

R/F: BORDEN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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BORDEN COUNTY TO CELEBRATE 75th DIAMOND JUBILEE

A tentative date of August 14, 1966 has been set aside for celebrating the 75th anniversary of Borden County. On February 2, 1966, The Borden County Historical Survey Committee met with interested citizens to discuss plans. This will be an old-timers' homecoming and also one for graduates of Borden County High School.

On February 12, John Ben Shepperd, former Attorney General of Texas and now President of the Texas State Historical Survey Committee, met with the Borden County group. Mr. Shepperd has obtained from the Borden heirs, funds for a proposed Gail Borden historical marker, which will be placed on the Courthouse square. The Borden County Committee is planning a marker, telling of interesting events and happenings of this county. It is the hope of this Committee that both these markers will be finished in time for dedication on August 14th.

Mr. Shepperd brought other members of Midland and Odessa historical groups - they were: Mrs. Shepperd and William McAnerny of Odessa; Mrs. H. N. Phillips, Mrs. John P. McKinley, W. L. Simmons and C. W. Edwards, all of Midland. We want to thank each of these guests for their helpful suggestions, their interest and cooperation.

All events on August 14 will be held in Borden County High School, with a church service at 11:00 A.M., followed by a barbecue. There will be displays of early day pictures and articles gathered for our museum. If you have anything of interest, please send it to this committee!

Watch for further plans of this celebration in future newsletters and your local newspapers. Be making your plans now to attend!

WEST POINT SCHOOL

In the summer of 1909, E. S. Marley organized a school district in the western part of Borden County. With some help from the neighbors he built a one-room school on the west side of his section and called it "West Point".

Mr. Marley had a teen-age boy and girl and four grandchildren - Othello, Merrit, Stella and Ella Carrol. There were three teen-age Jones children who lived on Tobacco Creek who attended the first school. Kate Grigsby taught the first school and boarded with Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Orson.

The next summer they moved the school to a ridge southwest of the Buck Canyon bridge. Ray Doyle, a niece of Mrs. D. Dorward, taught this term and it was attended by the Carrol children - Thelma, Dee and Eunice Turner, children of Walter Turner. Mr. Turner owned part of the ranch which was later bought by W. D. Johnson. Tama, Jim and Ruth Pratt began school that year. They lived five miles north in the head of Buck Canyon. Lenora Rogers, who is now Mrs. Blanton Street, taught the third school and Mamie Fields the fourth. Mary Ingram taught the fifth school term.

The Turners had moved away by this time and the Massengills were living at that place. Dee and Bart Massengill attended this term. Flora Cox taught the sixth term. After the Massengills moved, the Doc Howells took up residence where they had lived. Daisy, Elga and J. W. Howell and the four Pratt children and Robert Lee Gray were students that year. The Grays lived on the Cross C's and it was Robert Lee's first year. Miss Flora taught a second term and by this time all of the families who had school children had moved away except for the Pratt children and they were transferred to Mesquite school.

"West Point", or "Humpty Dumpty", as some called it, stood a lonely vacant building for a few years until it was finally carried away or used for firewood by campers.

- Compiled by Mae Stephens

(Note: In about 1920, Frank Miller and a cowboy were moving some cattle and had to spend the night in the "West Point" school. There were no doors or windows and during the night a heavy snow fell. Next morning both men became a little upset upon finding bobcat tracks across their bedrolls!)

We regret that the BENNETT name was omitted from the list of pupils who attended the Grapecreek School. The writeup of Grapecreek appeared in the November, 1965 issue.



Ah me! those joyous days are gone!  
Little dreamt till they had flown,  
How fleeting were the hours.  
Saxe.

PRESENTED TO: Charlie, Ethel and Sammie  
Morrow.

GAIL SCHOOL

Pupils;

