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THE LOCAL HISTORY APPROACH TO TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES:  
A COMPILATION OF HISTORICAL DATA ON BASTROP, TEXAS

by

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A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

It would be difficult to list the many people who have helped the author of this thesis in compiling the historical data of Bastrop. The names of some who served as direct sources for the facts written in the study appear in the bibliography. But there are many others who supplied verification of facts or who guided the writer to sources where she found material, whose names are not listed. The writer wishes to express her deep appreciation to all these and to others who encouraged her in this study through their interest.

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Lucile Jackson Perkins

The University of Texas  
Austin, Texas  
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C H A P T E R     I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Thesis Problem

It is the purpose of this study to present historical data which may be used to relate the concept of community change and development to certain other social studies concepts desirable for children in a third grade; to organize these historical data into a sequential story illustrative of the political, economic, social, and religious changes of Bastrop, Texas; and to show how these historical accounts which date back to 1830 may be used to teach certain social studies concepts of community development to children. It is believed that an exposition of methods for using local historical material for teaching social studies concepts in a third grade may serve as an illustration of the problem of this thesis.

Definitions

Webster defines the word "concept" as "an idea which includes all that is characteristically associated with or suggested by a term." In delineating social-studies

concepts, therefore, it is necessary first to define social studies for the implications therein. Wesley gives this definition:

The social studies are concerned directly with the web of relationships that develop between people and their environment, their institutions, and their organized activities.<sup>1</sup>

Specifically, Wesley says that "the term social studies is used to designate the school subjects which deal with human relationships."<sup>2</sup> The term was given official sanction in 1916 by the Social Studies Committee of the National Education Association. It is differentiated from the term "social sciences," which Beard describes thus:

They [the social sciences] are concerned with the actualities of human societies in development, with records of past actualities, with knowledge, with thought, and with methods of acquiring knowledge respecting the actualities of human societies in development.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar Bruce Wesley, Teaching Social Studies in Elementary Schools (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1952), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Charles A. Beard, The Nature of the Social Sciences (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 3.

The social sciences can be interpreted to include the collection and dissemination of knowledge without regard for the capacity of the layman to understand. The term "social studies" implies more, since the social studies must be understood by the listener or reader.

Marshall and Goetz give this definition:

The term "social studies" has come to be applied primarily to those techniques and knowledges designed to render our increasingly elaborate social life comprehensible to the individual.<sup>4</sup>

The Department of Superintendents of the National Education Association offers the following purpose of the social studies:

To give pupils the truest and most realistic knowledge that is possible of the community, state, nation, and world--the social and physical setting in which they live and are to live and make their way.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Leon C. Marshall and Rachel Marshall Goetz, Curriculum Making in the Social Studies (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup>Department of Superintendence, National Education Association, The Social Studies Curriculum, 14th Year-book (Washington: 1936), p. 57.



### Need for the Study

Effective teaching of the social studies not only involves an understanding of appropriate social living concepts for children on the part of the teacher but also a knowledge of how to provide classroom experiences which will be most meaningful in their learning of those concepts. More and more, teachers are finding in the community their richest sources of first-hand experience for children; and the local history approach to teaching social studies concepts is being used with increasing frequency. The importance of a knowledge of community backgrounds in the learning of social living skills by children is being reflected in the planning of modern curricula in line with the theory of learning which Wesley stated as "the reconstruction of experience."<sup>6</sup>

The part which the teacher plays in teaching the social studies is an important one which involves certain preparations, attitudes, and insights, as well as teaching skills. The Department of Superintendence describes the qualifications of the social science teacher as follows:

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<sup>6</sup>Wesley, op. cit., p. 100.

Next to a love and understanding of children, the first requisite for the teacher of social studies is a rich content background. There is no substitute for a wide and deep knowledge of the subject which the teacher is to present. The teacher must be acquainted with social conditions and trends in the past which have made history, and must have an acquaintance with source materials in the various phases of social studies.<sup>7</sup>

The teacher, then, who is to use the community as a laboratory in developing social-studies concepts, must have a thorough knowledge of the background of the community. Potter substantiates this theory:

Before the teacher can evaluate the children's experiences, she must have had community experiences of her own. She may acquire a fund of knowledge and understanding which she never has occasion to use with children, but this reserve will contribute to her personal satisfaction and enjoyment. "Partaking deeply of what a community has to offer" is truly the only way for a teacher to grow in an understanding of the social implications involved in everyday living.<sup>8</sup>

Having done the research necessary to provide an understanding of the community, past and present, the teacher

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<sup>7</sup>Department of Superintendence, op. cit., p. 283.

<sup>8</sup>Gladys Potter, "Exploring Your Community," Bulletin, Association for Childhood Education (Washington, D.C.: 1940), p. 6.

has become ready to guide pupils in a vivid and meaningful program which can be satisfying and productive for both teacher and children. Wesley makes these suggestions for effective teaching:

The teacher can develop and deepen interests by providing the necessary background of experience, and by then using materials, which explain, re-state, and expand the elements of the activity, and by seeing that the pupils go further and further into the problem or subject. The teacher must have a deep and continued interest in the materials, for interests, like bad colds, are highly contagious.<sup>9</sup>

Recognizing the values which a wide knowledge of historical backgrounds provides, it is seen that local historical data are needed for teaching social studies in a public school system. Bastrop, for example, is one of the older towns of the state, having a rich tradition of culture and of participation in the early development of Texas. Although abundant historical data exist, there has been no sequential history of the town written up to this time.

This study is made not only from the standpoint of personal interest of the investigator who is the teacher

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<sup>9</sup>Wesley, op. cit., p. 101.

of the third grade but also for the implications it may have for teaching social studies in other communities. It is believed that in any community data can be found that are at once interesting and illustrative of the concepts of change which the social studies teacher may desire to teach.

#### Procedures and Organization

The compilation of social studies concepts appropriate for primary children is based upon the opinions of recognized authorities revealed in recent books and articles. These concepts were the results of summing up such research.

The reports of the historical development of Bastrop, Texas, are original summaries drawn from numerous books and newspaper files, personal interviews, and studies of local historical documents and exhibits.

The suggestive methods with which the investigator intends to follow up this study in teaching social studies concepts are based upon research dealing with classroom experiments. Since community history has not been taught in an organized way in the Bastrop schools

heretofore, these methods are not presented as having been tried out as part of this particular study.

Although the research described general methods, the investigator suggests specific methods for teaching social studies in the third grade. It is felt, however, that these methods are applicable to all the primary grades, and even hold possibilities for use in the intermediate grades as well.

The conclusions which come in Chapter VIII present certain understandings which have been developed in the investigator in the process of making the study, which have implications for teaching the concept of change in the social studies program in the third year.

## C H A P T E R I I

### LITERATURE PERTAINING TO SCOPE AND SEQUENCE OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

As separate subjects, the social studies take in the fields of history, geography, and civics in the elementary grades, and economics and sociology at the secondary and college level. One finds, however, that social studies in the primary grades are much more inclusive. Lacey describes the social studies in the primary grades in these terms:

Taking the subject social studies in its broadest sense, it is the study of the social, industrial, and political life in the home, community, and world. In the primary grades, where subject matter barriers are of little consequence and where the entire range of experiences, interests, and activities of the children is made the basis for the selection of units of work, the term social studies may be very inclusive and may represent that body of instructional material which increases one's knowledge and appreciation of how people live and work together.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Joy Muchmore Lacey, Social Studies Concepts of Children in the First Three Grades ("Teachers College Contributions to Education," No. 548 [New York: Columbia University, Bureau of Publications, 1932]), p. 6.

In selecting appropriate social studies concepts the child's interest must be considered. Wesley makes this clear in this enlargement of learning as the reconstruction of experience:

Without experience, there can be no learning, but experience, itself, is not learning. Experience may or may not result in learning, depending upon the use that is made of it.<sup>2</sup>

If the experience is dull and unrelated, the child will not be stimulated to reconstruct it, and no learning will take place. If, on the other hand, the experience is full of interest and meaning for the child, he will not only be led to reconstruct his experience but also to expand it in other directions.

Gesell and Ilg give us these clues to the interests of the eight-year-old child.

He [the child] has an inherent sympathy of insight into other cultures, for he has the native honesty of childhood. This enables him to project his own life interests into the lives of children of foreign lands. . . .

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<sup>2</sup>Edgar Bruce Wesley, Teaching Social Studies in Elementary Schools (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1952), p. 100.

Eight is interested in time far past, in ancient times. He likes to hear and to read about things that happened when his own country was new. But his chronology is rudimentary. . . .

Eight is interested in books of travel, geography, and far-away times and places. . . .

He is eager to take trips to new cities, to visit museums, zoos, and places of interest. His spatial world is expanding even further through his interest in geography.<sup>3</sup>

Michaelis, in his study of child development as related to learning the social studies, says:

Important growth trends [in the third-grade child] include increasing ability to differentiate between reality and fantasy, growing language skills, more effective use of past experience, and increasing interest that extends outward from the immediate community to wider areas of experience.

The developing interests of eight-year-olds make possible more extended units in the social studies. . . . They may now undertake more intensive studies of aspects of living in the expanded community, such as transportation by trains or boats, wholesale market, water supply, and ways of securing food, shelter, and clothing. Clearer understandings of how people depend upon one another and help each other should be emphasized. These must be developed concretely through

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<sup>3</sup>Arnold Gesell and Frances L. Ilg, The Child from Five to Ten (New York: Harper & Bros., 1946), p. 165.



the use of excursions, dramatic play, and audio-visual materials, as well as through reading and discussion. A consideration of the ways in which people in the community meet needs for food, shelter, and clothing provides many opportunities for increasing insight into basic life processes.<sup>4</sup>

The content suggested by Michaelis for units in grade three includes:

Improving the community, community living, food, clothing, shelter, conservation, recreation, education, water supply, heroes, transportation, communication, boats and harbors, social living, holidays, the farm, seasons, children in other lands or communities, Indians, early man, and early settlers.<sup>5</sup>

Wesley lists the following topics as potential subject matter for the third grade:

Colonial life, Indians, people of other lands: Mexico, Brazil, the Philippines, China, holidays, primitive people, local history, local geography, biographies, hunting, farming, explorers, home, school, community, safety, cooperation, interdependence, citizenship, food, clothing, shelter, protection, local heroes, industries.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>John U. Michaelis, Social Studies for Children in a Democracy (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950), p. 66.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>6</sup>Wesley, op. cit., p. 44.

Obviously, these topics cannot all be explored exhaustively. However, an examination of the topics quoted reveals that a study of community history can provide the basis for understanding most of them.

Generally, the concepts desirable for third grade study are well outlined in Michaelis's quotation from the social studies program for the schools of California:

The social studies are those studies that provide understandings of the physical environment and its effects upon man's way of living, of the basic needs of man and the activities in which he engages to meet his needs, and of the institutions man has developed to perpetuate his way of life.<sup>7</sup>

The understandings involved may be divided into four general classes of concepts: political, economic, social, and religious. Political concepts include understandings of mutual protection as the basis for all democratic government and the individual's responsibility to the governmental policies of his community, state, and

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<sup>7</sup>As quoted in Michaelis, op. cit., p. 111, from The Social Studies Program for the Schools of California, State Department of Education, Sacramento, 1948, p. 3.

nation. Economic concepts include the basic needs of food, clothing, water, shelter, and fuel as the motivating factors in such activities as transportation, communication, and trade. The social concepts pertain to the influence of the physical environment upon man and the way he lives, the interdependence of people within a community, and the interdependence of communities themselves. Religious concepts develop the principle, indigenous to our country, of man's freedom to worship in his own way.

Having a knowledge of suitable concepts and understanding of the interests of third-grade children is the beginning of curriculum planning. The next step must be the implementation of these concepts through first-hand experiences. As Lacey says,

The wider the experience which children have with concrete objects and situations, the more accurate and full of meaning will be their concepts.<sup>8</sup>

Lacey's<sup>9</sup> study of primary children revealed that these children have many misconceptions about the most common social studies concepts which are being taught in the

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<sup>8</sup>Lacey, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

first three grades. Michaelis's statement largely explains this fact: "Rich concepts and functional generalizations can never be developed unless the child possesses the meanings involved in them." In this accent on meanings, he elaborates further: "The child's doing, feeling, and thinking as he interacts with objects and persons in his environment lead to the development of meanings."<sup>10</sup> It is for this reason that, as Wesley points out, the primary program is tending more and more to deal with persons, institutions, and activities that the pupil encounters in his immediate environment.<sup>11</sup>

In particular, community history is a fertile source from which to draw in developing third-grade social studies concepts. Quillen and Hanna have expressed the importance of the local history approach in this way:<sup>12</sup>

There exists in almost every local community examples of man's progress in every period of history and from all parts of the world . . . .  
by beginning the study of history in the local

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<sup>10</sup>Michaelis, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

<sup>11</sup>Wesley, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>12</sup>James I. Quillen and Lavone A. Hanna, Education for Social Competence (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, & Co., 1948), p. 312.

community, students gain direct experiences which will give concrete meaning to their study of the other times and places. At the same time, their understanding of contemporary life in their own communities will be deepened and broadened by comparing their culture with cultures distant in space and time. The increased insight thus gained should help them to participate more effectively in community living.<sup>12</sup>

Gibbons follows this same line of thought in his statement:

Through history, children were brought to an understanding of contemporary habits and ideas, to sense the inevitability and gradualness of change, to understand how difficult situations were met and solved in times past, and to develop loyalties to human values.<sup>13</sup>

In support of this idea of teaching the concept of change by means of local history, Hart expresses the understanding which the child receives from a study of community history:

{ The child who has been made familiar with this local history will feel that the traditions and annals of his birthplace are a rich

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<sup>13</sup>Jimmie Lee Gibbons, "Historical Development of the Social Studies Program in American Elementary Schools," unpublished Doctor's dissertation, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1953, p. 406.

heritage that he shares in common with every man, woman, and child in his neighborhood. He will have acquired an understanding of the varied national and racial elements that necessarily go to make up his community, and what each has contributed to the common good. He will have been taught to take a broader view of the position held by his hometown in the state and in the nation; he will appreciate what it stands for and should stand for. With such qualifications, he will surely become a more useful, more loyal citizen than will the lad to whom the place is an unmeaning checkboard collection of streets, sidewalks, and houses.<sup>14</sup>

Wesley terms the community the epitome of the world, providing instances of every fundamental social process, past and present.<sup>15</sup> Through the media of radio, television, movies, newspapers, and magazines, there have come to exist many elements of similarity in all communities. When children are taught to understand the changes which have taken place in a community since its beginnings, they are helped to gain insights not only into the development of the state and the nation as well.

The objectives which Quillen sets forth for

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<sup>14</sup>Joseph K. Hart, Educational Resources of Village and Rural Communities (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1913), p. 87.

<sup>15</sup>Wesley, op. cit., p. 113.

community education are (1) to gain an understanding of our evolving culture, through finding in one's own community the pattern for the development of similar communities; (2) to develop a wholesome framework of values through understanding not only what is but also what ought to be; and (3) to acquire social competence necessary to participate in activities of our culture gained from seeing how people have participated in the past and are participating in the present.<sup>16</sup>

In considering local history as the source of both concrete and vicarious experiences for achieving these objectives through developing children's social, economic, political, and religious concepts, it is necessary, first, to look at the interrelations of geography and history present in such an approach. The Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association effectively describes these interrelations in this way:

Only as the past helps the pupil to interpret the present is history useful. Only as geography helps the pupil to understand how man

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<sup>16</sup>James Quillen, "Education for Democratic Living," National Council for the Social Studies, 1938.

can alter his environment, and how man and his activity are conditioned by his environment is it helpful to the individual.<sup>17</sup>

Michaelis makes this statement:

. . . as children study life in the expanded community or a simple primitive culture, the major emphasis is not on how long ago, how far away, or number of square miles. From the child's point of view, it is more a matter of comparing and noting likenesses and differences in ways of living of others as compared with ways of living in his home and immediate community.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, in making his comparisons between ways of living during the beginnings of his community and ways of living as he sees them today, the child is made to see changes and improvements and to understand the activities in which man has engaged to bring about those improvements. Furthermore, he begins to understand the complicated structure of interdependence between people, their activities, and the geographical elements of the community, in making possible the modern way of life.

Through a study of food, fuel, shelter, clothing, and water supply of the early settlers and their ways of providing themselves with these necessities, the child

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<sup>18</sup>Michaelis, op. cit., p. 66.



realizes that the basic needs of man are still the same today, but his methods for supplying such needs have changed. He becomes conscious of the advances in transportation, communication, and commerce and of the effect of each new development, both on other developments and upon the way of life in his community. With the formation of the first mutually protective group for defense against the Indians, he associates the need for present-day civic organization for protection and advancement, and appreciates the part which each individual citizen plays in his support of and contribution to community organizations.

Potter states:

Too frequently children think of their own town as a "checker-board of houses and streets" that is more or less fixed. The environmental factors and the culture of the people who established the town are the keys to seeing it as a growing and developing thing different from other towns.<sup>19</sup>

Quillen and Hanna list the following values gained from a study of local history:

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<sup>19</sup>Potter, op. cit., p. 9.

1. A deeper understanding of the everyday life in which the individual participates and a basis for understanding problems of the state, nation, and world.
2. An interest in and love for one's own community, which lays the foundation for community loyalty and unity.
3. An understanding of the relation of ways of living to the geographic environment.
4. An understanding and appreciation of the contributions of other peoples and other cultures to the richness of daily living, which should result in an improvement of interethnic and intercultural relations.<sup>20</sup>

This appreciation of human achievement and its effect on the child is well expressed by Branom:

As a pupil studies about the past achievements of man, he begins to understand what a great debt he owes to those who have gone before him. This will cause him to think of himself, and he is likely to see that it is up to him to continue the work that has been started and to live in such a way that this world will be a better place for those who are to come after him.<sup>21</sup>

It is in keeping with this thinking that the historical data of Bastrop, Texas, have been collected with

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<sup>20</sup>Quillen and Hanna, op. cit., p. 312.

<sup>21</sup>Frederick K. Branom, The Teaching of the Social Studies in a Changing World (New York: W. H. Sadler, Inc., 1942), p. 30.

a view to helping children relate their concepts of community change to the political, social, economic, and religious developments in the world in which they live. The background material has been separated into these four conceptual areas and will be traced from 1830 to 1950 for each.

## C H A P T E R     I I I

### POLITICAL HISTORY OF BASTROP

#### Background for Settlement

Toward the end of the year 1820, Moses Austin, endeavoring to recoup his fortunes after a number of economic disasters, presented himself to the governor of Spanish Texas, Governor Antonio de Martínez, at Béxar. He requested permission to settle three hundred families in Texas, which, at that time, was virtually uninhabited except by Indians.

Governor de Martínez not only refused Austin's request but also ordered him to leave the province as soon as possible. Downcast, Austin left the building where he had his audience and walked toward his own lodgings. As he crossed the plaza, he met an old friend, Felipe Enrique Neri, Baron de Bastrop. This chance meeting was indeed fortunate, for out of it grew the American colonization of Texas.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph W. Steen, The Texas Story (Austin: The Steck Co., 1950), p. 59.

Of the personal life of the Baron de Bastrop little is known. According to his own statement as recorded in his will, he was a native of Holland. He came as a refugee to Louisiana, attempted to establish a colony there, and, failing, drifted to Texas and into the service of the Spanish government. At the time of his meeting with Moses Austin, Bastrop was serving as second alcalde of Béxar. His chief function was that of translating English documents for the officials and interpreting for strangers, because of his knowledge of the English, French, Dutch, and Spanish languages.<sup>2</sup>

Bastrop took an active interest in Austin's petition, and because of his position of honor and trust in Béxar, the Governor finally agreed to forward Austin's petition to his superior, recommending that it be approved. The Commandant General, Joaquín de Arredondo, gave his approval in January, 1821.<sup>3</sup>

Moses Austin then returned to the United States to prepare for the founding of his colony in Texas. Late

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<sup>2</sup>Margaret Belle Jones, Bastrop (Bastrop, Texas, 1933), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Steen, op. cit., p. 59.

in May, however, he became ill with pneumonia and on June 10, 1821, died. That summer, his son, Stephen Fuller Austin left New Orleans to take up his father's grant in Texas. He went first to San Antonio, then to Goliad, and then turned eastward to choose a site for his colony. He finally decided upon the valley lands lying between the Brazos and the Colorado Rivers as the most desirable location for his grant.<sup>4</sup>

It was Austin's plan to give to each settler who came with him one section of land, plus one-half section for a wife, one-quarter section for each child, and eighty acres for each slave. Additional grants were offered for the erection of mills or other establishments of value to the community. Austin was to have the land surveyed and, in return, the settlers were to pay him 12-1/2¢ per acre.<sup>5</sup>

Before he could complete his settlement, Mexico won her independence from Spain, and Austin found that his contract with the Spanish government would have no legal standing unless confirmed by the newly established Mexican government. He forthwith journeyed to Mexico City and

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<sup>4</sup>Steen, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

remained there for more than a year trying to obtain the necessary approval of the Mexican powers. During this time, Bastrop went among the Indians and treated with them, making every effort to insure the safety of the colonists under the Mexican government.<sup>6</sup>

In January, 1823, a general colonization law was passed by the Mexican government. Under the terms of this law, Austin's contract gave him the authority to introduce three hundred families into Texas. Each family was to receive a league (4,428 acres) of grazing land and a labor (177 acres) of farm land. Austin was to receive 22-1/2 leagues and three labores of land as a reward for bringing in the colonists. He was also given authority to found a town, organize militia, and control government until such time as a regular government could be established.<sup>7</sup>

On July 26, 1823, García, Governor of Texas, notified Bastrop of his appointment as commissioner of Austin's colony. Bastrop and Austin proceeded to the

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<sup>6</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>7</sup>Steen, op. cit., p. 64.

colony to issue land titles to the colonists who had settled there.<sup>8</sup>

By the spring of 1825, Austin's contract was complete, and three hundred families had settled in his grant. In that year, he was given a second contract which authorized the settlement of five hundred additional families within his colony. These were introduced into the colony under the terms of the new Mexican colonization Act of 1824. This act provided that impresarios were to receive five leagues and five labores (23,025 acres) for each unit of one hundred families introduced. Each family was to receive one labor of land for farming and twenty-four labores for grazing, a total of one league. The settler was to pay \$30 for his land, payable in three annual installments, the first of which was not due until four years after the grant was issued. A single man received only one-fourth of a league, but he received the additional three-fourths of a league when he married. A man marrying a Mexican woman received an additional one-fourth of a league, as did a family which came of its own accord to

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<sup>8</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 9.



the colony instead of being brought in by an impresario. Special grants were authorized for large families and for the construction of community improvements. Slavery was permitted but was not encouraged. Tax exemptions were granted for ten years, and the government pledged itself to make no change in the law for six years. Settlers were to be men of good moral character and followers of the Christian religion.<sup>9</sup>

Much of the credit for the passage of this liberal act should go to Baron de Bastrop, who, as the Texas member of the legislature of Coahuila and Texas at Saltillo, was still seeking to promote the best interests of the colony.<sup>10</sup>

In 1827, Austin was granted a third contract, which called for the settlement of one hundred families in a small area east of the Colorado and north of the San Antonio Road. This settlement was known as the Little Colony.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Steen, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>10</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>11</sup>Steen, op. cit., p. 69.

Austin chose his settlers with great care. Would-be settlers were required to bring satisfactory testimonials of character, and those who came without them were subject to expulsion from the colony at the pleasure of the empresario. Austin himself described them thus:

As enlightened, as moral, as good, and as law-abiding men as can be found in any part of the United States, and greatly more so than ever settled a frontier.<sup>12</sup>

Possibly, much immigration to Texas was stimulated by the panic of 1819. Many people had speculated in land following the War of 1812 and, being unable to meet their obligations, had to relinquish their holdings. They migrated into the West and Southwest, looking for homes and land.<sup>13</sup>

#### First Settlement at Bastrop

In Austin's petition for a third land contract in 1827, he stated that he had been solicited by several

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>13</sup>William Henry Korges, "Bastrop County, Texas: Historical and Educational Development," unpublished thesis, The University of Texas, Austin, 1933, p. 4.

of the inhabitants of Béxar to settle families at the Colorado crossing of the road from San Antonio to Nacogdoches,

. . . in order to found a town with a view not only to afford the necessary facilities to the travelers of that road but also to penetrate with the new settlement further into the interior of the country toward the Savage Tribes.<sup>14</sup>

In April, 1830, Austin and his surveying party, accompanied by Reuben Hornsby, Webber, Duty, and others who had previously made their selections of headrights, began surveying the town site at the crossing of the Colorado River and El Camino Real, or the old San Antonio Road.<sup>15</sup>

Prior to that time, in 1828, James Goacher opened a road or trace from the lower settlements to the Little Colony. In the fall of 1828, Thomas Thompson cleared land for a farma short distance below the Colorado

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<sup>14</sup>Eugene C. Barker (Editor), The Austin Papers, Vol. II, Part 2, pp. 1697, 1698, as quoted in Bastrop County History, Historical Records Survey, Works Progress Administration, 1935, Archives, The University of Texas, p. 2. Hereinafter cited as Bastrop County History.

