico.⁹ In his time he hauled freight from Kansas City to points in New Mexico, at the rate of \$28 per hundred, and saw flour sell at \$40 per hundred pounds, coffee at \$1.50 per pound, and bacon, sugar, and evaporated fruit at 75 cents a pound.¹⁰

After the war he entered the Government's service as a freighter for the military posts in the Rio Grande Country. He afterwards freighted from Indianola, St. Mary's, and other coastal points to places in the central part of the State. He was at Austin on December 13, 1871, to see the first Houston and Texas Central train arrive. He freighted from Austin to Fort Concho after Austin became a railway point. For freighting over the distance between these two points, about 250 miles, he received \$3.60 per hundred pounds. From 1872 to 1877 Smith supplied the Government's troops stationed at Fort Griffin with prairie hay, for which he received \$22 per ton. In 1873, while operating his hay works on the prairies in Throckmorton County, he lost from an Indian raid 26 mules. In 1893—after waiting 20 years—the Government's claims department reimbursed him for the loss of his mules in the escapade. From 1877 to the time of his death, Smith was intimately connected with the progressive moves of Crosby County. He was at Plainview in December, 1906, to see the first regular train arrive, and four years later he was

⁸ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

⁹ Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, November 1, 1921.

¹⁰ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

on hand at Floydada to witness the beginning of the town's train service. In 1894 he became the volunteer meteorological observer for the Government at Mount Blanco. This was a free service, but one in which he took great pride. His schooling was very limited, but nature was kind in endowing him with an unusually keen intellect. He read extensively, observed carefully, and retained information remarkably well. He used the English language, spoken and written, with much fluency and accuracy. He was an excellent type of the self-educated man.

Mrs. Elizabeth Smith, the wife of H. C. Smith, was reared to young womanhood in Scotland. Her father was Allan Boyle of the estate of Fleshwood, Dalry, Ayrshire.¹¹ Mrs. Smith's brother, John Boyle, was the first member of her family to come to the United States, in 1867. He procured employment as a bookkeeper in the Iron Mountain Works at Cairo, not far from St. Louis. At his instance, his three brothers, Andrew, who had been a captain in the British army, Joseph, who had been educated in the university of Edinburgh and had taught school, and James, who was a druggist, decided to emigrate to the United States. Elizabeth, the youngest sister, was importuned to accompany her three brothers and to act as housekeeper for them. They took passage for America in May, 1868, from Glasgow. The Boyles located at Fort Griffin in 1873. There Elizabeth and H. C. Smith were married on May 19, 1874. The issue of Mr. and Mrs. Smith are George W. Smith, of Crosbyton; Mrs. Leila E. Wheeler, of Ralls; Robert Burns Smith, of Floydada; Mrs. Annie J. McDermott, of Dexter, New Mexico; Mrs. Mary M. Kirk, of Mount Blanco. In November, 1921, Mrs. Smith had twenty grandchildren.

Charles Hawes, who made his home with the Smiths at Mount Blanco, was born in Maine May 28, 1831.¹² He and Smith first met in Arizona, in 1857. When the Civil War

¹¹ Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, November 1, 1921.

¹² Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, April 20, 1922.

came on these two friends enlisted on opposite sides. In 1877 Hawes chanced to accompany some buffalo hunters to Fort Griffin, where he saw Smith, after a separation of fifteen years. Hawes served a few years as commissioner of Crosby County. On August 22, 1921, he died at Ralls, in the home of Mrs. J. A. Wheeler, Mrs. Smith's daughter.

S. T. Peppers, who lived on Duck Creek when Smith moved to Mount Blanco, first lived at Fort Griffin during the early seventies.¹³ He lived a few years on Yellow House Canyon in Crosby County, and in 1888 moved to Plainview.¹⁴ in Hale County.

Judge John Schimerhorn was a lawyer with his home at Breckenridge, Stephens County. In his law practice he frequently had business at Fort Griffin, which was then the county seat of Shackelford County. When Smith made his prospecting trip for locating the projected Tasker-Jamison ranch, Judge Schimerhorn, as has been stated, accompanied him to get a view of Blanco Canyon.¹⁵

4. *The Quaker Settlement at Estacado*

In 1878, Paris Cox, the owner of numerous surveys of land in Crosby County, left his home in Indianapolis, Indiana, on an expedition to the West. He joined a party of buffalo hunters¹⁶ and in time visited the Staked Plains. In Crosby County he investigated the possibilities of the country for the establishment of a settlement of Quaker brethren. He interviewed H. C. Smith relative to the productivity of the soil and the availability of water for wells. As an experiment, Cox contracted with Smith¹⁷ to put down a well and to fence and break some land and to plant and cultivate a crop. Smith carried out his contract in good faith. Well water, abundant and wholesome, was obtained at a depth of fifty-five feet. 1879 was a fat year in Crosby County, as the rainfall was

¹³ Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, January 4, 1912.

¹⁴ R. P. Smythe to Claude V. Hall, May 6, 1922.

¹⁵ Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, January 4, 1922.

¹⁶ Rev. J. W. Hunt to Claude V. Hall, January, 1922.

¹⁷ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

abundant. Smith produced for Cox a good crop of frijoles, sorghum, and Indian corn. He sent samples of these to Cox at his Indiana home. They were a revelation to Indianians. Cox at once became enthusiastic over a Quaker settlement, and determined to try his own fortune in this country. In the late autumn of 1879 he and his family arrived accompanied by the families of Mr. Hayworth, Mr. Stubbs, and Mr. Spray. They settled in the northwestern portion of Crosby County on Section 59, Block C. In this settlement the town of Marietta was established, named in honor of Paris Cox's wife, whose Christian name was Mary.

The winter of 1879-1880 was one of great severity. The four Quaker families lived in tents, and their winter quarters could not be made comfortable. The winds blew incessantly cold and hard. The situation was extremely depressing; and the outlook was most discouraging. Before the approach of spring they regretted their settlement on the bleak plains of Texas. Two incidents accentuated their despondency.

One morning, in a dense fog, one of the men walked out to a basin not far from his home. When he attempted to retrace his steps he wandered from his course and was soon hopelessly lost. Nearly three days he wandered. The cool nights prevented his sleeping. Food was entirely lacking. H. C. Smith finally found the wanderer on the plains not far south of Mount Blanco. He was more than twenty miles from home and had traveled many times that distance in a vain endeavor to find himself. No such experience could befall a man in Indiana, the Quakers reasoned.

In the early spring, a driving rainstorm blew down the tents and scattered household goods through Blanco Canyon.¹⁸ It seemed useless to drag out a dreary life in such a country. The Plains could never become fit for the abode of civilized man. Thus the tenderfoot Quakers estimated the present and divined the future. At any rate, Mr. Spray, Mr. Stubbs, and Mr. Hayworth in disgust left the country. Paris Cox,

¹⁸ Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, February 7, 1922.

however, was undaunted. He erected a house and set about to induce other Quaker families to locate near him.

In 1880 some ten families came, among them those of George Singer, Andy Underhill, John Underhill, and Mr. Janeway. They prospered, and other Quaker families joined the colony. Some of these newcomers were the family of Gideon Cox, Rev. Anson Cox, Mat Hatley, George M. Hunt, Mr. Conroe, and Dr. William Hunt.¹⁹ From year to year the colony continued to grow until it disbanded in 1891. At one time the colony probably consisted of about two hundred persons. The Quaker Colony in Crosby County was not due to religious persecution elsewhere, for the settlers came from Indiana, Ohio, Kansas, Iowa, North Carolina, and Indian Territory. They settled in Crosby County that they might obtain cheap land and enjoy church²⁰ and school advantages.

In 1887 the Quakers established the Central Plains Academy, with Junior College rank.²¹ The instructors were Rev. J. H. Moore, the president, C. E. Lewis, and Miss Emma Lewis. The president was a Master of Arts graduate from Haverford College and the holder of the Ph.D. degree from John Hopkins University. The other instructors were Master of Arts graduates from Penn College, Oskalusa, Iowa. A part of the time Miss Emma Hunt, Rev. J. W. Hunt's oldest sister, gave instruction in this school. The school was maintained through the grades by public funds, but the students pursuing college courses paid tuition. In this school Rev. J. W. Hunt, now president of McMurry College, at Abilene, Texas, received all of his scholastic instruction. The Central Plains academy ceased to exist upon the dispersion of the Quaker Colony in 1891.

5. *The First Settlers of Floyd County*

In 1884 and 1885, when Crosby County had made some headway in settlement, Floyd County began to be peopled,

¹⁹ Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, February 7, 1922.

²⁰ Rev. J. W. Hunt to Claude V. Hall, January, 1922.

²¹ Rev. J. W. Hunt to Claude V. Hall, February 8, 1922.

and in 1886 and 1887 Hale County attracted settlers. Blanco Canyon, in Floyd County, had been occupied in 1883 by the sheep ranch of Owens, Marseilles, and Duncan. This served as a nucleus for a few actual settlers.

On June 1, 1884, arrived the first man with a family to settle in Floyd County. This was Arthur B. Duncan, a brother of W. V. Duncan and Ed Duncan. His family consisted of his wife and his infant son Silas.²² A boy named Robert A. Prince, accompanied them. When Arthur B. Duncan started for Floyd County in the spring of 1884, he expected to buy some watered school land in Blanco Canyon. The School Land Act of April 12, 1883, was in effect. It had created a land board with power to classify, appraise, sell, lease, and exercise other powers of a discretionary nature.²³ Before Duncan started, all the watered lands in the canyon were for sale, but before he reached Floyd County the land board had taken them off the market,²⁴ and had leased them to the cattlemen. By this arrangement only dry school land could be purchased by actual settlers. This action of the land board was virtually a knockout blow to the actual settler of limited means. Besides, it enabled the cattleman to control practically the entire country. Being thus foiled by the ruling of the land board, Duncan's only alternative was to settle on a watered homestead claim of 160 acres.²⁵ To file and settle on a dry section of school land called for water equipment—including well, piping, windmill—which was costly. Even the depth to water was unknown to him at that time.

The process of getting located on a claim in 1884 is illustrative of the difficulties which the plains pioneer had to meet. Floyd County had been incorporated into the Donley Land District the year previous. In order to file on his homestead, Duncan had first to go to Clarendon, the County seat

²² *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

²³ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IX, 263.

²⁴ Arthur B. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, February 8, 1922.

²⁵ *Revised Statutes of Texas*, 1895, Art. 4160, et seq.

of Donley County. Then no road led to that town. He had to travel by course, and this was not an easy thing to do in those days. Alone he made the journey on horseback. The country was unknown to him. Only a few cow camps and ranch headquarters were in existence. Clarendon was then a struggling village far removed from the nearest railroad point. Upon his return from Clarendon he employed C. U. Connellee, now of Eastland, to run out the claim. But Conelnee's work could not be recognized, as he was not an official surveyor. He could only show Duncan the location of his homestead claim. T. S. McClelland was the surveyor of Donley Land District. McClelland made the official survey²⁶ for Duncan in July, 1885. Through an error the district surveyor sent into the General Land Office field notes that showed this claim in conflict with other land. This error had the effect of denying Duncan a patent to this land for ten years. It was after Floyd County was attached to Crosby County for land purposes, in 1887, that a correct survey was made. H. C. Knight, the surveyor of the Crosby Land District, made a survey that the General Land Office recognized and approved in 1895.

For six and one-half years Duncan and his family resided in the canyon. Their home was a dugout. The front wall was of sod. The floor was terra firma, and the roof of timbers and dirt. It was large enough for two rooms of average size. A partition of cloth separated the kitchen from the living room. It was modestly furnished, as all other habitations then were. In the living room there was a fireplace dug out of the solid wall. The chimney had to be curved to avoid a projection of stone, and this sometimes interfered with the draft so that the smoke failed to ascend. In one corner of the room a rough stone protruded itself a few inches above the floor level. But this did not interfere, as a bedstead was placed over it. Here the family resided until the county was organ-

²⁶ Arthur B. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, January 28, 1922.

ized. Here the three oldest daughters were born. Here too, many wayfarers were the recipients of western hospitality.

6. *Character Sketches of Settlers*

Since his location in Floyd County as the first settler Arthur B. Duncan, has had a prominent part in the affairs of the county. After Floyd County was attached to Crosby County for land and judicial purposes, Duncan was appointed by the Commissioner's court of Crosby County justice of the peace of Floyd County. This position he filled until his election as county judge of Floyd County in 1890. Custom in the West was to recognize an honor conferred upon a man with the appropriate title. While he was justice of the peace he was uniformly addressed as "Squire Duncan". Because of the numerous legal disputes that came up in the canyon with reference to land matters, he provided himself with the *Revised Statutes of Texas*²⁷ and a copy of the *Acts of the Texas Legislature*. His experience as a land litigant and as justice of the peace entailed upon him the duty of consulting the statutory laws of Texas. In this way he soon formed a fondness for the study of law. In this way his name came to be mentioned in connection with the County Judge's office in Floyd County. He was honored with election as County Judge in the first nine successive elections for county officers in Floyd County, and again in the election of 1912.

Arthur B. Duncan was born in Hopkins County, Texas, August 12, 1862. His parents were William B. and Elizabeth Duncan. His father was a graduate from the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania,²⁸ and he practiced his profession in Arkansas and Texas. He died in Grayson County in 1874. His mother was a daughter of William Vaden, of Hopkins County. She died at her home near Plainview, Hale County, in July, 1892. In December, 1882, Arthur B. Duncan and Sarah K. Day, were married in Montague County, Texas. Duncan's school days were not num-

²⁷ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

²⁸ Johnson, *Texas and Texans*, 1656.

erous, as his father died when he was twelve years of age. He did, however, come under the instruction of J. E. F. Koger in a rural school in Grayson County, and the unselfish aims of this teacher profoundly impressed his pupil with life's realities and obligations. Duncan has always been a diligent student in the lines of his activities as a county official, as an abstracter and realty dealer, and as a farmer and stockman.

Mrs. Sarah K. Duncan, wife of Arthur B. Duncan, was reared in Grayson County. Her parents were Mathew and Sarah K. Day. Mrs. Duncan is a sister of M. M. Day, of Lockney, and a twin sister of J. J. Day of Floydada. The ten children born to her and her husband are: Silas E. Duncan, of Floydada; Mrs. Maude E. Hollums, of Floydada; Mrs. Emma L. Watkins, of Petersburg, Hale County; Mrs. Edith E. Pitts, Mrs. Hope E. Hammonds, Mrs. Ruby B. Brown, Mrs. Mattie Blackmon, and Arthur B. Jr., Carroll V., and Mark W. Duncan, all of Floydada.²⁹

Early in the spring of 1885 Mrs. Elizabeth Duncan, with her daughter, Edith, joined her son W. V. Duncan on the Owens, Marseilles, and Duncan sheep ranch. They had traveled by rail to Abilene. A few months later came with his family Z. T. Maxwell, a son-in-law of Mrs. Duncan, accompanied by Ed. Duncan, Poliet Smith, and Miss Eugenia Duncan. Maxwell had made a prospecting trip to Floyd County the year before. A Mr. Kitchen, a school teacher, came and stayed a short time—the first teacher to reside in Floyd County.³⁰ The canyon was now a community center. Homes were soon provided, but most of them were dugouts. A frame house was too much of a luxury, as lumber had to be freighted from Abilene and Colorado City over trails not easy for wagons. Living was comparatively easy, though not elegant or sumptuous. Supplies were purchased in large lots.

7. *The Early Settlement of Hale County*

As before stated, land litigation arose between the settlers

²⁹ Johnson, *Texas and Texans*, 1656.

