

# Borden Citizen.

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## ACTIVITIES OF J. K. SCOGGIN IN BORDEN COUNTY

(1902-1916)

One of the newcomers to Borden County during the land rush of 1902 was Jacob Kennedy Scoggin. Like many other men he came seeking his fortune in land and ranching. After working as a cowboy, he took over the management in 1904 of L. C. Hutchinson's four (later six) sections in Block 97 of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad Company's survey. (Editor's Note: L. C. Hutchinson, along with the Waskoms and Fulliloves, was among those who came from Louisiana to Borden County. Mr. Hutchinson's father was a large plantation owner in Louisiana. He did not tarry in Borden County but a few years and returned to the Bayou Country.) In 1908, Scoggin and Hutchinson formed a partnership in which they shared ownership in the ranch, a relationship which continued until ill health forced Scoggin to seek another occupation and the selling of the ranch to J. S. York in 1915.

Scoggin spent some of the best years of his life in Borden County. He was a successful small ranch manager-owner, he was twice elected County Commissioner of Precinct No. 4 (1910 and 1912), and he married and became the father of a daughter, the present Mrs. Maurice Elam of Wichita Falls. The following account of his activities reveals much about Borden County in its formative years and is the story of a man whose independence of thought, sincerity of purpose, and concern for others is typical West Texan.

Born in Hill County, Texas, February 11, 1866, Jacob (Jake) Kennedy Scoggin was the son of Jessie and Martha Clements Scoggin. Jessie had settled in the 1850's on a farm near Cowhouse Creek in northwestern Bell County, not far from the Coryell County line and the Sugar Loaf community. His strongly built house was known in the area as Fort Scoggin and was sometimes a refuge to which local residents fled to escape Indian attacks.

In 1854, Jessie had married Martha Clements, the school teacher at Sugar Loaf and daughter of James Clements who had moved to Texas from Georgia in 1841. Although little is known about Jessie prior to the marriage, he had been married before and was considerably older than Martha. Two grown children were living with or near him in 1864: Isaac Scoggin who became well-known in the area as a rancher and a lay preacher and Sarah Scoggin who later married one of her new step-mother's brothers.

Jacob (called Jake throughout his life) was the first of two sons born to Jessie and Martha. He and his younger brother, George Quincy, were orphaned by the death of both parents in 1871, before he was five years old. The boys were taken into the home of their mother's half-sister, Irena Clements Elms, who with her husband, Thomas, lived on a farm near Sugar Loaf Mountain, now a part of the Fort Hood Military Reservation. Here, the boys grew to manhood, working on the Elms' farm and receiving such formal education as was possible in a rural area in those pioneer times.

For a while in 1883, Jake attended the college at Salado; then, in 1887, he struck out on his own and went to Bonham where he worked for a time in a cotton plant. By 1891 Jake had migrated westward to Clay County where he met Ozella Ann Norwood, daughter of the Reverend H. G. Norwood, a Methodist minister, and commenced a friendship which, fifteen years later, blossomed into romance, marriage and a new life together in Borden County.



J. K. (JAKE) SCOGGIN AND OZELLA ANN NORWOOD  
Wedding Day, October 21, 1906

Not much is known of Scoggin's activities in the 1890's, but he spent some time in Indian Territory (Oklahoma) where he may have met the Joe Wicker family who later moved to Durham in Borden County. Sometime during the latter half of 1901, Jake, in company with George Fleming of Petrolia, Texas, went to Durham and stayed with the Wickers.

On April 20, 1902, in the first of many letters to Ozella Norwood (and from which many events in this account are gleaned) Jake remarked that the people in Gail were depressed because of a long drought which



had caused cattle to die by the hundreds.

Like many other men, Scoggin and Fleming were searching for school lands that were being opened for sale at a cheap price; and, like many other West Texas counties, Borden was swarming with claim filers in 1902. However, most would-be land owners were being discouraged by ranchers who wanted to keep farmers out of the country, and Scoggin and Fleming had no luck in the county. Fleming seems to have given up and returned to Clay county, but Scoggin stayed at Durham and worked as a cowboy for Wicker. In describing Durham to Ozella on May 28, 1902, Jake said it had a post office and a store, and that telephone connections were available at a ranch one mile away. He opined that while the Durham people were isolated, they were not asmuch so as people had been during the Dark Ages and that they had heard of Mt. Pelee (the volcanic Mt. Pelee in Martinique violently erupted in 1902) and a recent cyclone at Gloiad.