<sup>15</sup>John Wilbarger, Indian Depredations in Texas (Austin: The Steck Co., 1935), p. 8.

crossing but did not move his family there for a time because of the hostility of the Indians. In the summer of 1829, Martin Wells settled near the river crossing and Moses Rousseau and James Burleson soon followed. That fall, Edward Jenkins brought his family to settle five miles south of the crossing on the west side of the Colorado.<sup>16</sup>

Most of the earliest settlers, Joseph Duty, Josiah Wilbarger, Robert Coleman, William Barton, and Jesse and Lehman Barker, settled near the river, but not actually on the town site itself. In 1830 a visitor to the region of the upper Colorado wrote that Austin had established a town called Bastrop and that two families and a bachelor were camping at the site.<sup>17</sup>

Martin Wells was probably one of these, and, likely, Reuben Hornsby was another. According to Wilbarger, Hornsby had stayed in Bastrop for a year or two before moving to his headright located nine miles from the present site of Austin in 1832.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>18</sup>Wilbarger, op. cit., p. 8.

In June, 1830, following Austin's survey of the town site, Miguel Arciniega, commissioner of the state of Coahuila and Texas, came to Bastrop to confer the state's grant on the new town. The following is a quotation, in part, from the original grant:

I, the said Citizen Commissioner, Miguel Arciniega, being on this day at the point or place on the Colorado River where it crosses the road which goes from Béxar to Nacogdoches, known by the name of Upper Road and on the left margin of the same river and considering it to be a very suitable and appropriate site for the founding of a new town which should serve as capital in the said colony as prescribed by Article 34 of said law and Article II of said instructions have seen fit to select said site and to found a town whose plane area contains four leagues of land or what is the same, One Hundred Million Square Varas, and its configuration is that designated by the attached plan; to which town I have given the name and title of the town of Bastrop. The measurements have been made by the scientific surveyor, Samuel P. Brown, and are as follows, to-wit:

The survey of the town proper with its streets, squares, blocks, and lots is entirely in accord with the plan delineated where everything may be seen in detail, according as prescribed by Article 12 of the instructions already mentioned; in conformity with which I have called the central square which is One Hundred and Twenty Varas on each side, Square of the Constitution; the block which is east of the same square I confer upon the authorities for the church and priests' houses; the block to the West for the municipal buildings; and Block \_\_\_\_\_ which is Northwest for the Slaughter house; the Block which is North and is No. \_\_\_\_\_

for the construction of a jail and house of correction; and Block \_\_\_\_\_ which is Southwest of the Square and South of the Municipal Buildings for a school and other buildings for public education; and the block which is at the extreme edge of the town on the Northeast side for the cemetery. The streets run from North to South and from East to West and are twenty varas in width as shown by the plan of said town made by said surveyor.<sup>19</sup>

According to this grant, the town was originally called Bastrop in honor of the man who had done so much for American colonization in Texas. However, the government of Coahuila and Texas established the municipality of Mina on April 24, 1834, in order to maintain closer supervision of the colony, and designated as the capital of the municipality the new town at the river crossing, also to be called Mina.<sup>20</sup> Thus became official the Division of Mina which Austin had sought to create as early as 1826 in an effort to establish some sort of protection for his lower colony.<sup>21</sup>

A governing body for the municipality of Mina

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<sup>19</sup>Translation of original grant to the Town of Bastrop as quoted in Jones, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>20</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 19.

was formed according to Mexican law, the Ayuntamiento, which performed the functions of modern city commissions and some of those functions belonging to county commissions.<sup>22</sup> At the first recorded meeting of the Ayuntamiento in Mina on August 18, 1834, R. M. Coleman presided and William Gorham acted as clerk. James Neil, Andrew Raab, Samuel Wolfenbarger, and R. M. Coleman were recommended as judges, or *alcaldes*, and Thomas H. Mayes was elected as surveyor.<sup>23</sup>

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#### Early Troubles with Indians

Life for the early settlers was hard. In addition to the constant struggle to provide themselves with the necessities of life, they were faced with the ever-present threat of hostile Indians. Their particular Indian foes were the Comanches.

John Jenkins, in recalling his first sight of the Comanches, describes them as large, fine-looking men,

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>23</sup>Original Minutes, Ayuntamiento of 1834, Municipality of Mina, in A. B. McLavy's Scrapbook, Bastrop.

wearing only small aprons attached to belts or girdles, which were made of cloth of all textures and colors, with fringes and tassels at the ends. They had keen black eyes without lashes and long plaits of coarse black hair hanging almost to the ground. On this particular occasion a war party came to the settlement occupied by the Jenkins family. Speaking Spanish, which one woman in the settlement could interpret, the Indians said they meant no harm to the whites as they were hunting their enemies, the Tonkawas. They were hungry and wanted meat.

The settlers were going to give them a calf, but they said, "No, must have big beef". If white man come to Indian hungry, Indian kill big mule or horse-- have no cows." The Indians forthwith killed one of the finest cows, and before it was thoroughly dead, were eating its raw liver most ravenously, while the warm red blood trickled from their mouths and down their chins. Two men who had gone hunting returned at that time with venison, which the Comanches took over and ate raw, too.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>John H. Jenkins, "Personal Reminiscences of Texas History Relating to Bastrop County, 1828-1847," unpublished manuscript in the Archives of The University of Texas, p. 5 et seq.



The Indians were usually not satisfied so easily. Because of their repeated attacks, the settlers in the outlying country near Bastrop had to build stockades to protect themselves. Above the town in 1830, a blockhouse was erected by John T. Webber. Another stockade was built at Alum Creek. The Cottle, Highsmith, Samuel Craft, Parker, and Ridgeway families settled here. Ridgeway later moved to a site near the present town of Paige and built a stockade, but because of Indian forays had to move back to Alum Creek. A group of settlers from Georgia and Alabama, under the leadership of John G. McGehee, settled near the Edward Jenkins homestead in the region later known as Hill's Prairie, and a stockade was built there with the natural bluff overlooking the river forming one side of it.<sup>25</sup>

In the town of Bastrop, a stout stockade was built at the site of the present courthouse. When an Indian alarm was given by means of firing one of two small cannon there, the women, children, and old men rushed inside its walls, while the able-bodied men and boys scoured

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<sup>25</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 3.

the country to meet the Indians.<sup>26</sup>

The Indians were particularly covetous of the horses of the settlers. Wilbarger relates that upon one occasion, a party of Indians came into the settlements below the town of Bastrop and stole a lot of horses while the people were at church. A man who had remained at home discovered them, ran to church, and gave the alarm. General Burleson, with only ten men, started in immediate pursuit and followed the trail that evening to Piney Creek, near town. Next morning, reinforced by eight men, the group continued its pursuit and overtook the enemy near the Yegua. The horses were recovered, and six Indians were killed in the conflict.<sup>27</sup>

One trap, baited with horses, however, backfired. In the spring of 1833, Martin Wells and his son, who had ridden out of Mina, returned in great haste to report Indians lurking in the hills who were apparently intent on mischief. Thinking to trap the Indians, the men of the

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<sup>26</sup>Mrs. Mary Ann McDowall, "A Little Journey through Memory's Halls," unpublished manuscript, 1927, pages not numbered. This manuscript is in the possession of Mrs. McDowall's great-nephew, H. N. Bell of Bastrop.

<sup>27</sup>Wilbarger, op. cit., p. 206.

town staked horses at Gill's Branch and left them without a guard while they went to eat supper. They intended to come back later that night when they thought the Indians would be likely to try to steal the horses. When they did come back, the horses were gone. The Indians, in ambush, had watched the whole maneuver and had seized the opportunity to steal the horses as soon as the men had gone. This episode left the little village almost destitute of horses.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps the best-known of the many Indian incidents of Bastrop is that of Josiah Wilbarger. His brother, John Wilbarger, gives us the story:

In the month of August, 1833, a man named Christian and his wife were living with [Reuben] Hornsby. Several young unmarried men were also stopping there. This was customary in those days, and the settlers were glad to have them for protection. Two young men, Standifer and Haynie, had just come to the settlement from Missouri to look at the country. Early in August, Josiah Wilbarger came up to Hornsby's, and, in company with Christian, Strother, Standifer, and Haynie, rode out in a northwest direction to look at the country. When riding up Walnut creek, some five or six miles northwest of where the city of Austin stands, they discovered an Indian. He was hailed but refused to parley with them, and

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

made off in the direction of the mountains covered with cedar to the west of them. They gave chase and pursued him until he escaped to cover in the mountains near the head of Walnut Creek, about where James Rogers afterwards settled.

Returning from the chase, they stopped at noon to refresh themselves, about one-half a mile up the branch above Pecan Spring, and four miles east of where Austin afterwards was established, in sight of the road now leading from Austin to Manor. Wilbarger, Christian, and Strother unsaddled and hobbled their horses, but Haynie and Standifer left their horses saddled and staked them to graze. While the men were eating, they were suddenly fired on by Indians. The trees near them were not large and offered poor cover. Each man sprang to a tree and promptly returned the fire of the savages, who had stooped up afoot under cover of the brush and timber, having left their horses out of sight. Wilbarger's party had fired a couple of rounds when a ball struck Christian, breaking his thigh bone. Strother had already been mortally wounded. Wilbarger sprang to the side of Christian and set him up against his tree. Christian's gun was loaded but not primed. A ball from an Indian had burst Christian's powder horn. Wilbarger primed his gun and then jumped again behind his own tree. At this time Wilbarger had an arrow through the calf of his leg and had received a flesh wound in the hip. Scarcely had Wilbarger regained the cover of the small tree, from which he fought, until his other leg was pierced with an arrow.

Until this time Haynie and Standifer had helped sustain the flight, but when they saw Strother mortally wounded and Christian disabled, they made for their horses, which were yet saddled, and mounted them. Wilbarger . . . ran to overtake them, wounded as he was, for some distance, when he was struck from behind by a ball which penetrated about the center of his neck and

came out on the left side of his chin. He fell, apparently dead, but though unable to move or speak, did not lose consciousness. He knew when the Indians came around him--when they stripped him naked and tore the scalp from his head. He says that, though paralyzed and unable to move, he knew what was being done, and that when his scalp was torn from his skull, it created no pain from which he could flinch, but sounded like distant thunder. The Indians cut the throats of Christian and Strother, but the character of Wilbarger's wound, no doubt, made them believe his neck was broken, and he was dead. This saved his life.

When Wilbarger recovered consciousness, the evening was far advanced. He had lost much blood, and the blood was still slowly ebbing from his wounds. He was alone in the wilderness, desperately wounded, naked, and still bleeding. Consumed by an intolerable thirst, he dragged himself to a pool of water and lay down in it for an hour, when he became so chilled and numb that with difficulty, he crawled out to dry land. Being warmed by the sun and exhausted by loss of blood, he fell into a profound sleep. When awakened, the blood had ceased to flow from the wound in his neck, but he was again consumed with thirst and hunger.

As night approached, he determined to go as far as he could toward Reuben Hornsby's, about six miles distant. He had gone about six hundred yards when he sank to the ground exhausted, under a large post oak tree, and well nigh despairing of life. As he lay there, he distinctly saw, standing near him, the spirit of his sister, Margaret Clifton, who had died the day before in Florissant, St. Louis County, Missouri. She said to him: "Brother Josiah, you are too weak to go by yourself. Remain here, and friends will come to take care of you before the setting of the sun." When she had said this, she moved away in the direction of Hornsby's house. In vain, he besought her to remain with him until help would come.

Haynie and Standifer, on reaching Hornsby's, had reported the death of their three companions, stating that they saw Wilbarger fall and about fifty Indians around him, and knew that he was dead. That night, Mrs. Hornsby started from her sleep and waked her husband. She told him confidently that Wilbarger was alive; that she had seen him vividly in a dream, naked, scalped and wounded, but that she knew he lived. Soon she fell asleep and again Wilbarger appeared to her alive, so vividly that she again woke Mr. Hornsby and told him of her dream, saying: "I know that Wilbarger is not dead." So confident was she that she would not permit the men to sleep longer but had their coffee and breakfast ready by daybreak and urged the men at the house to start to Wilbarger's relief.

The relief party consisted of Joseph Rogers, Reuben Hornsby, Webber, John Walters, and others. As they approached the tree under which Wilbarger had passed the night, Rogers, who was in advance, saw Wilbarger, who was sitting at the root of a tree.

There were no telegraphs then and the people concerned had no way of knowing that Margaret, Wilbarger's sister, had died the day before Wilbarger was scalped, seven hundred miles away.

Wilbarger lived eleven years more. The soft spot on his head never completely healed. His wife used a black silk dress which had been part of her trousseau to make him caps which he wore.<sup>29</sup>

Joseph Rogers, Captain John Harvey, Captain McCullum, James Alexander, and his son are a few of the many

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<sup>29</sup>Wilbarger, op. cit., p. 8 et seq.

whom John Wilbarger noted as having been killed in Indian attacks. Mrs. Kate Jenkins Dechard records that Edward Jenkins came out one morning to look after some stock. He did not come back but was found later by some friends, killed and scalped, sitting under a large pecan tree out in a corn field.<sup>30</sup>

In the winter of 1838, the Indians were exceedingly hostile and made frequent raids on Bastrop. People had to keep their stables and lots well locked and guarded to prevent the horses from being stolen. When the Indians found that they could not get into the stables, they often revenged themselves by shooting the animals through crevices and bars with arrows.

One very dark night in January of that year, John Eggleston happened to be walking on the street near the lot of a neighbor named Anderson. Hearing a rattling of the chain at the gate and thinking that probably someone was trying to enter it, he decided to investigate. As he approached the gate, he thought he heard the grunting

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<sup>30</sup>Kate Jenkins Dechard, "Bastrop History Rich in Lore," American Statesman, October 17, 1937, reprinted in the Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition, in preparation. Hereinafter cited as Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

of hogs and saw shapes moving in the dark which he took to be hogs. As he turned away, satisfied, an arrow struck him in the breast. He was still able to run from the place, crying "Indians!" Men coming in response to the alarm, tried to pursue the Indians but because of the dark were not able to do so. Eggleston lived only three days longer.<sup>31</sup>

When a man was killed, or died, he was buried, and the earth was packed and smoothed above the body until perfectly level. Then a fire was built upon the spot and left burning. This was all done to disguise the burial place and keep Indians from digging up the bodies and taking scalps.<sup>32</sup>

Not all the Indians were hostile. Smithwick recounts one incident in which the Lipans discovered a Comanche encampment and hastened to the settlements to give the alarm. They also offered to assist in dislodging the Comanches.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Wilbarger, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>33</sup>Noah Smithwick, The Evolution of a State (Austin: The Steck Company, 1935), p. 215.



The Couchattas were worrisome Indians who stole horses and then turned them loose. The Caddos were friendly but finally began to steal. At Wood's Prairie, they stold corn until serious damage was done. Ten or twelve of the settlers went to the Caddos' camp and demanded that the stealing be stopped. A mule was given by the Indians as compensation to the white men, and the calumet was smoked.<sup>34</sup>

The Tonkawas were not by nature friendly, but, because of the mutual enmity toward the Comanches which they shared with the settlers, they gave the white men little trouble. Little is said of the Karankawas. Mrs. Elizabeth Wilkins, at some time during her fifty-three years in Bastrop County, encountered some of them and described them as "indescribably filthy." They would exchange great quantities of fish for an alligator, and were particularly fond of terrapin and buzzard meat. They wore long plaited hair which was decorated with polecat tails, feathers, etc. They tattooed their flesh by scratching their arms and legs with gars' teeth and rubbing in gun powder.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Jenkins, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>35</sup>Emma Holmes Jenkins, "Reminiscences from Mrs. Elizabeth Wilkins," Bastrop Advertiser, September 24, 1887.

## War with Mexico

During these years of early settlement, dissatisfaction with the Mexican government had been growing. Some of it was based upon the fact that the colonists felt that they lacked sufficient voice in the state legislature of Coahuila and Texas. Some of it was caused by Mexico's increasing disinclination to allow American colonists to become too numerous because of the fear that the United States might wish to add Texas to her expanding territory. Both American and Mexican elements regarded each other with distrust and lack of understanding. The head of the government in Mexico City was too far away to act with dispatch in matters requiring its arbitration.

In 1832 and again in 1833, consultations were called in San Felipe for the purpose of discussing the political status of Texas. Texans were eager to become a state of Mexico separate from Coahuila. In 1832 Mina was represented by Silas Dinsmore and Samuel Hoyt.<sup>36</sup> At the Consultation of 1833, it was represented by Alexander Farmer, Thomas J. Gazely, Eli Mercer, and Stephen F. Slaughter.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Biographical Directory of the Texan Conventions and Congresses, 1832-1845 (Austin, Texas, 1941), p. 15.  
Hereinafter cited as Biographical Directory.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

These meetings were not successful in improving relations with Mexico.

Yoakum tells:

The first step toward an independent organization in Texas was through committees of safety. The first committee of safety was appointed at Mina on the 17th day of May, 1935. It was chosen, not in reference to a rupture with Mexico, but as a consequence of the repeated outrages of the Indians. The people assembled on that day to make some arrangement for their protection. Samuel Wolfenbarger was called to the chair and J. W. Bunton appointed secretary. A previous meeting of the Ayuntamiento and a few citizens had convened on the 8th of the month and nominated D. C. Barrett, John McGehee, and B. Manlove, as a committee of safety. The meeting of the 17th confirmed it, and added to it the names of Samuel Wolfenbarger and Edward Burleson. This example was soon followed by all the municipalities.<sup>38</sup>

It was the function of the Committee of Safety to secure arms and ammunition and disseminate information important to the county.<sup>39</sup>

In November of that year, a third consultation was held at which Mina was represented by Don Carlos Barrett, Edward Burleson, R. M. Coleman, James Seaton Lester,

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<sup>38</sup>H. Yoakum, History of Texas (Austin, Texas: The Steck Co., 1935), p. 337.

<sup>39</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 249.

Bartholomew Manlove, and R. M. Williamson.<sup>40</sup> This meeting was followed in March of the following year, 1936, by the Convention of 1836, at which Texas declared her independence from Mexico. John W. Bunton, R. M. Coleman, and T. J. Gazely took part in this historic event.<sup>41</sup>

When the conflict with Mexico actually began, a company was organized about ten miles below Bastrop at what is now known as the "Old Burleson Place," under Captain Jesse Billingsley. In February, 1936, the company went to Gonzales to join Edward Burleson's regiment at the appointed rendezvous.<sup>42</sup>

After the fall of the Alamo, it was generally conceded that the Mexican army would advance through the region of Bastrop against Gonzales, and the women and children who had been left in Bastrop fled from the town. General Burleson, who, with the Texan army, had retreated to Fayette County, detailed Green-leaf Fisk, Edward Blakey, Walker Willson, and John Jenkins to go back to Bastrop and look after the families there. Jenkins, who was fifteen

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<sup>40</sup>Biographical Directory, p. 19.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>42</sup>Jenkins, op. cit., p. 34.

years old at the time, related that at "the Grassmire place," they met eight or ten families while others had gone on. Here he drove cattle and helped with the ups and downs of refugee life--which was a difficult life, with women and children wading through mud and water over the very worst of roads by day and sleeping tentless by night.<sup>43</sup>

Heavy rains had swollen the rivers and mired the earth. It took one party Jenkins was helping one whole day to go four miles in the Brazos bottom. Wagons would bog down, and women would have to get out and struggle through the heavy mud, sometimes with babies in their arms. And "one excellent lady, according to Jenkins, "a Mrs. Wilson who was rather fat, bogged down, too, and had to be pulled out."<sup>44</sup>

In Washington County on the Brazos, they met neighbors who, having left their families safe at Old Washington, were on their way back to Bastrop County to collect and run off stock from invading Mexicans. These men brought word from Jenkins' mother that he had better turn back to Bastrop and help them.

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 40-41.

<sup>44</sup>Kate Jenkins Dechard, loc. cit.

They went hurriedly to Bastrop. There they found Colonel Williamson, often known as "Three-legged Willie," with a small company of men stationed there for its protection.<sup>45</sup>

After rounding up some stock near Bastrop, Jenkins and another young boy were left in charge of the herd just across the river west of Bastrop, while the other men went on down the Old San Antonio Road to round up more cattle. The next morning, before daybreak, the two boys saw what they took to be a Mexican scout approaching, and later, the whole Mexican army, so they thought, came into sight. They hastily took to the bottom to hide, when to their consternation the whole army took after them. Concealed the best they could manage, the boys awaited their enemies.

But the scout proved to be a Delaware Indian from the far north who knew nothing of the revolution but who had a very fine load of beaver hides which he wanted to sell. The "Mexican army" was the herd of cattle the men had collected and were driving out of the country.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Jenkins, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>46</sup>Dechard, loc. cit.

The four young men left Bastrop with their cattle the following morning. The next day a Mexican division under General Cos drove Colonel Williamson's little company out of Bastrop and pillaged the town, burning two houses. The Indians came in after the Mexicans had departed and wreaked further destruction on the town.<sup>47</sup>

Noah Smithwick, who was one of the company which had been left to guard Bastrop, describes the countryside in the wake of the "runaway scrape," as the evacuation of the town was later called:

The desolation of the country through which we passed beggars description. Houses were standing open, the beds unmade, the breakfast things still on the tables, pans of milk moulding in the dairies. There were cribs full of corn, smoke houses full of bacon, yards full of chickens that ran after us for food, nests of eggs in every fence corner, young corn and garden truck rejoicing in the rain, cattle cropping the luxuriant grass, hogs, fat and lazy, wallowing in the mud, all abandoned. Forlorn dogs roamed around the deserted homes, their doleful howls adding to the general sense of desolation. Hungry cats ran mewing to meet us, rubbing their side against our legs in token of welcome. Wagons were so scarce that it was impossible to remove household goods, many of the women and children, even, had to walk. Some had no conveyance but trucks, the screeching of which added to the horror of the situation. One young lady said she walked with a bucket in hand

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<sup>47</sup>Jenkins, op. cit., p. 42.

to keep the truck on which her mother and their little camping outfit rode from taking fire.<sup>48</sup>

News of the Battle of San Jacinto and of the capture of Santa Anna reached the run-aways soon after they had crossed the Brazos River. A few, still apprehensive, went on east to safety, but the majority returned to their homes in the wilderness. Those who returned had to start all over again, but they did it with greater courage because the land was now their own.<sup>49</sup> In 1837, the rumor of another Mexican invasion precipitated the settlers into another "run-away scrape." They went fifteen miles down the river to L. C. Cunningham's farm before they learned that the rumor was not true.<sup>50</sup>

The following names are recorded in the General Land Office of the State of Texas as Bastrop men who engaged in the Battle of San Jacinto, April 21, 1836:

Colonel Edward Burleson, 1st Regiment  
Texan Volunteers. Company C. Jesse Billings-  
ley, Captain; Micah Andrews, First Lieutenant;  
James A. Craft, Second Lieutenant; Russell B.  
Craft, First Sergeant; William H. Magill,

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<sup>48</sup>Smithwick, op. cit., p. 129.

<sup>49</sup>Dechard, op. cit.

<sup>50</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 4.



Second Sergeant; Campbell Taylor, Third Sergeant; Privates: L. S. Cunningham, John Heron, Preston Conlee, Jackson Berrey, Jefferson Barton, Dempsey C. Pace, Lemuel Blakey, George Self, Thomas Davy, Jacob Standeford, Wayne Barton, Sampson Connell, Logan Vanderveer, Washington Anderson, William Standerford, William Simmons, George Green, George B. Erath, John W. Bunton, William Cresswell, Samuel McClelland, Lewis Goodwin, Willis Avery, Jesse Holderman, Charles Williams, Aaron Burleson, Calvin Gage, Martin Walker, Garrett E. Brown, Robert M. Cravens, Walker Wilson, Prior Holden, Thomas H. Mays, A. M. Highsmith, Thomas M. Dennis, James R. Pace, John Hobson, V. M. Bain, Robert Hood, Dugald McLean, Thomas A. Graves, James Garwood, James Curtis.<sup>51</sup>

#### The Republic of Texas

With the victory over Mexico won, it now became time for the new republic to set up its government under the constitution drawn up by the Convention of 1836. The first congress of Texas met in regular session from October 3 to December 22, 1836, in Houston and again from May 1 to June 13, 1837. To this congress Jesse Billingsley went as representative and James Seaton Lester went as senator from Mina.<sup>52</sup>

On December 18, 1837, an act was passed in the

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<sup>51</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>52</sup>Biographical Directory, p. 23.