³⁰ Z. T. Maxwell to Claude V. Hall, November 20, 1921.

and large ranch interests. All the settlers mentioned, except Arthur B. Duncan, wearied of the strife and compromised by relinquishing their claims for a consideration. W. V. Duncan and Ed Duncan moved to Hale County and settled on Runningwater Draw in the spring of 1886. The Duncans were the third family to settle in Hale County.³¹ Sixteen miles southwest of the Duncans, in Hale County, were the families of Horatio Graves and a Mr. Adams. Here a little later Graves founded the town of Epworth. In the spring of 1886 L. T. Lester moved from Palo Pinto County and settled not far from Epworth.³² A. N. Jones settled the same year east of Epworth, and later founded Hale Center. In the autumn of 1886 Z. T. Maxwell settled on Runningwater Draw four miles above W. V. Duncan's location.³³ Maxwell settled his claim ostensibly to engage in sheep raising. In some places well water could be obtained in the draw at a depth of about twenty-five feet. Shallow water proved an attraction for more settlers. Maxwell preferred not to have his sheep range disturbed by the coming of other settlers; but, inasmuch as he could not have his own way in the matter, he decided to found an embryo county seat. In this way Plainview came into existence. E. L. Lowe was his partner in the establishment of Plainview. Maxwell had this purpose in view when he left Blanco Canyon, as he himself says:

I had found that a large body of vacant land was situated there, and I moved there with a view of taking up some of this land, and eventually organizing a county and locating the county seat.³⁴

The first store in Plainview was in a tent in 1887 with Thornton Jones as proprietor. Later Hugh McLellan, Mr. Rollins, R. C. Ware, Mr. Leach, and Williams Brothers put in stocks of merchandise. Abundant homestead lands, shallow water, and Amarillo only about seventy miles away, with a level stretch of land intervening, gave quite an impetus to the early settlement of the Plainview country.

³¹ W. V. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, December 13, 1921.

³² L. T. Lester to Claude V. Hall, January, 1922.

³³ W. V. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, December 13, 1921.

³⁴ Z. T. Maxwell to Claude V. Hall, November 20, 1921.

W. V. Duncan remained in Hale County until 1889, when he moved to Memphis, Hall County, where he lived until 1893.³⁵ That year he took up his residence at Spearfish, South Dakota, where he engaged in stock raising and gold mining until 1908. He next became a resident of the western portion of the Dominion of Canada. His extensive travels, varied pursuits, and receptive mind, together with his readiness to impart information, rendered him a most interesting man.

Z. T. Maxwell was a Missourian. Shortly after the outbreak of the Civil War, he came to Texas. He had three brothers who enlisted under Quantrell³⁶ in guerilla warfare. He was married to Laura L. Duncan, a daughter of Mrs. Elizabeth Duncan. Mrs. Maxwell was born in Hopkins County and reared in Grayson County. Maxwell lived near Gainesville, in Cooke County, where he engaged in farming and dairying. He afterwards moved to Montague, in Montague County, and followed merchandising until his removal to Floyd County in 1885. He left Plainview in the autumn of 1892 and located on a farm on Oil Creek, near Ardmore, Indian Territory. He later lived in San Saba County, Texas, where for a number of years he operated a noted onion farm by means of irrigation. The town of Maxwellton, in San Saba County, was named in his honor. He and his wife are spending the evening of life at Coalgate, Oklahoma, in the midst of children and grandchildren.

8. *Early Events of Interest*

Thus far the early settlement of Crosby County, Floyd County, and Hale County have been presented somewhat in detail. The first settlers soon became reconciled to conditions in a new country. The country in general was undergoing a new epoch in its development. There were courtships, marriages, births, and deaths. Social functions now and then lessened the monotony of life. Social distinctions, or castes,

³⁵ W. V. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, December 13, 1921.

³⁶ Thoburn, *A Standard History of Oklahoma*, 1457.

were unknown. Society was then thoroughly democratic; and flappers and sissies, there were none.

In the spring of 1881 the first two white children were born in Crosby County. The first was a girl born to Mr. and Mrs. Paris Cox; and the second, a boy born to Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Smith on May 6. The first marriage in Crosby County was that of Frank Leonard³⁷ and Miss Ethel Overhuls. They now reside in Floyd County, Texas.

The first couple to marry in Floyd County were Poliet Smith and Miss Eugenia Duncan. The nuptials took place at the home of the bride's brother, Arthur B. Duncan, in 1885. The marriage license was obtained at Clarendon. O. A. Shook, a minister of the Methodist church, officiated. Mrs. H. C. Smith gave the couple an infare dinner at Mount Blanco.³⁸ On October 26, 1885, a son was born to Mr. and Mrs. Z. T. Maxwell. This was the first white child born in Floyd County. In recognition of this fact, he was christened Floyd. The first death in Floyd County was that of Mrs. A. M. Mills, in April, 1890. Her remains were taken from the home in Blanco Canyon to Estacado for burial.³⁹

The first wedding in Hale County was that of Henry Moore and Miss Edith Duncan, in 1887. It is thought that Edna Maxwell, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Z. T. Maxwell, was the first white child born in Hale County. This was in 1887.

9. *More Settlers in Floyd County*

While there was an exodus of settlers from the Canyon Settlement in Floyd County in 1886, at the same time there was an influx of new comers. Among these were A. M. Mills, M. C. Potter, A. K. Latham, J. A. Burrus, J. K. Latham, and later J. J. Day in April 1887.⁴⁰

Further up, on Runningwater Draw, B. P. Merrill and L. C. Darby located on August 4, 1887. Merrill and Darby's

³⁷ Mrs. H. C. Smith to Claude V. Hall, November 4, 1921.

³⁸ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

³⁹ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

⁴⁰ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

nearest neighbors were two cowboys who maintained a camp three miles distant on the Mackenzie Trail, and whose business was to see that cattle belonging to their ranch were not driven away. The newcomers constructed their houses by digging four feet in the ground, built sod walls about three feet high from the ground, and made the roofs of poles and dirt. The winter of 1887-1888 was extremely cold. Thousands of cattle and a few antelope froze to death. Mustang horses were troublesome because they would get with gentle horses and draw them away from their range.⁴¹

10. *Destructive Prairie Fires*

In the meantime, the country did not lack for incidents more or less interesting, when not humorous or thrilling. To be sure, those that lived in a sparsely settled country region of vast treeless plains have experienced the anxiety occasioned by prairie fires. In the early days of ranching in the South Plains Country these fires were the terror of cow men, sheep men, and settlers. In the summer months when the grass was dry fires were widespread and destructive. Perhaps the most destructive fire ever known on the South Plains was in June, 1879.⁴² It started in the southern part of Crosby County. At that time there were numerous wild hogs in the shinneries. A cowboy contrived the clever scheme of setting fire to a shinnery as a means of driving the hogs out in the open. A wind from the southwest set up, and the fire soon got beyond control and raged in a northeasterly direction. As it spread it advanced so as to sweep an immense area. It crossed Blanco Canyon, and finally spent itself in the regions of Quitaque Creek, Boggy Creek, the north and south forks of Pease River, and Tule Canyon. Along the streams groves of timber were completely consumed.

As the country became more numerously settled, fire-guards were made; that is, the owner of a tract of land would plow two furrows around its boundary lines, and then burn

⁴¹ L. C. Darby to Claude V. Hall, October 31, 1921.

⁴² H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

out, when there was no breeze, the grass between the furrows plowed.

The settlers and the cowboys soon learned the most effective means of fighting prairie fires. One method was to kill a cow, remove the skin, tie lariats to the head and tail, and drag the hide over the fire line by men on horseback on either side. Others would follow with wet gunny sacks to extinguish all smouldering fires left.⁴³ During one of these fires one firm lost its entire herd of 3,000 sheep on Crawfish Draw, near the Crosby County line. H. C. Smith gives a vivid description of this fire:

But at night the demon of destruction celebrated its hellish work with a blaze of splendor. For miles about in every direction shocks of burning feed presented the appearance of electric lights. But to the farmer whose year's hard work had been swept away in a flash, and the sheepman perhaps made penniless, these bright lights doubtless resembled the glowing eyes of a demon gloating over its work.⁴⁴

Occasionally the settlers of Blanco Canyon heard preaching by ministers who chanced to be passing through the country. O. A. Shook, Thomas Duncan, and J. H. Stegall did some preaching in the homes of various settlers. During the Autumn of 1886 there was a few days' meeting in the Canyon Settlement. A brush arbor was provided, and people for twenty miles about attended the services. One morning while Mrs. Arthur B. Duncan was serving breakfast to a number of guests who were attending the meeting, a blundering steer⁴⁵ walked on the roof of the dugout, when one foot pushed through the roof just over the kitchen and covered the dining table with sod roofing.

Thus have been traced the earliest settlements in the counties of Crosby, Floyd, and Hale for a period of ten years—from 1877 to 1887. Colorado City in Mitchell County, distant from Blanco Canyon about 130 miles, was the nearest shipping point. The Fort Worth & Denver then had its terminus at Wichita Falls, but its projected route was watched with intense interest, as its extension westward from Wichita

⁴³ L. C. Darby to Claude V. Hall, October 31, 1921.

⁴⁴ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

⁴⁵ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

Falls was the precursor of a tide of immigration to the counties of the Staked Plains. The people who had already located in these counties were fast learning how to adapt themselves to their new environment. He who came later could profit by the experiences and discoveries of those who preceded him. The settlement of the country was now assured.

Chapter VI

PREPARATION FOR COUNTY ORGANIZATION

1. *The Organization of Crosby County*

After Paris Cox founded the Quaker town of Marietta in 1881, it was learned that a post office of the same name had been established in Cass County, in the Eastern part of the State. In view of this fact the name of the Quaker town was changed to Estacado, as the Quakers were desirous of making their town both a post office and a county seat. George M. Swink, who had been sent out to the Staked Plains as a grass commissioner by the General Land Office in 1884, took a leading part in the movement for the organization of Crosby County. By 1886 the Quakers numbered about two hundred in their settlement, and Swink was warmly supported by them in his efforts, as he was by all other settlers on small tracts of land; but the big cattle interests opposed. This division was unfortunate, as 150 signatures of bona fide citizens' had to be on the petition asking the commissioner's court of Baylor County, to which Crosby County was attached for judicial purposes, to pass the election order for organization. H. C. Smith, who circulated the petition, says: "It took several weeks' travel over all these counties and much persuading to get the required number of signatures, but this was finally done, nearly all the signers being Quakers, Gentiles, Philistines, transients, and buffalo hunters, and just anyone who would sign it. A few cowmen and cowboys signed, but most of them flatly refused to have anything to do with it.² Smith made the trip to Seymour, the county seat of Baylor County, and presented the petition to the commissioner's court during the August term of 1886. The distance from Estacado to Seymour was 130 miles. Besides Mount Blanco,³ there were just two houses between the two places, namely, the Eight

¹ Art. 672, *Revised Statutes of Texas*, 1879.

² H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

³ *Ibid.*

Mile Ranch in King County and the Weatherly Ranch in Knox County. The date set for the organization of Crosby County was September 11, 1886. At this election Estacado and Section 22, in the breaks in the eastern part of the county, were contestants for the county seat. In the election there was cast a total of sixty-four votes, of which thirty-four were in favor of Estacado. The officers chosen were: George M. Swink, county judge; Paris Cox, county and district clerk; Felix Franklin, sheriff and tax collector; Hadley Lewis, county treasurer; H. C. Smith, tax assessor; and H. C. Knight, county surveyor; and Bill Harrell, H. B. Smith, J. E. Overhuls, and Alistus Lewis, county commissioners. In accordance with the provisions of Art. 673, Revised Statutes of Texas, 1879, all the officers-elect, except the four for county commissioner, had to go to Seymour to have their bonds approved, and their oaths of office administered by the county Judge of Baylor County. All these officers were reelected in the general election of the following November. From the organization of Crosby County until the construction of the court house the county officials had their offices in dugouts and shacks. H. C. Smith says the Tax Assessor's office was "a gunny sack and a two horse wagon."⁴

2. *Floyd County Attached to Crosby County*

Until April 1, 1887, the settlers in Floyd County had to go to Clarendon, a distance of more than one hundred miles to file on the lands they were to occupy, as that county was then a part of Donley Land District. After the organization of Crosby County the citizens of Floyd County petitioned the Twentieth Legislature in December, 1886, as follows:

"To the Honorable Senators and Representatives of the Twentieth Legislature, Austin Texas.—Gentlemen: We, the undersigned, citizens of Floyd County, State of Texas, would most respectfully request that Floyd County be attached to Crosby County for both land and Judicial purposes. Estacado, the county seat of Crosby County, is situated within five miles of the south line of this County, which makes it decidedly more accessible than any other point, both for mail facilities and business purposes."

The signers were: Arthur B. Duncan, A. M. Mills, W. B. Brown, Sam Gerrod, G. M. Rhoads, J. M. Cox, J. T. Cox,

⁴ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

C. H. Johnson, H. S. Van Trees, H. R. Baughn, J. A. Burrus, A. K. Lathum, John K. Fullingim, J. M. Standefer, J. P. Brown, Foster Fullingim, M. C. Potter, R. A. Prince, and Thomas Teeling.⁵ Judge George M. Swink, of Crosby County, rendered valuable assistance in pressing this matter before the legislature. These efforts resulted in the passage of the Crosby Land District act, approved April 1, 1887.⁶ The Crosby Land District was composed of the counties of Crosby, Dickens, Motley, Floyd, Hale, Lynn, Bailey, Cochran, Hockley, and Lubbock. The same session of the legislature reorganized the Thirty-second Judicial District by an act approved March 31, 1887,⁷ so as to include the counties of Nolan, Mitchell, Howard, Martin, Midland, Scurry, and Crosby, and the unorganized counties of Andrews, Gaines, Dawson, Borden, Kent, Garza, Lynn, Terry, Yoakum, Cochran, Hockley, Lubbock, Dickens, Motley, Floyd, Hale, Lamb, and Bailey. This act provided the terms of district court to be in "the county of Crosby on the fifth Mondays after the first Mondays in February and September, and may continue in session two weeks." This act further provided that the unorganized counties of Dickens, Motley, Floyd, Hale, Cochran, Bailey, Lamb, Hockley, and Lubbock, should be attached to Crosby County for judicial purposes. By these two acts of the legislature the settlers of Floyd County were enabled to transact public business with much greater facility than before.

3. Crosby County Court Activities

In 1887 the question of building a courthouse for Crosby County came up. It was estimated that a bond issue of eight thousand dollars would be necessary for this purpose. But the money through taxation necessary for the sinking fund and annual interest on a bond issue was not forthcoming, for at that time the cattle corporations paid their taxes at Austin.⁸

⁵ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

⁶ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, IX, 898.

⁷ Gammel, *Laws of Texas* IX, 878.

⁸ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

The commissioners' court was informed by the State Comptroller that the resident stockholders in the cattle companies were subject to the payment of local taxes, whereupon the tax assessor was instructed to assess the properties of these ranchmen; but, as a matter of course, they strenuously objected, since the taxes they would be required to pay at Estacado would be much greater than they had been paying at Austin. For 1887 the total valuation of assessed property in Crosby County was \$777,345,⁹ and for 1888 the total valuation rose to \$1,386,529.¹⁰ This was due to an increase in the appraisal of land from one dollar to two dollars per acre and to the diligence of the tax assessor in obtaining renditions of the resident stock holders of the cattle companies. The diligence of the tax assessor caused his defeat in the election of 1888, when the cattlemen elected one of their own number.¹¹

The cowmen and their employees very much opposed the building of the courthouse and jail, and after construction began they delighted to defy the law and to ridicule law enforcement. Such instruments of civilization were not to be tolerated. Cowboys played poker on the stacks of lumber with which the courthouse was being constructed,¹² and at the first session of District Court at Estacado, in October, 1887, gambling went on in full view of the public.¹³ This was shocking to the Quakers in particular. No indictments for gambling were found by the grand jury, as it was deemed best first to give notice that a new regime had begun and that thereafter all laws would be enforced.¹⁴ This announcement only elicited scoffs and contempt. The second grand jury convened in March, 1888. Lawlessness of every sort was investigated, and twenty-eight misdemeanor indictments¹⁵ and two felonies were reported. Because of its drastic action, this body was

⁹ Comptroller's Report of Texas for 1887, 114.

