

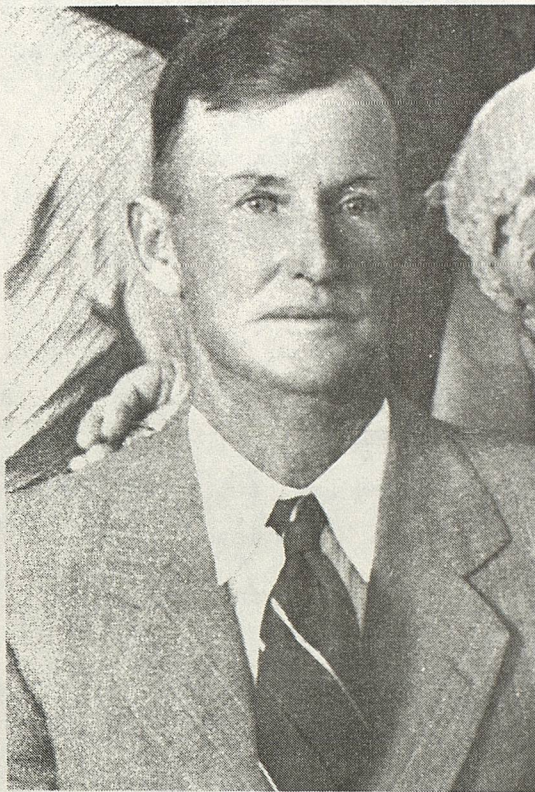
Borden Citizen.

Published by the Borden County Historical Committee - Fall, 1983
VOL. XIX, NO. 1

W. L. MILLER, BORDEN COUNTY RANCHER

BY ANN MILLER CARPENTER

William Lively "Ozona Bill" Miller came to Borden County in 1929, bringing with him over 5000 sheep. It was the largest herd of sheep to arrive in Borden County up until that time, with most herds then averaging 75 to 100. Miller ranched in Borden County until his death in 1953, and his family continues to have ranching interests in the area. His life was a testament to his belief in the virtue of hard work, but even more he is yet remembered for his unfailing generosity of spirit.



WILL MILLER

Born June 12, 1882 in Belton, Texas, William Lively Miller spent all of his life on ranches. He was the eldest son of Jones and Amy (Wills) Miller. He had twin brothers (Rob and Roy) and three sisters (Tina, Minta, and Pearl). Four other children had died in infancy. The family had already been ranching for some time. Will's grandfather Robert Miller was a cattleman with the brand J7 who came to Gonzales County, Texas, in 1855 from Kentucky; he had taken his son Jones "up the trail" as he drove cattle from Texas to northern markets. At the time of Will's birth, the family farmed and ranched in Bell County. From 1889 to 1892, they lived in McCullough County near Brady. On January 1, 1892, the family moved by wagon to Sherwood and then to Ozona. Once they were settled, 13-year-old Will was sent back alone to McCullough County to bring the horses.

Will finished school in Ozona and continued his lifelong association with ranching, as his father leased and purchased several Crockett County ranches, where they raised Hereford cattle and Rambouillet sheep. The best-known Miller ranch was 31 sections 21 miles south of Ozona on the Del Rio divide road (formerly the Kincaid place).

On February 28, 1906, Will Miller married Callie Dunlap in Ozona, and they had four children: Vivian (1908), Mildred (1910), Dorothy (1913), and Morris (1916). He bought 14 sections from Mr. Swabbe, a place that joined his father's ranch. Quite a few of the jobs occupied Will during these years, too. He and a brother-in-law (Paul Halcomb) cut and sold wood. He and another brother-in-law, Walter Dunlap, made



MORRIS MILLER

several trips to Missouri to buy horses and mules. They traveled over the country selling and trading horses, usually selling the mules to farmers. They were sometimes gone three to four months on these trading expeditions and often came home with as many head of stock as they had started with and some cash, too. One mule that was purchased in Missouri was named Ladder (because of the brand *H*) and was never sold. He was even moved later to Borden County and ridden only by "the boss".