Congress of Texas to incorporate the town of Mina, and on that same day a joint resolution was made and approved to change the name of the county and town of Mina to Bastrop.<sup>53</sup> At that time the present system of city government was provided for, which included a mayor, a city council made up of five aldermen, a city clerk, a city attorney, and a city marshall.<sup>54</sup>

Bartholomew Manlove was the first mayor of the city of Bastrop.<sup>55</sup>

Elections were held on April 8, 1837, for county officials and the first meeting of the County Court was held on April 14. A special session of the Court was held on April 18, with Andrew Rabb, Chief Justice, William Gorham, Clerk, and Samuel Craft, Associate Justice.<sup>56</sup>

Smithwick noted information concerning the first seals of office for Bastrop County:

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<sup>53</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>54</sup>H.P.N. Gammel, The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897 Vol. I (Austin, Texas: Gammel's Book Store, 1898), p. 1379.

<sup>55</sup>Interview with J. S. Milton, July 7, 1954.

<sup>56</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 5.

My next public service, done in a private capacity, however, was the cutting of the first seals of office for Bastrop County.

The seals--three in number--were for the county judge, clerk, and sheriff. They should have been preserved as interesting relics, both of the county and state, they being made of pieces broken from a six-inch shell, of which there were a number lying around town. There were two theories to account for their presence, either or both of which may have been correct. One that Conrad Ronrer, a teamster in government employ, brought them from the Alamo as trophies of victory after its surrender to the Texans in 1835. The other--and I am inclined to think the correct version--that when Gaona's division of the Mexican army came on there in the spring of 1836, they expected to find the town fortified and came prepared to shell us out; but finding it abandoned and being in haste to join Santa Anna, they left the shells and quite likely other heavy missiles, as the roads were very wet and boggy. Having no appliances for melting the metal, I laid the shell, which was about an inch thick, on the anvil and broke it with a sledge hammer, pressing the blocks down to their required size and shape with chisels. Andrew Rabb was judge, Richard Vaughn, sheriff, and William Gorham, clerk.<sup>57</sup>

On September 25, 1837, the District Court met for the first time with Richard Vaughn, sheriff, and Greenleaf Fisk, clerk, in attendance. The judge not being present, the court adjourned until the next day. The same procedure was repeated for several days, with no

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<sup>57</sup>Smithwick, op. cit., pp. 198-199.

judge in attendance. On October 29, 1838, the District Court met with R. M. Williamson, Judge of the Third Judicial District, presiding. James M. Long, deputy sheriff, and William Gresson, clerk pro tem, were present. The court tried thirty-nine civil cases, mostly for debt; five assault and battery cases; four breach of revenue laws; seven breach of gambling laws; forty-four cases of issuing change notes; and four grand larceny cases. All the criminal cases were styled "The Republic of Texas" vs. the defendant.<sup>58</sup>

In the fall of 1837, the first commission appointed to seek a site for the capital of the new republic reported as follows:

We will first present Bastrop as a site possessing some advantages over any other, such as the best of pine and cedar timber, and other advantages not surpassed, having as good water as any other, being located on a navigable stream not more than one hundred and ten miles from schooner navigation.<sup>59</sup>

It further reported that Bastrop was situated in fine

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<sup>58</sup>Records of the District Court, Vol. A, p. 1 et seq.

<sup>59</sup>"The Seat of Government of Texas," Southwest Historical Association Quarterly, X (October, 1906) 142.

country, having a front on the river of one mile and a half. Most of the tillable land on the front was claimed by private individuals, but the headright above it was good land, if it could be obtained.

Accompanying the commissioners' report was a proposition in which the people of Bastrop instructed their senator and representatives in Congress to relinquish to the government the unappropriated part of the town tract, about three leagues and three quarters, and to transfer all moneys due on the sale of the town lots already made, amounting to about seven thousand dollars. They further authorized John G. McGehee to pledge an additional two and one-fourth leagues of land or five thousand dollars in the event that Bastrop was chosen as the capital.<sup>60</sup>

It is interesting to note that the town is here referred to as Bastrop, although this report was made about a month before its name was officially changed from Mina to Bastrop. Evidently, the town was known by the name with which Austin had christened it in its beginning, rather than by the name of Mina which the government of

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

Coahuila and Texas had given it. Smithwick said that he never remembered Bastrop being called Mina.<sup>61</sup>

Bastrop was not selected as the capital site. Instead, in 1839, a small settlement called Waterloo was chosen and was renamed Austin. The city of Austin was at that time in Bastrop County. The county then took in all or part of twenty-four present-day counties. It was not until 1840 that Travis County was created, taking away some of the original Bastrop County, and not until 1874 that further division was made leaving the county area as it is today.<sup>62</sup>

The first years following the war with Mexico were times of great activity for Bastrop. In 1838 James Nicholson wrote to his wife in New York that immigrants were arriving in town in great numbers and that wealthy planters were coming in and paying high prices for land. In April, 1839, Nicholson wrote that "the Congress will sit in Bastrop next fall."<sup>63</sup> Apparently, this letter was

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<sup>61</sup>Smithwick, op. cit., p. 199.

<sup>62</sup>"Bastrop Embraced Many Counties," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>63</sup>"Early Days in Bastrop," Bastrop Advertiser, June 7, 1928.

written while the town was still hopeful of becoming the capital. However, after Austin was selected as the capital site and was being built, there was much traffic through Bastrop in that direction and many travelers decided to settle in Bastrop. In a letter written in July, 1839, Nicholson says:

There has arrived here within a week twenty wagons from the different states with their families, and some from as far as Indiana, some with twenty or thirty negroes.<sup>64</sup>

In September, 1839, he wrote:

We have had a meeting to make arrangements to give the President, M. B. Lamar, a dinner in Bastrop. We will have a splendid ball and supper in Bastrop tonight.<sup>65</sup>

During 1838 and 1839, quarters were apparently rented for the use of county agencies.<sup>66</sup> In 1840, a house was purchased and served as a courthouse until 1857, with only a twelve-foot addition made at some time during this

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Police Court Record, Vol. A, p. 6, Minutes Commissioners' Court, as quoted in Bastrop County History, p. 9.

period.<sup>67</sup> That same year a jail was built which was a log house two stories high with dimensions of eleven by eighteen feet.<sup>68</sup>

In the summer of 1841, when President Lamar sent out the ill-fated Santa Fe Expedition, both Cayton and Antonio Erhard, of Bastrop, were in its ranks. According to Antonio Erhard, they were taken prisoners not far from San Miguel, New Mexico, and would have starved if it had not been for Mexican women along the line of march, who took pity on them and gave them food.<sup>69</sup> After being released by the Mexican government, Cayton Erhard took part in the Battle of Mier on the 25th and 26th of December, 1842. The following is a list of names of other Bastrop men who engaged in that battle:

Peter Ackerman, James Barber, B. F. Bowman, William Clopton, William Davis, William Dunbar, Charles Hill, Allen Holderman, E. G. Kaughman, John Morgan, William Millrea, Mark Rogers, Carter Sargeant, William Sargeant, J. L. Shepherd (decimated and shot), Donald Smith, John Tanney, James Urie, Levi Williams.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>69</sup>Alfred E. Menn, "Letters Reveal Early Bastrop History," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>70</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 18.



## Bastrop—1845-1860

The years between 1836 and 1845 were marked by the constant threat of Mexican invasion, Indian troubles, and economic problems for Texas. The majority of its citizens realized that their position would be more secure as a state in the United States than as a small struggling republic, and having come from the United States themselves they were eager to have Texas become a part of that nation.<sup>71</sup>

When the news came in 1845 that the joint resolution to make Texas the twenty-eighth state in the United States had been passed in the United States Congress and received the approval of President Polk, it was announced in the District Court in Bastrop by Judge Robert E. Baylor, who was presiding. He immediately adjourned court until ten o'clock the next morning so that those connected with the court could join the celebration, which Smithwick described thus:

In the absence of cannon, we brought out all the anvils the town could muster, and taking

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<sup>71</sup>Ralph W. Steen, Texas, A Story of Progress (Austin, Texas: The Steck Co., 1942), p. 263.

up a collection to pay for powder, proceeded to get all the noise possible out of them. Had there been any Indians anywhere in hearing, they would probably have gotten away from that vicinity in short order.<sup>72</sup>

The years that followed annexation were a period of growth and improvement. In 1840, when the wife of William Nicholson came to Bastrop, the town was composed of a few houses, built of logs and clapboards; a two-story building in which court was held, sermons were preached, and the social life of the town took place; two or three small stores; and a stockade.<sup>73</sup> On November 29, 1851, the first newspaper in Bastrop, the Colorado Reveille, speaks of the town's having nine stores, two churches, one drug store, three blacksmith shops, two bakeries, two beef markets, three groceries, one provision store, three hotels, two academies, about forty carpenters, one livery stable, two saddlers, one cabinet maker, one wheelwright, one tailor, and a printing office.

Bastrop has five of the finest store-houses in the State, the finest academy, and the finest church. More than two hundred thousand dollars

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<sup>72</sup>Smithwick, op. cit., p. 282.

<sup>73</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

worth of dry goods will be sold in Bastrop during the year 1851, and the whole trade of the place will amount to near a million.

A "magnificent courthouse" was about to commence, a fine hotel was already begun, and another soon to commence, and houses were springing up like magic. More than fifty houses had been built in the preceding twelve months, more than a dozen were then underway, with many more in contemplation.<sup>74</sup>

In August of that year, Bastrop appropriated \$5,000 to build a two-story courthouse and jail of "well-burnt brick." This building was completed in 1857.<sup>75</sup> Two years later, in July, 1859, a separate jail was ordered to be erected. It was to be two stories high, thirty-six feet by forty feet of brick, with walls eighteen inches thick. The first floor was to be built for a family residence of two rooms. The second floor was to be the jail proper, with three cells and an inner wall of six-inch post oak logs. In October, 1860, this building was completed.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>From the Colorado Reveille, November 29, 1851, reprinted in the Bastrop Advertiser, March 3, 1883.

<sup>75</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 9.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

## Bastrop during the Civil War

During the latter part of the 1850's, there was a growing friction between the North and South over the question of slavery and states' rights, and there began to be talk of secession from the United States. At a citizens' mass meeting held in Austin in December, 1860, Jesse Billingsley and J. C. Higgins, of Bastrop, vigorously protested the secession of Texas. A state convention was called for January, 1861. Thomas B. J. Hill and W. G. Miller were elected as delegates from Bastrop County to attend this convention, which met at the appointed time and adopted a resolution favoring secession, calling for a February referendum election. At the election held February 23, 1861, Bastrop County opposed secession from the union by a majority of forty-two votes, with a count of 305 votes for secession and 347 votes against.<sup>77</sup>

When Texas did secede, however, the county immediately rallied to the support of the South. The cadets of the Bastrop Military Institute, which had been founded in 1851, were much in demand as drill masters throughout

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<sup>77</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 44.

the state. Colonel Wash Jones, who had strongly opposed secession, now gave his full allegiance and military skill to the Confederacy, organizing a volunteer company of Bastrop boys.

Mrs. Mary Ann McDowall related the story further:

On a never-to-be-forgotten day, the Bastrop Volunteers, under the command of Colonel Wash Jones, were drawn up on the campus of the Military Institute. In the rear of the volunteers, Captain Gillespie's cavalry was stationed. On the gallery of the Institute was a large group of citizens, men, women, and children. Mary Ann Nicholson [later Mrs. McDowall] stepped to the front, bearing a beautiful silken flag, and making a speech, presented the flag to Colonel Jones.

A call was made for men to cross the Mississippi. More than one hundred young men of Bastrop and Travis Counties volunteered and were ordered to meet in Houston for organization. Preparations were rushed, and, at last, the boys were drawn up in line on Main Street, and mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts filed down the line, grasping the hands which were soon to know only the bridle-rein, the musket, and the six shooter. The boys left by stage coach and by private conveyance.

In Houston gathered boys from many towns, and John A. Wharton organized and became a member of the Eighth Texas Cavalry, better known as Terry's Texas Rangers, eleven hundred strong, under Colonel B. F. Terry. Later, Wharton became colonel of the regiment and finally, major general, with command of all cavalry west of the Mississippi. On foot, this regiment marched through the swamps of Louisiana and Mississippi, fearing the war would end before they reached Virginia. Finally, crossing the Mississippi,

they were furnished horses and ordered to Tennessee. At Murfreesboro, they went into camp. An epidemic of measles broke out, and many died.

Travis and Bastrop County men were in Company D, under Captain Ferg Kyle. Of the Terry's Texas Rangers, one of the Confederate generals once remarked, "I rest easy when the Rangers are between me and the enemy."<sup>78</sup>

Mrs. McDowall further related that Colonel Green raised a brigade of Texans at the time the Rangers were organized, and that with this brigade went Joe Sayers, of Bastrop. During the war, he rose to the position of major, distinguished himself at Albuquerque, captured a battery at Val Verde, was wounded, and returned home at the close of the war.

Captain Petty of Bastrop took a company down into Louisiana. He was killed there, and the flag which Mary Ann Nicholson had presented to the first volunteers, and which his company had carried into action, was returned to her with an accompanying poem.<sup>79</sup>

Other companies organized in the county were those of M. B. Highsmith, John M. Finney, and H. D. Morgan.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 11.

In accordance with a court order, all the guns in the county were collected, repaired and made as nearly the same length as possible at an arms factory in Bastrop, a building which is still standing. The factory was operated by N. B. Tanner,<sup>81</sup> who was assisted by a Mr. Hanke. New rifle barrels were manufactured by hand, and wooden stocks were put on them and on other old guns in the collection.<sup>82</sup>

The arming of the companies from Bastrop County was accomplished in large part with money appropriated for that purpose by the county commissioners who drew it from the surplus school funds of the county.<sup>83</sup>

Serious economic problems now confronted Bastrop. The families of many of the soldiers were beset with difficulties in earning a living in the absence of the head of the household. And with the depreciation of the Confederate dollar, prices rose to exorbitant heights. Frank O. Hanke relates that his father, upon one occasion, paid

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<sup>81</sup>Ledger, pp. 121-122, Minutes of Commissioners' Court, as quoted in Bastrop County History, p. 11.

<sup>82</sup>Frank O. Hanke, letter to the Bastrop Advertiser, May 26, 1931, The University of Texas Archives.

<sup>83</sup>Ledger, p. 108, Minutes of the Commissioners' Court, as quoted in Bastrop County History, p. 10.

forty dollars for a forty-cent straw hat.<sup>84</sup> Those who had invested their money in Confederate bonds found their resources completely gone at the close of the war. This was the general state in which Bastrop found itself in April, 1865, when fighting ceased.

#### Bastrop—1865-1898

According to Mrs. McDowall, the Reconstruction period lasted five years during which time Texas was under military rule. The Negroes in Bastrop had been faithful during the war and so continued during Reconstruction, although there was rioting in some other parts of the county.<sup>85</sup>

There was much to rebuild during this time. In 1862, a fire had broken out in the building which housed both the weekly newspaper, the Bastrop Advertiser, and Eilers' store. Since all the active men in the town were in the army, there was no one to fight the fire except old men, women, and children. In a very short time, every building on both sides of the street for a block was laid

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<sup>84</sup>Hanke, loc. cit.

<sup>85</sup>McDowall, op. cit.



in ashes. After the close of the war this section was rebuilt with brick buildings.<sup>86</sup> In 1864, the Masonic building had been struck by lightning and entirely consumed by fire.<sup>87</sup>

On January 1, 1883, the old courthouse was destroyed by fire and plans were made subsequently for the building of a new one. The cornerstone of the old building, dated 1853, was broken open and was found to contain a rusty box. Most of the contents were decayed, but some scraps of paper, a ribbon, an 1842 silver dollar, an 1850 half-dollar, an 1850 quarter, and an 1851 dime were found. The recognizable scraps of paper were bits of an 1853 edition of the Bastrop Advertiser and one of the Galveston News. The ribbon was said by the older residents to have been tied around a scroll on which were written the names of the city and county officials of 1853, as well as a complete list of the members of the Masonic fraternity of that year. The rustiness and decay were attributed to the fact that in 1869, the river had overflowed the lower part

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<sup>86</sup> "The Bastrop Advertiser," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary edition.

<sup>87</sup> Bastrop Advertiser, July 23, 1881.

of the town with the water rising several feet on the courthouse walls. Apparently the water had seeped into the cornerstone.<sup>88</sup>

On June 30, the cornerstone for the new courthouse was laid by the Masonic Lodge. It has served the county since that time, undergoing remodeling in 1924.<sup>89</sup>

On April 23, 1898, the Bastrop Advertiser carried this headline: "It Is Now War! War! War!" The story ran as follows:

Congress at a late hour came to an agreement on the most momentous question it has dealt with in a third of a century. The Cuban question was passed and sent to the president this morning. Its provisions mean the expulsion of Spain from the island of Cuba by the armed forces of the United States.

In the same edition was another item:

Latest War News: Just as we go to press at two o'clock this Friday afternoon, station agent Carson sends us the following, caught over the wire: First fight: Gunboat Nashville captured Spanish steamer Venturo off Key West.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, March 3, 1883.

<sup>89</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 10.

<sup>90</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, April 23, 1898.

An armistice was declared on August 12, 1898. Because of the brief duration of the war, Bastrop was not drawn into the war activities as had characterized the War Between the States.

Bastrop, along with the rest of the state and nation, was shocked and saddened by the assassination of President McKinley on September 9, 1901. On September 19, all the business houses in the town were closed at eleven o'clock, and memorial services were held for the President.<sup>91</sup>

On August 7, 1914, the Advertiser again carried news of war with the headline, "All Europe Is at War." England and France had declared war on Germany on August 4. On April 6, 1916, President Wilson signed the United States proclamation of war against Germany. The 8th of May was proclaimed Loyalty Day in Bastrop. Flags were displayed, a parade was held, speeches and patriotic demonstrations were made.<sup>92</sup>

During the last week of August, the first Bastrop County men were called up for examination prior to induction into the army. Of the first 750 men examined, 216 were

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<sup>91</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, September 21, 1901.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., May 11, 1917.

selected.<sup>93</sup> The conscriptions continued, and Bastrop added to the war effort in other ways. The activities of the week of February 15 to 22, 1918, were representative of the times: The third Liberty Loan Drive started; the Red Cross reported that it had shipped three boxes of hospital garments and surgical dressings and that another of knitted garments was scheduled to be shipped that same week; War Savings Stamps were advertised; the Bastrop school was to give a patriotic program on Washington's Birthday; and patriotic exercises were held at the Methodist Church.<sup>94</sup>

On November 15 of that year, the Bastrop Advertiser carried the story of the signing of the Armistice on November 11 and of the general rejoicing that the war was over. That issue and later issues of the paper mentioned the influenza epidemic which was sweeping Bastrop along with the rest of the country.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, August 31, 1917.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., February 22, 1918.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., November 15, 1918.

## Bastrop—1918-1940

The 1920's were a period of general prosperity, shared by Bastrop, and put to an end by the depression which began in 1929. Throughout the nation, economic conditions became serious and remained so through most of the 30's, although Bastrop was helped to some extent by the program of government spending instituted by the Roosevelt Administration in 1933.

In 1931, Bastrop joined a movement led by Smithville to secure a state park for the area between Bastrop and Smithville.<sup>96</sup> The park became a reality in 1933, and in 1934 a unit of the Civilian Conservation Corps, a part of the federal relief program, was located at Bastrop for the purpose of constructing the buildings necessary for the park and maintaining the park itself. This organization remained at Bastrop for several years. After its disbandment, another group, a unit of the National Youth Administration, was stationed in the former quarters of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The new group was composed of boys from the surrounding community, and its work

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<sup>96</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, June 11, 1931.

was directed toward improvements in the park. It was opened in Bastrop in May, 1940, and remained there about a year.<sup>97</sup>

#### Bastrop - 1940-1954

Again there were stirrings of war throughout the country. In 1939 England and France were once again at war with Germany, joined this time by Italy. China and Japan had been struggling against each other for several years. The United States saw in the unsettled condition of the world the necessity for a strong defense program, more trained men, and a greater volume of equipment. The building of new military training camps over the country became a matter for consideration by Congress, and in June, 1940, a county-wide effort was started to secure the establishment of such a camp at Bastrop. Throughout the year of 1940, work continued on the project of submitting all information that could be gathered pertinent to the advantages of the Bastrop area.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, April 18, 1940.

<sup>98</sup>"Camp Swift," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

In October of that year, registration for conscription purposes was held for all men of military age in the country. There were 1923 men registered in Bastrop County.<sup>99</sup> This was followed soon after by the beginning of the enlistment of men for training as part of the national defense program.

In May, 1941, Bastrop became the first town in the state to have a complete trial black-out. The Hound Dog Regiment of the Anti-Aircraft Division of the United States Army, composed of approximately 1,400 men, practiced maneuvers in the Bastrop State Park for several days. Part of their maneuvers included a total black-out of the town in response to an "air-raid" alarm given by the fire siren between the hours of ten and eleven one night. Eight huge searchlights were employed to illumine the sky. Airplanes flown from San Antonio were supposed to come over Bastrop as part of the maneuver, but their flights were cancelled at the last minute because of heavy rain.<sup>100</sup>

On July 17, word came from Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson that the United States was to build fourteen new

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<sup>99</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, October 17, 1940.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., May 15, 1941.

camps in the nation, and that Bastrop would be the site for one of them. A survey was made of the proposed area and plans were drawn for the prospective camp. Merchants began to improve their stores, and new merchants moved into town. Then came a period of doubt as to whether the army would be expanded or not, and preparations came to a halt.<sup>101</sup>

On December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese, and on the following day, the United States declared war on Japan. Germany and Italy joined Japan a few days later by declaring war on the United States, and on December 11, the United States included both of these countries in her declaration of war.<sup>102</sup>

Very soon after these happenings, bids were called for and contracts were let for the construction of an army camp at Bastrop at a total cost of \$21,308,410.<sup>103</sup> Early in January, the work began on Camp Swift, as the camp was officially named that month, in honor of Major General Eben Swift. Fifty-two thousand acres of land were

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<sup>101</sup>"Camp Swift," loc. cit.

<sup>102</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, December 11, 1941.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., January 29, 1942.



purchased, and ten thousand workers were employed in its building. By June, 1942, the camp was ready for occupancy, and the entire camp area was turned over to Lieutenant Colonel Kurtz, the first camp commander.<sup>104</sup> The 95th Division was the first division to be stationed at Camp Swift.<sup>105</sup>

During this year of 1942, Bastrop embarked upon an all-out war effort. In February, the town went on War Time, setting its clocks up one hour as a means of conserving power.<sup>106</sup> Metal scrap drives and salvage campaigns for rubber, old silk hose, tin cans, waste fats, and scrap paper were held to conserve materials needed for defense. Rationing boards were set up, and civilians learned to use food, gasoline, rubber, and shoes according to apportionments allowed them. The Red Cross was active knitting garments, making bandages, and enlisting financial aid for the relief of soldiers and their families. Bond drives were made to which the citizens readily responded by investing their surplus funds in the war effort. The United

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<sup>104</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, June 25, 1942.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., July 9, 1942.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., February 5, 1942.

Service Organization constructed a building on the courthouse grounds, and Bastrop citizens aided in its program of entertainment for the soldiers of Camp Swift.

Practically every family in the town was personally concerned with the war's progress because of the great number of young men who served in some branch of the armed forces. Many of them saw months and even years of active service, going into all parts of the globe in combat. And, as in all wars, some of these who left Bastrop to serve their country, did not return.

In May, 1945, came the welcome news that the war in Europe was at an end. And on August 14, 1945, following the explosion of the atom bomb over Japan, came the joyful tidings that the war was over in that theatre as well. It had been believed for several days that the war was drawing to a close, and all during the day of the 14th of August, radio announcements had been made that the end of the war might be announced that afternoon. One of the local electrical appliance dealers set up his sound equipment with a loud speaker in the business section of Main Street. There was an air of excitement and anticipation about the town. Most citizens congregated in the business area and listened to a succession of news commentators

broadcast throughout the afternoon. At last, late in the afternoon, the long-hoped-for announcement came, and was greeted with great joy everywhere.

The next few months were marked by the reappearance of faces of those who had been discharged from the armed forces and were returning home. Camp Swift became one of the separation centers of the Eighth Service Command and discharged from 150 to 180 men a day.<sup>107</sup>

By the middle of 1946, it became evident that Camp Swift would not be retained on a permanent basis, and in the fall of 1947, an office for the disposal of its buildings was set up in the courthouse.<sup>108</sup> The dismantling of the camp and the sale of its buildings and fixtures began immediately after.

In 1946, the City Hall, which had been built in 1930 to replace a frame structure which existed prior to that time, was remodeled and enlarged. Later, the United Service Organization building was purchased by the county to provide additional office space for several county, state, and federal agencies.

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<sup>107</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, October 18, 1945.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., October 9, 1947.