Scoggin's search for land during the next few months extended to Lynn and Gaines counties. In June, 1902, he went "up on the plains" and filed on two sections of land in western Lynn County but was not optimistic about having it awarded to him because of some problems concerning prior settlement. He next traveled over Gaines County in May, 1903, looking for suitable land. In company with two brothers, whom he identified only as "the Sellar's boys," (brothers of Mrs. Joe Wicker) Scoggin went to the Land Office in Stanton to file a claim. However, when he found the office guarded day and night by stockmen, he changed his mind. Jake wrote Ozella on June 14 that if he had filed, he would have had to pay the stockmen fifty dollars per section for the privilege and that while, as a cowboy, he could obtain their approval, he thought he might look farther before filing. As it turned out, his searches took him to New Mexico.

Before tracing Scoggin's activities in New Mexico, it is interesting to note various incidents in Borden County which he mentioned in his letters. Writing to Ozella on August 21, 1902, he had this to say about a revival in Gail:

There is a protracted meeting going on at Gail conducted by a traveling evangelist who was once a circus clown(.) He served 15 years as a clown in Sells Bros. Show. He was converted and went to preaching at once(.) Those who have heard him say he is a splendid preacher(.) I haven't heard him yet(.) Gene (Wicker) and I are going tomorrow. We will likely stay a few days as clowns usually catch our attendance and attention.

In the same letter, Jake related the following story about a local widow: Well I must tell you how brave the women are in this country, especially the widdows (sic) and old maids(.) There is a widdow woman living in this country by the name of Hill who has 7 girls and about 3 of them are on the old maid list (she won't let the bachelors go to see them either(.) They have a 6 sec. pasture in this pasture she lives with her 7 daughters and a small son or two(.) It is customary in this country when moving a heard (sic) of cattle to just take a course and go through the country so a man was moving a heard(sic) a few days ago and when he came near Mrs. Hill's pasture he did as usual sent a man on a head to let her know he was coming and would soon be in her pasture. So the head boss thought as it was the custom to go through pasturs(sic) he would go through the old ladies pasture any way but to his surprise when he got to the fence he was met by the old lady and two of her old maids armed with a Winchester and shotgun and dared him to tear their fence(.) They told him if he went through their pasture it would be the last pasture he would ever go through(.) The man saw the determination of the women and made up his mind it would be safer for him to go around even if it was several miles out of the way for him. Now don't you think we have brave women in this country(?) Several old baches in this country would be glad to (have) these brave heros for a wife but they are afraid to go to see them about it(.)

Jake also mentioned, at random, these activities: two neighborhood dinners and parties were held during the Christmas season of 1902 in Durham; Miss Florence Wicker was married on Sunday, January 4, 1903, to Mr. James Mealer of Oklahoma; Miss Keenie Mae Wicker, who had been teaching school in Scurry County, was recuperating from a fall from her horse; the people at Durham had organized a Sunday School in January; a railroad was expected to reach the area in the near future; and, sleet and snow had been so heavy that on January 1, returning from a trip to Big Spring, he had ridden forty miles in a snowstorm, to Durham and had been ill with a bad cold.

On July 1, 1903, after having returned to Durham from Stanton, Scoggin and the Sellars brothers renewed their search for land. They traveled over several counties in southwest Texas; and, finding nothing to suit him, crossed the state line into New Mexico. On August 9, Scoggin, in a bit of humor which was typical of him, wrote from Cloudcroft, that his folks called him a rolling stone and he guessed they were right because in just two years he had rolled "clear across Texas and half way across New Mexico." He was not sure which way he would "roll" next, perhaps off the west side of the Rockies or maybe back down the east slope. In the meantime, he had met and was boarding with an unidentified friend who had been reared with him in Coryell County, Texas, and who now lived in Cloudcroft.

It was fortunate for Jake that he met this friend. On August 10, he went to work for the New Mexico Timber Company only to have this job terminated six days later when his horse kicked and broke his leg below the knee in two places. For at least the next six weeks he was bedridden in the home of his friend whose family cared for him "like a brother."

After recuperating from the injury, Scoggin went to El Paso for a short time, and then on



December 15, at the invitation of the Sellars, who had finally found a place to settle near Alamogordo, he went to stay with them. He soon went to work with a railroad carpenter crew and held this job until about April 1, 1904, when he received a letter from Durham offering him the job of managing a ranch. Believing ranching to be better than railroading, Scoggin left New Mexico, arrived at Durham on April 7, and on April 10, took charge of the ranch at the salary of forty dollars a month.