Primarily a sheepman, Miller bought many of his first sheep from Indians on an Oklahoma reservation. There he had to bid on each sheep separately, and he had to pay for that animal before another would be exhibited.

The family lived on the ranch at this time, and some times they had to use all their resourcefulness to survive. One such time Dorothy, when still a small child, was bitten by a rattlesnake that was under the house. Her life was saved as her parents loaded her and a bunch of chickens and headed for the doctor. They kept splitting the chickens open and applied them to the wound to pull out the poison.

About 1920 the Millers sold their 14-section ranch to Joe Pierce for \$66,000, and they moved to Ozona. Will Miller held a mortgage on the North Garage, where he had his office. He served as translator for Mexican trials and helped to establish the first Mexican school in Ozona. He also served as scab inspector for Crockett County. He was a member of the Oddfellows Lodge (where son Morris had his first paying job cleaning the building).

Ranching was as ever an important part of Will Miller's life. He leased one place four miles south of Ozona from Mr. Kincaid. He leased 16 sections from his father until 1929. He purchased the Chipotee ranch in Terrell County, where he was in the sheep business with his good friend, Earl Berry. He and his close friend, Dr. J. A. Fussell, bought a 12-section ranch at Marble Falls, which they did not stock; they harvested cedar there and leased the grazing rights.

In the spring of 1929 Will Miller was told by his uncle, Oliver Wills, of a ranch for sale in eastern Borden County. Known as the Craft ranch (also as the Fuller-Love ranch), it consisted of seventeen sections 7 miles south of Fluvanna. After Will and his son, Morris, inspected the place, he bought the ranch in October for \$7 per acre, this being just months before the Crash.

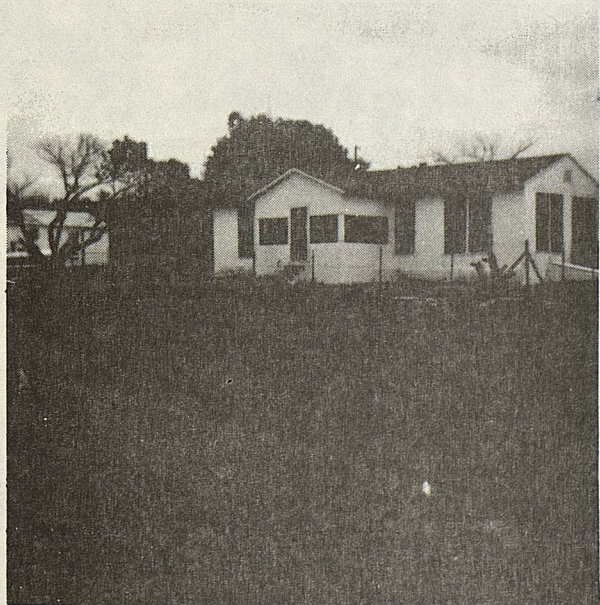
To stock the ranch, he bought 5,000 sheep from Vic Pierce and drove them from Ozona to Barnhart to the train; they arrived in Borden County by the R S & P Railroad. At the same time, he had two young men drive a wagon and team along with their saddle horses from the Terrell County ranch to Fluvanna. The trip took 29 days. One of the young men was Gaston Boykin, later sheriff of Comanche County for 25 years.

Miller's arrival in Borden County added to the proliferation of people named Miller already located there. To distinguish between W. L. Miller and W. C. Miller, the community gave them nicknames, designating W. L. as "Ozona Bill" and referring to W. C. as "Wild Bill".