Arthur Prince	Sammie Morrow
Hubert Newbey	Ella Kincaid
Charlie Morrow	Ethel Jeter
Shelby Searcy	Mollie Hopkins
Winston Joplin	Maudie Berry
Wesley Berry	Ethel Wilbourne
Frank Berry	Minnie Joplin
Thomas Bostick	Cora Doyle
Robert Reding	Katie Bostick
James Reding	Pearl Mullins
Guy Clark	Baylus Love
Jessie Newbey	Sid Wasson
Ethel Morrow	Charlie Searcy
Myrtle Jeter	Edward Newbey
Hettie Kincaid	Joseph Joplin
Myrtle Hopkins	Chas. Berry
Rebecca Simpson	Reuben Joplin
Nora Nix	Ralph Mullins
Maud Hopkins	Lee Caldwell
Mary Doyle	Alvin Wilbourne
Ray Doyle	Lillie Clark
Ross Simpson	Naud Nevels
Ira Wasson	Ola Kincaid
Robert Stiles	Tennie Kincaid
Roy Stiles	Grace Hopkins
Jas. Wilbourne	Goldie Prince
Gibbs Doyle	Roxie Nix
Jesse Joplin	Callie Stiles
Sid Clark	Lillie Joplin
Thomas Caldwell	Annie Doyle
George Clark	Bettie Bostick
Maggie Dow	Beulah Mullins
Luna Love	

BOARD OF EDUCATION

H. W. Hale C. A. Joplin H.A. Kincaid  
J.M. Searcy, Co. Supt.

S.A. and MRS. HATHCOCK, teachers.

The English class at Gail had their little school paper published at the Gazette office, which at that time (1907-1908) was edited by a Mr. Jones - called "Peachtree" because he sold nursery plants and trees to supplement his income. Our school paper was representative of each English class, with the members alternating in supplying material, reporting, editing, reading proof, assisting with lay outs and make ups. A sports department, social, and local happenings were written by elected members. Mr. McKay was instrumental in promoting the class in Journalism.

Ethel Morrow Everett

Alvin Jackson died September 23, 1965 in Colorado City. His wife, the former Katie Wilbourn, was a teacher in Borden County schools. He was the son of Mrs. Attie Jackson and the late W. M. Jackson, pioneer Borden County citizens.

That Mr. McKay, school principal in 1901 organized the first basketball team? This team consisted of two boys and two girls, with girl against girl, or boys against the girls. This kept up a competitive spirit. These students were also taught to march, drill and to salute, raise and lower the United States Flag.

That the franchise for a telephone system in Gail was given to T. D. Love and Associates, May 11, 1903 (CC records - Vol. 1, page 528). Permission was given to erect poles as needed with one phone designated for the courthouse (without cost, of course) - the franchise and privileges granted for 50 years. Love and Associates were given 30 days in which to construct said line and if not accomplished, the proposed line might be constructed by other parties.

That the oldest grave in the Durham cemetery is that of HAP TURNEY, born November 21, 1872 - died October 20, 1892. Hap was a young cowboy - it is believed he was working for the LFD ranch - and upon receiving a message of his mother's serious illness - set out on horseback for Colorado City, where he would board the train home. When he came to Bull Creek, which was on a rise, he was warned not to ford it. But determined to get on with his mission he went ahead. His body and that of his horse were found a few days later.

May 11, 1892

That the Commissioners' Court ordered that the occupation taxes of Borden County shall be as follows:

Selling malt liquors by the qt.	\$25.00
Running billiard table	10.00
Concerts or Theaters, each performance	1.00
Fortune teller	125.00
Flying Jennies & Co.	2.00
Hacks, Wagons & Car riggers (each)	.25
Lightening rod canvassors	12.50
Menageries (each day)	5.00
Foot peddlers	.62
One horse peddler	1.87
Two horse peddler	3.75
Shooting gallery	3.12
Peddlers of cook stoves & ranges	31.25
Sewing machine dealers	1.87
Wagon yard	6.20
Clairvoyants or mesmerits	6.25
Circus	25.00
Livery stable & vehicles (each)	.25

That the population of Borden County was 35 in 1880 - 222 in 1890 - 776 in 1900?

Population in 1910 was 1386;  
in 1940 was 1396;  
in 1950 was 1100;  
in 1960 was 1076.

Ira Wasson died in November in Big Spring. He and his wife, the late Dorothy Agnes Bedell, were married in Gail. He is survived by three sons; Elmo, Lloyd and Paul L. and one daughter, Mrs. Dorothy Ragan, all of Big Spring.



## ORGANIZATION OF BORDEN COUNTY

On February 10, 1891, the petition was granted by Howard County officials for the organization of Borden County - giving the County the right to divide into 4 Commissioners' precincts - 4 voting precincts and 4 Justices' precincts. In April, 1891, the first meeting of Borden County officials was held at Gail in the school. The Hon. C.L. Wasson presided as County Judge and the Commissioners were: W. H. McCulloch (1); W. L. Danner (2); D. V. Carter (3); J. S. York (4); T. D. Love, Sheriff and W. S. Moore, County Clerk. H. J. Camp, County Surveyor, was instructed to provide field notes and a certified map of said county. The salaries were pronounced to be: \$360 for County Judge, with most of the others set at \$300 per annum. Later in April, bonds were issued in the amount of \$4500. for the building of the Courthouse. A temporary clerk's office was ordered to be erected - being 10x12 ft. square with two windows and one door with walls 8 ft. high.