J. K. SCOGGIN ON WHITE HORSE IN CENTER ON SCOGGIN-HUTCHINSON RANCH IN 1910.

Although Scoggin spoke of the ranch having 5 sections, it was enlarged to 6 sections. The owner was L. C. Hutchinson of Caddo Parish, Louisiana. Records in the County

Court House in Gail show that Hutchinson purchased from L. J. Golden on January 20, 1902, sections 311, 321, 323, and 353 of Block 97, Houston and Texas Central Railroad Company survey. A search of the records did not reveal additional purchases by Hutchinson, but on November 1, 1915, he sold two of these sections, 311 and 323, and two additional ones, 310 and 322, to Joe S. York of Borden County. Just when Hutchinson acquired the latter two sections and disposed of sections 321 and 353, has not been ascertained. Nevertheless, for part or all of the time between January 20, 1902, and November 1, 1915, the Hutchinson holdings included six sections of land in close proximity in Block 97, and from April 10, 1904, to April 20, 1915 (Scoggin's ranch records end on this date), J. K. Scoggin was the ranch manager. Moreover, after April 20, 1908, when a partnership was formed, the two men were co-owners of the ranch.

Scoggin's letters to Ozella Norwood increased in 1905 and 1906, but they contain little information about people and activities in Borden County. He did mention in October, 1905, that a new church had been completed in Durham and that a revival, held to observe the opening of the building, was poorly attended and there were no conversions. Also, Scoggin mentioned going to Snyder July 4 - 5 to observe the holiday and meeting a relative whom he had known as a boy. The man lived in Snyder, was "old and gray," and seemed happier to see Jake than Jake was to see him. This relative was possibly Ingram Durham Scoggins (Jake never ended his last name with an "s" but some of his relatives did). Better known as Pete Scoggins, I. D. had established in 1886, with Boley Brown, the 24 Ranch in Kent and Garza counties and by 1905 was making his headquarters in Snyder where he was involved in numerous business and ranching enterprises.

Scoggin's letters during these years reveal him to have been a man who possessed a good sense of humor and a great deal of practical wisdom. He was very individualistic, hesitant to reveal his emotions, and careful to avoid hurting others. He was closest to the Wicker family who, incidentally, also knew Ozella. Until 1905, when both began to examine their relationship, Jake was hesitant to think of his and Ozella's correspondence as anything more than communications between friends.

Only his letters survive to provide insight into their relations since most of his papers were burned when fire destroyed their daughter's home in 1941. Nevertheless, Jake was a lonely man nearly forty years old in 1905, and Ozella was thirty-five in that year. He was a cowboy on a small ranch in an isolated and sparsely populated West Texas county, while she was the operator of a millinery shop in a bustling North Texas city. He had very few social activities - a few picnics, barbecues, and parties a year - and though not a church member himself at this time (he joined the Methodist Church at Durham in July, 1908, occasionally he went to Sunday School and church; she had an active social life with many friends, male and female, and was an extremely active member of the Methodist Church. Finally, he had been orphaned as a child and was not as attached to his relatives as was Ozella who, still living with her aging mother and father, was very devoted to her parents.