Because of the severe drouth in 1934, Will Miller rounded up the sheep on the Borden County ranch and started for New Mexico. The sheep drive passed south of Gail and stayed on the south side of the highway to Tobacco Creek. There they crossed over and passed across the Dean ranch. They made a big circle around Lamesa and crossed the Higginbotham ranch. There Dick Jones rode with them for a

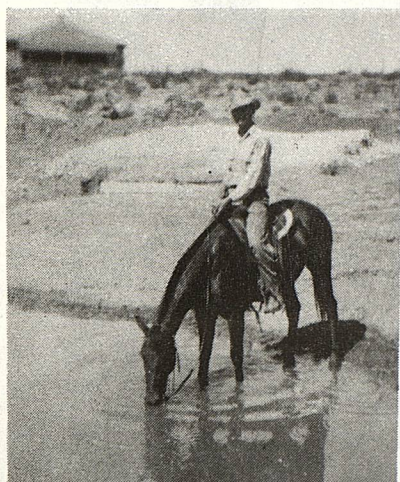


SLAUGHTER HEADQUARTERS
ON THE LOONEY RANCH



THE HOME WILL MILLER BUILT ON
LOONEY RANCH

day. Years later, Dick remembered eating dinner with the crew, and it was the first fresh meat he had tasted in several months. The sheep drive lasted until they reached the lights of Seminole. With the sheep near Seminole, Miller heard of the availability of a lease on the Judge Looney ranch located on the caprock in Borden and Dawson Counties. The ranch was leased to



FRANK BEAVER, with the adobe on Looney Ranch in the background.

Bass Arnett at the time. He leased this ranch and later bought it in 1935 for \$6.75 an acre. This place had the Colorado River, fed by many springs, running almost through the center. Miller liked the 12,000 acre ranch, but did not like the 2,000 acres of farm land it contained. The Looney ranch was once part of the C. C. Slaughter spread that reached from Big Spring to far in the Panhandle. Later Miller said that the day he bought the Looney ranch was "the best day's work I ever did". And this was long before the discovery of oil there.

Miller moved the headquarters to a small adobe house near a large spring of water. Carl Pettit and Sam Glover helped to drive the sheep from Miller's ranch in McCamey to stock the Looney ranch. An early chore was the building of a net wire fence. The posts came by train from the

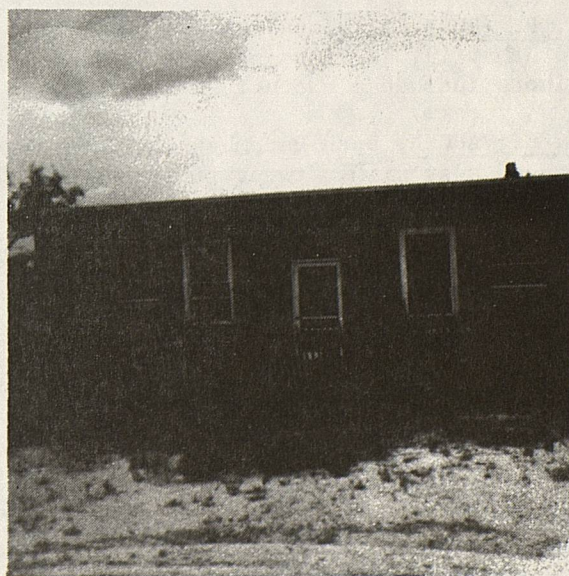
ranch at Marble Falls. Sixteen-year-old Morris Miller was sent after the posts and net wire. Morris managed the Fuller-Love ranch after the purchase of the land near Ackerly.

Around 1936, sixteen-year-old Frank Beaver began his long association with the Miller ranches, as he joined Morris in working the Fuller-Love ranch. Later, Morris was asked how he thought he could possibly at age 17 be mature enough to run such a large place. His answer showed why his father was so often looked upon as an excellent builder of young men: "It never occurred to me to question. I thought Frank Beaver and I could do anything." Many more young men were to have Will Miller's training, including young men in the armed forces stationed in Big Spring and even hitchhikers without a place to go that he picked up on the highway.