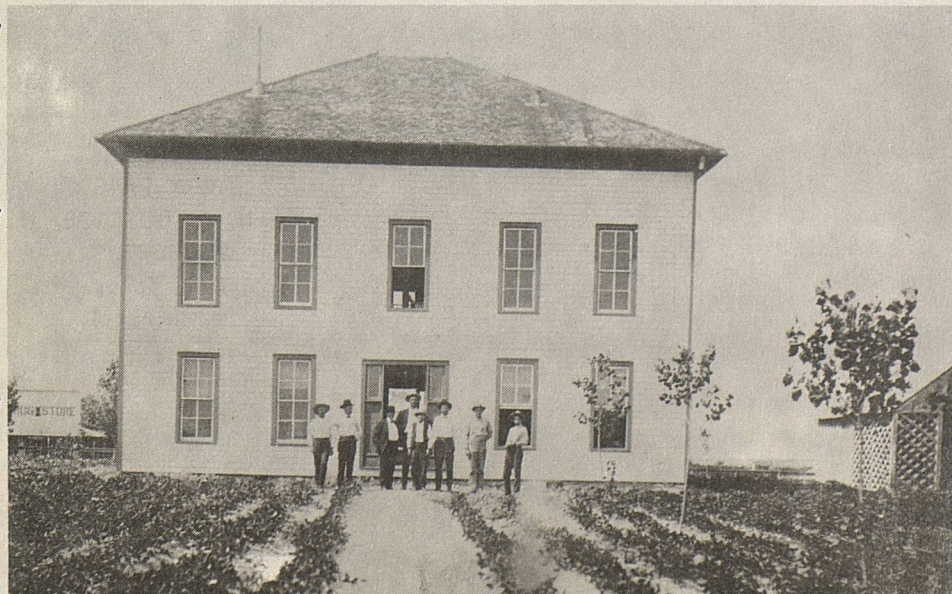
Weaver & Youngblood were given the contract for building the Courthouse - their bid - \$477. On June 10, 1891, C.L. Wasson was appointed to provide and furnish paint, roofing and paper - D.V. Carter was to supervise the hauling of lumber - J. H. Smoot was awarded the contract for building the foundation and vault for \$165. The contract for quarrying and hauling stone for the foundation

went to L.M. Reece for \$150 - the hauling of sand contract went to J. N. Smith at \$4.50 per yard and O.V. Casey was given the contract for painting the Courthouse for \$74.25. In the records, there is a vivid description of the plan of this building and later they set aside the lower floor for the County Clerk, County Judge, Sheriff, County Surveyor, County Treasurer and County Judge. The upper story was divided into court rooms and juror rooms. Spittoons were ordered by the County Judge in August, 1891. Some of the companies furnishing material for the building were: J.H. Bryant, Big Spring; Doss Bros. of Colorado City; and H. H. Byer Company. O.V. Casey made the benches at a cost of \$28 and T. D. Love was appointed to contract for the construction of the Judge's stand in the court room. H. H. Byer's bill for \$67 covered the cost of stoves, piping and flues.

May 11, 1891 - after election returns were counted, it was declared by the Court that Section 36, Block 31, T-5-N was duly selected as the County seat. On April 14, 1892, J. E. Wilbourn and L. E. Wilbourn, et ux, did "give, grant and dedicate" to Borden County, Block 32 for the public square where the Courthouse and Jail would stand. The following were also given: for a Cemetery in Block 18, consisting of 2 acres; Public school in Block 66 (300 ft. sq.); Methodist church - Lots 7 & 8 in Block 33; Baptist church, lots 11 & 12 in Block 92 and for the Christian church, Lots 11 & 12 in Block 28.

The Courthouse was to be the scene not only of official business in the coming years, but of much fun and merriment, as the second floor was used by young and old alike for dances and get-togethers. Many old timers remember dancing to the familiar tunes of a fiddler until the wee-small hours.

Not many Courthouses in the State could boast a garden and watermelon patch in the yard, but Borden County could! In fact, the garden in the picture below seemed to be thriving - water being obtained from the spring house on the right. Dewey Everett claims that no watermelon ever tasted as good as the ones he and his friends 'swiped' from this spot.