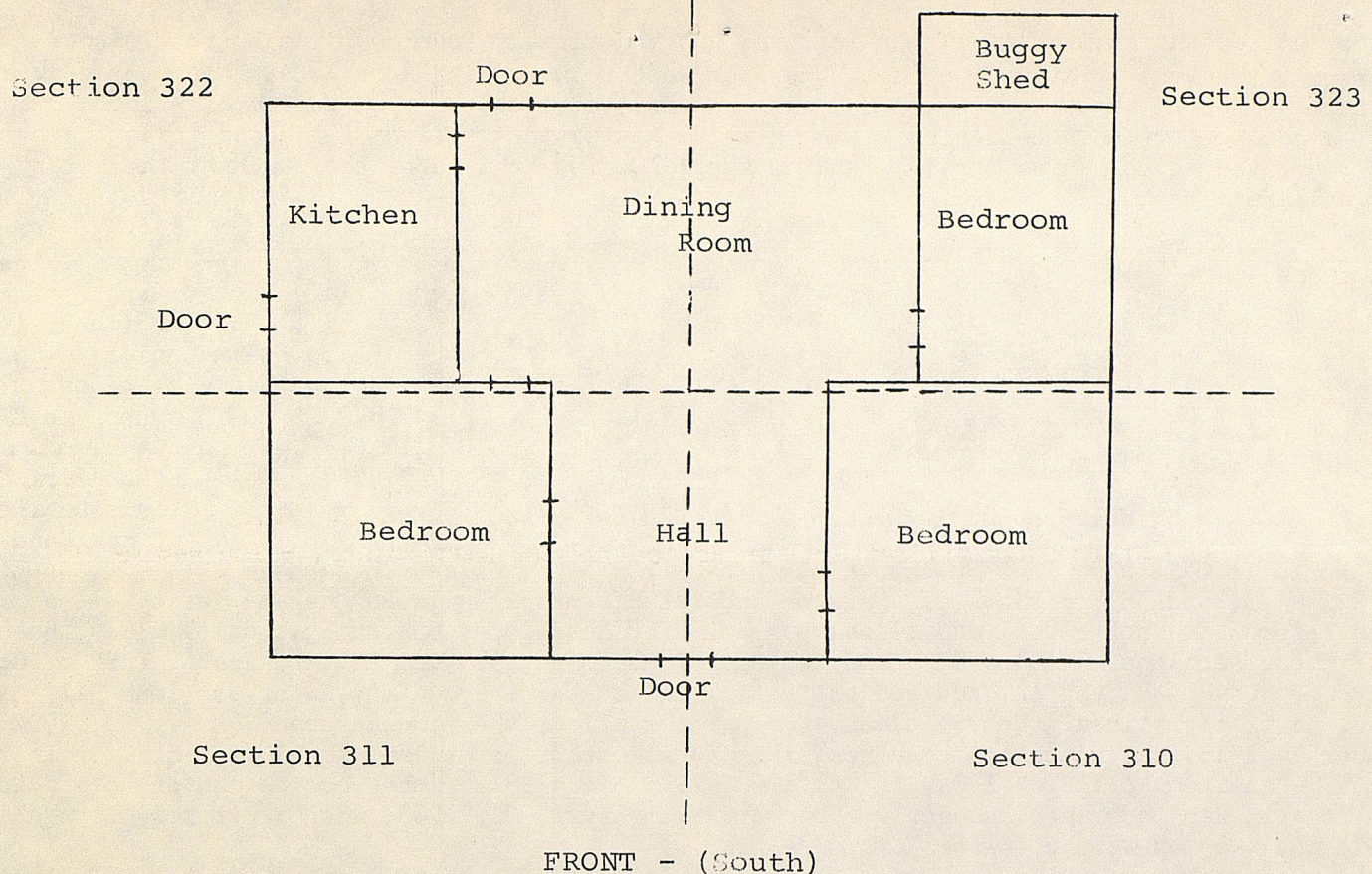
In spite of these differences, Jake travelled to Wichita Falls in October, 1906, and he and Ozella were married on the 21st. They returned to Borden County shortly and made their home in a house, now gone, which was uniquely situated across the corners of four sections (numbers 310, 311, 322, and 323) in Block 97.

In this house, on July 25, 1907, a daughter was born to the happy couple. Christened Martha Maurine, she became the pride of her father and of the cowboys he employed.



J. K. SCOGGIN (CENTER IN VEST) ON RANCH NEAR DURHAM, TEXAS IN 1910.





FLOOR PLAN OF THE SCOGGIN HOUSE

(Editor's Note: Many houses in West Texas in the Land Rush days were built so that they occupied more than one section of land. Since one was required to live on a "claim" continuously for three years, and to provide a token amount of improvements, such ~~as~~ a house, enabled members of a family to live in the same house and also to comply with the homestead requirements. Thus claims could be filed on each section and the four claimants reside in the one house. The three room dug out of the Widow Camp, mentioned in Vol. IX, No. 1, Borden Citizen, was built for this purpose.)

In the years that followed, the baby grew to be a young girl, going away to Snyder to attend school, the ranch prospered, and Jake and Ozella were active in the business, social, religious, and political life of Durham and Gail. In 1910, SCOGGIN was elected to the post of County Commissioner, Precinct No. 4 and two years later was re-elected to the post. Signing his bond as Securities in 1910 were W. A. Sealy and C. E. Reeder and in 1912, J. S. York and J. H. Wicker. During this period, perhaps partially attributable to his increased responsibilities, Scoggin's health began to decline. He suffered from a series of strokes after 1913 and sought cures while recuperating at various health spa's in the state.

Eventually, in 1915, Scoggin's declining health prompted he and Hutchinson to sell the ranch. On November 1, it was sold to J. S. York and shortly afterward, the Scoggin family moved to Wichita Falls where Jake attempted to work at various jobs but never recuperated and died in 1922.

The life of Jacob K. Scoggin in Borden County was at a time of significant county development, and his activities mirrored, to a great extent, the lives of many men who laid the foundations for successful living in the region of West Texas.

Earl H. Elam, Ph. D.  
Sul Ross State University  
Alpine, Texas

(Editor's Note: Dr. Elam is head of the History Department and Chairman of the Museum Committee at Sul Ross State University. He is also a member of several historical organizations. We would like to express our appreciation to him for sharing this information about his grandparents and Borden County for our enjoyment.)

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Purmela, Texas  
June 23, 1974

Borden County Historical Society  
Gail, Texas

I get your paper regularly, I enjoy it much. What ever became of Gertrude Greenhill? She and her older sister were raised by (school teacher) Mrs. Yeager. Mrs. Yeager taught school at Murphy school when I was a boy, two or three years.