One difficult challenge of the early years as well as the later ones was the threat of coyotes. The Millers tried rounding up the sheep at night and lighting a lantern to keep the coyotes away, but the practice was abandoned upon finding dead lambs under the lantern. Will Miller heard the theory that a tin can filled with a few pebbles could be tied at regular intervals on a net wire fence and that its sound when rattled would keep coyotes away. For many years those cans were a big mystery to all who came to the ranches. Unfortunately, the coyotes came anyway.

In the fall of 1937, Miller and his neighbor, Tom Good, decided to do something about a school to keep the children living on their farms and ranches from having to go to Ackerly to school. Borden County had no money available to help them, so Miller moved half the bunk-house from the old slaughter headquarters and fixed it so they could have a school. He drilled a well and put up a windmill. This school was used until 1952 when the Borden County School District wanted a new building. Miller told them they could build there and have school as long as they wanted, but he did not give them the land. The school was called "Glen Creek School". They had from 4 to 16 children each year. Some of the early teachers were Mrs. McBride, Mrs. Charlene Dyess, and Mrs. Springfield.

Miller was among the most charitable of men, and his gifts extended to both organizations and individuals. Since he was also one of the most unpretentious of all men, his charitable work was always done quietly



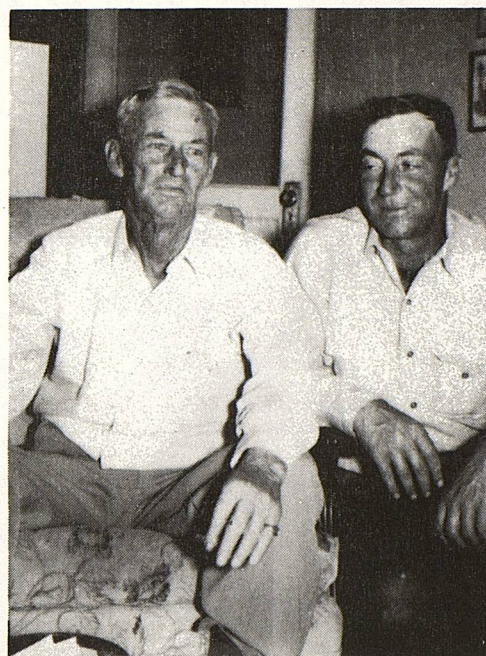
Glen Creek School, today

without desire for thanks or recognition.

There was never anyone who more enjoyed life or who more enriched the lives of others with his sense of humor. He enjoyed a good joke, and some of his tales are still savored among his family and friends.

Despite declining health in his later years, Miller spent the last 18 years of his life on the Looney Ranch. He suffered a stroke in the late fall of 1953, and died in his home at the ranch on December 28.

At the time of his death, the first oil well was being drilled. Miller had leased the land for oil exploration but had hoped the well would be dry because he did not want the ranch ruined by oil companies. He did not see the dozens of wells of JO-MILL field or the oil roads criss-crossing the ranch. One can still imagine him traveling over the ranch roads in his Buick, having the courage to travel difficult roads that others wouldn't try.



WILL MILLER AND MORRIS MILLER

BY ANN MILLER CARPENTER, as told by Morris Miller,
Doris Beaver and others.

The Editor of THE BORDEN CITIZEN thanks Ann Miller Carpenter and her helpers for this article. It is appreciated. Ann spelled the name of the school as "Glyn". The school books in the County Judge's office say "Glen". Which is right???