### Some Outstanding Men of Bastrop

Among the members of Bastrop families who have been outstanding in serving their state and nation are Edward Burleson, vice-president of the Republic of Texas during President Houston's second administration; George Washington Jones, lieutenant governor of Texas just after the close of the Civil War; Joseph D. Sayers, serving in the years between 1879 and 1903 as lieutenant governor of Texas, representative in the Congress of the United States, and governor of Texas; Albert Burleson, member of President Wilson's cabinet; Edward M. House, adviser to Wilson; Robert Lynn Batts, lawyer, University of Texas regent, jurist, and law writer, for whom Batts Hall at The University of Texas is named; Hiram M. Garwood, recognized head of the bar of the Southwest; Paul D. Page, former state senator, lawyer, and banker; <sup>109</sup> and Luther Evans, now chief librarian in the Library of Congress.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup>Worth S. Ray, Austin Colony Pioneers (Austin, Texas, 1949), pp. 324-325.

<sup>110</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, June 21, 1944.

## C H A P T E R   I V

### ECONOMIC HISTORY OF BASTROP

#### Location and Geography

Several factors entered into the selection of the site upon which the settlement of Bastrop was founded: its strategic position at the crossing of the Colorado River and the Old San Antonio Road; its soil and climate, favorable to agriculture; its abundant water supply; and the availability of building materials.<sup>1</sup> All were important in the later development of the area.

The Old San Antonio Road was first traced by a French trader, Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, employed as a guide for a Spanish expedition whose purpose was the founding of missions in East Texas. Perhaps he followed an old Indian trail. In the years that followed, the path made by his expedition was etched more sharply across the wilderness of Texas by royal carriages and pack trains, traveling from Mexico to the Spanish missions, until it became El Camino Real. It linked the Spanish

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<sup>1</sup>H. Grady Jordan, "An Industrial Survey of Bastrop, Texas," unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Texas, 1947.

city, San Antonio de Béxar, with the eastern outpost at Nacogdoches and came at last to be known as the Old San Antonio Road.<sup>2</sup>

It is claimed that, in order to protect the commerce which traveled this thoroughfare, Don Antonio Cordero, Spanish governor of Texas, in 1805 stationed troops at the site where the road crossed the Colorado and built a stockade there called Puesto del Colorado.<sup>3</sup> There was no settlement at the site in 1830, however, when Austin arrived to establish the town.<sup>4</sup> It was largely to provide facilities for the travelers of the Old San Antonio Road that Bastrop was founded.<sup>5</sup>

The town grant was located in the rich valley of the Colorado River. The sandy loam topsoil and the clay subsoil of the surrounding area provided fertile land

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<sup>2</sup>Bastrop County History, Historical Records Survey, Works Progress Administration, unpublished manuscript in the Archives of The University of Texas, 1935, p. 1. Hereinafter cited as Bastrop County History.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Noah Smithwick, The Evolution of a State (Austin, Texas: The Steck Co., 1935), p. 199.

<sup>5</sup>Eugene C. Barker (editor), The Austin Papers, Vol. II, Part 2, pp. 1697, 1698, as quoted in Bastrop County History, p. 2.

for farming.<sup>6</sup> Its mild climate and adequate rainfall made possible a long growing season.<sup>7</sup> The river furnished an abundant water supply and later a more than adequate underground water supply was found.<sup>8</sup>

The forest resources of the Bastrop area were most attractive to settlers, offering not only materials for the building of their own homes but also a source of revenue as well. Just east of the town, within the city limits, is the "Lost Pines Forest," so named because of its isolation from the main pine belt. It is located about eighty-five miles west of the main belt and is the farthest westward extension of the Southern pine in America.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the abundance of pine, there were also found cedar, hickory, elm, ash, and oak in great quantity. Other building materials native to the area were lime and other building stone, clay, and sand suitable for brick making.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Jordan, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>10</sup>Margaret Belle Jones, Bastrop (Bastrop, Texas, 1936), p. 3.

## Life of the Early Settlers

To this section of Austin's Little Colony came its first settlers. They came on foot, on horseback, and in covered wagons. The latter were often drawn by oxen, but sometimes their teams were milk cows that were unhitched and milked at night when camp was made.<sup>11</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. Josiah Wilbarger, with Mrs. Wilbarger's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lehman Barker, and Mr. Barker's mother, came to Matagorda, Texas, in 1827, and remained there a year. They then traveled on to Burnham's Station on the Colorado River, where the women remained while the men set out to locate their headrights on the Colorado, above the location that was to be Bastrop.

As soon as Mr. Wilbarger could complete the building of a blockhouse and stockade, he sent an experienced Indian fighter, John Walters, to escort Mrs. Wilbarger to her new home. On horseback, with her baby son on her lap, her feather bed tied behind the saddle, and her carpetbag on the saddlehorn, Mrs. Wilbarger made the

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<sup>11</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 15.



journey. This family was the first to settle in Austin's second colony.<sup>12</sup>

### Food, Clothing, Shelter

The business of prime importance in the life of the colonists was that of getting food. Upon their labor and their skill depended their staying alive in the wilderness which was Texas. Corn bread and wild game were just about their only foods.<sup>13</sup>

As soon as possible after arrival at their head-right, the settlers planted the seed corn which they had brought with them.<sup>14</sup> Sometimes the land was broken for planting with wooden plows made from cutting down forked trees.<sup>15</sup> After the corn was harvested, it was ground by using an old mortar and pestle<sup>16</sup> while in later years a hand

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<sup>12</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 9 et seq.

<sup>13</sup>"Bastrop, Its Past, Present, and Future," Bastrop Advertiser, December 15, 1894.

<sup>14</sup>John H. Jenkins, "Personal Reminiscences of Texas Relating to Bastrop County, 1828-1847," unpublished manuscript in the Archives of The University of Texas, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup>William Henry Korges, "Bastrop County: Historical and Educational Development," unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Texas, 1933, p. 81.

<sup>16</sup>Jenkins, op. cit., p. 3.

mill called an Armstrong mill was used.<sup>17</sup> The corn sieves were made of wooden hoops that were taken perhaps from a small branch of a tree over which buckskin was stretched and perforated with a sharp instrument. The settlers had no ovens but baked their bread upon "Jonnie Cake boards" at an open fire.<sup>18</sup>

Coffee beans were ground by being tied in a piece of buckskin and beaten upon a rock.<sup>19</sup>

Materials for building their houses offered no problem to the settlers, but tools were few. Jenkins recalls that in his family's first settlement at a point forty miles below the present site of Austin, log cabins were built and covered with pine boards, all of which had to be cut, hewn, brought to hand and built to shape without wagons, nails, or machinery. The cedar logs were cut with axes and dragged up by horses. Split pine boards that were brought by horseback were used for roofs.<sup>20</sup>

In 1829, when the Jenkins family moved to a point

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<sup>17</sup>Letter from Cayton Erhard, Bastrop Advertiser, May 8, 1875.

<sup>18</sup>Jenkins, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

five miles south of Bastrop, Edward Jenkins went ahead of his family to build a log cabin with a dirt floor, as most cabins were in those days. Although the headright contained a large acreage, only about ten acres were in cultivation on the Jenkins farm at first, and most of it was in corn.<sup>21</sup> The work of clearing land was tremendous, considering the kind of equipment which was available.

There were no matches. Coals to make the morning fire were covered with ashes at night. If the coals failed to keep, a shovelful of new coals was borrowed from a neighbor.<sup>22</sup> To make a camp fire it was common practice to take a bit of rag and rub powder into it; when this was fired from a gun, the flash would ignite the powdered rag. Or, sometimes, a gun flint or knife would be used to strike sparks into a rag into which powder had been poured.<sup>23</sup>

Buckskin served many purposes in the pioneer settlement being used for harness, chains, and rope among other things. These ropes could not be left out at night,

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>22</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>23</sup>Smithwick, op. cit., p. 204.

however, because the coyotes ate them.<sup>24</sup> The men often wore clothes made of buckskin which were very satisfactory except in wet weather.

Smithwick recalls the humorous story of one young man who went to visit in a home in which two young ladies lived. He was wearing buckskins and, on the way, was caught in a shower. By the time he got inside the house, his trousers had lengthened to lie in gelatinous folds around his feet. Taking his knife out, he trimmed the bottoms of the trousers to the desired length. A little later, after his clothes began to dry at the open fire, the young man was much chagrined to find that the bottoms of his trousers, in a process of shrinkage, were climbing toward his knees.<sup>25</sup>

Mrs. Elizabeth Wilkins, who lived in Bastrop County over fifty years, gave an account of the clothes worn at the first Fourth of July barbecue given in Bastrop, in 1834. She remembered that the ladies' dresses were made with tight waists, low necks, and mutton-legged

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<sup>24</sup>Kate Jenkins Dechard, "Bastrop History Rich in Lore," American Statesman, October 17, 1937. Reprinted in Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition, in preparation.

<sup>25</sup>Smithwick, op. cit., p. 157.

sleeves. Hair was combed to one side and then over a roll fastened to the other side. Many of the men dressed in the old revolutionary style with silk stockings, knee buckles, and with every variety of shoes including moccasins.<sup>26</sup>

Smithwick told of a wedding which he attended in 1836. He did not remember how the bride was dressed but the groom wore "store clothes." That kind of apparel was not the order of the day, however, since there were also many homespun suits and buckskins. Among the ladies, the rustle of silks was not wanting although styles were somewhat varied according to the period the wearer had migrated to Texas. Smithwick, himself, wore a buckskin suit, a hunting shirt, pantaloons, and moccasins. All were elaborately fringed.<sup>27</sup>

#### Trade

By 1836, the colonists no longer had to go to the Brazos trading post for the supplies they could not

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<sup>26</sup>Emma Holmes Jenkins, "Reminiscences from Mrs. Elizabeth Wilkins," Bastrop Advertiser, September 24, 1887.

<sup>27</sup>Smithwick, op. cit., p. 153 et seq.

provide for themselves. It is not known how many stores were in operation at that time, but David Holdermann, the groom in the aforementioned wedding, was spoken of as "Bastrop's leading merchant,"<sup>28</sup> which indicates the presence of more than one. An account of the "runaway scrape," which took place that year, says that when Mrs. Josiah Wilbarger came through Bastrop in her flight, the merchants had already gone. One of them had left his store open with a notice that customers might take what they wanted and pay for it if they returned. Mrs. Wilbarger selected a pair of French boots which she found well worth the price of five dollars, which she paid to the merchant upon her return. He, in turn, was very grateful for the money, as he had lost his storehouse and entire stock of goods when the Comanches set fire to the town during the citizens' absence.<sup>29</sup>

#### Prosperity and Recession under the Republic of Texas

Following the war with Mexico during the first years of the Republic of Texas, Bastrop grew at a rapid

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<sup>28</sup>Smithwick, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>29</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 10.

rate, and certain industrial changes became apparent. Prior to that time, the Colorado had been crossed at fords, but this practice was not always satisfactory since a rise in the river made fording it impossible. In May, 1837, John A. Moore was granted permission by a county court order to establish a ferry at the La Bahia crossing of the Old San Antonio Road and the Colorado River.<sup>30</sup>

On December 24, 1838, President Lamar approved an act of Congress of the Republic of Texas to incorporate the Bastrop Steam Mill Company. The object of this company was to operate by steam power or otherwise, a saw mill, a grist mill, a planing mill, a lath and shingle mill, and erect public and private buildings, stores, and offices upon contract. Another sawmill was operated in Bastrop in the early days by R. H. Grimes.<sup>31</sup>

Thus began the lumber industry in Bastrop. Lumber was transported to various parts of Texas in trains of ox wagons. Usually six yoke of oxen were attached to a wagon, and there were twenty or thirty wagons in a train.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Mrs. W. E. Maynard, "The River," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>31</sup>Jones, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

The first capitol building at Austin was built of Bastrop lumber, as were many buildings in Houston, West Texas, and even Mexico.

The setting up of the capital at Austin at this time brought in a new tide of settlers including wealthy planters with a number of slaves.<sup>33</sup> James Nicholson, writing to his wife in New York in 1839, said that he would probably locate eventually in Austin, but since business would be better in Bastrop for a time he had taken a store for forty-eight dollars a year rent.<sup>34</sup>

Nicholson's wife, Ruth, with her baby, mother, and sister, set sail from New York harbor in a schooner in 1839 and spent six weeks at sea before landing at Galveston. They then came by boat up Buffalo Bayou to Houston, where they were met by James Nicholson. After a few days' rest the party set out with the young mother, the grandmother, and the baby in a one-horse buggy, and the others traveling on horseback. It took them five days to cover the distance between Houston and Bastrop.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> "Early Days in Bastrop," Bastrop Advertiser, June 7, 1928.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Mrs. Mary Ann McDowall, "A Little Journey through Memory's Halls," unpublished manuscript, 1927, pages not numbered.



On January 5, 1840, the Congress of the Republic of Texas authorized the Postmaster General to establish a post office at or near the residence of Colonel Harvey Jones in Bastrop County. The act also provided for the establishment of a mail route from that post office to the town of Comanche for the purpose of carrying mail once a week. By 1840, the people of the town had in operation a fully organized post office of which James Nicholson was postmaster. He continued to hold this position when the United States post office was established in 1846, following the admission of Texas as a state.<sup>36</sup>

Letter writing in those days was an arduous task. Paper was scarce and expensive. As there were no envelopes, a space was left on one side of the paper to mark the address, and the missive was sealed with a great splotch of wax. Prior to the establishment of the post office, getting the letter to its destination was another task, since it had to be sent by whoever was going the way the letter was going.<sup>37</sup> After a postal service was

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<sup>36</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 186 et seq.

<sup>37</sup>Belle M. Costello, "Old Letters Tell How Texas Pioneers 'Put Up' Travelers in 1845," newspaper clipping, Bastrop County Scrapbook, The University of Texas Archives.

instituted, communication improved, although it was still undependable enough to warrant the term "tri-weekly mails." It occasionally came along once a week and tried to return the next.

Cayton Erhard, arriving in Bastrop on May 1, 1840, later remembered that at that time there were two steam and grist mills, a small store and post office kept by Mr. Nicholson, a grocery, two dry goods stores, a bakery, a watchmaker's shop, a tavern, two bar rooms, a vacant storehouse used for preaching, a two-story frame courthouse, a blacksmith's shop, a gunsmith's shop, and a small fort. He says that it was very primitive but these were the most enterprising and prosperous people he had seen since leaving Houston.<sup>38</sup>

These prosperous times did not last. The Republic of Texas had little money and no credit abroad. By 1842 few immigrants were coming to Texas and times were hard. Both steam mills ceased operation and were sold. J. C. Higgins bought one of them, and it was the only mill in operation for several years. There being no money, practically all trade was carried on by barter for stock

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<sup>38</sup>Erhard, loc. cit.

horses or land.<sup>39</sup> Smithwick remembers that the men in Captain Tumlinson's Ranger Company were given certificates for 1,280 acres of land for each twelve months' service. Smithwick himself got three certificates, one of which he gave for a horse which the Indians stole from him in less than a week. No one cared anything about land in those days since there was so much of it.<sup>40</sup>

In 1842 there was only one merchant in town, a man named Kleberg. Men and women principally made their own shoes and clothing and bartered cotton and hides to Kleberg for the few supplies they could not provide for themselves. Once or twice a year Kleberg sent an ox-wagon drawn by a three-yoke team to Houston for merchandise. Roads were the biggest problem in transportation. When the rivers flooded the lowlands it was impossible to get wagons through for needed merchandise.<sup>41</sup> In 1837, Mr. and Mrs. Wylie Hill, after crossing the Gulf of Mexico, to Columbia, Texas, had to remain in camp two months waiting

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<sup>39</sup>Ernard, loc. cit.

<sup>40</sup>Smithwick, op. cit., p. 213.

<sup>41</sup>Erhard, loc. cit.

for water courses to subside before they could begin their trip by ox team to Mina.<sup>42</sup>

The raising of cotton had begun on a large scale in 1837 with the importation of slaves.<sup>43</sup> In 1843, Erhard, returning from the Mier Expedition, found the cotton planters sending the larger part of their cotton on log rafts down the Colorado River to Matagorda. There the logs were sold for house building and the cotton was exchanged for goods and sugar. One man accompanying an expedition such as this was assigned the task of driving horses to Matagorda so that the men who managed the raft might be able to travel home on horseback. Sometimes, the raft would stall because of low water, and all hands would have to wait until the river took a rise.<sup>44</sup>

Large cotton plantations were cultivated on prairies and in the fertile river bottoms. The lint had to be separated from the seeds by hand until Josiah Wilbarger established the first cotton gin in Bastrop County in 1844.

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<sup>42</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, Historical Edition, August 29, 1935.

<sup>43</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>44</sup>Erhard, loc. cit.

<sup>45</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 12.

The year 1845 saw an improvement in travel and mail facilities. Prior to that time, the settlers were able to travel only by private conveyance. A letter from Mrs. Henry Crocheron describing a journey to Houston in January, 1845, reveals the traveling customs of the day. Mr. and Mrs. Crocheron started on the five-day journey in a one-horse spring wagon. They stopped first at a house in Craft's Prairie for dinner and a little rest. At twilight, they put up for the night at another home. There were few hotels at that time, but families, no matter how humble, always put up travelers. On the third night, the Crocherons stopped at the house of a family of squatters.

They found the family seated about a bare table which held a large pan of sour milk and some corn bread. There were no dishes, no knives and forks, just a cup. The table was black with dirt, and the floor was dirt. The mother bustled about getting the travelers a meal. She cooked meat and bread in the same pan, cooked turnips and made tea in another pan. "We couldn't tell whether we were drinking tea or turnips," Mrs. Crocheron said later.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Costello, loc. cit.

During that year, the first stage coach in Texas which was operated by Tarbox and Brown came through Bastrop on its initial journey from Houston to Austin. The trip took five days.<sup>47</sup> Thereafter, the stage coach always stopped overnight at the Nicholson House, in Bastrop, where the travelers were made comfortable and the best of food was served. Amelia Barr, in writing of her stage-coach journey through Texas said that the roast beef, venison steaks, young corn and squash served at Bastrop were a grateful change from the bacon and corn-pone diet at other places.<sup>48</sup>

#### Progress after Annexation

Following Texas's admission to the United States, a new period of prosperity began. In 1847, the Corporation of Bastrop granted Samuel Sims and Elias M. Smith permission to erect a saw and grist mill on the corporation lands. Another sawmill was operated about 1850 near Sayers by Major A. M. Brooks.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 129.

<sup>48</sup>Amelia Barr, All the Days of My Life (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1923), p. 185.

<sup>49</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 19.

Although cotton continued to be the principal crop, some cattle were raised on open ranges both for local consumption and for commercial purposes. The early cattle were mostly longhorns. They had to be driven to Kansas or even farther, to be marketed. Bastrop County was a transit point since many of the large herds gathered for the trail south of Bastrop and were driven north by the trail drivers.<sup>50</sup>

All the food possible was still raised at home. Beef was pickled or cut in long strips and hung on the clothesline to dry. Cabbage for winter use was pulled up by the roots and buried in a trench with the head to the south. Turnips were stored in hills in the garden. Pickles and vinegar were made at home.<sup>51</sup> Sides of bacon, hams, and sausage were smoked in smokehouses or salted down for preservation. Corn was still raised for the family's meal supply.

The following is a description of the Crocheron home, representative of the housing of the citizens at this period:

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<sup>50</sup>Kleber Trigg, Jr., "Cattle Industry in Bastrop County Dates Back to 1800's," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>51</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 26.

There was a chimney at the north, with a wide fireplace and high mantel painted black in the north room; a door and a window at the front, looking east, and a window at the south. The Crocherons enclosed the hall between the front and back rooms, leaving a door to the south but no place for a window. They built a porch at the front. The attic was converted into a bedroom--One could stand up straight only in the center of the room. Two beds were in this room; also a washstand and a bureau made of goods boxes. In one corner of the parlor below was a ladder made of smoothed-off cedar rails and round rungs. This ladder was canvassed and papered and placed with its back to the center of the room.

Cheap wall paper transformed the interior of the house. In the parlor was a square pine table with legs painted red, over which was a red-wool table cover. On either side of the table stood a red-painted chair, with a white hair-hide bottom. Before the fireplace was a big rocker, at one side, a black Boston rocker, and on either side of the fireplace, an ottoman made of goods boxes covered with turkey-red calico. On the table stood a tall sperm-oil lamp, called a solar lamp. On the mantel were two brass candlesticks with store candles, a perforated cardboard spill holder, and a cross-stitch picture of a church.

The bedroom contained one high bed--valenced--and a trundle bed, a book shelf, a homemade washstand made from a dry goods box, shelving for towels, and a kind of cupboard for clothes. One room was used as a dining room and kitchen and was furnished with a pine table, hide bottom chairs, and a stove.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>McDowall, op. cit.



The Runnels Building, which was constructed about 1850, was built of lumber sawed in the pine hills nearby and kiln-dried at the building site. The kiln was built of lumber, in which a slow fire was kept going. The lumber for the building was stacked in the wooden kiln and left there until it was seasoned. All the lumber was hand-dressed and tongue-and-grooved by hand. The doors and windows were handmade, and the frame of the building was fastened together with wooden pins.<sup>53</sup>

The Wiley Hill mansion was built of Bastrop pine, dressed and tongue-and-grooved by hand. It took three or four carpenters eighteen months to build it.<sup>54</sup> Brick for the chimneys was made by hand and kiln-dried on the plantation.<sup>55</sup>

Many plantations had kitchens built quite a distance from the house. This arrangement was probably a precaution against fire, since much of their cooking was done at a big open fireplace in the kitchen.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Letter from Frank O. Hanke, May 26, 1931, "Reminiscences of Bastrop County," University of Texas Archives.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, Historical Edition, August 29, 1935.

<sup>56</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

In the spring of 1845, the stern-wheel steamboat, "Kate Ward," had made its first and last trip up river to Austin, stopping at Bastrop en route.<sup>57</sup> On April 3, 1851, the side-wheel steamboat, the "Colorado Ranger," arrived at Bastrop on its way to Austin. It left for Austin the following morning. Upon its return to Bastrop a few days later, it took aboard a large load of pine lumber.<sup>58</sup>

In a letter signed "L," written to the Galveston Daily News in June of that year, an account of the steamboat's trip up river is given:

Having traveled from this point on our beautiful Colorado River to the city of Austin on board the steamer, "Colorado Ranger," commanded by Captain Douglass, I will, if you can allow space in your valuable paper, give something of a description of the trip, it being the first determined effort to test the navigability of the river. I will here state that no more determined or energetic officer could have been selected than Captain Douglass for such a pioneer expedition; and if, which is not supposed to be a settled fact, our river can be navigated as far as Austin, no one will be more entitled to the thanks of our citizens than the gentlemanly commander of the "Colorado Ranger"; for the obstacles which he encountered were

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<sup>57</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 135.

<sup>58</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 23.

great, indeed, and the amount of labor performed astonishing. Where rocks were in the channel, he caused them to be removed; where trees overhung the banks, or logs were fallen across the river, impeding the progress of the boat, they were cut away in some places for miles--the captain and other officers of the boat not hesitating to ply the axe vigorously. The main causes of delay were: the cutting away of hanging trees and the difficulty of procuring suitable wood for generating steam, as there was very little prepared by the citizens and consequently, the boat was compelled to delay until her own hands could go ashore and procure it. . . .<sup>59</sup>

The "Colorado Ranger" returned safely to Matagorda on April 19, but although she was used successfully for almost two more years on the lower river, she never came back to Austin. On March 5, 1853, she was stove in and sank about ten miles below La Grange.<sup>60</sup>

In 1851, the first attempt was made at publishing a newspaper in Bastrop. The "Colorado Reveille," a small five-column newspaper, was started but was short-lived. On March 1, 1853, William J. Cain established the Bastrop Advertiser. Since that time the newspaper has been in continuous operation except for a brief period during the Civil War, and has earned the distinction of

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<sup>59</sup>Galveston Daily News, June 3, 1851.

<sup>60</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 23.

being the oldest weekly newspaper in the state.<sup>61</sup>

In February, 1854, D. C. Campbell and Mr. McDonald applied to the County Court for permission to use the river and the river bank, stating that they were desirous of establishing a float mill in the Colorado River opposite the courthouse in the town of Bastrop. They were granted the privilege of erecting their float mill on the Colorado, but were expressly prohibited from obstructing the river so as to prevent its navigation by the "Water Mockasin," "a steamboat now on the docks."<sup>62</sup>

The "Water Mockasin" was built in Bastrop and christened there by Miss Mattie Moore. It was piloted up the river by Captain W. W. Knowles on the crest of a big rise in the Colorado. As the river fell before the boat could get away, it had to remain at Austin until another rise in the river made its trip down possible. On its return trip, the "Water Mockasin" was grounded on a sand bar a short distance below Bastrop and, being considered of no further use for navigation, was dismantled.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>62</sup>Mrs. W. E. Maynard, loc. cit.

<sup>63</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 23.

The signs of the times were reflected in the May 27, 1854, edition of the Bastrop Advertiser:

E. D. Barnett advertised that he had just received direct from the North, a large and well-selected stock of dry goods and clothing. He had boots and shoes, ready-made clothing, hats, saddlery, school books, perfumery, jewelry, rifles, shotguns, and pistols for sale.