Here is some history of my father, Jno. Gilmer Davis. Some people called him Gilmer Davis. My father was born in Grayson County, one mile of Howe, Texas. One and a half miles of Farmington, Texas, and eight miles of Sherman, Texas. He and his father and mother moved to Sterling County when my father was 21 years old. Grandpa Davis bought about 8 sections of land North of Sterling City and lived there until his death. My father bought a section of land near there and married



Rosa Sykes, a baptist preacher's daughter. She died with her first baby, leaving my daddy with the little girl, Rosa V. Davis. Jno. Gilmer Davis gave up that section of land for a bigger country that he was looking for. After looking around he found land that could be got for \$1.00 per acre in Borden County. He stopped his wagon on the old home place and set up his shack. He filed on four sections but finally lost two of them. In those days whoever filed on the land first had the best chance of getting the land. There was lots of land rushes in those days, the big cowman and his cowboys and the settlers. Whoever got there first would try to keep the other party from getting in the land office so they could file on the land, so that brought on some big skirmishes. Jno. Gilmer Davis was a big man, six feet two inches, carried about 220 lbs. The Sheriff took everything away from everybody that he would hurt someone with, so it boiled down to whoever was the biggest and the most of them that held the land office until the appointed hour. All the settlers always come after Daddy and he always went, night or day. He drove a pair of brown mealy nosed mules to a big ranch buggy. One of those mules died after one of those trips to Gail. No one knew that Daddy had royalty blood in his viens, but people should do all the good they can in the world, don't make any difference what kind of blood he had. Jno. Gilmer Davis' Grandma was Stonewall Jackson's sister and his great Grandfather on his mother's side was the pastor of the Mayflower church that came across for freedom of worships sake. Jno. Gilmer Davis got acquainted with May Mildred Hill in about 1902 and married her, which was my mother. I was born in the last part of 1903. May Mildred Hill Davis only lived about seven years after she married. May Mildred Hill was one of the 16 children of the Hills that owned the Borden Gray ranch back there at that time. Grandpa sold the ranch to the Grays in a early day. Jno. Gilmer Davis was remembered for helping the settlers get their homes in Borden County. Jno. Gilmer Davis made his home on his ranch in Borden County in the Southeast corner until his death in 1957, March 29. He was 89 - 3 months at his death. He ate his dinner and went and lay down, closed his eyes and went to his reward. He was once honored in the Murphy Community for helping keep the Baptist Church going for years and years. Never tasted tobacco in any form, never tasted beer, whiskey or never cursed in his life. Lived a long and healthy life.

This was written by his son, Marshall G. Davis, Purmela, Texas.

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## ON TO LAMESA

(Editor's Note) In the 1920's, a man by the name of John R. Williams of Gail, Texas, (the story goes) wrote a poem about "On to Lamesa" and the pitfalls and misfortunes that befell him in his journey. The poem had wide circulation and was read on the floor of two District Conventions of the West Texas Chamber of Commerce by a Lubbock citizen.... (Lamesa Daily Reporter, Dec. 6, 1970)

## "ON TO LAMESA"

By John R. Williams, Gail, Tex.

An old Rube left his home in  
the East  
Said he was going to Lamesa or  
bust a trace.  
He loaded his car with his kids  
and dogs  
And on the running board he  
tied his chickens and hogs.  
On the back of his car he scrap-  
ed off the rust  
And painted a sign "Lamesa or  
bust."  
Before he reached Fort Worth,  
he blew out a tube.  
But a thing like that didn't  
check Uncle Rube.  
He went into Abilene on the  
rim,

His radiator was leaking, his  
lights were dim.  
He searched through his pack  
for a kerosene lamp,  
And he spent the night at the  
Turist's camp.  
On his way to Snyder he lost  
his dog.  
He then ran out of grub so he  
killed his hog.  
He landed in Gail, badly in  
need,  
But he wouldn't pick cotton or  
cut any feed.  
Uncle Rube wouldn't work for  
money or check  
He was headed for Lamesa,  
and was going, by heck.  
When he got to the Cap Rock,  
she was hitting on one  
It looked like the old jitney's  
race was about run.

Her bearings were loose, her  
pistons in a jam  
But he was so near Lamesa,  
he didn't give a dam  
When he reached the camp  
grounds, in the south part of  
town,  
The sharks and land agents all  
gathered around  
They picked him and skinned  
him, and left him for dead  
Rube had the dying consol-  
ation in his head  
He had finally reached Lamesa,  
by Ned.  
Now he looks back o'er his jour-  
ney, to his old home so grand  
With her running streams and  
her fertile land  
And says - "To hell with La-  
mesa and her blowing sand,  
I'm going to Lubbock or Level-  
land."