MR. AND MRS. OSCAR TELCHIK of the Plains Community were honored with a reception on Sunday, July 31st at the Plains Community Center. Friends and relatives called and congratulated them on 50 years of marriage. Mrs. Telchik was the former Beulah Wellborn. Hosting the reception was their daughters, Daphene Minter of Riverton, Wyo. and Nancy Edwards of the Plains Community.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE BORDEN STAR:

In October, 1939, two men from Chickasaw County, Miss. went to Gail, Texas to visit their cousin, J. R. Roper. One of the men named King, and other Evans, both of whose Mothers were named Roper. While on this trip, Mr. Charles Evans had a heart attack and died in a hospital at Snyder, Texas on 16 of October, 1939. J. R. Roper of Gail, Texas, signed his death certificate. I recently tried to locate any of the Roper descendants still living in Gail, but was told by phone operators that none of the Ropers by that name was listed there. If anyone of the residents know anything of this family, where they may now be living, I'll greatly appreciate being notified. The purpose of this is the fact that a book of the family is in preparation. Thanking you, I am, Sincerely, Corinne King Murphy, 1416 Parsons Street, Sheffield, Ala. 35660.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks to THE BORDEN STAR for the use of the above article. Mrs. Floyd Hull of Big Spring, Texas would be a living relative.

E. P. (BUD) SMITH, 64, passed away June 25, 1983 and was buried in Vealmoor Cemetery. Bud was born May 19, 1919 and came to Vealmoor that year with his parents, Jess and Myrtle Smith. Survivors include a brother, Alvin Smith, of Gail.

R. C. VAUGHN, born December 26, 1896 in Gadsden, Ala. and MRS. R. C. VAUGHN (EULA) both of Gail, passed away within twentyfive days of each other. He died June 25, 1983 and she on July 20, 1983. They had lived in Borden County since 1943 and in Gail since 1955. They loved and cared for the youngsters at school as they cared for the school buildings in Gail for many years. Among their survivors are a daughter, Wanda Tate of Lubbock and four sons, James of Rico Rivera, Calif., Ruben of Snyder, Bill of Hobbs, N.M. and Charles of Borden County.

PAUL M. CLAYTON, 62 of Paris, Texas died at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. Mr. Clayton lived with his family in the Fairview School Community South of Gail. He was born November 19, 1920 in Big Spring. He married Stella Miller in 1945.

W. P. "BILL" HERRING, 74, of the Dermott Community died October 8, 1983 with burial in the Fluvanna Cemetery. He was born October 27, 1908 in Dawson County. Survivors are his wife, two daughters, Nelva Jones and Sue Floyd and a son, Ray Herring, all of the Fluvanna Community.

IRVIN CLAYTON, 72, a longtime resident of Kermit died November 3, 1983 in Mineral Wells. Irvin attended the little one room Fairview School south of Gail, later attended Borden County High School, where he graduated. Survivors include his wife, Ruth and one son, Jimmy of Austin. Also a sister, Mrs. J. N. Whetstone of Aztec, New Mexico. A brother Paul M. preceded him in death.

WINNIE M. (PRINCE) GOODWILL, 87, passed away on October 13, 1982 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Among her survivors are Arthur Prince of Abilene and Jim Prince of Albuquerque.

ARTHUR PRINCE, 93, of Abilene died May 28, 1983. Born Nov. 24, 1889 in Merkel, he moved to Abilene from Borden County in 1906. He married Lula M. Wood who preceded him in death. Survivors include two daughters, Frances Jefferies and Dora Mae Williamson of Abilene and a brother, Jim, of Albuquerque.

 IN MEMORY OF M. J. TAYLOR, a Memorial Gift has been sent to the Museum by Ross, Ruth and Chrystine Hinshaw of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

 LETTERS FROM THE PENS OF OUR READERS

I am sending you a check for a subscription for the Borden Citizen Newsletter. It means more to me than words can express. Thanks for remembering me. Mrs. Lud (Doris) Taylor.

Please extend the paper another year. I enjoy it... I share my paper with my cousin in Tucson. She was Zettie Cathey. My mother was Lola Cathey, married Charlie Morrison. I was born in Gail in 1904. Imogene (Mrs. Fred) Taylor, Portales, New Mexico 88130.