¹⁰ Report of the Comptroller of Texas, 1888, 108.

¹¹ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

¹² *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

¹³ L. C. Darby to Claude V. Hall, October 31, 1921.

¹⁴ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

¹⁵ Report of Attorney General of Texas, 1887-88, 15.

dubbed the "bloody grand jury". It was composed of the following citizens of Crosby and attached counties: L. T. Lester, W. L. Browning, Robert Linn, A. B. Cooper, Sam Gholson, George W. Lee, R. W. O'Keefe, Bennett Howell, Arthur B. Duncan, J. K. Milwee, Z. T. Maxwell, and S. T. Peppers. William Kennedy was district judge, and Xavier Ryan, district attorney. The work of this session of the district court very much pleased the law and order element.

4. *The Prosperity and Decline of Estacado*

From 1883 to 1887 Estacado received mail once a week from Colorado City, in Mitchell County. The mail stage transported passengers one way for a fare of \$15 per passenger.¹⁶ As the Fort Worth & Denver Railroad had reached Amarillo, in 1887, John W. Murray^{16b} suggested that it would be advisable for Estacado to discontinue the mail route to Colorado City and establish one to Amarillo in its place, since the country from Estacado to Amarillo was level and without streams to cross. Murray and the mail contractor made a reconnoitering trip to Amarillo in the summer of 1887. There was neither road nor trail to follow, and the travelers drove towards Amarillo from basin to basin, the route being marked with mounds of dirt. With a few changes this route afterwards became the regular wagon road from Estacado to Amarillo. Plainview, Tulia, and Canyon did not then exist. Amarillo was a mere village, and there was only one house about forty miles south of Amarillo at that time. Murray describes Amarillo as follows:

At this time there were two Amarillo's, the hotel being about a mile and a half from what was called the business part of town. The whole thing put together would not make a town of respectable size, but there was a town fight on, and the hotel finally carried the day. There was less than a dozen business concerns all told, three of these being rather large establishments, and others being small outfits and saloons. Of course this doesn't include the land agents, for they were there by the dozen. It was a typical, swift new railroad point and western cattle town, rough in all the word implies and without the semblance of social advantages.

¹⁶ *Texas State Gazetteer* for 1884, 320.

^{16b} Murray, in the prime of life, was a man of no mean ability. His experiences were somewhat varied. In 1886 he had crossed the Staked Plains on a trip with cattle to Montana. Prior to his removal to Crosby County he was county judge of Taylor County. His rather extensive reading had given him a great fund of information. He published the *Crosby County News* for nearly twenty years.

Soon after the organization of Crosby County, in 1886, the *Crosby County News* was established at Estacado by John W. Murray. This was the first newspaper founded on the Staked Plains. The nearest points where newspapers were published were Clarendon on the north, Seymour on the east, and Colorado City on the south. At this time Crosby County was not an attractive field for launching a newspaper enterprise, for Estacado then "had only two stores, a hotel and a few dugouts."¹⁷ The publisher looked to the business concerns of Colorado City and Amarillo for advertising patronage. The distance from Estacado to either point was about 130 miles. Amarillo and Colorado City were strong rivals for the South Plains trade, and this rivalry redounded to the advantage of the *Crosby County News*. This publication was a real booster, and glowing descriptions of the country went forth each week. More copies were sent abroad than were circulated at home. Such zeal on the part of the editor after about three years incurred the opposition of two elements: namely, the cowmen, who objected to the settlement of the country under any circumstances, and the Quakers, who protested against settlement by any except people of their own particular faith. Murray says that the Quakers made overtures, then threats, and finally instituted a boycott, while the cattlemen looked on and chuckled with joy. In 1890 Murray took steps to maintain the life of the *Crosby County News*, and at the same time deal the Quakers a heavy blow. He contrived a scheme to found a new town and take the county seat from Estacado. A town company was quietly organized, and the town of Emma came into existence near the center of Crosby County. In December, 1890, Murray moved his printing plant to Emma, and began a relentless agitation for the removal of the county seat. No election could be held for this purpose until the expiration of Estacado's five year tenure. The election for the removal of the county seat was held October 14, 1891. Section 1, two miles east

¹⁷ John W. Murray in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

of Emma, was put in the race to split the Estacado vote.¹⁸ Emma received 109 votes; Section 1, 19; and Estacado, 3.¹⁹ When Estacado lost the County set the fate of the Quaker settlement was sealed. The Quakers had met with many discouragements, and, with the loss of the county seat, they did not care to remain any longer at Estacado. Some returned to Indiana and other old-time homes, while others went to Lubbock County, and to other states. Only Charles Holmes remained at Estacado, and in 1898 he moved to Kansas. Thus the old Quaker colony of Estacado became a memory.²⁰

5. *General Growth of the South Plains*

The establishment of the Quaker Colony at Estacado had made possible the organization of Crosby County at a much earlier date than would have been the case by ordinary immigration and settlement, and, with Crosby County's early organization, an impetus was given for the settlement of neighboring counties. As mentioned before, Hale County began to settle up rapidly in 1887 because of shallow water, abundant homestead land, and proximity to Amarillo as a railroad point. Settlers in Hale County became numerous enough for its organization August 13, 1888. Plainview and Hale City contested for the County seat, Plainview being the winner. The following County officers were chosen: J. C. Burch, county judge; R. A. Ford, sheriff and tax collector; E. L. Lowe, county and district clerk; L. G. Wilson, county attorney; C. W. Marseilles, county treasurer; W. E. Jones, county surveyor; J. H. Bryan, tax assessor; A. J. Welter, R. S. Stringfellow, A. E. Adams, and J. N. Morrison, county commissioners, A. L. Conklin, justice of the peace, and Arthur Taylor, constable of the Plainview precinct. In the election of November 6, 1888, 84 votes were cast for the district judge.²¹ The total votes cast in Crosby County for the

¹⁸ H. C. Smith in *The Crosbyton Review*, February 28, 1912.

¹⁹ Edgar Allen to Claude V. Hall, December 30, 1921.

²⁰ *The Hesperian*, December 21, 1905.

²¹ *Report of Secretary of State*, 1888, 181.

same office were 249, but many of these were cast in attached counties, 28 of which were cast in Floyd County.

During 1887 there were four marriages, one divorce, three births, and no deaths in Crosby County. The population that year was 108 males and 72 females. The disparity in the members of the sexes is due to the fact that many unmarried men were employed on the cattle ranches. There were 34 families and 53 children within scholastic age. In the election for statewide prohibition on August 4, of that year, Crosby County gave 35 votes for and 16 against that proposition. No election was ordered in the attached counties.²²

6. *Events Leading to the Founding of Della Plain*

During 1886^{22b} a protracted and devastating drouth prevailed over Western Texas, and a great scarcity of grass, stock feed, and surface water resulted, particularly in that region of the West lying east of the Staked Plains. There the surface is more or less broken and cattle, horses, and sheep died by the thousands from thirst and hunger. During this time, however, the Staked Plains was not perceptibly affected, as the wells were never failing, the settlements sparse, and the range not overstocked. It was in the midst of this perilous situation for stock farmers in the West that T. J. Braidfoot, of Baylor County, was compelled to seek a new range for his cattle, and in the early part of the summer of 1886 he drove his herds to Floyd County. He spent the following winter in the breaks in the eastern part of the County.

In the meantime the Fort Worth & Denver City railroad was building westward from Wichita Falls and the Wichita Valley Railroad was making Seymour its objective. The construction of these railroads attracted attention to the west, and a tidal wave of immigration was flowing westward. Crosby County had already been organized, and Hale County was

²² *Report of Secretary of State 1887-1888, 146.*

^{22b} J. S. McLain, of Mickey, Texas, has kindly furnished most of the facts pertaining to the founding of the first town in Floyd County; i.e., Della Plain.

looking forward to an early organization. Therefore, one did not need to "have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries" to foresee that Floyd County would be in a few years sufficiently populous for county organization. Under these conditions Braidfoot quickly conceived the scheme of founding a town to be groomed for the county seat when organization should be effected. He located a school section as near the center of the county as could be ascertained, since the county boundary line had not been definitely established. The first thing essential to the new town's existence was to provide a water supply, and efforts at sinking a well in the center of the section were undertaken by District Surveyor H. C. Knight revealed that this improvement was near the west line of the section and in a strip of country which afforded no underground water, a singular freak in the nature of the Staked Plains. An abundant supply of water was found by a subsequent drilling in the exact center of the section for the projected town.

At the outset of this enterprise, Braidfoot, after taking an inventory of his own financial resources and estimating the probable cost involved, realized that he lacked sufficient capital to carry out to a successful conclusion his scheme for an embryo county seat. He thereupon formed a partnership with J. R. McLain, of Seymour, to help put the new town on the map of Floyd County. McLain was then a man of means, energy, and experience. He had unbounded faith in the country's future. A little later, however, the partnership between Braidfoot and McLain was terminated, as Braidfoot, after taking account of the hugeness of the undertaking, found that he was financially unable to perform fully his part in the partnership. Braidfoot sold his entire interest except a few blocks to Dr. L. T. Wilson and Judge I. R. Darnell, both of Seymour, but afterwards bought back an interest in the town promotion firm.

7. *Della Plain's First Settlers and Improvements*

To give tangible proof of the town's existence, a building

was erected on the north side of the public square. The lumber and other materials for the building were hauled in the early part of the autumn of 1887 from Wichita Falls, a distance of 175 miles, by means of ox wagons. It was intended for a store, but at first lumber for the floor and shingles for the roof were lacking. It remained in this unfinished state for several months, but it served as a temporary dwelling place for the families of new comers and as a place for public assembly.

Meanwhile the Fort Worth and Denver City Railway extended its train service to Childress, which was thenceforth, for a few months, the trading point for Floyd County settlers. From the latter part of 1887 to the summer of 1898 Amarillo was the principal trading point during the warm seasons while Childress was the market for cold seasons. Estacado was about thirty miles southwest of the new town in Floyd County, and this was then deemed quite convenient for Floyd County settlers for mail facilities, for land and legal business, and for trading in small wares.

Among the new settlers of Floyd County in the vicinity of the new town was J. S. McLain. He had been a citizen of Texas only a few years. He and his family came from Randolph County, Arkansas, whence they moved to Baylor County, where they resided until their removal to Floyd County in the autumn of 1887. He was influenced in moving to Floyd County by two men who were town promoters. One man, his uncle, J. R. McLain, who was putting his faith in Floyd County and the new town then being founded. The other was Paris Cox, the founder of Estacado and the county clerk of Crosby County until 1888. Cox spent some time in the winter of 1886-1887 at Seymour transcribing the records of Baylor County pertaining to Crosby County. Cox lost no opportunity to set forth the resources and advantages of the Staked Plains. McLain settled upon a school section a mile northwest of the new town in Floyd County. The promoters in casting about for a name for the town decided

upon Della Plain in honor of McLain's daughter, Della.

Della Plain grew during 1888 and 1889 at a rate that was gratifying to its promoters. In 1888 a new store building was erected on the west side of the public square. But at first it served pretty much the purposes which had characterized the one on the north side of the square. A square-topped building of several rooms was put up near the southeast corner of the public square. This most pretentious building of the first year or two was occupied as a hotel by T. J. Braidfoot. In all directions from Della Plain habitations were fast provided, and most of them were dugouts and sod houses. The settlers in general were not well supplied with funds, but they had ample time to devote to the construction of homes which cost nothing save muscular exertion on the part of the owners.

Seg Bradford, a surveyor by calling, near the close of 1887 located on a quarter section in the homestead strip lying north of Della Plain. Like a number of others about Della Plain, he and his family were from Baylor County. He built his home out of cedar posts after the fashion of a stockade. The posts were placed close together in an upright position, and the walls were lined on the interior with wagon sheets. Here Bradford resided until the organization of Hale County in the summer of 1888, when he located near Plainview, where he remained until 1898. He then removed to New Mexico, where he afterwards died of tuberculosis. He was highly respected wherever he lived. He located the school lands for the permanent school fund of Floyd County in Bailey County in 1890.

Business enterprises were few. In the fall of 1888 D. R. Wilson put in a small stock of merchandise in the first building erected at Della Plain. The stock consisted chiefly of tobacco, canned goods, and small wares, and represented a capital of about one hundred dollars. In the spring of 1889 Wilson was succeeded in this business by Davis Brothers, who felt justified to enlarge the stock of goods, as more settlers

came into the country; but in the following summer A. J. Sams came into possession of this store. The Davis Brothers left Della Plain and settled on some homestead land about six miles northwest of Della Plain and near the site of Lockney, which was to be the rival of Della Plain. Sams remained in business at Della Plain until the founding of Mayshaw in 1892, whither he moved and continued merchandising until 1895, when he became a citizen of Lockney. The old store building on the north side of the square at Della Plain was occupied as a store, a dwelling, and a post office by A. D. White until 1893.

In the spring of 1888 a special post office at Della Plain was established. It was supplied from Estcado. J. R. McLain was postmaster, and R. E. L. McLain, assistant postmaster. J. S. McLain served as mail carrier most of the time that Della Plain was specially supplied with mail from Estacado. About a year later Della Plain was converted into a regular post office. A mail route from Amarillo to Estacado, via Plainview and Della Plain, was created. Della Plain still received the mail once a week, but it was received more expeditiously than before.

In January, 1889, R. E. L. McLain founded *The Della Plain Review* in order that Floyd County and Della Plain might become better known to those who were thinking of seeking homes in the West. During the life of this publication its editor strove zealously to set forth the country's merits and to get people identified with Della Plain's aims and aspirations. The editor was also the general agent of the town's promoters. Aside from his duties as editor, land agent, and assistant post master, he seemed to have had at his disposal much time to converse with prospectors and settlers over the country's resources and possibilities. His enthusiasm and rather glib tongue led him into a great many indiscretions. He sometimes unwittingly berated other towns than Della Plain and other counties than Floyd County. He urged earnestly the early organization of Floyd County and

caustically censured the commissioners' court of Crosby County for delaying to provide for Floyd County to assume a separate existence.

When Della Plain was established there were no roads across the county, to speak of. Most travel was by course or by cattle trails. To facilitate travel between Della Plain and Plainview a route was marked out by the aid of a pocket compass and by means of a cedar log dragged over the ground by a wagon. The mark thus made for the guidance of the traveler was on a line to Plainview, and it ran about one mile south of the site where Lockney was afterwards founded. Without some sort of dependable guidance it was indeed easy for a traveler to lose his way.

A blacksmith shop was set up at Della Plain in 1888 by J. C. White. As evidence of appreciation of the blacksmith's arrival, the town promoters erected gratuitously a shop of sod and timbers. For nearly a year he plied his trade in this structure, but in 1889 circumstances arose which influenced him to leave Della Plain and to locate at Lockney. His son-in-law, R. M. Emerson, was one of the promoters of Lockney, and White had what he believed to be a just grievance against some Della Plain people. Upon his removal to Lockney he exhibited his contempt for Della Plain people by tearing down the sod walls and conveying the timber to Lockney. Quite naturally the citizens of Della Plain could not look upon this indignity with complacency. White remained at Lockney until 1893, and then moved to New Mexico.

8. *Social and Cultural Events*

On Christmas Eve, 1888, Della Plain had its first public dance in the old store building on the north side of the public square. Few, if any, of the nearby settlers were absent from this social function. J. C. White and one of his daughters furnished music for the occasion. The violins were his own handwork. They were rough in finish, but the music they produced was quite satisfactory to all present. The

dance closed before it was intended because of a quarrel between an overgrown boy and a domineering fellow. However, the festivities did not end. To the Braidfoot Hotel the crowd repaired and played games, but these soon terminated, when a sensitive father took his daughters home.