Henry Crocheron announced that "the subscribers" had lately erected a steam mill for the purpose of sawing cedar lumber six miles below town.

J. A. Campbell's livery stable was advertised. It was connected with Colonel John A. Polk's Bastrop House and was located two doors above the courthouse square.

George Golden announced that he had erected a grist mill five miles from Bastrop and one-half mile from the Old San Antonio Road. He would grind corn at the usual rates or give meal in exchange.

A cabinet shop had been opened by J. B. Fehr, selling dining tables, common tables, wash stands, extension tables, bedsteads, bureaus, wardrobes, and safes.

Francis T. Duffau advertised a new shipment of drugs and medicines. These were some of his wares: quinine, soda, gum camphor, castor oil (forty gallons),

turpentine, olive oil, and alcohol.<sup>64</sup>

The last advertisement is particularly interesting, since it marked an addition to the town commerce. In the earlier days there were no drug stores. Mrs. McDowall had a faint recollection of a store in the southern part of town with a crescent-shaped transom over the door. Inside on a table or counter were some curiously-shaped bottles filled with colored waters. There were also some jars containing various kinds of snakes and other creeping things. The doctors kept their saddle bags stocked with calomel and quinine with which to treat the chills and fever that were prevalent due to much stagnant water that stood during the rainy seasons.<sup>65</sup> The family doctor carried a medicine bag and rolled terrible pills on a dinner plate. He treated diphtheria, typhoid, yellow fever, small pox, and cholera. There were no tonsilectomies or appendectomies.<sup>66</sup>

Bastrop in 1854 was enjoying a wave of prosperity. Its lumber mills were running full blast, and

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<sup>64</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, May 27, 1854.

<sup>65</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

<sup>66</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 26.

long strings of ox and mule teams loaded with lumber lined the road in all directions.<sup>67</sup> All other lines of industry felt the impetus to trade afforded by the general activity.

Generally speaking, there was very little credit loss in the early days. People bought only the things that they felt they could afford, and when they made a promise to pay, they either paid off their obligation at the appointed time or gave ample security for it.

There was also comparatively little robbery. It was the custom to leave large sums of money unguarded, with little fear of being robbed. The manager of one of the mills kept a cigar box of silver dollars under the bed in his room. When one of the hands needed a few dollars between paydays, the manager would go to his room for the money, or else send the hand there to take the sum desired.<sup>68</sup>

because of the fact that all merchandise had to be brought in by ox and mule wagons with a great deal of difficulty and expense, most of the merchandise consisted of essentials with very few luxuries. Only those with considerable wealth wore "store clothes," and then only on

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<sup>67</sup>"Prokop's Store," Bastrop Advertiser, Historical Edition, August 29, 1935.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

special occasions. The dress of the average man was a hickory shirt and homemade jean pants tucked into boots.

Two bootmakers, M. A. Prokop and A. Knittle, made most of the boots and shoes worn by people in the Bastrop area in 1855, and for many years after. Most of the men wore handmade boots of calfskin with little variety in style. Each person had his boots or shoes made to his own measure. The cost of a pair of boots ranged from ten to twelve dollars. Low shoes ranged from four to five dollars and were also made to individual order. They were often embellished with high heels that would take a polish, and these were the "Sunday shoes" for the whole family. A brogan shoe was made from rough leather for heavy duty and sold at one dollar and fifty cents to two dollars a pair.<sup>69</sup>

At first, shoemaking was done entirely with hand tools, but later sewing machines and other equipment helped to facilitate shoe construction. W. M. Kesselus, who established himself in merchant tailoring in 1857, brought the first sewing machine to Bastrop.<sup>70</sup> Prior to that, all

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>"Bastrop, Its Past, Present, and Future," Bastrop Advertiser, December 15, 1894.



sewing was done by hand. The first machines were small and were clamped to a table.<sup>71</sup>

When Laura Sims and Major Allen of the Bastrop Military Institute were married, the bride and her attendants wore white organdy. Their dresses were made with full double skirts, very wide hems, white sashes, and the girls wore white satin shoes and wreaths on their heads.

At the inaugural ball for Sam Houston which Mary Ann Nicholson and her friend, Mary Millet, attended, the latter wore a white tarleton dress, a skirt all of puffs caught down in places with white bugle beads, a low neck, and short sleeves. Her long black hair was braided across the front in a broad braid of twelve or more strands and caught back over the ears with a knot in back. Miss Nicholson's dress was of blue tarleton, with a double skirt, white silk lace bertha, low neck, and short sleeves.<sup>72</sup>

The trip to Austin for the inauguration was made by carriage. Family carriages in those days were roomy and cushioned. Most of them had folding steps which let down to the ground; otherwise, ladies with full skirts and

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<sup>71</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>72</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

several petticoats could not have entered their coaches.<sup>73</sup>

Brick which were produced commercially at this time were made by hand from native Bastrop clay. Matthew Hoffman in 1855 began to follow his trade as brickburner. In 1858, Neely and Beck advertised "large quantities of best-quality brick" at their brickyard, one-half mile east of the courthouse. This brickyard was formerly known as Highsmith's brick yard. Bricks sold at eight dollars per thousand.<sup>74</sup>

#### Life during the Civil War

The Civil War put an end to the general prosperity of the fifties, and once again the problem of food became of prime importance to many families. The depreciation of the Confederate dollar and the absence of so many men upon whom their families had depended resulted in a serious economic condition.

Early in 1862, one thousand dollars was appropriated by the County Court for the support of the soldiers'

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<sup>73</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

<sup>74</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, July 24, 1858.

families.<sup>75</sup> The destitute condition of such families became so acute in 1863 that the residents of the county pledged themselves to divide support and maintenance with the soldiers' wives and children and keep the commissary supplied with provisions.<sup>76</sup>

In 1864, the cost of food was exorbitant. Corn sold for six dollars a bushel, bacon for one dollar and fifty cents a pound, and salt for one dollar a pound.<sup>77</sup> Frank O. Hanke writes that his father, who had a large family, got only three dollars per day in Confederate money, which did not buy much. Calico sold at a dollar a yard so Hanke built a weaving stool to weave cloth by hand. This coarse fabric was made out of home-raised cotton which was carded by hand and then spun into threads which were woven into cloth. This slow process would not furnish enough cloth to clothe the family, and so every townsack available was used to make dresses for the girls.

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<sup>75</sup>Ledger of the Commissioners' Court, p. 139, quoted in Bastrop County History, p. 11.

<sup>76</sup>Ledger of the Commissioners' Court, p. 164, quoted in Bastrop County History, p. 11.

<sup>77</sup>Ledger of the Commissioners' Court, p. 225, quoted in Bastrop County History, p. 11.

The family had to raise all food at home. The fact that the Bastrop soil was so well adapted for raising garden foods was an alleviating factor in their existence. Coffee was made out of sweet potatoes by cutting them into small wafers, parching them brown, and grinding them in the coffee mill. Beef was plentiful and could be bought at two and three cents a pound. Hanke would go out on Sunday about a mile below Bastrop in the cornfields and shoot as many wild geese as he could carry home. He smoked the breasts of the geese, which kept them indefinitely. When geese were out of season, he would go out on the hills east of town and kill wild turkeys or deer.<sup>78</sup>

During the war, a lead mine was operated on Wilbarger Creek by Tom Hill. Slaves mined the lead, which was used for bullets. The location of the mine was later lost.<sup>79</sup> In the area now known as Wilbarger Bend, Hugh Barton made gunpowder, burning trees and logs for ashes to make the necessary potash.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Hanke, loc. cit.

<sup>79</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 192.

<sup>80</sup>Mrs. W. A. Barton, interview, March 22, 1954.

Eventually, people in the county refused to sell supplies to the commissary because of the depreciated value of Confederate money.<sup>81</sup> The County Court then devised a plan of allowing people to pay their county taxes in commissary supplies, which helped the situation somewhat.<sup>82</sup> In the fall of 1864, in accordance with a legislative act, a specie tax of one-half of one per cent was levied for the support of the needy families of soldiers.<sup>83</sup>

#### Post-war Economy

At the end of the war, the economic problems of the southern states were great. Confederate money and bonds were worthless. In addition, adjustments had to be made by both Negroes and white people because of the emancipation of the slaves. In 1861, there had been 2,591 Negro slaves in Bastrop County, more than 35 per cent of the total population. These now had to be employed. The

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<sup>81</sup>Ledger of the Commissioners' Court, p. 229, quoted in Bastrop County History, p. 11.

<sup>82</sup>Ledger of the Commissioners' Court, p. 238, quoted in Bastrop County History, p. 11.

<sup>83</sup>Ledger of the Commissioners' Court, p. 240, quoted in Bastrop County History, p. 11.

raising of cotton was resumed after the war, with the freed Negroes performing much the same work as they had done before their freedom.<sup>84</sup>

In 1865, Cayton Erhard moved the drug store which he had established in San Marcos in 1847 to Bastrop. This drug store, the oldest in Texas, has been in continuous operation by members of the Erhard family since that time.<sup>85</sup>

A description of a trip to New York which Mary Ann Nicholson took in 1866 with her mother and her uncle is illuminating as to travel facilities of the day: They left by stage coach from Bastrop, taking steam cars from La Grange to Galveston. At Richmond, they had to cross the river on a flat boat and take the train on the opposite side. Arriving at Houston, they saw an ice wagon and for the first time saw gas lights. From Houston, they went on a train to Galveston and left that port on a Morgan steamer along with sixteen hundred head of cattle! At the mouth of the Mississippi, the boat took a pilot and

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<sup>84</sup>Texas Almanac, 1867, p. 77, quoted in Bastrop County History, p. 12.

<sup>85</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, Historical Edition, August 29, 1935.

went up the river, reaching New Orleans on the twelfth of the month, four days after leaving Bastrop. In New Orleans, they saw street cars and gas-lighted streets for the first time.

On the morning of the thirteenth, they boarded the train, the Jackson & Mississippi Central, and rode through swamp after swamp to Mississippi, getting off the train at train stops for their meals. At Columbus, Ohio, they boarded the steamboat, "General Anderson," and were in Cairo for breakfast. At noon, they boarded the train and had dinner in Centralia. They took seats that night in the night coach which had armchairs, by paying fifty cents extra. The sleeping coach in the rear had berths at one dollar each.

On July 16th they arrived in Cincinnati, where they took a side trip of two days in order to visit friends in Frankfort. Coming back to Cincinnati on the 18th, they took the train for New York. They arrived in that city on July 22nd, having been two weeks en route.<sup>86</sup>

In 1867, another newspaper, published by Dr. C. Kendrick, was established but was not successful. Two

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<sup>86</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

others, the Bastrop Chronicle and the Deutsche Zeitung, a German publication, were published in 1873, but were discontinued shortly afterward through lack of patronage.<sup>87</sup>

In 1862 a cotton and wool manufacturing plant had been established in Boston.<sup>88</sup> By 1867, it was said to be turning out eight hundred to one thousand yards of material daily.<sup>89</sup> In 1874, the company was incorporated as the Bastrop Cotton and Wool Manufacturing Company and was sold to the Lone Star Mills in 1875. The mill had twenty-six looms, twelve hundred spindles, and one wool carder. It could turn out from eleven hundred to twelve hundred yards daily and would require forty people to operate it.<sup>90</sup>

By 1878 there were forty-three businesses in Bastrop, according to Bradstreet's Credit Journal.<sup>91</sup> In 1879 still another industry made its appearance, a broom

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<sup>87</sup>Korges, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>89</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 14.

<sup>90</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, November 13, 1875, quoted in Korges, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>91</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, February 18, 1928.



factory, established by E. Ingersoll.<sup>92</sup> That year also saw an improvement in public transportation. The Bastrop Advertiser in January carried the following announcement:

The mail contractors, between Bastrop and McDade, Messrs. Green and Nash, have purchased and put upon the line, a large passenger coach which is a decided improvement on the old mail hack. The coach will conveniently carry ten passengers, six on the inside, two with the driver, and two on top, together with any amount of baggage.<sup>93</sup>

During these last years, there had been several attempts to secure a railroad for Bastrop, but none had been successful. In 1885, the first determined effort to bring a railway line to the town was made by a group of citizens from Taylor, Elgin, and Bastrop, who met together and formed the Taylor, Elgin, & Bastrop Railroad Company.<sup>94</sup> It was the purpose of the company to build a railroad line from Taylor to Elgin to Bastrop by subscription among the citizens. This project was not successful, but the following year the Bastrop and Taylor Railway Company was

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<sup>92</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, August 18, 1879.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., January 18, 1879.

<sup>94</sup>Clipping from the Bastrop Advertiser, March 5, 1885, in Scrapbook of Mrs. O. P. Jones.

chartered, with the name being changed to the Taylor, Bastrop, and Houston Railway Company a few months later. In 1887, eighty-seven miles of track were constructed from Taylor to Boggy Tank, about seventy-five miles west of Houston. When the railroad became the Missouri, Kansas, & Texas Company in 1891, the line was completed into Houston.<sup>95</sup>

Prosperity among the cotton planters began to decline in 1887 because of a protracted drought and insect pestilence which destroyed over 65 per cent of the cotton crop.<sup>96</sup> In June, 1889, there was a twenty-eight-foot rise in the Colorado, which submerged from twelve hundred to two thousand acres of land and destroyed approximately one hundred thousand bushels of corn.<sup>97</sup>

In July, 1889, Bastrop's first bank, the First National Bank, was organized, and its charter granted in August of that year. J. C. Buchanan was its president, T. A. Hasler, vice-president, and Selden Duncan, Cashier.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>S. G. Reed, History of the Texas Railroads (Houston, Texas: St. Clair Publishing Co., 1941), p. 381.

<sup>96</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 13.

<sup>97</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, February 23, 1889.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., Historical Edition, August 29, 1935.

The ferry across the Colorado had been in operation since its establishment in 1837. Because of the fact that Bastrop drew trade from a wide area of the county, the commercial advantage of a bridge to the town was apparent. In 1889, work was begun on a bridge financed by a corporation of citizens of Bastrop. The bridge, with its dirt approaches, was more than a quarter of a mile long and was of a type new to Texas.<sup>99</sup> Completed in 1890, it was operated as a toll bridge as long as it was privately owned, with the toll being five cents for a pedestrian, ten cents for a rider on horseback, fifteen cents for a buggy, and twenty-five cents for a two-horse team and wagon.<sup>100</sup> In 1898 the bridge was bought by the County for the sum of \$24,200, and the toll was lifted.<sup>101</sup>

In 1891, the Advertiser carried the following story:

At the last regular meeting January 6th, of the board of directors of the improvement and investment company, a question of fire protection for our little city was discussed, and

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<sup>99</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>100</sup>E. E. Moore, Interview, July 4, 1954.

<sup>101</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, November 19, 1898.

it was shown that the business portion of town was practically at the mercy of the first fire that comes along.

The present system is wholly inadequate and is fast failing, and we understand will not be renewed, hence the necessity for prompt action.

The company have resolved to devote their entire paid-up stock to the construction of a system of water works sufficient in extent to satisfy the present and future needs of the town. They will also open up their stock books and invite all business men and others to subscribe to the enterprise. . . . After plans are matured, the company will ask the city council for a franchise and to take a number of hydrants for fire purposes.<sup>102</sup>

There was no system of public water works at this time, with both residences and business houses relying upon private wells to supply their needs. Fires were fought by a volunteer bucket brigade with water drawn from wells.<sup>103</sup> In December, 1893, a public meeting was held to consider the proposition of organizing a water works for the city. It was their purpose to acquire a state charter to secure the supply of water to the city as well as other advantages incidental thereto including electric lights and cold

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<sup>102</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, January 10, 1891.

<sup>103</sup>E. A. Moore, Interview, July 4, 1954.

storage. The materials for the water works had been ordered and were in transit, and the cooperation and subscriptions of the citizens were asked.<sup>104</sup>

In February, 1894, ground was broken for the beginning of the construction of the water works.<sup>105</sup> In March, 1897, a contract was closed with W. G. Schumirth and Company for a first-class electric plant.<sup>106</sup>

On August 27, 1894, a meeting of the volunteer fire department was held, at which time a hook and ladder company was organized.<sup>107</sup> In the beginning, there were two two-wheel carts with hand-reels at either side, on which the hose were wound and buckets were hooked. These were pulled by hand to the fire site. Then a four-wheel cart was added with a ladder and buckets hooked to each side. This, too, was pulled by hand unless someone on horseback was conveniently near, and then a rope would be tied to the cart and attached to the saddlehorn for the horse to pull.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, December 16, 1893.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., February 10, 1894.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., March 13, 1897.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., Mid-Century Homecoming Edition, May 18, 1950.

<sup>108</sup>J. S. Milton, Interview, July 7, 1954.

The fire alarm was given by means of a bell in a tower on top of the combination city hall and fire department. This same bell was used as a curfew bell for some years, ringing from seven o'clock to eight-thirty o'clock in the evening, depending on the season. All male children below the age of seventeen were forbidden to be on the street after curfew without written permission from their parents. The penalty was a fine from one dollar to five dollars if children failed to have such permission.<sup>109</sup>

In March 1893, the Bastrop Cotton Oil Company was organized for the purpose of establishing an oil mill in Bastrop, which was to be completed and in running order by September of that year.<sup>110</sup> In later years, the mill was known as the Powell Oil Mill. It continued in operation until 1924, when it was destroyed by fire.<sup>111</sup>

In 1893, A. T. Morris, in connection with his livery stable, installed a wagonette capable of seating

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<sup>109</sup>Revised City Ordinances, City of Bastrop, 1897, Article 187, p. 39.

<sup>110</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, March 10, 1893.

<sup>111</sup>J. S. Milton, interview, July 7, 1954.

ten persons to carry passengers from the depot.<sup>112</sup> Another type of transportation had become popular within the city. The Bastrop Advertiser, on June 17, 1893, carried this item:

The Bastrop Wheel Club is increasing in membership, and the boys look real cute and fascinating when in their complete dress and out for a ride.<sup>113</sup>

A temporary economic recession was indicated in the advertisements of the latter part of 1893. One store, in announcing that it would sell out its entire stock at and far below New York cost, began its advertisement in this way: "The existing hard times demand that we should be economical in all things."<sup>114</sup> Another establishment advertised fifteen thousand dollars' worth of clothing and dry goods "at factory panic-stricken prices."<sup>115</sup>

Food prices were low. Sweet milk sold for thirty cents per gallon and buttermilk at fifteen cents

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<sup>112</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, March 18, 1893.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., June 17, 1893.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., December 30, 1893.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

per gallon with butter at twenty-five cents per pound.<sup>116</sup> E. E. Moore remembers that when he went from Bastrop to Waco in 1896, he and his wife and child together paid only thirty dollars a month for room and board. Furthermore, a meal consisting of steak, three vegetables, a drink and a dessert could be had for fifteen cents.<sup>117</sup> Chickens were selling at ten to twelve-and-a-half cents each.<sup>118</sup>

Methods of preserving and refrigerating food had not been developed then to the extent that we know them today. Meats to be sold during hot weather were killed and dressed the day of the sale, and even in cold weather could not be kept too long.<sup>119</sup> Most households still had gardens and raised much of their own food, canning some vegetables and fruits in glass jars.<sup>120</sup>

In 1872 a commercial vineyard had been established near Bastrop by Fred Keil. More than forty varieties of grapes were raised for wines.<sup>121</sup> An item in the Bastrop

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<sup>116</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, July 15, 1893.

<sup>117</sup>E. E. Moore, interview, June 15, 1954.

<sup>118</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, July 18, 1896.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., Historical Edition, August 29, 1935.

<sup>120</sup>E. E. Moore, interview, June 15, 1954.

<sup>121</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, December 15, 1894.



Advertiser in 1896 said that Mr. Keil had on hand one hundred barrels of wine at ages varying from one to six years.<sup>122</sup>

Some prices quoted in advertisements in 1896 and 1897 are interesting: H. B. Mistrot advertised fifty pieces of twenty-five-inch plaids at three cents a yard and seventy-two pieces of twenty-seven-inch extra heavy cotton checks at five cents a yard. J. W. Pledger advertised wallpaper at three cents per roll. Gold paper was four cents per roll "and upwards."<sup>123</sup> Light fabrics such as organdies sold at sixteen cents a yard. Napkins were priced at from twenty-five cents to one dollar a dozen.<sup>124</sup>

In March, 1898, the Advertiser carried the following notice:

The Postal Telegraph and Cable Company are completing arrangements to pass through Bastrop. The City Council, at its regular meeting next Monday night will pass an ordinance granting the company right of way through the town. It is thought the company will complete the route through and open an office in Bastrop within a couple of weeks.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, August 8, 1896.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., January 18, 1896.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., June 26, 1897.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., March 5, 1898.

In these last years of the nineteenth century, three more newspapers were printed. The Busy Bee was published for a short time in 1888. The People's Paper, owned and edited by Judge Dyer Moore, was published about 1895 when the Populist Party was established. The paper was abandoned a few years later when the Populist Party was no longer in existence.<sup>126</sup> Another paper, the Bastrop Vidette, established in 1899, lasted only a short time.<sup>127</sup>

#### The New Century

The beginning of the new century brought a new era in industrial development in Bastrop, along with changes and improvements in transportation and communication. Before 1900, there were telephones in use in the town, but it was in that year that the first switchboard communication was installed. This switchboard was equipped with ninety-five lines for local customers and five lines for long distance calls. It was first operated in a private home.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>127</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>128</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

For the last quarter of the nineteenth century, coal had been taken from various parts of Bastrop County.<sup>129</sup> It was first mined, however, about 1895, by an Irishman, Martin Glenn. The first mine was an open pit on the Perkins farm three miles north of Bastrop.<sup>130</sup> In 1900, Glenn and his son-in-law, John Belto, organized the Glenn-Belto Coal Company,<sup>131</sup> and sank a shaft at Glenham, since re-named Dunstan. In 1903, another coal mine was opened on the Ransome farm,<sup>132</sup> and in 1911 the Calvin Coal Company began operations. Until 1925, several companies came into existence but because of a diminishing demand for lignite all but two of these ceased operations by 1939. Since that time these two have also stopped active production.<sup>133</sup>

It was during the operation of the mines that the Mexican population in Bastrop had its real beginnings, as many Mexicans came to Bastrop to furnish labor needed.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>129</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, October 24, 1903.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., Mid-Century Homecoming Edition, May 18, 1950.

<sup>131</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, March 10, 1900.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., October 24, 1903.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., Mid-Century Homecoming Edition, May 18, 1950.

<sup>134</sup>E. E. Moore, interview, June 15, 1954.

In 1899, the Bastrop Advertiser mentioned the fact that "Tom Wood has the honor of receiving the first 'rubber-tired buggy' in Bastrop, a gift from his father."<sup>135</sup> In 1903, the Bastrop Advertiser called attention to a new kind of transportation:

Mr. R. Hosche of Austin, brother-in-law of Mrs. Ed Bastian, has the honor of introducing the first Oldsmobile in Bastrop. He came in it from Austin Sunday last, making the trip in exactly three hours and five minutes, notwithstanding the roughness of the road. Monday morning, through the kindness of Mr. Hosche, the senior [the editor] took his first ride in an Oldsmobile, riding over the town in a very few minutes. The ride was delightful. It is buggy-shaped, run by a gasoline engine of four-horse power, and rides as easy as a first-class railway coach. The cost of oil consumed is less than one cent a mile. Mr. Hoschke has the agency for the sale of these Oldsmobiles, and we learn, sold several to Bastrop parties. The cost of the one he had in Bastrop is \$650, free on board of cars at Houston.<sup>136</sup>

From that time on, several makes of automobiles were advertised by various agencies in the town. In 1913, the first carload shipment of automobiles to arrive in Bastrop consisted of five model T brass-trimmed Fords and

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<sup>135</sup> Bastrop Advertiser, November 25, 1899.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., May 30, 1903.

was consigned to T. P. Haynie.<sup>137</sup>

The coming of the automobile changed trade in Bastrop more than any other one thing, perhaps. In the days of horses and wagons, it was no uncommon thing for a family living in the vicinity of Red Rock or Rosanky to get up and have breakfast at one o'clock in the morning and drive to Bastrop, arriving there about ten o'clock in the morning. They would sell their produce and do their trading until about four in the afternoon and then start for home, arriving around midnight if the weather was good. But if a rain came up, they would likely be on the road all night. This meant that the average farmer lost a whole day and almost two nights in making the trip. Thus, the time between trips was necessarily from six weeks to two months--which prevented the sale of such products as butter and eggs in great quantities since those foods could not be kept fresh for any length of time. The coming of the automobile and better roads made possible more frequent visits to town, an enlarged market, and therefore more business for Bastrop merchants.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, Historical Edition, August 29, 1935.

<sup>138</sup>"Prokop's Store," in ibid.