I'm sorry! Somehow in the melee of weddings, new babies, geneological pursuits, birthdays, illnesses, etc. (What did I do before I retired?) I overlooked renewal fees for Borden Citizen... Each issue is read carefully and then filed for reference- Never having been a resident of your county I search for names my husband has mentioned. What a thrill it was to find-years ago-a list of Borden County Civil War Veterans. One of those veterans was my father-in-law, Lemuel Prior Cosby. He died years before I met the man I married. Best wishes to you in your preservation of local history. Mrs. C. N. Cosby, Canyon, Texas.

Thank you so much for the recent copy of your interesting and newsy paper. I enjoyed reading it all, tho I have never lived nearer Gail than Fluvanna. Thank you sincerely for the obituary of my brother, M. E. Boren of Lamesa. My sister, Mrs. V. A. Wills sends her thanks too. Do not know why I've not sent my subscription years ago. Mildred Mathis, Fluvanna.

I enjoy your publication. A Nolan County Native, Mildred Shuff, Sweetwater, Texas.

Hi There. Enclosed is the dues for my 1984 Borden Citizen. I don't want to miss a one in 1984. Eddie Jenkins, Athens, Texas.

I am sending check for subscription to Borden Citizen paper. I enjoy the paper so much and enjoy going back and reading some of the past editions. I keep them all. I also enjoy reading the letters of subscribers. Thanks for your good work. Juanita Williams, Abilene, Texas.

We received another issue of THE BORDEN CITIZEN. We appreciate the good work you people are doing in keeping our interest in Borden County going. Your "tall tales" that you publish are very interesting and sometimes even "tear jerkers". Very good reading. Mrs. Ross Hinshaw, Albuq.NM.

I am the daughter of A. N. Prince. I am enclosing a clipping from the Abilene paper about his death on May 28, 1983. He was, as I am sure you know, a pioneer of your area and a staunch, loyal, former citizen of Gail, Borden County. He loved many people there and I have heard many, many statements of happenings in and around there. He enjoyed the last reunion he attended very much. He wanted so much to come back in the last few years, but his health would not permit it. Mrs. Frances Jefferies, Abilene, Texas.

We always enjoy the Borden Citizen so much. Jim has been ill for four years. We did not get to go to his brother Arthur's funeral in Abilene. He passed away May 28 and was buried May 31, 1983. We miss him so much. He was 93. We sure would love to go to Gail sometime, but we seldom get away. Since Jim's sister passed away in 1982 and now Arthur, Jim is the only one left in the Prince family, except for neices and nephews. Jim and Alma Prince, Albuquerque, N. Mex.

 MUSEUM NEWS

On October 29, 1983, The Borden County Museum was host to THE 1946 STUDY CLUB of O'Donnell, Texas. Among the guests were: Tonnie A. Smith, Lucille Atkinson, Lucile Barnes, Edna Carrole, Ruth Marie Ballew, Nodia Tredway, Mary Ann Russ, Bonnie Popnoe, Jimmie Jones, and Jackie Beckman. The Club spent about two hours touring the Museum and then traveled to Snyder for lunch. Cookies, cokes and coffee were served by the hosts at the Museum who were Van. L. York, Barbara Farmer, Sadie Ludecke, Helen Price and Dorothy Browne. We were honored to have them tour the Museum.

This note was received: I just want to thank all of you who helped for the lovely day our Club spent with you. It certainly was a memorable day.
 Thanks again. Sincerely, Alta Line, Corresponding Sec.
 1946 Study Club, O'Donnell, Texas.

RECENT VISITORS AT THE MUSEUM:

Dr. and Mrs. Frances Houchew, Lakewood, Colorado. Mrs. Houchew (nee Lorena Scott) was born near Gail in 1935.
C. L. Watts, Liberty, Texas. Hugh Dillahunt, Tulsa, Okla. Jack Mayo, Oklahoma City, OK. Don and Emmy Lou Duncan of Comstock said it was very enjoyable.
Other visitors: Sarah Lee and Bob Lee of Crestwood, Kentucky. Dr. Nermal Sengh, Farmington Hills, Mich. Dr. & Mrs. Bouestein, Pearce, Arizona. Jean Wooley, Austin, Texas. Jean Laird, Willcox, Ariz.