One character who bore a conspicuous part at the dance on Christmas eve was a Mr. Van Winkle, a typical frontiersman. He was just as nature made him. He was well-built. His hair was long and unkempt, while his beard was tangled and shaggy. He wore a long, greasy, ragged overcoat of brown duck, with a piece of frazzled rope tied about his body. He bore some resemblance to the famous Rip Van Winkle just after recovering from his sleep of twenty years. Who were his ancestors no one could surmise. He did not really dance but he actively directed the movements. He cared nothing for the amenities of society, and when settlers became more numerous, he and his family hied away for New Mexico.

The first school in Floyd County was at Della Plain in the winter of 1888-1889. There were fifteen scholastics in Floyd County, and the per capita apportionment was \$4.00, \$60.00 being the total school fund. Miss Emma Lewis, of Estacado, was the teacher, and T. J. Braidfoot, J. S. McLain, and A. V. McCracken served as trustees. The teacher was paid \$30.00 per month and the term was four months. The teacher's salary was supplemented by private subscriptions. The year following there were twenty scholastics, and the total school fund amounted to \$80.00. W. M. Massie was the teacher, and his salary was \$40.00 per month for four months. The teacher was paid for two month's services in money, and for the remaining two months in cedar posts and wood. The two Merrill boys, sons of W. A. Merrill, of Blanco Canyon, attended the second school session of the school at Della Plain from their home twelve miles away.

The year 1889 marked the arrival of a number of newcomers in the vicinity of Della Plain. Among these were

B. F. Farmer, Amos Hamilton, H. Terry, A. J. Byars, C. D. Farmer, W. M. Ewen, J. A. Ewing, C. H. George, R. T. Miller, J. T. Thomas, C. F. Ramsey, A. D. White, and W. M. Bailey. There were enough now to inspire the promoters of Della Plain with the hope for an early organization of Floyd County.

Early in 1889 a Sunday School was organized. R. T. Miller was the superintendent. The interest was marked, as some people who attended lived ten miles or farther from Della Plain. Occasionally there were divine services at Della Plain. Sometimes the store building on the north side of the public square was used as a place of worship, and at other times, meetings were held in dugouts. O. A. Shook, J. H. Stegall, and Thomas Duncan, the men who preached in the Canyon Settlement, visited Della Plain. These preachers, together with Anson Cox, the Quaker preacher of Estacado, may justly be reckoned the pioneer preachers of the Staked Plains. Cox included Della Plain in his visits. J. H. Stegall, writing from Dickens County, September 27, 1888, reported that in company with Rev. John A. Wallace, a presiding elder, and Rev. J. H. Wiseman, he conducted a series of meetings, beginning at Estacado on September 15, then going to Plainview, where they held a quarterly conference of the Methodist church on Saturday and Sunday, September the twenty-second and twenty-third, and lastly reaching Della Plain, where Wallace preached on Monday evening. On the following morning Wallace and Wiseman left for Haskell^{22c} to hold another quarterly conference, while Stegall proceeded to his home in Dickens County.²³

9. *Lockney as Della Plain's Rival*

Immigration in 1889 was relatively large. About seven

^{22c} Rev. J. H. Stegall was well known to the writer, to whom he related much of his life. He moved from Arkansas to Cooke County, Texas, in 1886. From 1875 to 1887 he resided near Fort Griffin, in Shackelford County. He resided in Dickens County until his death, with the exception of a few years which he spent in Swisher County. His wife was the mother of Lieutenant Governor J. N. Browning. She died in 1903 and he in March, 1907.

²³ *The Texas Christian Advocate*, October 11, 1888.

miles northwest of Della Plain there was a body of State land subject to homestead occupation, on which water could be obtained at fifty feet, while wells on the school land near Della Plain were from 150 to 200 feet deep. The result was that many of the newcomers occupied these homestead lands, and the founding of a new town naturally followed.

The first men with families who formed the new settlement in the homestead belt included J. E. F. Koger, T. B. Stewart, S. D. Mills, R. M. Emerson, W. L. Covey, J. H. Lockney, and J. F. Lockney. J. F. Lockney was a man of much native shrewdness. He had had extensive business interests at Abilene and Haskell,²⁴ but the drouth which prevailed from 1885 to 1887 left him bankrupt. Like others, he moved to the staked plains to begin a new career. His keen eye saw an opportunity to found a town as the rival of Della Plain. In this enterprise he was joined by W. L. Covey, W. R. Davis, and R. M. Emerson.²⁵ Together the partners owned four 160-acre homesteads, which formed a square section, and on this was platted the new town by District Surveyor H. C. Knight of Crosby County. Knight was requested to choose a name for the town, and he called it Lockney, in honor of J. H. Lockney, the venerable father of J. F. Lockney. The new town thus established was ambitious to outstrip Della Plain and win the county seat at the approaching organization of Floyd County. Its promoters impressed prospectors with the difference in the depth of water at the two places. Della Plains' promoters affected to look with contempt upon Lockney, which they called "Pulltight". Lockney had one store in which W. R. Davis and Company kept a small stock of merchandise and the post office.

10. *Efforts to Hasten County Organization*

Fearing the result of competition, Della Plain attempted to hasten the organization of the county, but found diffi-

²⁴ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

²⁵ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

culty in obtaining the 150 names to the petition necessary for that purpose. Prospectors and transients who chanced to pass through Della Plain were earnestly solicited to locate in that vicinity. If the traveler was headed elsewhere, he was warned against the mistake of settling where the soil was sterile,²⁶ the water exhaustible, and the seasons rainless. If all efforts were unavailing to induce him to locate at Della Plain, then he was prevailed upon to help by signing the petition for organization.

In the general election of November 6, 1888, the resident citizens of Floyd County had for the first time been permitted to vote. The commissioner's court of Crosby County constituted Floyd County, as a whole, as an election district and designated the home of Arthur B. Duncan as the election box for the Floyd County voters. A total of twenty-eight voted, viz: B. F. Merrill, L. C. Darby, S. B. Chadwick, W. Methley, A. M. Mills, Frank Dacus, J. F. Sutton, P. C. Ketchum, A. K. Lathum, Henry Schweitzer, Thomas Teeling, Arthur B. Duncan, J. J. Day, H. S. Van Trees, H. K. Baughn, W. R. Vandever, C. E. Vandever, J. A. Burrus, J. S. McLain, E. C. Fullingim, R. E. L. McLain, D. R. Wilson, T. J. Braidfoot, E. Cox, and Tom Cox.²⁷ These comprised pretty fully the voting population of Floyd County at that time, and when, in August, 1889, a goodly delegation of Della Plain citizens visited Estacado and presented a petition for organization, bearing 150 names, the commissioners skeptically investigated the validity of each, and refused to order an election for organization. The Della Plains "boosters" sought at the next term of district court at Estacado to compel the commissioners by mandamus to effect the immediate organization of Floyd County. Failing in this, the Floyd County members of the grand jury instituted an investigation of the official act of the commissioners, and found that three of them had failed to make reports on

²⁶ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 2, 1905.

²⁷ Arthur B. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, January 28, 1922. The letter overlooked the names of the three others who voted at this time.

the condition of the public roads in their respective precincts, as the law provided.²⁸ There were no public roads laid out, but the three commissioners were indicted for the non-performance of their official duties. Thus rested matters relative to organization until the following spring.

²⁸ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

Chapter VII

THE ORGANIZATION OF FLOYD COUNTY

1. *Lack of Unity for Early Organization*

After the founding of Della Plain in 1887 the organization of Floyd County was the one great event to which many looked forward with eagerness. As long as Della Plain was the only town in the county it was the expectation of all that it would be the seat of government. Lockney, established in 1889 so far from the center of the county, was not seriously regarded by the mass of people already in Floyd County as a considerable rival. However, as before stated, the promoters of Della Plain clamored for an early organization of the county, and their one vexing problem was to secure favorable action by the commissioners' court of Crosby County. Apparently the element attempting to hasten the organization had incurred the ill will of the county officials of Crosby County, who, in turn, were severely lampooned by Della Plain enthusiasts. The promoters of Lockney, on the other hand, favored delaying the organization, because their chances for success depended upon a marked change in conditions, which time only could bring about. As long as sentiment towards early organization was divided the commissioner's court of Crosby County did not feel justified in lending encouragement to Della Plain's scheme. However, sentiment did early in the year 1890 unite in favor of the immediate organization because of a sudden turn of affairs in Floyd County, and this was the founding of Floydada.

2. *The Founding of Floydada*

The creation of Floydada¹ is interesting as well as important in its bearing on the history of Floyd County's organization. Many an important event occurs by mere chance or accident, and this seems to be true of the founding of Floydada. Her coming into existence was indeed sudden and surprising.

In the month of February, 1890, a party of nine men left

Childress on a tour of inspection among some unorganized counties that were receiving a perceptible immigration. This party was composed of W. T. Montgomery, J. J. Harrison, M. C. Williams, J. A. Reed, G. H. Chapman, J. H. Henderson, James Broyles, and two others whose names cannot be recalled. These men started out with the notion that they might found a town in Lubbock County and set going a movement for the organization of that county. In Lubbock County they spent a few days in the vicinity of Singer's Store, which was near the site on which the town of Lubbock was afterwards established. The land here was more undulating than that of Floyd County. The prospect of the settlement and organization of Lubbock County seemed too remote to interest these men, as they were seeking something that would bring them early and lucrative returns. Besides, the prospectors fancied a great many objections to the Lubbock country, and these objections threw them into a state of dissatisfaction. They retraced their steps and spent a few days at Estacado. Here they chanced to see a copy of *The Della Plain Review*, which was heaping anathemas upon the commissioner's court of Crosby County because of its reluctance to permit Floyd County to organize. The county officials at Estacado had come to have a feeling of resentment towards Della Plain. At this juncture the prospectors were shown in the deed records of Crosby County the following deed of dedication:^{1a}

STATE OF MISSOURI)
 COUNTY OF COLE)

Know all men by these presents,

That I, Caroline V. Price and James B. Price, her husband, have granted and conveyed, and by these presents do grant and convey unto Floyd County for the use of the public, the following described property, to-wit:

All the streets, alleys, parks, and Court House square in the town of Floyd City, as shown by the above plat, the same being situated in Floyd County, Texas, and being the 640 acre survey, Survey No. 33, Abstract No. 15, Certificate No. 350.

To have and to hold the above described premises as long as the public uses the same, and, on failure to use the same, to revert back to said Caroline V.

¹ Many of the facts pertaining to the founding of Floydada were furnished by the late and lamented W. T. Montgomery.

^{1a} *Deed Records of Floyd County, I, 517.*

Price, her heirs, and assigns.

Witness our hands this 12th day of March, 1887.

(Signed)

CAROLINE V. PRICE
JAMES B. PRICE

A further investigation revealed to the prospectors that Caroline V. Price of Jefferson City, Missouri, was the owner of forty-three sections of land lying south of Della Plain, in Floyd County. The idea struck them that Mrs. Price could be interested in a town building scheme that would outstrip both Della Plain and Lockney. On closer investigation they learned that the section that Mrs. Price had designated as a town site was not wholly situated to their wishes, as some of the party wanted for themselves school sections adjoining the town site projected. H. Terry and sons were occupying the school section adjoining Section 33, which was named in the deed of dedication. Other Price sections which would meet the demands of the Childress party were investigated. Before leaving Estacado they tentatively agreed upon Section 65, in Block 1, A. B. and M., belonging to Mrs. Price, as the site for the proposed town. Coming to Floyd County they had Chapman, a surveyor by calling, to run a line from Terry's place to Section 65, the northwest corner of which was two miles south of the southeast corner of Section 33. But in the midst of these activities a lack of harmony developed among the prospectors, and the project was dropped for the time being. But activities on the part of some did not entirely cease.

Upon returning to Childress, Williams communicated with Mrs. Price and she immediately sent J. K. Gwynn as her representative. Gwynn learned that Williams was entertaining some notion of establishing a town on his own account in the event he could not make with Mrs. Price an arrangement satisfactory to himself. Gwynn lost no time, therefore, in joining forces with Williams. An effort was made to locate the town to be on Section 61, cornering with section 65 on the northeast, as Section 61 was seen to be a mile nearer the center of the county than section 65; but a

close inspection of the surface features revealed the existence of a basin nearer the center, and this fact led finally to the adoption of section 65 as the new town site. Section 65 was platted precisely as Section 33 had been in the deed of dedication of March 12, 1887. Each business block was laid off with 32 lots,² 25x150 feet in size, and each residence block, with sixteen lots, 50x150 feet in size. The four principal streets leading from the court house square were each 100 feet wide, and all other streets, 75 feet wide, and all alleys were 25 feet wide. Besides the court house square, two blocks designated as Washington and Napoleon Parks and two half blocks for school and church purposes were laid out. The streets running east and west were designated from the north side of the town section in the following order: Price, Ross, Grover, Lee, Jackson, Virginia, Missouri, California, Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Houston, and Crockett; those running north and south numbered from One to Twelve. The total number of blocks was 143.

The appearance of Gwynn on the scene gave great impetus to the new town movement, as he was a leader among men and the reputed representative of great financial interests. He drew about him a group who enthusiastically followed his leadership. Williams filed on the school section lying south of the town section; Harrison, on the one on the west side; M. F. Rountree, on the one on the east side; and J. D. Starks and W. J. Westmoreland, on the one on the north side. Starks was the first to erect a house on his claim. The first man to make a beginning in the improvement of the town was Montgomery, who removed a mesquite grub from the southwest corner of the public square. The first business house erected was Williams' Exchange Saloon on the southwest corner of the public square. The next building was a two-room section of the Hardy Hotel, and later on two more rooms were added. Westmoreland, Harrison and Company, land agents, put up a small office structure. S. B. Chadwick

² *Deed Records of Floyd County*, II, 294.

soon followed with a store building, in which he installed a stock of groceries. Gwynn had a public well with a windmill placed on the public square, and for a few months many of the people for three or four miles about obtained their supply of water from this well.