FROM THE PENS OF OUR READERS: Zettie Cathey Richards, Portales, New Mexico writes, "I feel like my time must be about out for the newsletter, and I don't want to miss a copy. I came there with my parents in 1900 when just a child, went my first school to Mrs. Dorward. I enjoy reading about people I used to know."

Lawrence Tredway, Fresno, California, says, "My mother, Mrs. Bessie Tredway Wright, had the misfortune of falling and breaking her leg in September and has been bedfast since that time. She enjoys your publication immensely and does not want to miss a single copy."

MRS. MAYDELL ALDERMAN, McConnelville, Ohio, I read every word of the newsletter and wish to add my praise to you all. You are wonderful people.

ABY WILBOURN ROGERS, tells, "Back in 1891 to 1901 there was some rough times for the Wilbourns, as they traveled by wagon from the eastern states, and headed west to settle the rough ranch land. J. I. Wilbourn and his dad, J. W. Wilbourn decided to settle a section out west. This section is in Borden County. They lived in tents and wagons until a small house was finished. J. I. sold some lots and acres to his cousins, the Grahams. Then he gave ground for the Courthouse and land for the first school. J. I. Wilbourn faced the rain and snow storms from 1891 to 1901 and helped establish Gail and Borden County. In 1901 J. I. moved to Garza County and settled a section on the plains. He lived in a dug out until he got a house built. In 1904 his dad, J. W. Wilbourn died there and was taken back to Gail by wagon and was buried in the old grave yard. In 1903, J. I. Wilbourn's only son, Edward was married to Miss Cora Asberry. In 1904 they had a son who was born in the dug out, who was named John... John's first school was the old Gail school... This was told by Aby Wilbourn Rogers to Mrs. John Wilbourn. Mrs. Wilbourn writes that they enjoy visiting the Museum and Gail. Gail brings many sad and many happy memories to us.



# GAIL POSTOFFICE

According to the United States Postal Records, there have been nine postoffices in Borden County since the first one was established at Durham in May, 1887, with Anthony Blum as postmaster. This postoffice, discontinued in October, 1925, has a longer list of citizens who served as postmaster than any of the other offices in the county. (See Borden Citizen Vol. V, No. 4, June, 1970.) Probably you have never heard the names of some of the postoffices, like Belvey, Champ, Julia, Kingsmere and Morris, which was later located in Howard County. Champ was a later name for Julia, just as Gale was changed to Gail. The Borden Citizen has published articles on Tredway and Durham. We hope to have later articles on all the Borden County postoffices. This one has to do with the Gail Postoffice.

Gale was established February 19, 1891 with John I. Wilbourn as postmaster. Probably this postoffice was first operated in the Wilbourn home which later became a hotel, the social center of Gail for many years. In April that same year the name Gale was officially made Gail and Albert S. Miller became postmaster. There was quite a turnover of postmasters that year. In October, Samuel B. Linn was appointed, but was replaced in November by Peter O. Pruitt who remained postmaster until May, 1893. Joel W. Wharton became postmaster following Mr. Pruitt and

12

## RECORD OF BOX RENT COLLECTIONS

No. of box.	Name of box renter.	Amount.				No. of box.	Name of box renter.	Amount.			
		3d Qr.	4th Qr.	1st Qr.	2d Qr.			3d Qr.	4th Qr.	1st Qr.	2d Qr.
12						64					
13	Wm Jackson	25	25	25	25	65					
14						66	L. B. Worrell	25	25	25	25
15	J. G. Lerner	25	25	25	25	67					
16						68					
17	M. J. Long	35	35	35	35	72	Mazzie Luth	25	25	25	25
18	J. K. Mitchell	35	35		35	73	S. B. Verick	25	25	25	25
22						74	J. B. Worrell	25	25	25	25
23	G. B. Spear	25	25	25	25	75	H. C. Jolly	25		25	25
24	John Rogers	25	25	25	25	76	J. B. Worrell	25	25	25	25
25						77	R. M. Clayton	35	35	35	35
26						78	L. B. Worrell	35	35	35	35
32	R. J. Gray	25	25	25	25	82					
33	Oliver Allen	25	25	25	25	83	R. B. Wrenn			25	25
34						84	J. S. Fily	25	25	25	25
35	T. G. Hodson		25			85					
36	J. G. Lerner	25	25	25	25	86	S. B. Cory	25	25	25	25
37	J. L. Rogers	35	35	35	35	92	W. A. Clark			25	
38	L. J. Long	35	35	35	35	93					
41						94	Wm. L. Campbell	25	25	25	25
42	W. L. Godwin	25	25	25	25	95	J. C. Wright		25		
43						96					
44						97	Gail Bonney	35	35	35	35
45	W. K. Clark	25	25	25	25	98	T. G. Patterson	35	35	35	35
46											
47											
48											
51											
52	B. F. Chancellor	25	25		25	12	T. W. Holt		15	15	25
53											
54											
55											
56											
57	J. K. Mitchell			25			J. K. Mitchell			25	
58											
61											
62	O. B. Ranch		25								
63											