HONORING THE BORDEN COUNTY PIONEERS

by Barbara York

The Borden County Historical Committee is very excited about the progress of the plaque honoring County Pioneers, those who lived here from 1890-1935. Fifty-one names have been submitted thus far to be remembered on the plaque. We do not wish to forget anyone, so if you know of a pioneer who is not listed here and has no relatives, please submit his or her name to: Barbara York, Box 157, Gail, Texas 79738, and we will try to find someone to donate for the person. If you have purchased a memorial, and it is not on this list, please contact Barbara at the above address. The persons honored are:

Mr. and Mrs. John Henry Smoot
Mr. and Mrs. W. K. Clark
John K. & Eliza Mitchell
Catherine & Joseph S. York
Sicily & C. E. Doc Reeder
Joe & Ella Roper
T. V. (Thad) & Josie B. Hood
Wave & Nettie Coates
John & Bell (Kincaid) Clark
J. S. Mitchell
J. N. (Jim) & Katie Willes York
Minnie & Hiram Drum
Carl Gray
J. B. Cotten
Charlie Miller
Wm. A. & Julia Bills Clark
W. P. & Margie Coates
W. H. (Billy) & Alice Hood Askins
Miss Maggie Williams
Edwin Love
John Gilmer Davis
Mr. R. L. Gray
Frank Miller
George A. & Ludie Locklear Clark
Billie Mitchell

Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Spears
Charlie J. Engle
Sam & Eliza Wilson
J. R. & Vesta Jenkins
Mr. Finis & Mrs. Mary Seigler
Mr. & Mrs. A. W. Boucher, Sr.
Guy & Ollie Maxwell
Thomas D. & Mary Hancock Edwards
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Martha Murphy
Ora Bell Smoot (Summers)
Mr. & Mrs. John L. Pettit
Mr. and Mrs. John H. Tiller
Carson Ancel & Zuma Bearden
C. Glenn Toombs
John H. & Judith Ellen Doyle
Bob & Hettie (Kincaid) Whitaker
Mr. and Mrs. L. A. Pearce
W. M. "Will" and Attie Jackson
Rosa Virginia Davis Cotten
J. B. and Anolia Bley
Cliff & Myrtle McKnight
A. N. Prince
Alex and Bell Murphy
Elmer Long
Sid Reeder

Members of the Historical Committee would also like to express its appreciation to Dorothy Browne for the many volunteer hours she puts into the historical newsletter to make it the quality paper it is today.

Signed: Barbara York.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I am sorry that there was not room in this edition of the newsletter to print the names of the donors of the plaques. These will be listed again at a later date.

If you have not paid your \$3.00 subscription to the Newsletter lately, please do so as soon as possible. Your money is needed to continue to publish the paper. Send your subscription money to Dorothy Browne, P. O. Box 23, Gail, Texas 79738. We wish to say thanks again for the excellent story about the life of W. L. Miller prepared by Ann Miller Carpenter. We sincerely appreciate it. We need your stories. Send your stories and family histories or memories of Borden County to Dorothy at the above address or to Edna Miller, Route 1, Fluvanna, Tex. 79717. The Historical Committee wishes to say a BIG THANK YOU to all persons who have contributed to the Museum or THE BORDEN CITIZEN in any way. A special thanks is sent to Pauline Clark who has done so much over the years and is not feeling well as this is being printed. Send your letters and your family histories NOW, please.

Borden Citizen.

Published 4 times a year, September, December, March and June. Subscription rate \$3.00 yearly payable to the BORDEN CITIZEN; and mailed to the Borden County Historical Survey Committee, Gail, Texas, 79738.

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Gail, Texas 79738

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