3. *The Election of Officers and County Seat*

In the beginning of Floydada's growth the organization election and the county seat contest were under headway. Lockney saw that she could not avail anything for herself by standing alone, and she readily accepted the invitation to unite with Floydada in opposition to Della Plain as a common foe. In the outset Floydada did not want the contest to take place soon, but Della Plain was, as usual, impatient of delay. As before stated, Della Plain's standing with the commissioners' court of Crosby County was unfavorable, but by representing that Lockney was also eager for Floyd County to organize without further delay, the commissioners were won.³ A petition bearing the requisite number of signatures was presented, and on April 14, 1890, the Commissioner's Court of Crosby County convened in a called session at Estacado. The following officers were present: W. C. Dockum, county judge; A. W. Lewis, J. E. Overhuls, J. W. Allen, and H. B. Smith, County commissioners; K. E. Hoy, county clerk, pro tem; and T. H. Lewis, deputy sheriff. The court unanimously passed an order providing for an election for the choosing of a county seat and of county and precinct officers for Floyd County. The date set for election was May 28, 1890, and four voting boxes and presiding officers were designated as follows: precinct No. 1, Lockney, J. F. Lockney, presiding officer; Precinct No. 2, Della Plain, J. A. Ewing, presiding officer; Precinct No. 3, residence of Arthur B. Duncan, W. M. Ewen, presiding officer; and precinct No. 4, residence of W. A. Merrill, W. A. Merrill, presiding officer.⁴ For six weeks the contest lasted, and it was indeed

³ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

⁴ *Minutes of Commissioner's Court of Floyd County*, I, 1.

intense and exciting. The methods employed by leaders of either contestant for the county seat might not now be defended, but there was so much of a personal and financial nature involved as to constitute extenuating circumstances. The total vote cast was eighty-eight, fifty-five for Floydada and thirty-three for Della Plain, and the following county officers were chosen: Arthur B. Duncan, county judge; John C. Hendrix, county attorney; R. T. Miller, county and district clerk; D. W. Jenkins, sheriff and tax collector; E. E. Keeley, county treasurer; L. C. Darby, tax assessor; W. M. Massie, county surveyor; and C. F. Ramsey, T. B. Michael, W. R. Vandever, and B. P. Merrell, county commissioners. The first county officers thus chosen went to Estacado to be sworn in, and to have their bonds approved by Judge Dockum.⁵

4. *County Seat Election Contested.*

The election of May 28 was contested when the commissioners' court of Crosby County met to canvass the returns and to declare the result. The promoters of Della Plain employed Judge J. L. L. McCall, of Weatherford, and Judge R. W. Hall, of Vernon, to point to the commissioners' court the alleged irregularities of the election. The election box at the residence of Arthur B. Duncan was thrown out on the ground that the presiding officer, W. M. Ewen, had failed to deliver the separate returns to the county clerk.⁶ In conveying the returns on horseback Ewen found it convenient to put inside the ballot box with the ballots the two sets of poll lists, tally sheets, and returns made out separately and enclosed within separate envelopes for the county judge and for the county clerk, and when he arrived at Estacado he took out the set for the county judge and delivered it to him, but the ballot box was delivered to the county clerk without removing from it the set for him. The attorneys for Della Plain urged that since the presiding officer had not complied

⁵ Arthur B. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, January 28, 1922.

⁶ Arthur B. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, April 19, 1922.

with Art. 1698, Revised Statutes of 1879, the ballots of this box should not be included in computing the votes cast in said election, and the commissioners' court acted in accordance with the attorneys' contention. This action, however, did not materially affect the result of the election, as in the remaining three boxes Floydada received 41 and Della Plain 27, votes. Vandever was appointed commissioner of precinct No. 3. Irregularities in the other three boxes were alleged, but the commissioners' court rejected them as untenable.

Della Plain's defeat, as a matter of fact, was a keen disappointment to those who had espoused her fortune in the contest for county seat. At first her supporters could not surrender unconditionally. They entertained the hope that she would yet receive the trophy, and no effort was spared to attain this end. Every opportunity conceivable was seized upon. They attempted to induce the county and district clerk of Floyd County, R. T. Miller, who supported Della Plain, to maintain his office at Della Plain, as they contended that Floydada was not the legally chosen county seat; but Miller firmly refused. They awaited the first opportunity to "ask for an injunction and base a suit to test the legality of the county seat election."⁷ In September, 1890, the commissioners' court of Floyd County passed an order to issue bonds in the sum of \$7,000.00 for the purpose of building a jail and purchasing court house supplies and fixtures. There was no contention over the need of these, but the order to erect a jail at Floydada was the first act by the commissioner's court on which an injunction could be sought, and thereupon the county seat of Floyd County was a subject of litigation for nearly a year.

The suit brought was styled J. A. Ewing *et al.* v A. B. Duncan *et al.*, and it was both an injunction and a mandamus proceeding in the district court which convened in November, 1890. The petition stated that the purpose of the suit was

⁷ Arthur B. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, January 28, 1922.

to prevent Floyd County from making an expenditure of public funds in the erection of public buildings for the use of the county at Floyd City^{7a} (Floydada), and to compel the county judge to order an election for the selection of the county seat.⁸ The petition alleged that the election of May 28, 1890, was void for these reasons: that there was no order of the commissioners' court of Crosby County fixing the day for election; that the election was not held on the day provided for a general election of State and County officers; that the county judge of Crosby County did not canvass the vote and declare the result; that Floyd City (Floydada) was more than five miles from the geographical center of the county, and did not receive two-thirds of the votes cast; and that Floyd City (Floydada) did not receive a majority of the legal votes cast at the election. The interest in the outcome of the hearing of this suit before J. V. Cockrell, the district judge, and two years afterwards a member of Congress, was such as to bring a large crowd of Floyd County citizens to court. The demurrer of the defendants was sustained, whereupon the plaintiffs appealed to the Texas Supreme Court, where the case was finally passed on May 28, 1891.

The contention that Floydada was without the five miles radius from the geographical center of the county and that she did not receive two-thirds of the legal votes cast was rather serious. In the meantime, while the appeal of this suit was pending before the supreme court, the Legislature of Texas passed the validating county seat act, approved⁹ March 5, 1891. This law validated the location of county seats in these counties where their organization was effected "under the belief that the law authorized the location of county seats more than five miles from the center of the county by a majority of the votes at such election," and such were to re-

^{7a} Floyd City is the County seat name, but a postoffice of that name could not be obtained, as there was already in Hunt County, Texas, a postoffice of the name of Floyd.

⁸ Texas Reports, 230, 81.

⁹ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, X, 32.

main county seats "until such time the same may be removed by election." Fortunately for Floydada the Validating Act passed before the Supreme Court rendered its opinion on the case appealed.

On May 28, 1891, Judge Gaines rendered the opinion of the court. He held, (1) that where the commissioners' court makes an order directing an election for an organization of a county and the choice of a county seat, the election is valid, though the order is not reported; (2) that an election for the organization of a county and the choice of a county seat need not be held at a general election; (3) that the fact that the county judge fails to canvass the returns and declare the result of an election to organize a county and choose a county seat, as he is by law required to do, does not invalidate the election, when it appears by other evidence what the result actually was; (4) that an averment in a petition that the majority of votes cast for a certain place as county seat were improperly influenced, "as plaintiffs are informed and believe", by lots at that place being deeded to the voters, is insufficient, on general demurrer, as the averment should be positive, not on information and belief; and (5) that since the Validating Act of March 5, 1881, the election can not now be set aside merely because Floydada failed to receive two-thirds of all the votes for county seat at the election. Relative to the averment in the petition that votes for Floydada were improperly influenced by the deeding of lots to the voters Judge Gaines says:

How can it be known that Floyd City (Floydada) did not receive a majority of the legal votes, when neither the number nor the names of those who were improperly induced to vote for that place is not known, the petition does not explain. Can it be said under these circumstances, that the allegation that Floyd City did not receive the requisite number of legal votes is made in good faith? It appears that the object of the allegation in regard to the matter was to take chances at establishing a case; although it is not known that a case exists.

At this point Judge Gaines grows slightly humorous by remarking:

It is somewhat analogous to a "fishing bill," which had been defined to be one which shows no cause of action, and which endeavors to compel defendant to disclose one in plaintiff's favor. *Carroll v. Carroll*, II Barbour, 293.

5. *Some Newspaper Controversies*

There were only a few months intervening between the election for organization and the general election of that fall. The various candidatures were somewhat involved in the county seat question. In the early part of September J. F. Lockney and John C. Hendrix procured an army press and a few fonts of badly worn type and founded Floydada's first newspaper, *The Texas Kicker*. *The Texas Kicker* and the *Della Plain Review* contributed somewhat towards the antagonisms between Floydada and Della Plain, and the thrusts that each made at the other are now amusing. In its issue of October 24, 1890, *the Texas Kicker* contained the following reference to its rival:

We are able to see nothing reliable about a newspaper filled full of mail plate and advertisements and blows of a dead town and published in an out of the way place by a politically dead and bursted editor.

In another place appears this item:

Our circulation is allright, but it hurts some people awful.

In *The Della Plain Review* of October 31, 1890, was this news item:

Bro. Lockney was in the metropolis this week learning the ways of a city and will probably tell his 350 readers what a grand thing it is to live in a city.

Elsewhere in the same issue was the following self-laudatory squib:

The Review is simply a dandy. She is the only newspaper in the county and every settler in Floyd County should subscribe for it and when you get through reading it send it to a friend back east.

In answer to a statement running week after week in *The Review* that "Now is the time to subscribe for The Review, the only newspaper published in the country," *The Texas Kicker* continually ran a retaliatory line to the effect that it was "the only reliable paper published in Floyd County."

The county judge's race was the center of attention in the November election, as the incumbent at that time was an avowed supporter of Floydada. A. J. Sams and Fayette Copeland, who were reported to be supporters of Della Plain were both candidates for county judge. The leaders of the Della Plain faction wanted to have no division in their ranks,

and a convention was called to concentrate on a candidate. Sams refused to have his name considered, and refused to withdraw from the race when Copeland received the nomination. In its issue of October 28, 1890, *The Texas Kicker* contained the following reference to the convention at Della Plain:

"They" held a private convention a few miles north of town on last Wednesday for the purpose of—? The voters of Floyd County will make a suitable selection on the 4th (of November).

Again in the same issue *The Texas Kicker* remarks: "We know a few candidates who were not nominated, but like the bed bug, they will get there all the same." On Thursday evening, October 30, 1890, there was a candidate speaking at Floydada, and *The Texas Kicker* of October 31, 1890, observed:

. . . Prof. Copeland in the course of his remarks said "the convention which nominated me, met for the purpose of nominating a county judge." We think however, he is entirely mistaken and that the voters of Floyd County on the 4th of November, 1890, will emphasize our position and the votes he receives will cause him to use more exclamations and interrogations than we did in our article last week.

In the election of November 4th the county judge and two of the commissioners chosen were favorable to Floydada and the remaining two commissioners sympathized with Della Plain.

Shortly after the election *The Texas Kicker* was discontinued, Lockney bought Hendrix's interest in the printing plant and began putting in new equipment for a publication, which appeared in April, 1891, as *The Floyd County Times*. Floydada's growth during the fall and early winter months was gratifying. *The Della Plain Review* maintained its existence and never abated in its zeal for Della Plain. Shortly after the appearance of *The Times*, T. J. Briscoe succeeded R. E. L. McLain as the editor of *The Review*. In May, 1891, the newspapers of the rival towns engaged in a controversy over the location of the county seat. *The Review* was positive in its assertion that Floydada was not the legal county seat, and called on the people of Floyd County to get together and definitely settle the question. *The Times* causti-

cally rebuked *The Review* for its agitation. In one issue just before the Supreme Court announced its decision holding that Floydada was legally chosen as the county seat, *The Review* contained the following:

... In writing the article that has raised all this havoc, *The Review* man stated just what he believed to be stern, stubborn facts. We regret that Floyd City is and can only be (the) temporary county seat. . . .

The Times seemed to find much merriment over the charge that various voters were given town lots to influence votes in behalf of Floydada. In the issue of June 21, 1891, *The Times* says: We got the forty acres and the mule—wonder if we couldn't swap the mule to some of those fellows that were "disinterested" in the other place.

Again *The Review* said:

We stand today an unorganized county. Floyd City is only the temporary county seat, whether by fair or foul means we are not prepared to say.

The Times showed its elation over the Supreme Court's decision on May 28, 1891, by remarking:

Supreme Court has washed us "white as snow" and thrown the dirty water on you fellows.

Again *The Times* became humorous. It said:

The commissioners of Crosby (county) have been corrupted by the donation of a few lots, put where they would effect the best results—but the commissioners' court has been sustained by the highest judicial tribunal in the great state of Texas—how much did the supreme court get? Were they made "interested" to the extent of a few lots?

On June 12, 1891, *The Review* grew more conciliatory by saying:

Now, that Floyd City has been declared the county seat, we extend congratulations. As we have often said, we hope to see her prosper.

But *The Times* in its issue of June 19 puts in bold-face a plaintive soliloquy which was ascribed to *The Review*:

I am sick. Something must have hit me. I feel just as if I wasn't going to live long. Do you know what is the matter with me? Let's see if I can crow. Co—no it won't come—when I open my mouth to crow, the county seat wants to come up. What is the matter with the dod gasted thing that it won't digest? My organs would digest a sausage mill, three grind stones, and a circular saw, but I am afraid this county seat dose will kill me yet.

6. *A New Town Idea Incubated*

During the winter of 1890-1891 the opponents of Floydada proposed that an entirely new town be formed and made the county seat as a means of uniting both factions, but the supporters of Floydada violently opposed this. Citizens' meetings were frequently suggested that the county seat question might be amicably settled, and this proposition was made the subject of considerable jest at the Floydada

Literary Society which met once a week at the school house. J. H. Angel, a local humorist, prepared as a special feature of the weekly meetings *The Ephraim Messenger* to be read by him as its editor. He represented himself as a progressive negro, whose name was Ike Ephraim, who organized a citizen's town meeting,¹⁰ dominated its deliberations, and located the county seat on his own section of land. He published *The Ephraim Messenger*, which ignored all other publications. He made generous use of burnt cork when he read an issue to the interested listeners. This publication represented Ephraim as a town of magical growth, and as a result, Della Plain and Floydada were both completely absorbed. Besides boasting of Ephraim's growth, *The Messenger* contained many humorous local news items, wherein it represented certain pious men as running saloons, others of high official position managing popcorn stands, and still others of doubtful fitness conducting religious revivals. This piece of burlesque was carried on for three or four months.

7. *A Court House Built and a New Town*

During the spring and summer of 1891 there was a lull in the growth of the country, except that some 300 or 400 settlers located on the homestead or vacant lands lying south and west of Floydada.¹¹ The antagonism between the rival towns doubtless made prospectors skeptical of the stability of Floydada. Most of the people who had settled in the county were not earning a livelihood, as they had not yet learned to adapt themselves to their new economic environment. As an expedient for giving employment to many people and as an anchor for Floydada as the county seat, a movement for a bond issue for the erection of a court house at Floydada was started in July of that year. At first a stone court house costing \$15,000 was advocated, but this project had to be abandoned when it was ascertained that Floyd County's tax values restricted her to an additional issue of only about \$10,000. A pull then was made for a frame

¹⁰ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

¹¹ J. I. Carter to Claude V. Hall, December 17, 1921.

structure costing \$10,000, and on Monday, August 19, 1891, the matter was acted upon by the commissioners' court, with the result that two commissioners voted for and two against the proposition. The county judge cast the deciding vote in favor of the bond issue.¹² The court house was made ready for use in the spring of 1892. But the construction of the court house, like that of the jail two years before, was an issue in the races for county judge and county commissioners in the general election of 1892. In the meantime, however, Della Plain had become almost extinct by the founding of the town of Mayshaw two miles west of the Della Plain townsite. *The Della Plain Review* had suspended publication in August, 1891, and its plant was moved to Silverton, in Briscoe County.¹³ On May 20, 1892, *The Mayshaw Zephyr* was established by the "Citizens Town Company." Its editor was J. H. Dodson, an attorney. The *Zephyr* pursued a conciliatory course. The county seat question was not mentioned in its columns. In its initial issue it announced that "we do not propose to let our zeal for any town lead us to make war upon other sections of this county simply because their inhabitants do not agree with us as to the advisability of certain measures". While the two newspapers of Floyd County did not agitate the county seat question, there was nevertheless much ill feeling involved in the election. Floydada's triumphs left unpleasant memories among those who had supported Della Plain. The election in the county judge's race was rather close although Duncan was re-elected over his two opponents, J. H. Dodson and H. C. Atchison, by a small plurality. After 1892, a visitation of grasshoppers in a most destructive form and repeated dry years caused many settlers to move elsewhere. Mayshaw maintained only a struggling existence. The location of the county seat ceased to be a subject of thought on the part of the mass of people in Floyd County, and this vexed question lay dormant for a few years.

¹² *Minutes of the Commissioner's Court of Floyd County*, I, 96.

¹³ R. E. L. McLain to Claude V. Hall, May 15, 1922.