The automobile may have been responsible for a movement in Bastrop for better streets within the town. In August 1907, gravel was being taken from a gravel pit southeast of town for the streets of Bastrop.<sup>139</sup>

In 1909, a new bank was opened. The bank was issued a charter and opened on January 15 as the Citizens' State Bank of Bastrop. Judge Paul D. Page served as its first president, J. L. Wilbarger and Dr. H. C. Combs as vice-presidents, and James T. Crysup as cashier.<sup>140</sup>

In 1909 a search for oil in Bastrop County began. Drilling started in the Alum Creek area, about six miles east of Bastrop in that year,<sup>141</sup> and since that time wells have been drilled in all directions in the area surrounding Bastrop. During the next twenty years, much excitement was engendered at times by the activities of various oil companies, but it was not until 1928 that oil was found in quantity sufficient for production. The Yoast Field, near Cedar Creek, had thirteen producing wells in 1929.<sup>142</sup> In 1933, the Hilbig Field was brought

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<sup>139</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, August 24, 1907.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., Historical Edition, August 29, 1935.

<sup>141</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, February 6, 1909.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid., February 21, 1929.

in near Rockne and is still producing oil commercially under the operation of the Humble Oil and Refining Company.

On April 6, 1922, the Bastrop Advertiser printed the following:

E. S. Orgain was out on the street Saturday, soliciting funds with which to install a radio phone in the Chamber of Commerce which will be free for everyone. The instrument that is being installed will be strong enough to reach out and connect with all parts of the United States. It will be rather strange for us here to attend the Chicago Opera without cost or inconvenience. It will be of interest to know that crop and weather reports will be given by this method. In fact, with the coming of the radio phone, Bastrop will be in constant touch with the whole world.<sup>143</sup>

Up until 1921, there had been many doctors but no hospital facilities were available in Bastrop. Dr. J. G. Bryson, who came to Bastrop in 1911, tells a story which is illustrative of the conditions under which doctors sometimes had to work. He had not been in town long when he performed an operation upon a Mexican who had been shot in the abdomen. There were no sterilizers in those days; so Dr. Bryson and his wife, after soaking packages of drug-store gauze, cotton, bandages, and some

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<sup>143</sup> Bastrop Advertiser, April 6, 1922.

towels and sheets of their own in a bichloride of mercury solution, placed all these materials in the oven of their wood stove and baked them for an hour. They placed the doctor's instruments and two pairs of rubber gloves in a clothes boiler and boiled them for thirty minutes. Everything was then loaded on a delivery wagon and taken to the house where the Mexican was waiting. Dr. Bryson had taken his office table and basins earlier and had placed the latter in a wash kettle in the yard to boil. The house was exceedingly dark; and so the table was moved out on the back porch for light. Word had gotten around of what was happening. By the time the patient was under chloroform there was quite an audience in the back yard of the house to watch the operation, which, incidentally, was successful.<sup>144</sup>

In 1921, Dr. Bryson opened the Bryson Sanitarium, which he operated until 1924. In that year, he and a number of leading citizens organized a corporation and procured funds for the construction of a modern hospital with complete equipment. The late Mrs. Sarah Jane Orgain

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<sup>144</sup>Dr. J. Gordon Bryson, "Body and Soil," unpublished manuscript, p. 131 et seq.



made a gift of \$13,000 to the hospital as a memorial to her son, F. A. Orgain, in whose memory the hospital was named. Churches and fraternal organizations of Bastrop County donated the furniture and fixtures for seven rooms. The other seventeen were equipped by the hospital board. Through the years since, this hospital has been serving the citizens of Bastrop and of the surrounding areas.<sup>145</sup>

Little activity in the lumber industry had been apparent during the first quarter of the twentieth century, due to the fact that so much of the timber had been cut away during the earlier years. In 1928, the Edwards Brothers Mill, one of the largest and most active of the saw mills operated in Bastrop County, came to the town and began operations. The mill was completely destroyed by fire in 1931 but was rebuilt and remained in operation until 1936. In 1934, J. S. Dearmon established a lumber mill which was active until 1944. In 1938, H. C. Wilkins opened a mill in Bastrop, which is now in operation as H. C. Wilkins and Sons. Another mill, established by J. H. Richardson in 1940, was bought by E. R. Barnhill and

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<sup>145</sup>"Orgain Memorial Hospital Founded Here in 1924," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

Lincoln Farris. The lumber industry continues to be a part of Bastrop's commerce, as it was in its earliest days.<sup>146</sup>

### The Great Depression

The decade from 1930 to 1940 was marked by economic problems and a program of governmental spending to help relieve conditions. In 1934, a unit of the Civilian Conservation Corps was organized at Bastrop and was utilized in the construction of buildings for the Bastrop State Park, a grant for which had been approved in 1933. In that same year, a mattress factory was opened in Bastrop under the Texas Relief Program;<sup>147</sup> a drainage system was completed under the Texas Relief Commission;<sup>148</sup> and a plan of government purchasing of cattle was instituted as part of an emergency drouth relief program.<sup>149</sup>

That year saw the installation of natural gas

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<sup>146</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>147</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, November 1, 1934.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., May 3, 1934.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., July 26, 1934.

as a fuel system instead of the wood and lignite which had been in use. It also saw improvement in the roads surrounding Bastrop with the surfacing of the highway between Bastrop and Smithville,<sup>150</sup> the grading of the Bastrop-Paige Road,<sup>151</sup> and the surfacing of the Old San Antonio Road to join Bastrop and San Antonio in a direct route.<sup>152</sup>

In 1922, the section of Main Street in which the business district was located had been paved but the remainder of the streets had been graveled. In 1935, a paving program was instituted under which most of the streets in the town were paved.

The power and water plant at Bastrop for a number of years was owned by a corporation of private individuals. In 1925, it was sold to the Texas Public Utilities which sold it to the Texas Power and Light Company. In 1938, the Lower Colorado River Authority bought the utilities, and then the City of Bastrop, after voting to issue revenue bonds for that purpose, purchased the

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<sup>150</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, June 14, 1934.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid., March 15, 1934.

<sup>152</sup>Ibid., February 22, 1934.

utilities from this commission.<sup>153</sup>

The Lower Colorado River Authority had served Bastrop and other towns along the Colorado in another way. Floods due to uncontrolled rises in the river had, throughout the years, caused great damage to farmlands and to town property. The overflow of 1889 has been described.<sup>154</sup> One of the worst floods in the history of Bastrop took place in 1935, when the river rose to a crest of fifty-three feet above low-water level. Twenty-four homes were destroyed, and serious damage was done to over four hundred more. The town's water supply was cut off, roads were closed, typhoid warnings were put out, and trains stopped running into Bastrop for four days.<sup>155</sup> Under the Lower Colorado River Authority, dams have been built above Austin, which have done much to control floodwaters.<sup>156</sup>

#### Economic History during and after World War II

Immediately following the entry of the United

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<sup>153</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>154</sup>Cf. Chapter III, pp. 68-69.

<sup>155</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, June 20, 1935, reprinted September 25, 1952.

<sup>156</sup>Bastrop County History, p. 13.

States into World War II, Bastrop became a hive of activity because of the building of Camp Swift near the city. This account given by the Bastrop Advertiser describes the great and sudden change in the city:

Overnight, the hundred-year-old town bloomed like a century plant, into a hustling, bustling little city. The sound of hammers filled the once peaceful atmosphere, and the streets were filled with strange people.

Old store fronts were torn out, and with astonishing rapidity, new modern show windows appeared. Strange men came into town and opened new businesses in every available building space. New buildings grew like mushrooms. Vacant lots that formerly were used to stake the cows in were covered with buildings of all sizes and types-- or were turned into tourist courts and trailer camps. The very air was alive with activity.

The construction men moved in, and on pay day, the older residents found it more comfortable to remain at home, or if it became necessary to go to town, to go on foot. Traffic became a problem and parking spaces a thing of the past. The cafes and picture shows were crowded. But in spite of the crowd, there was very little disturbance. These people came to Bastrop to do a job; they were very much in earnest about getting that job done . . . . And in the unbelievable space of three months, the sandy hills between Bastrop and Elgin became the broad expanse of buildings, paved streets, and manoeuvring grounds that is Camp Swift today.

There is no "business as usual" in Bastrop. The construction crews are gone, but the streets are filled with soldiers, and the town has settled

down to serve them, in every respect, to the best of their ability.<sup>157</sup>

Many other improvements took place in Bastrop at this time: a new telephone building was built; a telegraph office was installed to replace the old system by which telegraph messages were sent through the railroad station agent; and an adequate bus station was constructed, not only for the cross-country buses which arrived in Bastrop, but also for a line of transit buses operating on an hourly schedule from Bastrop to Camp Swift.

The purchase of gasoline, automobile tires, and shoes was controlled by rationing during the war. Sugar was rationed in 1942,<sup>158</sup> and in 1943 rationing included most other foods such as coffee,<sup>159</sup> canned foods,<sup>160</sup> shortening, butter, oils, and meat.<sup>161</sup> Some foods such as pepper and chocolate were rarely available, but there was no real food shortage at any time.

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<sup>157</sup>"Bastrop Bustles with Camp Swift Boom," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>158</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, April 9, 1942.

<sup>159</sup>Ibid., February 4, 1943.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid., February 18, 1943.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid., March 18, 1943.

At the end of the war, Camp Swift began reducing its personnel. In 1947, the camp was dismantled, and Bastrop trade felt the effect of the resulting decrease in population. The last census in 1950 showed Bastrop to have a population of 3,176, less than half the number of those who registered for sugar in 1942.

In 1950, Bastrop commerce was largely dependent upon the cattle industry, which has replaced cotton production in the Bastrop area to a great extent. Interested citizens of the town are now making every effort to bring a factory or some such industry to Bastrop.

## C H A P T E R   V

### THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF BASTROP

The history of Bastrop, like that of other towns, bears witness to the fact that man does not live alone in this world, that his greatest mental, spiritual and industrial progress is brought about in his relations to others. From its earliest days until the present time, social relations among the people of Bastrop either in relatively small groups or en masse have contributed to the welfare and happiness of the town.

#### Early Years of the Settlement

In the first years of the settlement at Bastrop, the widely scattered families came to depend upon each other a great deal from necessity. When a new settler needed a house, his neighbors helped him build it. When marauding bands of Indians came into the vicinity, all the families went to the nearest stockade to join forces both for defense and for attack. When the settlers returned from the "run away scrape" and the Battle of San Jacinto, the danger from Indians was at its peak. The



settlers solved this difficulty by leaving the women and children in town, while the men went out to work the farms in shifts.<sup>1</sup>

Even the parties which settlers held had an element of cooperative labor in them with one of the favorite games being "cotton picking" in which contesting sides "picked races" for the largest pile of lint.<sup>2</sup> Not all of their social gatherings were of this type, however, as is seen from Elizabeth Wilkins' description of the first Fourth of July celebration held in Bastrop:

They had a good "old-fashioned" time. Danced all night till the broad day-light--merry old reels played by Lee Cottle, who was considered a fine fiddler here then. The young people in those days were not over-particular as to what kind of music they danced by and many a merry dance they had by "Old Isum's" playing.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1840's, it was the custom when a visitor came for all the ladies, visitor and ladies of the house alike, to sit in the parlor and sew, tat, or knit as they

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<sup>1</sup>Bastrop County History, Historical Records Survey, Works Progress Administration, unpublished manuscript, The University of Texas Archives, 1935. Hereinafter referred to as Bastrop County History.

<sup>2</sup>Margaret Belle Jones, Bastrop (Bastrop, Texas: 1936), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Emma Holmes Jenkins, "Reminiscences from Mrs. Elizabeth Wilkins," Bastrop Advertiser, September 24, 1887.

talked.<sup>4</sup> In those days, it was customary to spend the day--and that meant all day; to go to tea, and spend the whole evening; or to be invited to spend the night because it was not safe to be out after dark. One evening the Crocherons, after visiting one of their friends, returned home about ten o'clock walking about a mile to do so. The next night, a man coming over the same path, was killed by an Indian arrow.<sup>5</sup>

Mrs. McDowall described a two-story building in the south of town:

This building consisted of two rooms only, one below and one above; and here, court was held. Here the hardy Methodist circuit rider came, and laying aside his gun and powder horn, took from his well-worn saddle bags a Bible and hymn book and preached, sang, and prayed, while as sometimes happened on week days, the women of the congregation picked cotton lint from the seeds which their stout-checked aprons held. Dances were given here, lasting from sundown to broad daylight, as the tallow dips in their tin holders on the wall flickered to a finish. In the dance hall, wooden benches ran all around the walls. Mothers brought their babies, and, wrapping them in shawls as they slept, laid them underneath the benches while they danced.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Mrs. Mary Ann McDowall, "A Little Journey through Memory's Halls," unpublished manuscript, 1927, not numbered.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

The family laundry was a communal affair. On washday, the entire family went to the river to do the laundry. The women scrubbed the clothes at the water's edge while the children played. The men sat with their guns on their knees and talked, keeping alert at all times for signs of Indians.<sup>7</sup>

On Christmas Day, 1843, James Nicholson gave a Christmas ball to which the admission fee was a cow and calf, worth about five dollars. People came to the ball on horseback from as far away as Austin and LaGrange. Mr. Nicholson managed to get coffee from La Grange and sugar from Matagorda for the supper. There was an abundance of pork, mutton, beef, eggs, and butter from local supplies.<sup>8</sup>

It was not uncommon for the settlers to travel thirty or forty miles on horseback for such a social occasion. When Henry Crocheron and Mary Ann Tipple were married, they left Bastrop immediately after the wedding on horseback and rode to Austin, where they attended a ball given in their honor by Mrs. Haynie.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Dr. J. G. Bryson, interview, June 19, 1954.

<sup>8</sup>Letter from Cayton Erhard, Bastrop Advertiser, May 8, 1875.

<sup>9</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

The need for educating their children was early felt by the inhabitants of Bastrop. It is believed that there were schools operated by itinerant teachers in the very earliest years, but there are no records of such schools.<sup>10</sup>

One of the first schools about which there is available information was taught by William Nicholson, father of James Nicholson. It was in a log building north of the Nicholson house. In his school Mr. Nicholson always used a quill pen for writing and taught the children to make pot hooks and strokes of various kinds devised to form the hand before they were allowed to write a word. The punishment meted out to those who fell behind in their lessons, or perhaps misbehaved, was the vigorous application of a leather strap or ruler to the palm of the hand.<sup>11</sup>

The next school was conducted by Miss Keziah Paine and her mother in a log house at the foot of the hills east of town. Children walked to school with tin buckets containing their dinner, usually of cornbread or

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<sup>10</sup>William Henry Korges, "Bastrop County: Historical and Educational Development," unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Texas, 1933.

<sup>11</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 31.

biscuit, a bottle of milk, a bottle of molasses, and sometimes a piece of meat. They stayed from eight o'clock in the morning until four or five o'clock in the afternoon.<sup>12</sup>

In 1838, Mr. Martin Ruter, a Methodist minister, organized the Bastrop Educational Society for the purpose of opening an academy. The society applied for a charter, but various reverses delayed their accomplishing their purpose until 1850.<sup>13</sup> In that year, the board of directors for the Bastrop Educational Association purchased a site for an academy from John D. Hogan and his wife for the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars.<sup>14</sup>

The Academy, completed in 1851, was erected north of and facing the Methodist Church. It belonged to the Methodist Conference and was for a long time the best school in the state. Mrs. McDowall describes the school:

The building was two-story, strongly built, and had a two-story gallery, the whole length of the front on the South, and it had a cupola which housed the bell belonging to the church and which

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<sup>12</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup>Mary Lucy Maynard, "Bastrop Methodist Church Oldest in Southwest Texas," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition, in preparation. Hereinafter referred to as Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>14</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 27.

was bought by money procured, or rather given, by citizens.

The Academy had two large auditoriums, one downstairs and one upstairs. There were heavy pine desks and seats combined. At the west end of the auditorium, a platform--stage, we called it--reached quite across. A half dozen blackboards, in frames so we could work on each side, were arranged to swing. In the center of the stage sat the teacher at a pine table. At the west end of the building, downstairs, was a long room which was called the chemistry room and which was well fitted up for those times. At the east end of the building, downstairs, was a room and an entrance hall with stairway; and at the west end of the building upstairs, was a music room and a library. The library opened on the gallery. There were good books. At the east end was a recitation room and a stairway leading down toward the north and also one leading up into the attic and belfry. The roof was pitched high.<sup>15</sup>

A two-story boarding house was built in the block west of the school campus. To this boarding house came planters' sons and daughters, the Caldwells, Washingtons, Hills, and others, to live while they attended the Academy.

The school was first in the charge of Professor W. J. Hancock who was brought from Aberdeen, Mississippi, by the Methodist Conference. When he moved to Houston,

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<sup>15</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

the Reverend Henry Carmer and his wife came. They were well educated and procured good teachers.

Boys and girls always had recitations together, but the boys' study hall was downstairs, while the girls' was upstairs. Recesses of a half-hour were scheduled at different periods for the boys and girls.

There were big classes. The spelling class stood on the step of the platform and reached from one end to the other. The children spelled each other down. When one got to the head of the class, the rule was that he must go to the foot and work up again. The Blue Back Speller was used for the lowergrades, the dictionary for the more advanced classes.

The school was in session from eight o'clock in the morning until four o'clock in the afternoon, with a half-hour recess both morning and afternoon.<sup>16</sup>

According to Mrs. McDowall, the Carmers had at one time been connected with the Kentucky Military Institute under Colonel R. T. P. Allen. Through the Carmers' influence, the Colonel was induced to come to Texas and the Bastrop Military Institute was started in 1857. Colonel

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

Allen took over the lower story of the Academy, while the Carmers retained the upper story as the Girls' School. Barracks were built along the east and west sides of the campus, and the boarding house was enlarged. After one year, the Carmers went to Chapell Hill to take charge of Chapell Hill Female College, and the Girls' School ended.<sup>17</sup>

The Bastrop Military Institute increased its numbers. Young men from other states came, and soon more than one hundred young men were cadets. "Extended courses in Mathematics, Mechanics, Natural Sciences, Civil Engineering with field practice and the use of instruments" were given.<sup>18</sup> The course of study required four years for completion in order to obtain a degree.

There was a morning study hour which began at daylight and ended when breakfast was announced; the evening study hour ended at nine o'clock when the roll was called. Punishment for absence from roll call was expulsion. The cadets were not permitted to visit except on Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, October 9, 1858, quoted in Jones, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>19</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 33.



Among the cadets of the Military Institute were J. D. Sayers and his brother, W. B. Sayers, as well as two of Sam Houston's sons.

Bastrop people soon formed the habit of gathering on the Academy porch to watch the cadets drill, a procedure which took place every afternoon. Every Sunday the cadets marched in a body to the Methodist Church where they attended services conducted by Colonel Allen. They wore uniforms which were blue with brass buttons and had red stripes down the trousers.<sup>20</sup>

Mrs. McDowall describes Commencement at the Academy:

At Commencement in the Academy, exercises were held in the Methodist Church. The Governor of the state [Sam Houston] was always present. For one week the little town was in gala attire--exercises were held in the Academy, oral examinations were conducted daily, addresses by cadets were in order, read from a be-ribboned paper. At Commencement, the cadets, in uniform, filed into the church, taking front pews. A body-guard escorted the Governor to a large armchair at the front. Graduates were seated on the right of the chancel, a choir of girls on the left. The Governor addressed the graduates, presented diplomas, greeted his friends, and later, dined with the colonel. In the afternoon, there was an exhibition, drill

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<sup>20</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 34.

cadets in full uniform, high military hats with drooping white plumes. Governor Houston watched these young men from Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana pass in review.<sup>21</sup>

In 1858, a Corporation School was opened. Heretofore, all schools had been private, requiring tuition from the students. The Corporation School was semi-private with the Corporation of Bastrop paying one-half the tuition and requiring the students to pay the other half.<sup>22</sup> There was no free public school until just before the end of the century.

In 1861, Mrs. Sarah Jane Orgain established the Colorado Institute,<sup>23</sup> which flourished until the early 1890's. This school was one of the outstanding institutions of the town.

#### The Civil War

The Civil War put an end to the Bastrop Military Institute, its cadets scattering to all parts of the state

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<sup>21</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>23</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, January 14, 1861.

to become drillmasters for troops being organized. The war also changed the social life of the town with the citizens turning their energies toward providing for war needs rather than for pure enjoyment. The women gave concerts and arranged tableaux to raise money for clothing for Southern soldiers. Carpets were taken up and shaped into blankets. The women made bandages and scraped lint.<sup>24</sup>

The Royal Arch Chapter No. 23 of the Masonic Order was in existence in Bastrop's early days. It had functioned in the laying of the cornerstone of the courthouse which was built in 1853. This chapter was said to have disbanded about 1857 or 1858.<sup>25</sup> On June 12, 1863, the Gamble Lodge No. 244 was chartered and has continued in service since that time.<sup>26</sup>

#### Postwar Days

In 1866, the Bastrop Casino Association was incorporated with the following board of directors: Charles

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<sup>24</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

<sup>25</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, August 24, 1907.

<sup>26</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 162.

Wertzner, A. Alzner, C. Erhard, William Miller, and H. Hoppe. It was described as a body corporate and politic for the purpose of promotion of education,<sup>27</sup> morals, benevolences, and encouragement of scientific and literary pursuits.<sup>28</sup> The association erected a building which was the scene of many of the festivities of the town. A school was also organized soon after incorporation and was maintained for a number of years.<sup>29</sup>

In 1870, the Bastrop Male Academy was opened under the direction of Louis C. Wise.<sup>30</sup> That same year, William McKay of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, opened the Excelsior College in the Bastrop Academy building. In 1875, he applied to the local school board to make the College a free school and to grant it the use of the building. This application was denied, and the school continued on its original basis until 1880.<sup>31</sup>

The year 1870 also was the establishment of the

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<sup>27</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, March 25, 1871.

<sup>31</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 80.

Guttenberg Lodge of the International Order of Odd Fellows in Bastrop.<sup>32</sup>

Shortly after the Civil War, a Virginia family consisting of father, mother, and three sons, Colonel Charles James, Major John James, and Captain Fleming James, came to Bastrop, where the sons tried without success to establish a military institute.<sup>33</sup> In 1873, the Academy building was sold to the "Board of School Directors of the County of Bastrop," and from then until 1892, it was occupied by different schools operated under the community, or private system.<sup>34</sup> In 1892, Dr. H. P. Lockett purchased the old building and razed it, building a residence on one side of the former campus.<sup>35</sup>

In May, 1873, the Bastrop Turn-Verein was incorporated with the following board of directors: Edward Bastian, Louis Eilers, T. A. Hasler, Charles Wertzner, J. Duve, T. W. Hoppe, Joseph Kirsch, and associates. The association was organized for the purpose of promoting

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>33</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

gymnastics and social and educational enterprises. A private school was organized and maintained in the Turn-Verein Hall for a number of years, with special emphasis given to the German language and traditions, and to physical education.<sup>36</sup>

On December 13, 1873, a Democratic Calico Ball was announced. It was to take place on December 23 at the courthouse. All the ladies were requested to wear calico dresses. According to the Bastrop Advertiser, "It will be the grandest ever held in the state."<sup>37</sup>

The Christmas season was indeed a festive one that year. The merrymaking began with the Calico Ball on December 23. That event was followed by a party at Major Woods Moore's home, December 25; a Christmas tree and ball at the Turn-Verein Hall, December 25; a party and dance at the home of Colonel George Washington Jones, December 26; a party and dance at Mr. William Young's, December 30; a "little folks'" ball at Mr. Batts's home, December 31; a German ball at the Casino, and a ball at the Academy, January 1.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 104.

<sup>37</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, December 13, 1873.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., January 3, 1874.