The buggy and team appearing in the picture above belonged to Harvey Everett. He had stopped at the Courthouse and had sprinted over the steps - in a hurry to get a marriage license from Roddy Keen. Harvey and Ethel Morrow were married April 23, 1908 by T. R. Mauldin, minister.

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-Compiled by Dorothy  
Dennis

SOUTHWEST COLLECTION  
Texas Technological College  
LUBBOCK, TEXAS



## INTERESTING FACTS TAKEN FROM FAMILY HISTORIES

H. D. BEAL and a nephew, "DINK" LOGAN drove a herd of cattle from Milam Co. to Borden County in 1879. Mr. Beal moved to Lubbock County about 1898, where he ranched about 8 or 10 miles north of Lubbock until 1920. He moved his family to Borden Co. and bought the present Beal Ranch from FRANCIS I. ABNEY in 1920. The late J. HOMER BEAL was the son of H. D. BEAL. - - - O. F. BOYD, who lives in Baptist Memorials in San Angelo, was another early settler in this County and he worked with H. D. Beal as a partner in ranching. - - - The J. T. REDING family arrived in Borden Co. in January, 1895 in a covered wagon with two colts following their mothers that pulled the wagon. They resided temporarily on a place owned by JUDGE J. M. SEARCY, about 2 miles west of Gail. MR. REDING later filed on a homestead adjoining REV. J. A. PETTY'S place on the east. The REDINGS lived in Gail from 1895-1903. J. T. REDING hauled the largest rock that was put in the Borden Co. Jail and he dug and plastered the cisterns for drinking water for many pioneer citizens. He later sold his place to ANDY LONG, owner of the OB Ranch. - - - G. W. SIMPSON came to Borden Co. in 1893, where he was postmaster and also operated a store in Gail. THE HALE HOTEL was owned by Mrs. J. R. SIMPSON'S father - the hotel was on the south side of the square and there was a telephone booth in the dining room. - - - FRANCIS I. ABNEY had the first car in the County. UNCLE PINK COATES used to threaten to shoot the car because his horses always were afraid of it and invariably tried to run away with him. MR. ABNEY and MR. COATES used the same road to and from their homes to Gail - the car no doubt was the cause of much consternation to those still riding in hacks and wagons. - - - A. R. GRAY moved on Wild Cat Creek, just east of Rattlesnake Pasture in August, 1890 when son ANDY was 3 years old. A. R. GRAY helped haul the lumber from Big Spring to build the first bridge across the Colorado River between Big Spring and Gail. As a young boy, ANDY was much impressed helping BUNK GROVES move cattle - especially when BUNK went to CHICAGO to pick up his mail and found a letter addressed as follows: "Pass me on at a rapid rate to Chicago Post Office, Texas State - in the Post Office, let me be til Mr. Bunks Groves calls for me". This letter was from BETTY HULL who lived with her family about 1½ miles east of FAIRVIEW school. ANDY remembers that during a church revival under a brush arbor it began to rain and everyone had to cram inside the school - there was just about standing room only - song books were passed around and the one tune Andy remembers singing was "The Unclouded Day", and it was pouring down outside! Several years ago ANDY ran into TOM ANGEL in Big Spring and much to his surprise found that he had led the singing that day in FAIRVIEW school. ANDY GRAY now lives in Truth or Consequences, N. Mex. - - - E. A. GLEGHORN moved to Old Light, near Fluvanna in late 1890.

THE BORDEN COUNTY HISTORICAL SURVEY COMMITTEE wishes to thank each of you for sending in family histories. Please continue to send us information and it will be added to our files - to those of you who haven't gotten around to it yet, please get busy! After you read the newsletter, if you have any further information on any subject, please let us know about it. Remember that all we know is what you pass on to us! If you haven't paid your \$3.00 dues for the newsletter, send it in.

TO ALL STUDENTS OF BORDEN COUNTY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL: The Survey Committee will pay \$5.00 for an appropriate name for this newsletter. Please submit all entries to Mrs. Bert Dennis, Gail, Texas. We hope one of you will come up with an original and appropriate name. You may send in as many names as you wish! The Committee will be the final judge and may reject any or all names - so please try to come up with something unusual. Good luck!

The Borden County Historical Society  
Gail, Texas 79738

BULK RATE U. S. POSTAGE 2 5/8c PAID Gail, Texas Permit No. 1
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