Chapter VIII

FLOYD COUNTY SINCE ORGANIZATION

1. *Floydada's Early Growth*

After the organization of Floyd County, Floydada soon attained a widespread celebrity. She was heralded as "the queen of the Plains",¹ "the future great city on the Plains", and "the commercial metropolis of the country." All of a sudden, town lots became valuable, and a multitude of enterprises were in the air. Those who were interested financially or sentimentally in her growth either feigned or sincerely believed that she was destined to be a great railway center. The imagination of some was pinioned, as it was confidently asserted that Floydada was "On the Only Practical Railroad route from Dallas and Fort Worth to the Panhandle."² For a year or two the projected Fort Worth and Albuquerque Railroad was expected to be constructed through Floydada,³ as "there was scarcely a doubt but that the Albuquerque will rush out for the spring" (of 1891). There was a myth to the effect that those who founded Floydada had immense wealth at their command and that the same would be employed for the advancement of Floydada.⁴ The agents of The Floyd City Town Company advertised that "much of the prosperity of Floyd County is due to the liberal and enterprising founder of Floyd City—Prof. J. K. Gwynn."⁵ The fondest hopes of the supporters of Floydada were cherished for a few months by Gwynn's occasional visits, encouragements, assurances, and improvements wrought. In July, 1890, he erected a one room school house at a cost of about \$700; in October, 1890, a temporary courthouse costing about \$3,000; and in December, 1890, a hotel building at an outlay of about \$2,500. As evidence of the fact that

¹ *The Texas Kicker*, Floydada, Texas, September 12, 1890.

² *The Floyd County Times*, April 24, 1891.

³ *The Texas Kicker*, Floydada, Texas, October 24, 1890.

⁴ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

⁵ *The Texas Kicker*, Floydada, Texas, October 24, 1890.

Floydada's growth soon reached a standstill the one-room school house was not enlarged for five years. The lower floor of the temporary courthouse was occupied with Johnson Bros. and Ainsworth's General Merchandise stock, the Floyd County bank operated by this firm, and the county and district clerk's office, while the upper floor contained a court room and six offices. J. P. Drace operated the new hotel a few months but finding the patronage too limited, he abandoned this enterprise and became a stock-farmer. After the first year of the town's existence, Gwynn left it to its destiny.

In the winter of 1890-1891, Floydada contained the business concerns of J. A. Whitney & Co., hardware and implements; Siddens & Johnson, groceries; Johnson Bros. and Ainsworth, general merchandise; S. B. Chadwick & Co., groceries; W. O. Menefee, dry goods; Tomme & Ranft, general merchandise; M. C. Williams, saloon; Thomas Teeling, meat market; M. M. Day, livery stable; and the trades and professions were represented by Andrews, Tilson & Co., real estate agents; Massie & Menefee, real estate agents; Carter & Carter, land agents and surveyors; V. Andrews, physician and surgeon; John C. Hendrix, lawyer and land agent; Bartley & Bartley, law and land business; C. B. Adams, blacksmith; J. M. Powell, carpenter; W. T. Montgomery, contractor and builder; two hotels, the Floyd House and the Drace Hotel. The Floyd County Bank, a private concern, was the first bank on the Staked Plains between the Texas & Pacific Railway on the south and the Fort Worth and Denver City Railway on the north.⁶ The Floydada post-office was created in September, 1890. When the county was organized with Floyd City as the county seat efforts were made to get a post office by that time, but the application was rejected by the Post Office Department because Hunt County already had a post office named Floyd. Efforts were then made to secure a post office under the euphonious name of Floydalia, and here hangs a tale. Gwynn

⁶ *The Texas Kicker*, Floydada, Texas, October 24, 1890.

looked after this matter in person, and he claimed the name was transmitted by wire to Washington with the result that the name Floydada was given the new post office,⁷ while Thomas Lawson Price, a step-grandson of Mrs. Caroline V. Price, states that the Prices wished to build a monument in the name of his mother Ada C. Price, and that the "name of the city was changed from Floyd City to Floydada, taking the name of the county and my mother's name Ada."⁸ When it was learned that the post office was established under the name of Floydada a number of people at the place were much dissatisfied, and some professional men persisted in giving Floydalia as their post office in the advertisements in *The Texas Kicker* and *The Floyd County Times*. Gwynn never did reveal to his friends in Floyd County that he was acting in consonance with the wishes of his clients in securing a name for the post office. The first postmaster was J. H. Henderson, who served until Cleveland's inauguration as President in 1893, when W. O. Menefee succeeded him. Henderson had seen service as a Union soldier, and afterwards he fought the Indians in the Northwest under General Custer. At first the mail at Floydada was received from Estacado twice a week. In February, 1891, Floydada received mail three times a week from Plainview, and after about a year this line became a daily service, except Sunday. On June 1, 1891, a tri-weekly mail route to Matador was established.⁹

During the winter of 1890-1891 the citizens of Floydada organized the Floydada Board of Trade, which met weekly for the discussion of proposed enterprises. A telephone line to Childress was discussed, at first, with more or less enthusiasm, but some of the leaders, after more mature thought, came to the conclusion that talking over a wire at so great a distance would be unsatisfactory on account of the high winds. It was therefore determined to construct a telegraph line. A

⁷ Arthur B. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, February 8, 1922.

⁸ Thomas Lawson Price to Claude V. Hall, January 9, 1922.

⁹ *The Floyd County Times*, April 24, 1891.

committee was appointed to investigate and to report a plan for financing it. But interest soon became dormant, and further meetings ceased.¹⁰

J. D. Starks erected the first home at Floydada on his half section north of the town section. During the summer of 1890 a number of families lived in tents. Among the residences that were erected during the summer and fall of 1890 were those of Max R. Andrews, Dr. R. C. Andrews, W. O. Menefee, J. J. Harrison, M. C. Williams, Arthur B. Duncan, and D. W. Jenkins. Later during the winter R. T. Miller, S. B. Chadwick, and J. F. Lockney built box houses. Sam H. Kelsey, Ole T. Nystel, Frank Slack, J. D. Arnold, and J. M. Powell lived in dugouts. Powell's dugout was covered with cloth."

During the first year or two of Floydada's existence few of the inhabitants provided themselves with wells and wind-mills, and rolling water kegs came into general use. On both ends of a keg blocks of wood with protruding spikes were placed. On these spikes were attached ropes or leather straps, by which the kegs were rolled on the ground. The kegs were ten-, twenty-, and even thirty-gallon capacity. J. D. Starks supplied his home one-half mile from the public well by means of a rolling keg drawn by his big dog Quannah. J. R. Keene's home, two miles west of town, was supplied with water hauled from the public well on a slide drawn by two yearlings. The means thus employed in obtaining a water supply for home use illustrates the resourcefulness of the first people who lived at Floydada. The conditions that prevailed then were of high educative quality. At any rate, mollicoddles could not thrive.

2. *Some Vicissitudes of Early Days*

During the month of August, 1890, a prairie fire swept over the country from east to west. The grass of a strip of

¹⁰ Minutes of the proceedings were seen by the writer about seventeen years ago, and notes were taken at that time.

¹¹ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1890.

country about four miles wide and fifteen miles long was destroyed. J. D. Arnold's tent and household goods on the town section were consumed. Everybody became a fire-fighter, and late that evening the fire was brought under control. The destruction of the grass caused the settlers in the fire's wake great loss and inconvenience, as most of them had to buy high-priced feed for their stock. But the hardship thus suffered was regarded as a mere incident to life in a new country.

On December 31, 1890, a heavy wind-storm visited the South Plains country. It arose about noon and continued until late in the night. It blew down the front of S. B. Chadwick & Company's store, unroofed the temporary courthouse, and partly wrecked C. A. Tomme's store and M. M. Day's livery stable. Dugouts were places of refuge that evening. Many hats, tubs, and other wares were swept towards the east. While the wind was raging many newcomers and prospectors were despondent and were turning their thoughts elsewhere for homes, but the following day was still and clear, warm and balmy. The ingenuity of real estate men was greatly taxed in their efforts to palliate the effects of western windstorms. Some who assumed scientific knowledge gave luminous explanations and declared that such a thing as a cyclone was impossible on the Staked Plains. The disadvantages of the climate were soon forgotten.

Rumors of the invasion of hostile Comanches reached Floydada in February, 1891. It was first reported that the marauders had reached Clarendon and were slaying the whites mercilessly. Some at Floydada treated the report lightly, but others regarded it somewhat seriously. One night while the excitement was at its height Ole T. Nystel, a Norwegian settler from Bosque County, took the precaution to guard his home by sleeping on the outside with his gun close at hand. During the night the gun was accidentally discharged. The report of the gun gave rise to the supposition

that the Indians had arrived and that hostilities had begun, and the entire population of the town was thrown into a state of intense excitement. Nystel had been captured by the Indians when a child, and he was far more apprehensive about the Indian invasions than others were. In a few days the report was found to be a hoax.¹²

In April, 1891, a Nebraskan of the name of Morgan, who was located on a section three miles south of Floydada, died rather suddenly. His remains had to be conveyed to Estacado for interment, as, up to this time, Floydada had no cemetery. This occasioned the purchase of a ten-acre tract of land one mile north of town for the Floydada cemetery. In August, 1891, Jehu McMannis, the aged father of S. A. McMannis, a new dry goods merchant at Floydada, died, and his remains were the first to be deposited in the Floydada cemetery.

In the early days of Floydada there was no lack of social diversion. On June 24, 1890, the first picnic and barbecue took place, and for a year thereafter Floydada's chronology was reckoned from "June the Twenty-Fourth." The attendance was large and the occasion felicitous, except that the sheriff had some trouble in quelling a cowboy who had imbibed too freely of the Exchange's liquid goods. The year following, July 4 was celebrated with an elaborate program.¹³ Active preparations for the event began a month beforehand. The purpose was to cultivate a feeling of unity among the people of Floyd County. The various committees appointed to work out the details of preparation represented all parts of the county. The program provided for music and dancing from 8 to 11 a.m., and from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. there were addresses by W. M. Bailey, John C. Hendrix, and J. B. Bartley, and the Declaration of Independence was read by J. I. Carter, music interspersing the program. The remain-

¹² *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

¹³ *The Floyd County Times*, June 19, 1891.

der of the day was consumed with dinner, baseball, music, and dancing.

3. *Early Court Proceedings*

The first session of district court in Floyd County, in November, 1890, transacted little business outside of passing on the county seat injunction suit, Ewing *et al.* vs. Duncan, *et al.*, which had been set forth in detail in the previous chapter. The first grand jury of Floyd County was impaneled November 25, 1890, with the personnel as follows:¹⁴ J. F. Lockney, foreman, W. L. Covey, C. F. Ramsey, M. F. Rountree, R. P. Reeves, C. H. George, W. T. Montgomery, W. H. Tuder, E. C. Fullingim, G. R. Whitney, J. H. Henderson, and J. T. Thomas. In the regular session of the Twenty-Second Legislature the Fiftieth Judicial District was created. It was composed of the counties of Baylor, Knox, Crosby, Floyd, Motley, Hale, Dickens, and Lubbock, and the unorganized counties of King, Lamb, Bailey, Cochran, Lynn, and Hockley, and the same act provided for the session to be "in the county of Floyd on the fifth Monday after the first Monday in February and August, and may continue in session two weeks."¹⁵ W. R. McGill, of Baylor County, was appointed district judge, and W. Q. Henderson, of Floyd County, district attorney. On Monday, September 7, 1891, district court convened at Floydada. Gambling had been carried on without much hindrance during the year. The grand jury at this session of the district court made a searching investigation of all violations of the law, and as a result about sixty-six indictments charging gambling were reported. At that time many persons of good character did not regard gambling with cards a gross crime, and they could see no reason why their favorite sport should be interfered with by the courts. Some even disdained to give the grand jury a full recital of the illegal transactions with which they were familiar. D. Y. Rainey disliked very much to

¹⁵ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, X, 36.

¹⁴ Minutes of the District Court of Floyd County, I, 2.

testify against the "sports", but when called on to testify he made an excellent State witness. At this session of the district court he eluded the grand jury's subpoenas. One day he took refuge in T. G. Harkey's wagon, concealing himself under a wagon sheet. Harkey drove his wagon to his home in the afternoon, and upon arriving there he had Rainey for a guest. Rainey did not return to Floydada while the grand jury wanted his presence. Later in the trial of some of the gambling cases Rainey had been advised by an attorney that he could not be made to testify, and, as he was not inclined to do so, he refused; but when told by the court what the penalty was, he responded, "Well, judge, I reckon I'd better testify."¹⁶ The County Attorney, Sam D. Snodgrass, afterwards Assistant Attorney-General of the State, dismissed many of the indictments with the admonition that thenceforth the laws against gambling must be respected at Floydada as they were elsewhere, and subsequent grand juries reported comparatively few violations of the law.

The courtroom of the temporary court house was a bachelor's dormitory, a loafers assembly, and a school for the study of law. At the March term of District Court, in 1892, four of these students of law were given a public oral examination for the bar and granted permanent license. The new attorneys thus schooled were J. H. Angel, C. J. Menefee, T. M. Bartley, and Sumpter S. Brown. Angel and Menefee the following year took up ministry. Bartley was the first county judge of Lynn County. From 1912 to 1914 he was a member of the lower house of the Texas Legislature. Since then he has become Grand Secretary of the Royal Arch Chapter of Texas.¹⁷ Brown was appointed county attorney soon after his admission to the bar. He was a man of peculiar mold. He had once been a preacher. At the time of his examination for the bar he was a mail carrier from Floydada to Lubbock,

¹⁶ The writer knew Rainey quite well and was informed of these incidents at the time they occurred.

¹⁷ T. M. Bartley to Claude V. Hall, February 14, 1922.

and he constantly wore a coat of black leather and trousers of brown duck. He neglected to shave and seemed wholly indifferent about his personal appearance. He had read extensively, and his memory was unusually retentive. Immediately upon his accession to the county attorney's office he became an entirely changed man as to his personal appearance. He was an affable fellow, and his associates took many liberties with him. He was ambitious and he was encouraged to seek publicity.^{17b}

4. *Partisan Politics*

In 1892 Floydada was the center of many political discussions. The Hogg-Clark gubernatorial campaign and the appearance of the Populist Party kept the atmosphere agitated with ceaseless political discussions. The Democrats of Floydada organized a Democratic Club which held regular weekly meetings at the court house. Sam D. Snodgrass, Dr. R. C. Andrews, J. I. Carter, J. B. Bartley, W. M. Massie, and J. F. Lockney were the moving spirits of the club. Aside from the serious consideration of political issues and principles, some pleasantries were indulged in. To get the recently licensed attorneys to speak upon political issues was the great purpose of a few. C. J. Menefee promised to deliver an address on Friday evening, May 20, 1892, and when the time arrived for the address there were only a few gathered for the occasion, and Menefee declined to "speak to empty seats." In the meantime Sumpter S. Brown had been groomed for a speech against Populism. After Menefee refused to speak the chairman recognized Brown as a man of courage who would inspire the Democrats assembled. Brown did his utmost, but his thoughts were somewhat muddled. Every sentence was cheered vociferously, and Brown remained on the floor for more than an hour. Snodgrass procured some water and offered the speaker a drink, but Brown declined with the remark: "I thank you, Mr. Snodgrass, as *we* had a

^{17b} Brown was well known to the writer, and the statements pertaining to him were given from memory.

drink at the saloon a while ago," and then there was much merriment at the expense of Snodgrass.

On July 4, 1892, there was a picnic at Floydada. In the morning G. W. Evans spoke in behalf of the Populist party, and was followed by R. E. Davis in defense of the Democratic party. That afternoon Rev. T. E. Leake talked Populism and Sam D. Snodgrass extolled Democracy.