In 1874, a debating society was organized by a group of Bastrop men with Major Joseph D. Sayers as president.<sup>39</sup> In that year, for the amusement of its citizens, Bastrop had a Roller Skating Association.<sup>40</sup> Another type of entertainment was announced in November: The Great International Menagerie, Museum, Equerium, Grecian Circus and Grand Roman Hippodrome were coming to Bastrop, with five hundred living animals, requiring seventy wagons, cages, and chariots, drawn by four hundred horses.<sup>41</sup>

Bastrop was well able to provide its own entertainment, however. On February 20, 1875, the Bastrop Advertiser announced that the Bastrop Social and Dramatic Club, in connection with the German Brass Band, proposed giving a dramatic and musical entertainment at the Casino Hall on the evening of March 2.<sup>42</sup> At that time there were two brass bands, two string bands, and forty or fifty single musicians in Bastrop, which then had a population of approximately nineteen hundred.<sup>43</sup> The brass bands were

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<sup>39</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, January 17, 1874.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., October 31, 1874.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., November 7, 1874.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., February 20, 1875.

the Bastrop City Band and the Casino Band. Frequently, the two bands gave joint concerts.<sup>44</sup>

In March, 1879, the Bastrop Literary Club was organized. Apparently, it was a society composed of men. The subject for debate for the first program was "Should Women Be Allowed the Right of Suffrage?"<sup>45</sup>

The annual closing of the schools was an important event for many Bastrop citizens. In 1879, the editor of the Bastrop Advertiser described the final examinations of Excelsior College, which were conducted orally before an audience, and which he had attended. The examination of the pupils began on Thursday morning and lasted two days. School was opened with scripture reading and music at eight o'clock in the morning. Afterwards the morning was spent in examining classes in reading, grammar, physical geography, and primary arithmetic. At one-thirty in the afternoon, the exercises were resumed when other classes in grammar, geography, arithmetic, and algebra were examined. On Friday, the more advanced classes in arithmetic, geology, natural philosophy, geometry, chemistry, and physiology were examined. Music, vocal and

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<sup>45</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 159.



instrumental, was given during the day to delight the audience. Closing exercises consisted of "declamations, select readings, and compositions" interspersed with music. The Bastrop Advertiser complimented teachers and pupils on the brilliant showing they made.<sup>46</sup>

In 1883, the Bastrop Gun Club was active. According to the Bastrop Advertiser, the club "shoots Thursday and Friday evenings, smashing glass balls and clay pigeons and occasionally lightening the pockets of zealous friends."<sup>47</sup>

In 1883, another private school was organized to teach in the old Academy building by Mrs. H. V. Thompson, her daughter, Miss Annie Thompson, and A. E. Hill. The tuition was from two dollars and fifty cents to four dollars per month, depending upon the grade level in which the child was enrolled.<sup>48</sup>

In the same year, a private school was taught in Calvary Church by the Reverend and Mrs. George Jenner.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, May 31, 1879.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., March 31, 1883.

<sup>48</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>49</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, September 15, 1883, quoted in Korges, op. cit., p. 112.

The Bastrop Graded School, organized in 1886 by Jesse D. Crow, was successful for a number of years.<sup>50</sup> In 1899, J. L. Hood assumed charge of this school.<sup>51</sup>

In 1889, the Opera House was built and forthwith became the setting for all varieties of entertainment in Bastrop. Such attractions as performances of the Alcazar Comic Opera Company,<sup>52</sup> Lyceum courses,<sup>53</sup> Chautauqua programs,<sup>54</sup> minstrels, and home-talent plays were presented in the Opera House to delight Bastrop audiences.

In 1891, the Bastrop German-American School was incorporated.<sup>55</sup>

The following year, an election to initiate free schools carried unanimously in Bastrop, and a special tax of one-half of one per cent was voted.<sup>56</sup> On March 18, 1893,

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<sup>50</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>52</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, February 1, 1890.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., January 3, 1919.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., June 6, 1919.

<sup>55</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>56</sup>Clipping from the Bastrop Advertiser, in Mrs. O. P. Jones Scrapbook, pages not numbered.

the Bastrop Advertiser announced that "the teachers and pupils of Professor Rogers' school move into their new building today."<sup>57</sup> Mrs. Emma Holmes Jenkins served as principal and teacher in the new school.<sup>58</sup> In 1895, there was a scholastic population of 692 in the city.<sup>59</sup>

A few years later, Mrs. Jenkins organized the Bastrop Normal School, which she conducted for more than thirty years.<sup>60</sup>

The year 1896 opened with a succession of gala events, beginning with a Leap Year ball at the Opera House. Invitations were sent out, and arriving guests were provided with dance programs with accompanying tasseled pencils. The music for the grand march, played by "Volina's Band," began at nine o'clock. Between eleven and twelve o'clock, supper was announced with the table being laden with "a magnificent spread embracing almost every luxury

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<sup>57</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, March 18, 1893.

<sup>58</sup>Kate Jenkins Dechard, "Bastrop History Rich in Lore," American Statesman, October 17, 1937. Reprinted in the Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>59</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, August 31, 1895.

<sup>60</sup>Dechard, loc. cit.

to be imagined."<sup>61</sup> Dancing continued until about three o'clock in the morning.

On January 11, Miss Ruth McDowall gave a progressive tea at which ten courses were served where partners changed at the end of each course according to programs made out in Leap Year style at the beginning of the party.<sup>62</sup>

The weekly paper also mentions a "Grand Masque Ball" at the Casino Hall in the same week.<sup>63</sup> This type of social gathering was very popular for a number of years, its participants going to great pains to provide themselves with appropriate and original costumes.

In April, the eighth annual Mai Fest was advertised, to take place on the hill one mile from Bastrop which is still called Mai Fest Hill because of its selection as the setting for this occasion. The program outlined for this particular celebration was typical of the yearly festivals. There would be, according to the announcement in the paper, "a grand street parade, the crowning of the May Queen, baseball games, a grand cattle roping contest, horse racing (trotting and pacing), a grand

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<sup>61</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, January 4, 1896.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., January 18, 1896.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

shooting tournament, games and amusements for children, and a grand ball each night with music by Professor Alf Jung's Silver Cornet Band."<sup>64</sup>

Various study groups have been prominent in Bastrop's social life through the years. There were music study clubs as early as 1880.<sup>65</sup> In 1896, a Shakespearian Club was organized.<sup>66</sup> In 1897, the Bastrop Reading Circle was begun.<sup>67</sup> In 1900, the Bastrop Harmony Club, one of the oldest federated clubs in Texas, had its beginning.<sup>68</sup>

#### The Twentieth Century

As early as 1852, Bastrop was interested in establishing a library. Citizens of the town, by joint subscription, provided over one thousand volumes of standard works and authors for that purpose. It was the only one

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<sup>64</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, April 18, 1896.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., Anniversary Edition.

<sup>66</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, January 18, 1896.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.; Mid-Century Homecoming Edition, May 18, 1950.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

of its kind in the state.<sup>69</sup> Evidently, in the half-century following its organization, this library had ceased to function. In 1900, the Bastrop Public Library was organized<sup>70</sup> and was operated for a number of years by volunteer workers among the citizens of the town.

In 1901, Bastrop Chapter No. 64 of the Order of the Eastern Star was organized.<sup>71</sup>

In 1911, the first Bastrop County Fair was held at Bastrop and was an annual occurrence for several years.<sup>72</sup> Prizes were given for outstanding agricultural products, livestock, canned goods, cakes, fancy work, art work, and pot plants, with special prizes to the prettiest baby, the fattest baby, the ugliest man, the tallest man, the largest man, the largest family, the family coming the longest distance, any couple living in the county who got married during the Fair, and the winner of the fat man's race.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>71</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, September 27, 1951.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., November 7, 1913.

<sup>73</sup>Catalog and Prize List, Bastrop County Fair (Bastrop, Texas: 1912), p. 33 et seq.

In 1913, a country club was proposed for Bastrop by J. C. Powers. The following year, the Bastrop Fishing Club was organized and bought one hundred sixty acres of land two miles east of town. A dam thirty feet high was erected across Copperas Creek to make a lake.<sup>74</sup> A house was built to serve as a country club.

In 1920, the first American Legion Post, the Clifford Marshall Post No. 243, was organized with O. B. Wolf as commander. This post became inactive after a time. Following World War II, the James H. Perkins Post No. 533 was begun, with Bower Crider as its first commander.<sup>75</sup> An American Legion Auxiliary was organized in October, 1947. The post has since been very active, establishing an American Legion Center which has become of service to the entire community.<sup>76</sup>

In 1928, another service group composed of businessmen, the Bastrop Lions' Club, was instituted.<sup>77</sup> In 1939, a new Chamber of Commerce had its beginning as a

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<sup>74</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, November 19, 1915.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., Anniversary Edition.

<sup>76</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, Mid-Century Homecoming Edition, May 18, 1950.

<sup>77</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, August 23, 1928.

successor to a similar organization which had ceased to function sometime during the twenties. J. V. Ash was its first president. These two groups, the Lions Club and the Chamber of Commerce, have been active since their foundation in all projects beneficial to the community.

In 1931, Bastrop County marked its one-hundredth anniversary with a centennial celebration, in which a pageant depicting the history of the county from 1830 to 1931 was presented at the Fair Grounds on Mai Fest Hill. This colorful event was planned and executed through the combined efforts of all the communities in Bastrop County. Miss Mary Nell Jones of Bastrop reigned as queen of the celebration, with Perkins Herndon as king.<sup>78</sup>

In 1921, the building completed in 1893 for the public schools was remodeled and a new annex was added.<sup>79</sup> This edifice served the city schools until 1939, when an increasing enrollment made further expansion necessary. In 1939, the necessary bonds were voted by the city for the construction of a new school. This building was started in May, 1940, and for the following eighteen months

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<sup>78</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, July 9, 1931.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., May 27, 1921.



classes were taught in a group of barracks which were no longer in use by the Civilian Conservation Corps. In February, 1942, the building was completed, and the students and teachers moved into their new quarters.<sup>80</sup>

The construction of Camp Swift had just started at this time, and within a month after occupying the new building, an additional three hundred students had been added to the enrollment because of families moving in to carry on the work of construction. By the end of March, the enrollment had necessitated the employment of eight additional teachers, and the school administration, with difficulty, had found space for eight new classes in what had hitherto seemed a more-than-spacious building.

The enrollment decreased somewhat with the completion of Camp Swift and the subsequent moving away of many families, but most of these were replaced by families of soldiers, many of whom had children of school age. After Camp Swift was evacuated, the school enrollment decreased slightly for two or three years, but has risen again since that time because of the increase in the birth rate within the community.

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<sup>80</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, January 29, 1942.

Provision for the education of the Negroes was a part of the public school program in Bastrop instituted in 1892. In a county survey of schools in 1895, there were ninety-four schools listed in the county. About half of these were for Negro children.<sup>81</sup> A frame building was erected in Bastrop at the corner of Austin and Marion Streets. In 1947, this building was torn down and a new modern building was constructed.<sup>82</sup>

In 1933, several small elementary schools in which Latin-American students had been taught in Bastrop and the surrounding area were consolidated, and the Mina Ward School was opened.<sup>83</sup> This school was in operation until 1947. Latin-American high school pupils attended the Bastrop High School. Since 1947, all grade school Latin-American students have attended the Bastrop Elementary School. In 1950, the Mina Ward School building was moved to a corner of Hill and Cedar Streets where it was enlarged and remodeled to serve as the Bastrop Primary School.

Bastrop people have consistently been fond of

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<sup>81</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, August 31, 1895.

<sup>82</sup>P. J. Dodson, interview, July 19, 1954.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

sports, as is evidenced by the forming of various sports clubs. In 1931, both the Golf Club<sup>84</sup> and the Bastrop Tennis Association<sup>85</sup> were mentioned in the weekly newspaper. In 1938, the Archery Club was organized.<sup>86</sup> Outside of clubs, interest in spectator sports such as football, baseball, and track has been high. For many years, Bastrop had its own baseball team and competed with teams from other towns in Central Texas. In 1919, a notice appeared in the Bastrop Advertiser that on March 28, all Bastrop stores would be closed at noon, so that the merchants and their employees might be able to attend the county meet at which various athletic events such as track, volley ball, and baseball were scheduled.<sup>87</sup> A deep interest in school athletics has been sustained among the citizens through the years.

Bastrop's proximity to Austin and the ever-increasing facilities of transportation and good roads have made it possible for its citizens to attend athletic

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<sup>84</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, April 16, 1931.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., August 13, 1931.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., January 27, 1938.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., March 14, 1919.

events of The University of Texas and to take advantage of various cultural advantages which Austin has to offer as well.

The Bastrop State Park now provides an attractive setting for Bastrop social gatherings. It contains a well-maintained golf course, a swimming pool, and extensive and picturesque picnic grounds equipped with barbecue pits and running water.

In recent years, an event of much interest to the citizens of Bastrop has been the annual homecoming celebration which was first held in 1948 and promises to become a fixed institution in the life of the town. It features a parade, a rodeo, the Fishermen's Boatrace down the Colorado from Austin to Bastrop, and an afternoon reunion gathering of all the classes who have ever attended Bastrop High School. It is planned and executed each year by many groups acting cooperatively and is enjoyed by the members of the community in the same spirit which has always characterized Bastrop social life.

## C H A P T E R     V I

### RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF BASTROP

In all the contracts into which the Mexican government entered with various impresarios, it was specified that only Catholics be brought to Texas. In spite of this requirement, however, few of the colonists were required to take the oath which pledged them to support the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> The word "Catholic" was broadly interpreted by the impresarios as meaning "of or pertaining to the church universal."

#### The Catholic Church in Bastrop

In the original grant made to the town of Bastrop in 1830, the blocks and lots were laid out according to the usual Mexican plan and included a block "for the church and priests' houses."<sup>2</sup> The Catholic Church was not built for some time, however, because of the relatively

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph W. Steen, Texas, A Story of Progress (Austin: The Steck Co., 1942), p. 288.

<sup>2</sup>Translation of the Original Grant to the Town of Bastrop, quoted in Margaret Belle Jones, Bastrop (Bastrop, Texas: 1936), p. 5.

small number of Catholics in Bastrop and because of conditions within the Catholic Church in Mexico.

It was believed by the Mexican government that the Spanish ecclesiastics of the new régime were in favor of a restoration of the monarchy of Spain; therefore, efforts were made to limit the powers of the Church. After 1821, there was no bishop, and there were very few priests for the vast newly opened territory. In 1934, a decree of the legislature of Coahuila and Texas stated these terms:

The founding of edifices built by charitable donations under any denomination whatever is hereby absolutely prohibited; no person shall dispose of more than one fiftieth of his property in benefit to his soul; the intervention of ecclesiastical authority in affairs purely civil is prohibited; also the testament visit in the state by the bishops of the diocese.<sup>3</sup>

One of the few buildings in Bastrop in its earliest days was a combination meetinghouse, courthouse, and dance hall, built by S. V. R. Eggleston. To this building came priests and later other ministers of the gospel

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<sup>3</sup>H. P. N. Gammel, The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897, Vol. I (Austin: Gammel's Book Store, 1898), pp. 350 et. seq., quoted by Sister Mary Angela Fitzmorris, Four Decades of Catholicism in Texas, 1820-1860, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 1926, p. 38.

at widely spaced intervals. Their visits were so rare that a system of marriage by contract was legalized. Marriage contracts were drawn up in writing and signed by the contracting parties and two witnesses. These contracts were as binding as licenses. Sometimes it would be two or three years before a priest could be secured to perform the marriage ceremony.<sup>4</sup>

Because of the extent of the territory which a few priests had to visit and because of the slowness of methods of transportation of those days, the priests could stay in one place only a day or two. Marriages and christenings occupied most of their time.

When Texas became a republic, freedom of religious worship was set up by its constitution patterned after that of the United States. At this time the Diocese of Texas was established by the Catholic Church with its center in Galveston. There were still few churches built, however, because money during the days of the Republic was very scarce. The priests continued to travel from one town to another.

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<sup>4</sup>Jones, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

In a letter written from Galveston, April 11, 1841, the Reverend J. M. Odin said:

From Austin we went to Bastrop, a small town situated on the banks of the Colorado. There are hardly twenty Catholics, but all the inhabitants . . . wished to assist at the ceremonies and various addresses that we made seemed to produce a sensible effect.<sup>5</sup>

It was not until 1864 that a Catholic church was formally organized in Bastrop. Two missionaries, Father N. Fallin and Father Jacob Lauth, working out of St. Mary's Church in Taylor, had charge of the Bastrop church from 1864 to 1892.<sup>6</sup> Services were first held in the courthouse.<sup>7</sup> Later, the meeting place was the home of C. Z. Schaefer, one of Bastrop's early mayors.<sup>8</sup> In 1870, St. Martin's Church, a brick structure, was erected at a corner of Water and Chestnut Streets. In 1896, this building was torn down and a frame building was

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<sup>5</sup>Priests of St. Mary's Seminary, La Porte, Texas, Diamond Jubilee (Galveston: Christopher E. Byrne, 1922), p. 61.

<sup>6</sup>Catholic Youth Organization, Centennial (Galveston: Christopher E. Byrne, 1947), pages not numbered.

<sup>7</sup>O. B. Wolf, interview, July 16, 1954.

<sup>8</sup>Mrs. Rosa Woehl, interview, July 13, 1954.



constructed on the same site. At this time, the name of the church was changed to Sacred Heart Church.<sup>9</sup> Father Lennartz of La Grange was in charge. Priests of La Grange had charge of Bastrop as a mission from 1893 to 1924. In 1925 the church became a mission of Guadalupe Parish in Austin. In 1938, it was changed to the Guadalupe Parish in Taylor, from which it was attended for a number of years.<sup>10</sup> Recently, the church has been served by pastors from the church in Elgin.<sup>11</sup> Up to 1942 services were held once a month. Since Camp Swift was built, services have been held each week.

#### The Methodist Church

The Methodist Church in Bastrop was organized one Sunday morning in the spring of 1835 in the incomplete storehouse of Jesse Holderman, a merchant of Bastrop. Planks were placed on boxes or kegs as seats, and a barrel was used as a pulpit. In charge of the gathering was

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<sup>9</sup>O. B. Wolf, Interview, July 16, 1954.

<sup>10</sup>Catholic Youth Organization, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup>Mrs. Johnie Hoffman, interview, July 13, 1954.

James Gilliland, a Methodist exhorter and lay preacher, who had built Moore's Fort thirteen miles below Austin in 1832. Gilliland, although not a licensed preacher, spent his free time riding about the countryside gathering people together for religious services. There were eleven charter members of the Bastrop Methodist Church. These were Mr. and Mrs. C. Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Boyce, Mr. and Mrs. Deleplane, Mr. and Mrs. Brisband, Mrs. Sara McGehee, Mrs. Mary Christian, and one Negro woman, Celia Craft. Mrs. Christian's husband had been killed at the time that Wilbarger was scalped. Two of her greatgrandsons, J. Frank and W. Angie Smith, are now Methodist bishops.

The Bastrop church was the first Methodist church organized within the boundaries which now encompass the Southwest Texas Methodist Conference.

In 1838, Dr. Martin Ruter, an ordained minister stationed at La Grange, came to Bastrop where he reorganized the church and formed the Bastrop Educational Society for the purpose of opening an academy. He made this trip accompanied by three men armed with rifles, although he carried no arms himself. The four men traveled thirty miles or more without seeing a house and passed six graves of persons who had been killed by Indians.

Dr. Ruter's ministry along the Colorado was brief. In May, 1838, less than six months after his arrival in Texas, he died.

In 1839, John Haynie was sent to Austin. His first sermon in Texas was preached in Bastrop. Thereafter, he preached in Austin and Bastrop on Sunday and in the surrounding countryside during the week.<sup>12</sup> There were by this time thirty-two members of the Methodist Church in Bastrop.

At the close of the Mexican War the Methodist people in Bastrop bought a house on Main Street and held services there until 1851.

In 1840, Bishop Beverly Waugh came to Texas to hold the first Methodist Church Conference in the state. In 1842, the third conference was held in Bastrop. Other conferences met in Bastrop in 1851 and 1853, and there have been several in the town since that time.<sup>13</sup>

In 1851, the Methodists, aided by other citizens of Bastrop, built a church on the lot next to the present

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<sup>12</sup>Lucy R. Maynard, "Bastrop Methodist Church Oldest in Southwest Texas," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition, in preparation. Hereinafter cited as Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

site of the rectory. Mrs. McDowall describes the church as a plain substantial structure facing north toward the Academy building. A gallery was built in the north end. This was for Negroes. Many planters came to church regularly every Sunday, bringing not only the carriage drivers but also one of the housemaids. Sometimes a sermon was preached to the Negroes alone on Sunday afternoons. Aunt Celia Craft, the only colored charter member of the church, was allowed the privilege of sitting in the "Amen corner." The pews on either side of the pulpit were so named. From them frequently could be heard a fervent "Amen."<sup>14</sup>

The pulpit was long and white, with a cushion on the top for a large Bible. On either side of the pulpit stand was a raised place for candlesticks.<sup>15</sup> The church was lighted, however, by ten oil lamps, eight of which were hanging.<sup>16</sup>

The pulpit was on a raised platform where members

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<sup>14</sup>Mrs. Mary Ann McDowall, "A Little Journey through Memory's Halls," unpublished manuscript, 1927, pages not numbered.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Macum Phelan, A History of Early Methodism in Texas, 1817-1866 (Nashville: Cokesbury, Press, 1924), p. 329.

in good standing knelt for the quarterly observance of the sacrament. It was opposite the entrance, with a large south window on each side. Over the southeast window, on black scroll, was printed in gold letters: "Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." Over the southwest window was the inscription: "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." On the back wall of the pulpit were the words: "Thou God, seest me." There was a big painted eye after the "Thou, God," and to children it seemed to be a real eye.<sup>17</sup>

There were double pews in the center of the church with no passage between them. Two aisles led from the two doors of the vestibule. The wall pews were for men only, the center ones for women and children. This segregation held good for years until at last a few venturesome men dared to sit with their wives. The others soon followed suit.

Hymn books were not plentiful, and so hymns were lined out. The preacher read two lines of the hymn at a time and the congregation sang them, led by a brother in the Amen corner.<sup>18</sup> For several years there was no organ

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<sup>17</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

because it was felt that it was a sin to worship God with a machine.<sup>19</sup>

Children went to Sunday School and to church. In Sunday School they had a Catechism lesson, using the same book over and over. They learned Bible verses at home and recited them to their teachers. Everyone knelt for prayers.<sup>20</sup>

The church bell was housed in a cupola on the roof of the Academy, where it not only called people to worship but also served as a school bell as well.<sup>21</sup> When the Academy was sold in 1892, the bell was placed in a tower beside the church building.<sup>22</sup> In 1923, lightning struck the belfry, setting fire to the tower. The town people quickly extinguished the fire before it spread to the church.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>"The Episcopal Church," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>20</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Harriet F. Batts, Editor, "The Old Methodist Bell at Bastrop," Some Writings of Robert Lynn Batts, 1864-1935 (Austin, Texas: 1935), p. 238.

<sup>23</sup>Maynard, loc. cit.

No information has been found as to a remodeling of the old Methodist Church. The older citizens of the town remember that the entrance of the church faced east and that there was no gallery. It is believed that when the rectory was built on the lot just north of the church building, the entrance was changed and other alterations were made.

In 1924, a new Methodist church was erected at the corner of Main and Farm Streets, and the old church was torn down. The stained glass windows were moved from the old building to the new, and the bell was installed in a campanile on the grounds.<sup>24</sup> The new church building was dedicated on March 2, 1930.<sup>25</sup>

#### The Baptist Church

One of the first Baptist churches in the state of Texas was Providence Church organized about twelve miles below Bastrop in 1834. Its members were James Burleson, Joseph Burleson, Elizabeth Burleson, Moses Gage,

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<sup>24</sup>Maynard, loc. cit.

<sup>25</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, February 27, 1930.

Isabella Crouch, and the Reverend Isaac Crouch, under the leadership of the Reverend Abner Smith. This church was in existence about forty years.<sup>26</sup>

In 1849, a Baptist congregation of seven members was organized in Bastrop by C. G. Baggerly.<sup>27</sup> Apparently it was not active for a few years, however, for in 1850 Miss Keziah Paine wrote:

We have preaching here by Methodists, chiefly, nearly every Sunday. A Baptist preacher lives here, but never preaches in town. His name is Johnson, and he is a carpenter by trade.<sup>28</sup>

In the early fifties, the Baptists held services in a building erected by the Presbyterian denomination. This building was destroyed by fire in 1862 after being struck by lightning.<sup>29</sup> Until 1888, the small group of Baptists used other buildings in town for its meeting place.

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<sup>26</sup>J. M. Carroll, A History of Texas Baptists (Dallas: Baptist Standard Publishing Co., 1923), pp. 124-125.

<sup>27</sup>Colorado Association of Texas Baptists, Seguin, Proceedings, 1853, p. 6, quoted in William H. Korges, "Bastrop County: Historical and Educational Development," unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Texas, 1933, p. 175.

<sup>28</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>29</sup>"Bastrop, Its Past, Present, and Future," Bastrop Advertiser, December 15, 1894.



In 1888 a frame, one-room building was erected at a corner of Pecan and Chestnut Streets. Its early members were Mrs. Sarah Jane Orgain, Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Morris, Mr. and Mrs. A. S. Dyer (Taylor), Mrs. K. M. Trigg, Sr., Mrs. James Moore, R. W. Hubbard, Miss Annie Hubbard, Mrs. R. A. Brooks, Mrs. Bettie Price, Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Moncure, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Norment, Mrs. Kate Turner, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Craft, Preston Dyer (Elgin), and R. T. Gibson. A few years later several members from the Craft and Hemphill families joined the church, coming from Hill's Prairie and Hemphill's Prairie.<sup>30</sup>

In 1913 the Reverend Paul C. Bell, a former pastor of the Bastrop Baptist Church, began the Mexican mission in Bastrop, an institution supported by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. The functions of the Mission were educational, religious, and industrial. In the Mission building a school was instituted and regular religious services were held. In connection with the Mission, a sixty-three acre farm was worked by the students in the school to pay for their tuition and board. Classes

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<sup>30</sup>S. L. Brannon, "The First Baptist Church," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

in the school were held for only a half day in order to give its pupils time for the farm work.<sup>31</sup> The Mission was operated on this basis for many years. After it ceased to function as a school, religious services continued to be held for the Latin-American population, served by visiting pastors sent out by the Mission Board.