LIST OF BOX HOLDERS, 1919, THE RENT WAS 25 CENTS PER QUARTER



was succeeded by George Simpson in August, 1894, James N. Hopkins in January, 1901 (This date may be incorrect.), Miss Julia McCarty in February, 1902 and William S. Cathey in June, 1906.

When J. N. Hopkins served as postmaster the postoffice was located on the west side of the Courthouse square next to the Hotel and livery stable which Mr. Hopkins operated. He also had a drugstore and was Justice of the Peace for awhile.

Miss Julia McCarty was something of a legend. Today the tall dark, red haired girl would probably have been an advocate of women's lib. She had taught school "below the river bridge" riding horseback to Gail for the weekends, spent at the Hopkins Hotel. When appointed postmistress she built a small one room house in Gail to live in. Her family lived east of Gail on Bull Creek near the "big Pecan Tree". She left Gail soon after her tenure of office was finished and died soon afterward.

William S. Cathey had the longest tenure of office and many of us remember this short, slightly lame man who never complained about returning to the postoffice to let us have our mail no matter how late we got to town. His days were not limited to eight hours, either. A record of Postoffice accounts for 1919 (In the Borden County Museum) gives his salary for the year as \$493.72. This was based on a percentage of postage stamps canceled, less "War Tax" Revenue, added to box rent collected. After "Mr. Pat" died, his wife, Miss Pearl kept the postoffice. She was succeeded by Mrs. Gene Skeen. Mrs. O. D. Jackson is the present Postmaster.

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A postoffice was maintained below the Caprock about 12 miles north of Gail, on the then busy stage-mail route which ran through Gail, from Colorado City to the building town of Lubbock. This postoffice, called Belvey, lasted about a year, being discontinued in 1893 and the records moved to the Gail Postoffice. (Quoted from a newspaper clipping in the Museum.)

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Many visitors have visited the Borden County Museum in recent months. We have had out of state visitors from Belgium, Germany, Bermuda, Virginia, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Washington, Pennsylvania, Mississippi, Illinois, Arkansas and Oklahoma. Some of the former Borden County residents have been: Mrs. Nell (Hale) Simpson and daughters, Mrs. Sam Jolliffe and Mrs. George Hays of Midland; Mrs. Katie Lewis, the Doyle Justices, David Mitchells and J. B. Cotten, IV, all of Lubbock; The Paul and Rocky Mangums of Lockney; The Bill Sealys, Dewey Everetts, Miss Oleita Mitchell and Mrs. Clintia (Blackard) Williams of Arkansas, daughter of Ophelia (Dorward) Blackard, Snyder; The Don Burdetts, Matador; Vie and Alta Short, Hobbs, New Mexico; Eddie and Clara James and boys of Seminole, Coach and Mrs. James taught in Borden School in the 1950's; The Bob Lairds of Willcox Arizona and C. A. Hassells of Seagraves, Sisters of Dorothy Browne of Gail; The J. W. Wilbourns; Mrs. C. J. Engle of Big Spring; The C. W. Grissoms of Houston, Mrs. Grissom's father was a Borden County Cowboy in 1890's; Dick Jones, Fluvanna; Sam Shoemakers, Ralls; Waverly F. Coates, Farwell, Texas; Mrs. W. D. Mitchell, Edythe Currey, Lamesa; Desendants of Aquilla and Annie Spears were the Walter (Ruth Spears) Thompsons, of Crowell, Ferne and Adelia, daughters of Virgie and Susie (Spears) of San Angelo, Vie (Spears) Moore and family of Monahans, Aquilla Spears, Jr, Lee Spears of Dickerson, Mrs. H. B. (Lois) Carroll of Abilene and the Clark Spears;

Ann Miller (Museum Field Archivist) of Odessa was among our recent visitors; also Mrs. Christene Graham of Sweetwater, Mrs. B. T. Vessells, Pecos, and Mrs. Nolan Dunegan of Trent, Texas, whose grandfather was John Wilbourn, founder of Gail and long time resident. Bryan Halsell of Odessa, son of the noted author, H. H. Halsell was also a recent visitor.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. John Wesley Wilbourn of Big Spring, Texas, who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 24, 1974. Mr. Wilbourn's grandfather, J. I. Wilbourn, early Borden County settler, gave the land for the Courthouse square and cemetery in Gail, Borden County, Texas.