5. *Educational and Fraternal Activities*

The first session of the Floydada Public school opened on Monday, December 2, 1890. Sam H. Kelsey was the teacher, and M. F. Rountree, J. J. Harrison, and V. M. Massie composed the school board. There were present about twenty pupils the first day but the enrollment reached about fifty at the close of the session, which was six months in length. During the first month there were no desks or other school equipment. Most of the text-books used had to be ordered by the teacher, and it was about six weeks before the order was received. The Merrell and Fox children attended from their homes seven miles southwest of Floydada. This school organized a literary society, in which a number of the people of Floydada took part. The Friday afternoons were usually devoted to spelling matches and other school amusements. This school was not incumbered, with a system of grades, examinations, promotions, and student reports. When a pupil finished a book in arithmetic he took up the next in order. The teacher was sympathetic, and had a good sense of humor.^{17c}

In April, 1891, the resident members of the Masonic order "forwarded a petition to the Grand Master duly recommended by (the) Plainview Lodge, for a dispensation to organize a new lodge to be called Floyd City Lodge.¹⁸ The Lodge at Floydada was to meet upstairs over the store of S. B. Chadwick & Company. The members were to meet "Wednesday night of each week for practice." On April

^{17c} The writer was a pupil in the first session of the Floydada public school, and here speaks from personal knowledge.

¹⁸ *The Floyd County Times*, April 17, 1891.

22, 1891, the dispensation was received.¹⁹ The officers were: W. O. Menefee, Worshipful Master; J. I. Carter, Senior Warden; and R. C. Andrews, Junior Warden. The charter was granted December 11, 1891, under the designation Floyd City Lodge No. 712, A.F.&A.M. The charter members were: R. C. Andrews, J. D. Arnold, J. B. Bartley, J. I. Carter, J. Q. Johnson, B. P. Merrell, W. Methley, S. G. Pool, T. A. Ward, R. E. L. McLain, S. B. Chadwick, Jno. A. Ewing, W. F. Greenwell, W. O. Menefee, S. A. McMannis, J. A. Noble, G. H. Paulson, and Peter M. Hall.

Early in the spring of 1890, shortly before Floyd County was organized, a movement for founding the Della Plain Male and Female Institute was put on foot. This enterprise had its inception at Seymour, where Rev. B. F. Fronabarger, the proprietor of a large private school at Springtown, in Parker County, delivered an address²⁰ in the interest of his school. At the close of the address Fronabarger was approached by J. R. McLain with reference to founding a school at Della Plain. He took the matter under consideration, visited Della Plain, and entered into a contract with McLain and seven others to the effect that Fronabarger was to erect a "school building according to specifications", establish, maintain and supervise a school for five years, at the expiration of which the title to the building and some town lots were to vest in him. The men contracting with Fronabarger were to place lumber on the ground and pay a specified sum of money when work began on the building. When the carpenters were ready to begin work a payment of \$500 was made, but Fronabarger was assured that the remainder promised would soon be forthcoming. When the building was finished it was learned that the contractors were unable to meet their engagement. The lumber company the following year obtained judgment against those responsible for the erection of the building. Fronabarger secured a release to his

¹⁹ *The Floyd County Times*, April 24, 1891.

²⁰ Rev. B. F. Fronabarger to Claude V. Hall, September 28, 1921.

part of the obligation by the payment of a certain sum of money.

The Della Plain Male and Female Institute existed only a few months in 1890-1891. Fronabarger was to furnish teachers to operate the school. He sent C. W. Hutcheson, a graduate of Fronabarger's school at Springtown, to act as Principal. Miss Anna Bedecarrax was advertised as the "assistant principal."²¹ Hutcheson entered upon his work with much vigor, but soon resigned and was succeeded by Fayette Copeland. The school ran as a public school and closed in about six months. It was advertised as having primary, preparatory, and collegiate departments. In the collegiate department the following subjects were listed: "General History, Composition and Rhetoric, Metaphysics and Logic, Higher Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Surveying, Greek, Latin, French, German, Hebrew, Spanish, and Natural Science and Commercial Law," and art, "in all branches" was offered. A letter to the public, published in *The Della Plain Review*, set forth the advantages of the school. A climax was reached in the following paragraph:

Come to the beautiful little Della Plain, in the County of Floyd. Send your children. They will find board cheap but good; tuition reasonable; instruction thorough; discipline kind, but rigid. Send your sons that they may get the advantage of a college course without having to leave their homes to get it. Send your daughters that they may become skilled in the finer arts, as well as being equipped for the sterner duties of life.

The concluding paragraph contained the following Scriptural paraphrase:

The settlers that are already here say come; those that are coming say come. Let every one that will come and enjoy these advantages for yourselves and your posterity.

The Della Plain Male and Female Institute building was converted into an additional room of the Floydada public school in 1895.

In the fall of 1890 T. J. Braidfoot, one of the promoters of Della Plain, under the caption "One Thing Calls for

²¹ *The Della Plain Review*, October 31, 1890.

Something Else," made the following announcement to the public:

We will soon be ready to start up the sporting and fishing grounds in Della Plain. We will donate ten and a half blocks of land, which covers the lake just south of the public square, and issue a five thousand dollar stock divided into five hundred shares at \$10 each, and will limit each man's stock to twenty-five shares, each share to control one vote. As soon as all the stock is taken we will organize the company and go to work. All wishing to take stock will please let me know at once, and oblige.²²

There is no record that any shares were bought.

6. *Della Plain's Demise and Maysbaw's Advent*

The population of Della Plain dwindled away during 1891 and 1892. Briscoe County was organized March 15, 1892,²³ and Braidfoot, Briscoe, and a few others, losing confidence in Della Plain's future, moved to Briscoe County and had some part in the founding of Silverton. Others had a part in the founding of Mayshaw, and still others moved elsewhere. Only the post office and a small store, operated by A. D. White, were remaining in 1893. In the autumn of 1893 the Della Plain post office was discontinued, and White settled on a 160-acre homestead nine miles west of Floydada. In 1900 twenty acres of the Della Plain townsite was planted in cotton, and six bales were gathered and were ginned at Childress.

After the Supreme Court had held that Floydada was the legally chosen county seat of Floyd County, many of the supporters of Della Plain regarded its cause as hopeless, and they turned their attention to a new town project, with the plea for harmony.²⁴ They perfected their plans in the spring of 1892, after numerous town meetings had been held. The outgrowth of these meetings was the Citizens Town Company, whose stock was capitalized at \$10,000, the value of each share being \$5. The shares were advertised²⁵ as being "worth more than their par value", and "becoming more valuable every day." As a precaution against one man control at any time, each stock holder was limited to "one vote

²² *The Della Plain Review*, October 31, 1890.

²³ J. S. McLain to Claude V. Hall, January 3, 1922.

²⁴ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

²⁵ *The Maysbaw Zephyr*, May 20, 1892.

and no more." At the head of this enterprise were A. J. Shaw, of Galesburg, Illinois, and A. F. Dodson, J. H. Dodson, B. F. Farmer, A. J. Sams, and others of Floyd County. In a statement to the public *The Maysbaw Zephyr* explained the cause of the town's existence, as follows:

Mayshaw was started by the citizens of Floyd County who being tired of the ceaseless warfare being waged between the various towns of Floyd County determined to build a town of their own and for this purpose held a mass meeting and elected a committee of seven persons who were to select a site for the proposed new town.

The County seat was not mentioned in any of the literature sent out by the Citizens Town Company, but those interested in Floydada's fortunes looked with suspicion at the new competitor. The site chosen for Mayshaw was two miles west of Della Plain on a patented section owned by Shaw. The reasons for choosing this site were "that this section was near the geographical center of the County, had a perfect land title, was almost the exact agricultural center of the county, had a splendid natural drainage, a magnificent view, and last, it was known that plenty of water could be secured upon this section at a very small expense." The new town was christened Mayshaw in honor of Mrs. May Shaw, the wife of A. J. Shaw.

For a few months during the summer of 1892 Mayshaw seemed to prosper. A post office was established, a small public library was installed, and some new business enterprises were projected, but came to naught. A few of the houses at Della Plain²⁶ were moved to Mayshaw, while others were moved to Briscoe County. Colonel and Mrs. Shaw showed a paternal interest in the new town and encouraged the projected enterprises, but conditions were adverse to the town's growth, as a long-continued drought and a grasshopper plague followed in 1893. Vainly did *The Maysbaw Zephyr* attempt to inculcate good feeling and to attract recruits to the town. Its editor, J. H. Dodson, was a candidate for County Judge, and during the first year of its existence this publication was sent free to the citizens of Floyd

²⁶ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

County. It inserted without cost classified reading notices and the marks and brands of stockmen. In 1893 Dodson moved to California, and *The Zephyr* ceased to function until it was revived in 1894 by W. C. Hawkins. The Populist party was then aggressive, while the Democrats were militant, but Hawkins maintained an attitude of neutrality, which elicited from *The Floyd County Times* numerous sportive gibes. In the spring of 1895 Hawkins discontinued the publication of *The Zephyr* and succeeded J. F. Lockney as editor of *The Floyd County Times* at Floydada.

Among the leading spirits of Mayshaw, besides J. H. Dodson, the editor, and his brother, A. F. Dodson, the manager of the Citizens Town Company, were I. R. Vorhees, a mechanic and windmill expert, S. M. Brown, the blacksmith, G. W. Farnsworth, a public-spirited farmer, C. F. Ramsey, one of the first members of the commissioner's court of Floyd County, A. J. Sams, a merchant, Mrs. T. Cromartie, proprietor of the Windsor Hotel, E. P. Thompson, who was "prepared to put up or repair all kinds of windmills on short notice," and G. W. Grammer, who proclaimed himself an instructor in music, stenography, and phrenology. Grammer was a singular character. He wore long hair and beard, and, through his advertising circulars, it was announced that he was "believed to be the greatest living musical genius". He founded a school by which he and Miss Ellen Kyle, his sister-in-law, taught the Grammer Lightning System of Music". He delivered occasional lectures on music and phrenology. During 1895 he published at Mayshaw *The Western Star*, which he used as a medium for advertising his various pursuits. His claims did not inspire popular confidence. In the winter of 1895-1896, he moved to Lockney, where he continued his occupations a few months, and then he moved elsewhere.²⁷

In the days of her prime Mayshaw put forth her best efforts to create a moral and enlightened atmosphere. A

²⁷ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

Sunday School was maintained, and there was preaching the first Sunday in each month by Rev. Anson Cox, of the Friend's Church, and every third Sunday by C. W. Smith, of the Church of Christ.²⁸ On May 19, 1892, the commissioners' court of Floyd County created the Mayshaw School District, and the first session was taught by Miss Rosa Ewing, a daughter of J. A. Ewing. Rev. T. E. Leake, a Baptist minister and Populist leader, organized on April 28, 1892, the Mayshaw Farmers Alliance, with S. M. Brown as president, H. Terry as vice-president, and S. F. Lindsay, as secretary, and on Saturday, May 14, it held its first regular meeting. All the people of Mayshaw were not averse to the less serious forms of entertainment, as the following news item from *The Mayshaw Zephyr* will indicate:

"Thursday night May 22, (1892) a number of the youth and beauty of Floyd County met to celebrate the completion of the New Business House of Mr. J. B. Anthony of Mayshaw. Messrs. Cox and Farmer furnished the music and dancing continued until the wee small hours."

Elsewhere *The Zephyr*, of May 20, 1892, reports that on Wednesday evening, May 18, 1892, a Social Party was given at the residence of W. M. Perrin who lives about six miles east of Mayshaw, and that "the party was pronounced a most enjoyable affair." But Mayshaw's prosperity was of less than two years' duration. Her promoters lost heart, as those of Della Plain did, and, by degrees, the town was depopulated, and in 1896 only a post office and a blacksmith shop, both of which were under the management of S. M. Brown, were left. With the rebuilding of Lockney in 1895 a part of Mayshaw's population became identified with it. After 1896 there were only a few dugouts to mark the sight of the defunct town.

7. *Removal and Rehabilitation of Lockney*

In the summer of 1894, S. W. Smith, a Christian preacher from Lubbock County, was in Floyd County conducting church services at Floydada and other places. C. W. Smith, another Christian preacher who had been living in Floyd

²⁸ *The Mayshaw Zephyr*, May 20, 1892.

County since April 1890,²⁹ was associated with S. W. Smith in church work in Floyd County in 1894. In August S. W. Smith suggested to C. W. Smith the establishment of a Christian school at Lubbock, in Lubbock County, but C. W. Smith insisted that Floydada or Lockney would be a better location than Lubbock, whereupon the two Smiths prospected at both Lockney and Floydada. At Lockney they met with encouragement in their project, while at Floydada, the proposition was received with indifference, and *The Floyd County Times* treated it lightly.³⁰ The Smiths proposed to locate the school at Floydada if the people would donate 160 acres of land adjoining the town section and the old Della Plain Male and Female Institute building, which had been moved to Floydada, but the church membership and other citizens of Floydada did not think that they could afford so great a burden. The Smiths were determined in their efforts, and located the school at Lockney. They published an announcement³¹ "To the Brotherhood and Friends of the Lockney Christian College," in which was set forth the need of sympathy, influence, and patronage to make this laudable enterprise a success, and the purpose that

We intend its [the Lockney Christian College's] influence to be more than local, and hope the whole county will take pride and interest in the work.

Lying west of the original town of Lockney were in order, the W. E. Brogden, N. B. Davis, and I. E. Davis 80-acre tracts of patented lands. The two Smiths bought from Sam H. Kelsey the Brogden tract for the site of the Lockney Christian College, and J. A. Baker the N. B. Davis and I. E. Davis tracts for a new town site. West of the new town site C. W. Smith acquired a 160-acre tract from J. C. White and one from A. B. Bell. Baker moved his store and the post office from the first town site to the new one, and the new town of Lockney was given its existence in 1894.³² Work on the new school building was begun soon after the

²⁹ C. W. Smith to Claude V. Hall, October 20, 1921.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ *The Floyd County Times*, September 8, 1894.

³² C. W. Smith to Claude V. Hall, October 20, 1921.

site was chosen, but it was not completed in time for the opening on Monday, October 2, 1894. The first few weeks the school was conducted in a two-room dwelling. J. D. Burleson and his wife, Mrs. Sadie Burleson, of Uvalde County, were engaged as teachers, and the enrollment the first day was sixteen pupils.³³ The school building was a two-story structure, twenty-four feet wide, forty-eight feet long, and eighteen feet high. During the first year only the first floor was used. The seats and desks were home made, and the blackboard space was rather limited. The public school of the Lockney district was taught by Sam H. Kelsey on the old town site, and after its close in the spring some of the pupils entered the church school, whose enrollment was thereby augmented to about fifty pupils. Lockney Christian College was advertised far and near by the preachers in their evangelistic travels, by circulars, and by both local and church papers. Because of the founding of the church school many people were induced to locate at Lockney, and the remnant of the "boosters" of the defunct towns of Della Plain and Mayshaw helped to swell the population of Lockney. At this time the Staked Plains country was suffering a serious setback because of droughts and the financial crisis which prevailed over the country after 1893, and Lockney's demand for houses was in part supplied by the purchase and removal of a number of Floydada's houses that were unoccupied in 1895 and 1896. Quite naturally a town rivalry in Floyd County thus arose. From 1895 to 1898 the church school building was used for maintaining the public school of the Lockney school district, and while the free school lasted religious instruction was excluded from the course of study. The second year the school enrolled ninety-five pupils.³⁴ In 1898 the school building of the old town site was moved to that of the new town and was enlarged from a one-story, one-room to a two-story, two-room structure. The church

³³ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

³⁴ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

school for years to come was run to conform with the purpose of its founders. During the school year of 1898-1899 the church school was taught by G. H. P. Showalter and Mrs. Ivy Poynor, and the free school by M. G. Bryant and S. Poynor.

In 1895 D. M. Ealy and G. F. Stevenson set up a blacksmith shop and J. S. Fox opened up a small stock of merchandise. In 1898 W. A. Trowbridge put in a stock of dry goods and groceries, but in a short time he was succeeded by W. A. Anderson; also W. M. Chandler established the People's Drug Store, S. T. Cooper, a general merchandise store, and J. T. Dagley, a grist mill, with a windmill for the motor power. A board of trade was organized, and in its weekly meetings for a part of 1896 the establishment of a canning factory was discussed with more or less enthusiasm. The town thereafter maintained a creditable growth.

8. *Cursory View of Floyd County's Development*

The failures, difficulties, and achievements of Floydada, Mayshaw, Della Plain, and Lockney have been traced in the early days of Floyd County's existence and it is now appropriate to give a cursory view of the county's history of this period. During 1890 and 1891 settlers came rapidly. Just after the organization of the county W. M. Bailey,³⁵ a Federal census enumerator, made a careful canvass and listed 529 persons in Floyd County;³⁶ but a few months afterwards the population was doubtless more than twice the number, for in the county seat election a total of 88 votes were cast, while in the general election of the following November 186 votes were cast for governor of Texas. This difference in the total voting strength of the county on May 28, 1890, and November 4, 1890, would indicate that there were many who had located in the county during the early part of the year. That the stream of immigration continued after the organization is evidenced by the fact that 97 children of scholastic age were

³⁵ Arthur B. Duncan to Claude V. Hall, May 30, 1922.

³⁶ *Abstract of the Twelfth Census of the United States*, 170.

enumerated in June of that year, whereas in the four public schools of the county there were enrolled the following winter 150 scholastics, or 191 pupils of all ages,³⁷ and there doubtless was a considerable number of children within scholastic age who were not enrolled at all that year because of their inaccessibility to schools.

It is noteworthy that the people who settled in Floyd County in 1890 and 1891 appreciated the value of public education. On August 21, 1890, while the entire county constituted one school unit or district, an election was held authorizing the levying of a special district school tax of 15 cents on the \$100 valuation.³⁸ There were 20 votes in favor and only one against the proposition. Four school districts were created that year; namely, Floydada, Della Plain, Lockney, and Irick. The Floydada school was taught by Sam H. Kelsey; the Della Plain school by C. W. Hutcheson and Fayette Copeland; the Lockney school, by D. F. Davis; and the Irick school, by C. James. The state apportionment was \$4.50 per scholastic, or a total of \$436.50 for Floyd County,³⁹ and the special tax fund was about \$1250. The following school year 1891-1892, the scholastic enumeration was 252, and the State apportionment amounted to \$1,134.⁴⁰ In 1894-1895 the total scholastic population increased to 392, but the state apportionment was only \$3.50 per capita, or a total of \$1,375.⁴¹ At this time the scholastic age was from 8 to 16, an increase of one year.⁴²

The total vote in Floyd County for governor in 1890 was 186;⁴³ in 1892, 323;⁴⁴ in 1894, 291;⁴⁵ and in 1896 297.⁴⁶ These figures indicate that the county suffered a

37 *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1890-1891*, 26.

38 *Minutes of the Commissioner's Court, Floyd County*, I, 71.

39 *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1890-1891*, 4.

40 *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1891-1892*, 172.

41 *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1894-1895*, 18.

42 Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, X, 612.

43 *Report of the Department of Agriculture, Insurance, Statistics, and History for 1890-1891*, 491.

44 *Houston Post Almanac for 1895*, 400.

45 *Houston Post Almanac for 1895*, 400.

46 *The Galveston Daily News*, November 9, 1896.

diminution of its population between 1892 and 1894, and this can be accounted for because of the droughts in 1892 in 1893 and the grasshopper plague of 1893. The only crops grown then were sorghum, milo maize, and kaffir corn, and these crops were unusually short for these years. The efforts to grow wheat proved a complete failure. The panic of 1893 cast a gloom over the country's prospects for railway construction and other improvements. Many of the citizens believed that hard years were ahead, and they removed elsewhere.

Probably the first preacher to locate in Floyd County was R. E. Davis, a Primitive Baptist, who lived at Lockney from 1890 to 1893. The second preacher was C. W. Smith, one of the founders of Lockney Christian College, who located in March, 1890, on a section about three miles northeast of Floydada just before Floydada was founded.⁴⁷ In 1891, W. B. Ford, a Methodist evangelist, resided at Della Plain and preached at various places in Floyd and adjoining counties. He announced "a camp meeting in Blanco Canyon, 6 miles south of Floydada, beginning on Wednesday night before the 4th Sunday in July; and continuing as long as the Christian people are hungering and thirsting after righteousness or sinners are convicted and crying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner'."⁴⁸ T. E. Leake, a Baptist preacher, settled in the eastern part of the county in 1890, but he was a rather enthusiastic expounder of the principles of Populism, and it is doubtful that he made any engagements to preach for the two or three years that he resided in Floyd County. The first sermon preached by a Baptist was at Della Plain in August, 1890, by Rev. I. B. Kimbrough,⁴⁹ of Plainview, while visiting his daughter. He organized the First Baptist Church of Floyd County in October, 1890, at the residence of R. M. Irick, who resided about seven miles southwest of Lockney. The

⁴⁷ C. W. Smith to Claude V. Hall, October 20, 1921.

⁴⁸ *The Floyd County Times*, July 3, 1891.

⁴⁹ R. E. L. Muncy to Claude V. Hall, April 10, 1922.

charter members were R. M. Irick and wife, T. F. Anderson and wife, J. K. Anderson, Miss Lillie Anderson, T. A. Cowart and wife, J. T. Dagley and wife, D. P. Windsor and wife, their daughter, and C. James.⁵⁰ This congregation worshipped at the Irick residence until the school house was ready for use. In 1891 the Llano Estacado Association of the Baptist Church—embracing the counties of Motley, Dickens, Floyd, Crosby, Briscoe, Swisher, Hale, and Lubbock was organized at Plainview. As late as August, 1892, C. W. Smith conducted church services in G. F. Mickey's dugout, eight miles west of Floydada, for the Disciples of Christ.

9. *County School Lands Located and Boundaries Established*

As long as there was any unappropriated public domain in the State, each county, when organized, had the privilege of locating four leagues—17,712 acres—of land for the creation of a permanent county school fund. After organization Floyd County took steps to acquire the four leagues to which she was entitled. The following items appear in *The Texas Kicker*, published at Floydada, October 24, 1890:

W. M. Massie, C. F. Ramsey, T. B. Michael and Bud Davis have returned from their trip to Bailey County, where they went to inspect Floyd County's school land. They report a good time, good country, plenty of game, etc. . . .

Floyd County's school lands were located in Lamb and Bailey counties. They were leased to stockmen the first few years at 3 cents per acre, and the money thus derived was apportioned among the public schools of Floyd County each year.

As stated before, Floyd County was attached to Crosby County for land and judicial purposes. After organization Floyd County remained a part of the Crosby County Land District, as the boundary lines of Floyd County had not been "actually surveyed, marked out, and established."⁵¹ Although W. M. Massie had been elected county surveyor on May 28, 1890, still the Commissioner of the General Land Office of Texas refused to recognize Massie's work in the surveying and location of school and homestead lands. Mas-

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ J. I. Carter to Claude V. Hall, December 17, 1921.

sie insisted on performing the functions of his office, but his efforts were in vain, as only surveying done through the Crosby Land District Office was recognized by the land office. Pending the establishment of the boundaries, J. I. Carter was appointed district deputy surveyor under H. C. Knight.⁵² The boundary lines were finally established, and in October, 1892, the field notes were approved by the land office. Massie thereby came into possession of his office a week or two before the general election of November 8, 1892.

10. *Ownership of School Land a Burden*

During 1890 and 1891 approximately 475 school sections and as many homestead claims were settled.⁵³ The purchase of these school lands at \$2 per acre with interest at 5 per cent, created an indebtedness amounting to at least \$500,000 and entailed an annual interest payment of about \$25,000, which after a year or two proved to be quite a financial drain on the county's resources. Added to this outlay were the reverses sustained by the prevalence of droughts and the ravages of grasshoppers, and it can be readily seen that people would experience hard times. Besides, many who settled in the county during these years had never before lived in new counties and were used to farming, while others came because they expected to see railroads build and land values suddenly rise. The primary purpose of many a settler then was to obtain a big bonus, which is the profit realized by the transfer of school land. At first, little farming was attempted, as the principles of successful farming on the Staked Plains were not yet understood. The newcomers needed time to adapt themselves to stock farming conditions. Living expenses were heavy. All supplies were freighted from Childress and Amarillo, the two railway trading points, at a cost of 75 cents per hundred pounds. It required six or seven days to make a trip to either railroad point when the weather

⁵² J. I. Carter to Claude V. Hall, December 17, 1921.

⁵³ J. I. Carter to Claude V. Hall, December 17, 1921.

was favorable. Homes were scantily improved because of the high cost of building materials. The money that the newcomers brought with them was spent after a year or two, and their plight and that of those that came without money were then about the same. Perhaps the man who had no money when he came was ultimately more favorably situated, as he usually settled on a homestead which cost him nothing, while the man with money settled on a school section, for which he was due the State \$1,248 of the purchase price and an annual interest payment of \$62.40; that is to say, the school land settler had a burden while the homestead settler had none. The settlers on school land made their interest payment in 1891, but many failed to meet these obligations to the State in 1892. As a relief measure, D. F. Goss, State Senator from Seymour, secured the passage of an act, approved March 20, 1893,⁵⁴ providing that the payment of interest due any year may be deferred for one year; but this act in effect, afforded relief only for the year of 1892, as the interest due for 1892, not being paid then, had to be paid in 1893, and the "extensive and disastrous drought during the year of 1892 amounted to a public calamity," was protracted after this act became a law. Both a drouth and grasshopper plague materially reduced feed crop production and curtailed the grazing capacity of the range in 1893, and, as a result, nearly all school lands that had been purchased were forfeited to the State for the non-payment of interest due. By this time the mass of people had reached the conclusion that State school land at \$2 per acre, with five per cent interest, was too burdensome to own, and there arose a widespread demand for the reduction of the purchase price, a lower rate of interest, and an increase in the number of sections one might own. It was currently asserted that a single section of land on the Staked Plains was an insufficient quantity to enable a family to earn a livelihood.⁵⁵ When the Twen-

⁵⁴ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, X, 460.

⁵⁵ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

ty-Fourth Legislature convened in January, 1895, Representative W. B. Plemons, of Amarillo, and Senator Goss put forth their best efforts to secure school land legislation more favorable to the West; but they were unable to accomplish all that they desired, as most members of the Legislature from other sections of the State were uninformed as to the conditions in the West and too conservative to be instructed by capable teachers.⁵⁶ About all that could be accomplished was the reduction of the rate of interest from five per cent to three per cent,⁵⁷ but still people would not purchase school land at \$2 per acre. In the meantime, however, an agitation for reducing the price of school land was kept up, and on August 8, 1896, the Populist Party platform, adopted at Galveston, contained the following plank:

The People's Party favors all State Legislation that tends to increase the number of home owners and that will assist in the settling of our unoccupied land; hence we demand that only the improvements and the amount actually paid to the State upon school lands be subject to taxation.⁵⁸

On August 19, of the same year, The State Democratic platform at Fort Worth adopted the following declaration:

The Democratic Party will continue its well established policy of disposing of the public school lands of the State to those desiring homes, so as to promote as far as practicable, the settlement of the country and its speedy development. To this end, and that the school fund may be more speedily increased from that source, we favor such legislation as will facilitate the sale of such land, rather than the indefinite perpetuation of a lease system.⁵⁹

In his message to the Twenty-fifth Legislature on January 11, 1897, Governor Culberson called attention to the Democratic Party's platform demand relative to the sale of school land. He said, "The State should cease to be a land owner as soon as practicable," and suggested that its price should be fixed at \$1 or \$1.50 per acre.⁶⁰ Representative R. P. Smythe, of Plainview, and Senator Goss took a leading part in securing school land legislation in harmony with party platform pledges. Under the school land law of 1897⁶¹ the settler was permitted to hold four sections classi-

⁵⁶ *The Hesperian*, Floydada, Texas, December 21, 1905.

⁵⁷ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, X, 793.

⁵⁸ Winkler, *Platforms of Political Parties in Texas*, 381.

⁵⁹ Winkler, *Platforms of Political Parties in Texas*, 387.

⁶⁰ *House Journal*, Twenty-Fifth Legislature, 18.

⁶¹ Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, X, 1238.

fied as agricultural and eight sections classified as grazing land. The price of agricultural land was reduced from \$2 to \$1.50 per acre, and that of grazing land was fixed at \$1 per acre. When this act went into effect the provision authorizing reclassification was liberally invoked. It was an easy matter to obtain the affidavits of three creditable citizens that lands in Floyd County could not be relied on with any degree of certainty for agricultural purposes. By this means, nearly all the school lands were purchased at \$1 per acre, with 3 per cent interest. In a short time in the summer of 1897 practically all the school lands in Floyd County were filed on by settlers, and thus a new epoch in the history of the country was begun.

11. *A Synoptic View of Floyd County's Early History*

A look backward is now in order. The changes wrought in the political geography of Western Texas have been traced. Prior to 1876 the Staked Plains were known as Young and Bexar Territories, when it was the scene of buffalo hunting and Indian incursions. The Indian wars of 1870 and 1874 ended with the utter extermination or expulsion of the nomads, and the way was then made clear for stock raising, which marks the entry of the first settlers. The course of events marked the establishment of free range cattle and sheep ranches, and these gave way to land owned ranches enclosed with wire fences. By chance a few brave souls located as settlers in the new country.

The Quakers founded the Estacado settlement and thereby hastened the organization of Crosby County. A bitter war by the cattlemen in general was waged against the settlers who would in time circumscribe the stockman's monopoly of the range.

Blanco Canyon became a settlement of stockmen of limited resources, and these, tiring of an unequal strife with big stock interests, moved up Runningwater Draw and founded the Plainview settlement in Hale County.

The public school land act of 1887, which put on the market State School land at \$2 per acre, with deferred payment for forty years, opened up the way to settlers, who, though of limited means, would really develop the country. The drouth of 1886 led to T. J. Braidfoot's seeking better range conditions in Floyd County, where he saw an opportunity to prepare the way for the county's organization by establishing Della Plain.

The construction of the Fort Worth & Denver City Railway to Amarillo swelled the tide of immigration and enabled Hale County to organize in 1888. Floyd County shared in the general settlement of the country, and her organization in a year or two was an assured fact.

The coming into existence of the town of Lockney as a rival of Della Plain accentuated the eagerness of Della Plain's promoters for a speedy organization. The refusal of the Commissioner's Court of Crosby County to be duped or coerced into ordering an early election for the county's organization by the aggressive leaders of Della Plain held matters in check until Floydada was given a place on the map. Floydada's triumph in the county seat election and in the litigation that followed, in the end, so disconcerted the forces of Della Plain that she dwindled and died.

The effort to give Mayshaw a permanent footing was prevented by drouths, the panic of 1893, and the people's wearying of the county seat contention. The wholesale forfeiture of school land was inevitable, yet it occasioned a careful counting of the cost of things in the development of a new country.

The creation of Lockney Christian College rehabilitated Lockney with a new location just west of the old town site. The rapid growth of Lockney after 1894 brought the renewal of an unpleasant town rivalry in Floyd County, which was to smoulder for years to come. The school land legislation of 1897 paved the way for the county's solid establish-

ment and forward development. The county then had for its citizenship home owners, who had other motives than merely that of transitory speculators. From 1897 on the establishment of wholesome social advantages is uppermost in the thoughts of the mass of the people. All the years hitherto have been a period of preparation.

A rich soil, an invigorating climate, and a preeminently industrious and enlightened people presage a happy and prosperous future.

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