The Borden County Museum has recently received 2 jars and an axe head from the Vernon Wolf family of Borden County. Mr. Bert Massingale of Noel, Missouri has brought a hornet's nest to the Museum and the blacksmith tools of the late Walter Boshop have been given to the Museum by his daughters, Mrs. Carl H. Peterson and Mrs. McMahan of Corpus Christi, Texas, who also donated a horse hobble stake and four old school books that were used at the Willow Valley School.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Thompson (Ruth Spears) of Crowell, Texas have made a generous donation to the Borden County Museum.

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ROLAND MARTIN of Center, Texas, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Martin of Borden County was drowned on June 16, 1974 in Sam Rayburn Reservoir. He is survived by his wife, Carol, two children, his parents and three sisters, Mrs. Weldon Fannon, Mrs. Bobby Owens and Jo Ann Martin.

NATHAN MIERS of Post, Texas died on July 15, 1974. He was a former resident of Borden County..

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We need information and a picture of the Big Pecan Tree, that was on Bull Creek, East of Gail, just North of the highway going to Snyder. Please send your memoirs of picnics, etc. under this tree to Mrs. Vivian Clark, Gail, Texas 79738 or to Mrs. Edna Miller, Fluvanna, Texas 79517.



## THE OLD TIMERS AND THEIR NEW AUTOMOBILES

By Vivian Clark

I have heard of quite a few funny things that happened when the Old Timers in Borden County first began to buy new automobiles. Sometimes the drought let up long enough that they could pay off their mortgages and have a little money left. When they did, they would usually buy a car. It might be a model T Ford or it might be a \$5,000.00 Cadillac. Some cars were expensive, even then.

Having never driven anything but a team of horses or mules, some funny things happened. One old fellow bought a high priced new car and would only drive it in second gear. Somebody asked him why he did not shift to high. He replied, "Why shift to high - it will run fast enough in second!!" Another old cow-man bought a new car and drove it from Gail to Tredway. The road up the caprock was not very good. Just a wagon road. When he got back to Gail he was telling how his new car would pull. Says he, "I did not know if I could make it up or not but I just stepped on the differential and it pulled right on up!"

One of the natives drove up on the baldies in his new car, picked up another fellow and started to O'Donnell. Soon they came to a corner. The corners were square then, not rounded as they are now. He saw he couldn't make the corner, so he just ran on through the fence, out into the pasture, turned around and drove back through where he went out and went on his way, all without slowing up. Then there was the old timer who bought a new car, drove up to a gate, reared back on the steering wheel with all his might and yelled, "Whoa, whoa, you so and so!" And went on through the gate, tearing it down. Mr. Roper's driving speed was 20 miles an hour. If the road was paved, he drove 20 miles an hour. (Looking neither right or left.) If the road was a wagon track, his speed was still 20 miles an hour.

An old time rancher in Scurry County drove into Snyder and not finding a parking space, just crowded in between two parked cars. (I imagine we all feel like doing that sometimes.) He smashed a few fenders. After that, he would just drive to the edge of town and walk the rest of the way. Another old timer drove his new car to Clements feed store in Snyder. He forgot how to stop it, and drove right through the plate glass window into the store! Well, they did not have to carry the feed out to the car! Martin Taylor bought a new car and drove it down on main street to show it off. Then after helping whittle a bench for awhile, he got in a domino game. When it came time to go home, he forgot all about his new car and walked home. Sometime during the night, he thought about it and walked back to town and got his car!! John Cranfill, one of our native sons, was quite a mechanic. He bought a new Model T. In a few days, he decided it was not running right so he would just over haul it. Soon, the parts were scattered all over the car shed. I do not think he ever got it all back together and running again, and I expect there are parts of it still in the pasture!!

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Miss Arvie Bishop, daughter of Walter Bishop, old timer of Vincent, Texas, was teaching her first school at Willow Valley in 1928. One evening, she and two of her pupils, Beth and Perry Matthews were picking wild flowers on their way home from school. Perry said, "Ain't these daisies pretty?" Beth said, "Perry, Miss Bishop tried to teach you, it ain't - ain't, its hain't!"

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A horse buyer has been in this section of the country for a few days, he bought, so we are told, a bunch of mares and colts from J. W. Parker at \$12.00 for mares, and \$8.00 for colts. This is the cheapest bunch of horses that we have heard of selling in this section. Quoted from THE BORDEN CITIZEN, Published in Gail, Texas, May 30, 1901.

All letters, stories and comments are appreciated. Mrs. Pauline Clark is Memorial Chairman. Your subscriptions should be sent to Mrs. Sybil Holmes, Box 137, Gail, Texas 79738.

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