In 1922, Mrs. Sarah Jane Orgain purchased the home of Mr. and Mrs. August Elzner on North Main Street and gave it to the Baptist Church to be used as a parsonage. It was first occupied by the Reverend W. J. Earles.

In 1930, Mr. and Mrs. Hartford Jenkins gave to the church a lot at the corner of Water and Farm Streets as the site for a new building. The old frame church was torn down and its lumber used in building the new church. This building, a structure of brick with thirteen rooms, two auditoriums, and a basement, was dedicated in June, 1930. The Reverend J. W. Milton was pastor.<sup>32</sup>

#### The Episcopal Church

The first service of the Episcopal Church in

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<sup>31</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>32</sup>Brannon, loc. cit.

Bastrop was performed by Bishop Gregg on May 5, 1869, when Colonel and Mrs. J. C. Higgins invited Bishop Gregg to come to Bastrop to baptize their infant daughter, Leilah. Miss Rubelle Nicholson, a daughter of William Nicholson, was also baptized.

The Methodists of Bastrop opened their church building for the service. An organ was carried from the Higgins home to the church building for the first time. This created a stir through the town because, as has been mentioned before, feeling had been against worshipping God with a machine. Practically the entire population of Bastrop filled the auditorium to see the service and hear the organ used instead of a tuning fork.

Bishop Gregg announced that he would organize a mission the following morning at the home of Colonel and Mrs. Higgins. The reception room of the house the next morning was crowded with people of all faiths. Mrs. Higgins and her sister, who later became Mrs. M. T. Higgins, were the only Episcopalians. A vestry was elected of the men of the town, not one of whom was a churchman. Colonel Higgins, a Presbyterian by birth and a Methodist by adoption, was Senior Warden, and one of his sons, E. F. Higgins, was one of the vestrymen. R. J. Swancoate, a deacon living

in Austin, became the first minister. The mission was called Calvary after the church to which Mrs. Higgins had belonged in Tarboro, North Carolina.

The use of the Methodist Church for one Sunday each month was secured. Mrs. Higgins and her sister were the only Sunday School teachers for a time. Then Mrs. Henry Crocheron, a confirmed member of the Church of England, and James Nicholson, a baptized English Episcopalian, joined them. Later, a Mr. and Mrs. Gibson who had been Episcopalians in Maryland were added to the little group. The women organized a Guild at this time.

At the first confirmation Mary and William Gibson, Major Dinwiddie, and Captain Fleming James were confirmed. In subsequent services John Phillips and Colonel Higgins were confirmed.

Some years before, Colonel Higgins had loaned money to a German congregation to build a church. The congregation had disbanded before the debt was paid, and the church became the property of Colonel Higgins. The Episcopalian women with their servants cleaned and whitewashed the whole structure. The men built a temporary altar and curtained off one corner of the auditorium for a vesting room. This building was the Episcopal Church for fourteen years.

In 1881 the construction of a new church was begun. Colonel Higgins gave the old building to the parish to be used as a rectory. The new church was a white Gothic structure in which two rows of black brick were placed as a memorial to Horace Douglas Higgins, graduate of the Universities of Virginia and Sewanee and a lay reader of the church. Eleven stained glass windows were installed as memorials. A disastrous fire near the church later caused severe damage to these windows. While they were being repaired in St. Louis, canvas was nailed over the window openings, and services continued.

The first altar, which was used for more than fifty-eight years, was made by a Bastrop cabinet maker from solid walnut table leaves given by the founder of the church. This altar was replaced in 1927.

For nine years beginning in 1906, the church was not in condition for services. Until 1915, there was no fixed place of worship, no minister, and only rare visitations of the bishop. In 1915, the church was repaired through the united efforts of its members.

When Camp Swift was built, the need for a parish house was more than ever apparent. Some time before, Mrs. Jennie Haines had given the church a lot back of the church

building. The Army and Navy Commission of the Episcopal Church offered to pay half the amount needed for the construction of a parish house, and the rest was provided through the contributions and continued efforts of the church members.<sup>33</sup>

### The Christian Church

There are no records of the Christian Church in Bastrop prior to 1895; therefore, the date of its beginning is not known. The Bastrop Advertiser in 1894 said that in the early days the Christian denomination held services on the second floor of a building designated as "the red house, now J. W. Kennedy's steam mill and gin," and that Elder McCall did most of the preaching.<sup>34</sup>

A small rock church is said to have occupied the site of the Christian Church for some time before the present edifice was built. The bell in the belfry of the church today was the bell used in the original church.

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<sup>33</sup> "The Episcopal Church," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

<sup>34</sup> "Bastrop, Its Past, Present and Future," Bastrop Advertiser, December 15, 1894.

The present Christian Church building, a white frame structure, was completed in 1895. It was dedicated by the Reverend Homer T. Wilson, with the Reverend B. B. Sanders as pastor.

The church was chartered by the State of Texas on the 22nd day of November, 1895, under the name, "The Bastrop Christian Church." The three trustees whose names are affixed to the charter are A. A. Erhard, A. C. Erhard, and T. W. Cain. Among the charter members of the church were Dr. and Mrs. Cayton Erhard, Mr. and Mrs. Adolph A. Erhard, Mrs. Delia Grimes Kennedy, Mrs. Jones Trigg, Mrs. Maud M. Fowler, Mrs. Lula Hood, Mr. and Mrs. N. A. Morris.<sup>35</sup>

In its early days the Christian Church was exceeded in numbers only by the Methodist Church. In recent years, however, its membership has been comparatively small, and in 1950 the church did not have a full-time minister.

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<sup>35</sup>J. Lloyd Hood, "Christian Church Building Is Completed Here in 1895," Bastrop Advertiser, Anniversary Edition.

### The Church of Christ

The first meetings of the Church of Christ were held in the Tower Theater for a period of two or three years. In 1948, while Camp Swift was being dismantled, one of its church buildings was bought by the congregation of the Church of Christ and moved to a location near the junction of the Smithville and Elgin highways. Beginning as a very small group, this denomination has increased in numbers to a great extent. Since 1947 it has not had a resident pastor but has carried on a full church program, including regular Sunday School and church services and mid-week prayer services, conducted by pastors living in Austin.<sup>36</sup>

### The Assembly of God

In 1948, the Reverend Wayland Woodall came to Bastrop to establish a church for the Assembly of God. He obtained a lot on Austin Street and soon afterwards acquired an army surplus building which was moved to the lot. A residence adjoining the church lot was later secured, which

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<sup>36</sup>Mrs. Walter Rosanky, interview, July 18, 1954.



became the pastor's home and also was used to house part of the growing Sunday School.

This young church has had a very rapid growth in its brief history. Since its beginning with eleven participants in its first Sunday School service in May, 1948, its numbers have increased steadily, and its program is one of expansion.<sup>37</sup>

#### Former Churches of Bastrop

In the early fifties, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church erected a two-story building in Bastrop, which they shared with the Baptists in holding services. The upper floor was used by the Masonic Lodge, the lower by the church. After this building was destroyed by lightning during the Civil War,<sup>38</sup> there is no record of any further activity of the church. Father Rennick was the pastor.<sup>39</sup>

The German Methodist Church was organized in

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<sup>37</sup>The Reverend Wayland Woodall, interview, July 16, 1954.

<sup>38</sup>Korges, op. cit., p. 178.

<sup>39</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

Bastrop at an early date, but it was not until 1893 that a church building was erected. In a letter written to the Bastrop Advertiser on May 10 of that year, the Reverend W. A. Moers said that the new German Methodist Church was to consist of an auditorium, lecture room, vestibule, and tower.<sup>40</sup> The church was subsequently erected on a corner of Spring and Jefferson Streets. The church ceased to function and was torn down sometime in the early 1920's.<sup>41</sup>

In 1904, the Bastrop Advertiser said that on the preceding Monday, February 14, the Reverend Mr. Frehmer, the Lutheran preacher of McDade, reorganized the Lutheran Church at Bastrop and was selected as pastor. The newspaper further stated that the old building of the Lutheran Church once stood on the lot now known as the baseball ground and that the church at one time had a large and active membership.<sup>42</sup> The newly organized church did not prosper in Bastrop, however, and its members were gradually absorbed in other denominations.

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<sup>40</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, May 13, 1893.

<sup>41</sup>Jesse Dawson, interview, July 19, 1954.

<sup>42</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, February 18, 1904.

### Cooperation among Churches

Religious attitudes in Bastrop in 1950 were characterized by a high degree of cooperation among the various denominations in the town. This fact is indicated by the Thanksgiving services which have been held jointly by all the churches for a number of years and by the recently inaugurated Sunrise Service at Easter, in which the churches all take part.

## C H A P T E R   V I I

### SUGGESTED METHODS FOR USING LOCAL HISTORY TO TEACH SOCIAL STUDIES CONCEPTS

After the historical data of the community have been collected and organized, it becomes evident that some historical facts and implications are beyond the understanding of third-grade children and that a formal presentation of such facts is not desirable. At the same time, however, they do contribute to the teacher's knowledge as he presents a sequential story to children in terms which will help develop their understandings of the social studies concepts involved. Certain attitudes and ideas are acquired through a knowledge of historical data which underly the fundamental truths necessary to the development of thorough understandings of political, economical, social, and religious concepts.

#### Teaching of Political History

The political history of Bastrop, in the events of the one hundred twenty years which have been recorded, is largely a story of conflict. The inhabitants of Bastrop

have been involved in conflicts with Indians, with Mexico, with their northern sister states, with nations of Europe and Asia in a succession of wars that have taken place in the history of the nation as a whole. Children should be taught to look at this pattern of struggle between peoples and to recognize in it the basic elements of man's struggle to get along with other men. They must be led to see that future peace in the world will depend on each individual's efforts to live peacefully with others. Horn says:

The worth of any society is dependent on the individuals who comprise it. If a society expects to improve itself, the point of attack is the individual. One of the fundamental purposes of instruction in the social studies--one which can improve our society--is to teach children how to live together well.<sup>1</sup>

Children of any grade can be taught that getting along with people is the result of their own efforts and that if all people tried to live together well, there would be no wars.

One facet of this effort to avoid conflict is the cultivation of empathy, the ability to see things from

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas D. Horn, "Social Relationships and the Elementary School Curriculum," Elementary School Journal, September, 1951, p. 36.

another's viewpoint. In hearing of Indian violences, for example, children should also be led to understand that the Indians made their attacks upon the settlers because they felt that the latter were trespassing on their own land. Their tactics were barbarous because they were a primitive people without the training of the many years of civilization which the white man had received. Even so, they had many admirable qualities. An account such as Smithwick gave of the Comanches<sup>2</sup> may serve as an illustration of this fact to offset the impression of Indians which a continuous recountal of Indian atrocities may laave in children's minds.

It should be emphasized further that people along with events have changed. The Indians are no longer savages. In the past century, benefits of education and religious instruction have been made increasingly available to all peoples in the United States so that there is much similarity of viewpoint among all races in our country.

In accounts of the war with Mexico, the idea should be engendered that our difficulties with this country came about largely because of the mutual distrust

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<sup>2</sup>Cf. Appendix, p. 225 eq. seq.

between the two peoples, and that distrust arises from lack of understanding. There were differences of language and customs between the Mexicans and the Americans. If both groups had tried to learn more about each other in order to understand the other, their difficulties might have been settled more amicably. In any event, their conflict was finished more than a century ago, and there should not at this date be any traces of rancor because of it. People of several races came together in Texas in its beginnings. Today they are all Americans, citizens of the United States of America.

The idea should be conveyed to children that democratic government was instituted by individuals for individuals. The concept of the organization of city, state, and national government can be presented to third-grade children only in very simple form but the idea which Branom presents should be developed:

It [American democracy] is a loyal citizenship, which believes that unity, justice, fairness, tolerance, honesty, personal integrity, human equality and brotherhood, freedom of discussion and inquiry, the nobility of labor, and the good of the community are worth any necessary sacrifice. A good citizen believes that the world

owes him very little and he owes the world very much.<sup>3</sup>

This may seem a too-ambitious aim for teaching primary children, but Branom also says:

It is being realized more and more that a good citizen must have an intelligent interest in his community and that the time to start to develop this interest is the very first day he enters school.<sup>4</sup>

Since government is the responsibility of individuals, every individual should take part in its functioning, if only in exercising his privilege to vote. The Civil War can be used as an illustration of the fact that where there is too much disagreement among individuals, a democratic government cannot long survive.

#### Teaching of Economic History

In teaching economic concepts, the teacher should emphasize two main ideas: (1) that the history of a community is strongly affected by its geographical

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<sup>3</sup>Frederick K. Branom, The Teaching of Social Studies in a Changing World (New York: W. H. Sadler, Inc., 1942), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 71.



environment; and (2) that the basic needs of man underly all economic activity.

The geographical elements of soil, climate, water supply, and natural resources should be clearly defined and their importance as a factor in the choice of a town site and in providing sources of sustenance and income should be stressed. Closely connected with this idea is the concept that man works and uses the resources of his community to satisfy his physical needs of food, clothing, shelter, water supply, and fuel. In telling the story of the means by which the early settlers provided for their needs and how they improved their methods, children can be led to understand how transportation, communication, education, and technology have enabled men to work more efficiently, to improve working conditions, and to use resources more wisely.<sup>5</sup>

Another concept which should be developed is that the growth of a town is a continuous cause-and-effect process. People first settled the area because of its geographical advantages and natural resources. The settlers'

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<sup>5</sup>John U. Michaelis, Social Studies for Children in a Democracy (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950), p. 113.

need for certain services induced others to come to the area to establish industries and to pursue professions. The creation of these industries offered employment and facilities which attracted new residents to the community. As more residents arrived, more commercial enterprises were required. Thus, the town grew.

The concept of interdependence of people should be developed by the teacher in presenting the story of economic growth in the community. Children should be led to understand that people work together in communities to secure food, shelter, and clothing, and that through the evolution of transportation we have come to be dependent not only upon the rest of our community but also upon the rest of the world<sup>6</sup> for supplies which have raised our standards of living. Even in the primitive life of the early settlers, men depended upon their neighbors for labor in clearing land, building homes, and harvesting crops. They bartered their surplus commodities for supplies which they needed. As transportation developed, many services became available, a larger area of interdependence came into being, and living became more complex.

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<sup>6</sup>Michaelis, op. cit., p. 112.

The child can readily understand the extent to which this is true by looking around his own home or schoolroom and recognizing in it the many articles that are not produced in his own community.

Understanding of the relationship between the economic status of the community and that of the nation can be developed in children by using certain instances in local history. The scarcity of money in the newly formed Republic of Texas, the hardships of Confederate days because of the worthlessness of Confederate money, the years of the great depression, and the prosperity of the war years all have corresponding chapters in the history of the community.

#### Teaching of Social History

Branom says that "history tells us about the progress of man in society."<sup>7</sup> The history of a community is the story of the cooperative efforts of the people in it. Its progress or its lack of progress depends in large measure upon the degree of cooperation present among

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<sup>7</sup>Branom, op. cit., p. 18.

its members. This is the idea which the teacher should endeavor to leave with children, and with it, the idea of personal responsibility in securing that cooperation. The individual can contribute much good to his community by his own single actions. But for widespread and lasting influences for good, best results are obtained by groups working together. Individuals had to band together for protective strength in time of war; to inaugurate a system of government; and to raise funds for schools, churches, and other civic improvements.

A study of the various groups which have been created in the community illustrates a statement by Michaelis in which he says that "people develop and improve social organizations in order to achieve a better life."<sup>8</sup> It should be observed that groups serve many purposes. Such organizations as the Lions Club and the Chamber of Commerce were created to promote civic improvement. Study clubs were organized to develop the cultural aspects of the community. Recreational groups provided relaxation and enjoyment as essentials to wholesome attitudes. All kinds of groups contribute to the improvement of the community.

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<sup>8</sup>Michaelis, op. cit., p. 113.

The social importance of education should be emphasized. An enlightened, thinking person is a better citizen. The efforts of the citizens of the community to provide schools for their children indicate their recognition of this principle. Children should be led to understand, too, that because of this interest which the adults of the community have in them, they can rely on the kindness of adults and their sincere desire to help in whatever problems the children may encounter. If this concept can be instilled in small children, it is possible that it may prevent the development of certain adolescent attitudes which sometimes contribute to juvenile delinquency.

Michaelis says that modern progress has extended the possibility of common social experiences and progress throughout the world.<sup>9</sup> Children can be taught that the development of their community is very similar to the development of other communities in their country. The community pattern of growth is basically the same as that of the nation in its elements of primitive life, various conflicts, and industrial progress. The teacher should try to implant the idea that because of progress people are

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<sup>9</sup>Michaelis, op. cit., p. 112.

today very much alike everywhere, not only in the nation but also in the world.

### Teaching of Religious History

The first and foremost principle to be developed in studying the history of religious denominations in the community is that of the right of the individual to worship as he chooses. Mexico's regulation of religious practices in Texas is an argument against state control. Although Catholicism was the state religion, the Catholic Church was hampered by governmental control. It was not until freedom of religious worship was established in Texas that the Catholic Church was able to provide a bishop and an adequate number of priests to carry on its work in the state.

Closely allied with this concept of freedom of religion is the concept that each individual must respect the right of others to their particular beliefs. We are alike in many ways, but there are differences of thought and feeling in all individuals. None of us can say with certainty that our interpretation of religious doctrines is the only right way. We must teach children to stand secure in their own beliefs and at the same time understand

how others may find the same security in theirs.

This idea was prevalent among the early settlers. When a minister of any denomination came to the community, all its inhabitants, regardless of their different religious doctrines, were present at his services. Buildings were shared by the various denominations, and funds for erecting new buildings were contributed by the entire citizenry of the town. Thus, it can be shown again in religious history as it was in political, social, and economic history, that the greatest efforts for good are put forth by cooperation, by groups working together.

#### Teaching the Concept of Change

Branom says that "since men have lived in groups upon the earth the things have always been changing."<sup>10</sup> The teacher may demonstrate this concept to children in every aspect of community history. In the story of the succession of conflicts in which the citizens have engaged, one sees the evolution of modes of warfare, from the bow and arrow of the primitive Indian to the guided missile of

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<sup>10</sup>Branom, op. cit., p. 7.

today. In tracing man's efforts to supply himself with food, one sees the changes in standards of living that have come about from the first settlers' almost complete dependence upon their own efforts to supply themselves with food to the highly complex system of food supply and methods of food preservation which we now enjoy. The changes which communication and transportation have wrought in social activities and relationships is at once apparent. And in the history of the development of the churches, one observes great progress and expansion since the days of the circuit rider.

This realization of the differences in our way of life as compared with that of the founders of the community should be augmented still further by the idea that as the community has changed in the past, we can expect it to go on changing in the future. The social studies teacher should particularly stress this idea to children.

As Branom says:

The social studies play a very important part in the transmission of our cultural heritage and in preparing pupils to meet unflinchingly the issues in this changing world.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Branom, op. cit., p. 8.



### Some Suggested Activities

From the collection of local historical data, many units can be developed. The teacher may wish to organize units according to periods in history. Or he may prefer to plan units on separate concepts such as food, clothing, shelter, transportation, community, social life, churches, and commerce. His choice of method will depend upon the individual teacher and the material which he accumulates. There are, however, a number of activities which may be of use to the teacher whatever his method. Some of them are discussed in the following pages.

### Concrete Experiences

Field trips are an effective means of providing concrete experiences for children in teaching community history. Visits to local museums, historical sites, old homes and buildings, and local industries are all suitable excursions for third grade children. Many learnings are involved if such an excursion is properly handled: in notes written by the children asking for permission to visit the museum, home or industry; in safety and courtesy rules for conduct during the trip as formulated by class

discussion prior to the excursion; in discussion before the trip of things the children are to look for; in discussion after the trip to reconstruct the experience for the group as a whole; and in other creative activities growing out of the children's interests.<sup>12</sup>

Local historical museums enable children to see objects and documents which furnish insights into the life of people long ago, and articles of clothing worn by the pioneers. In old buildings and old homes, children see hinges and locks on doors, nails or pegs, and materials which tell the story of the construction of the building. Some of the old homes still have their original wallpaper and carpeting. Many have antique furniture. From these the children can see how houses were once furnished and decorated.

Historical sites provide the physical setting for the mental re-creation of events which took place. As many of these are marked with monuments, the facts inscribed on such monuments attain reality and assume greater significance for children after a group visit to the site.

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<sup>12</sup>Elaine Radkey, "How Communities Have Changed," Bulletin of the Association for Childhood Education, 1940, p. 19.

Visits to local industries provide means of comparison between primitive and modern methods of production.

After an excursion to one or several of these places, children can be encouraged to look for themselves for objects similar to those they have seen. They may look for old clothes, pictures, pots, pans, books, newspapers, letters, and magazines. They may ask for stories from their parents of happenings in their own families. An exhibit may be set up of the objects and each article discussed.

Another type of concrete experience may be an outgrowth of the excursion. Children may be stimulated to try to reproduce objects which they have seen or which have been suggested by the stories they have heard. They may make soap and candles as the pioneers used to do, mold pieces of pottery, weave miniature rugs, and construct Indian villages, log cabins, covered wagons and canoes.

Children's interests may lead also to their expressing in drawings the impressions formed on the excursion; to creative writing using the arts of written language; to understanding and enjoyment of music related to the

social life of the pioneer; to expansion of reading interests and understandings gained from reading.

#### Interviews with Community Citizens

Creative activities should be outgrowths not only of excursions but also of other community activities as well. One very effective contact with the community can be made through bringing its citizens into the classroom to talk to the children.<sup>13</sup> Older residents have stories to tell of manners, customs, and events of another day. They often have pictures, articles of clothing, and other objects to show. Many of the community's citizens have pieces of antique china and glassware which have interesting stories connected with them.

Other representatives of the community can be called in to contribute their special learnings. The county agricultural agent can give information about the soil of the area and about the kinds of crops that are best grown in the soil, as well as information about conservation and improved methods of farming. People interested

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<sup>13</sup>William H. Burton, The Guidance of Learning Activities (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1944), p. 538.

in mines, oil wells, forests, or other natural resources in the community can aid in teaching the importance of such resources. Businessmen who have old records can tell the children something about former business practices and changes which have come about in trade. A member of the local city council may be asked to trace the history of the city's government. A member of the fire department may tell the children about the beginning of the fire department and its improvement through the years.

The study of local history provides an excellent opportunity to secure community interest and cooperation.<sup>14</sup>

#### Literature

To supplement and enlarge learnings derived from concrete experiences, sufficient reading material at several levels should be available. A number of state-adopted textbooks in the third grade, such as Building Our Town,<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>James I. Quillen and Lavone A. Hanna, Education for Social Competence (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, & Co., 1948), p. 311.

<sup>15</sup>Clyde B. Moore et al., Building Our Town, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950).

Now and Then Stories,<sup>16</sup> and All Around America<sup>17</sup> give excellent insights into early American life. Much free material is available to enlarge understandings of methods in which we provide ourselves with the basic needs. Well-illustrated encyclopedias give supplementary information.

Simple stories about the community can be written by the teacher and reproduced for the pupils' use. Pupils can be encouraged to ask their families and friends for other stories. These, dictated to the teacher, written down and duplicated by him, furnish further reading material.

Imaginative literature plays an important part in pupils' understandings.<sup>18</sup> Such books as Johnny Texas on the San Antonio Road<sup>19</sup> are thoroughly enjoyed by the children and, through their appeal to imaginative interest,

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<sup>16</sup>M. M. Ames et al., Now and Then Stories (St. Louis: Webster Publishing Co., 1945).

<sup>17</sup>Ralph W. Cordier, All Around America (New York: Rand, McNally & Co., 1950).

<sup>18</sup>Ernest Horn, Methods of Instruction in the Social Studies (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 292.

<sup>19</sup>Carol Hoff, Johnny Texas on the San Antonio Road (Chicago: Wilcox and Follett Co., 1953).

re-create for children the early days of Texas. An excellent list of supplementary books and stories based on pioneer life can be found in the Teachers' Guidebook for the basal third-grade reading text, More Streets and Roads.<sup>20</sup>

### Visual Aids

Many visual aids are available to illustrate and explain concepts encountered in the study. Films concerning American pioneer days aid understandings of early life in Texas. Industrial films trace histories of the development of machines and industry, or furnish contrasts between primitive and modern methods. A valuable implement to learning is a variety of pictures to be used in illustrating discussions and stories, and also as bulletin-board material for the pupil's more careful examination. A simple graph of census figures of the population of the community can make the growth of the area easily understandable to third-grade children. They can be led to

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<sup>20</sup>William S. Gray and Lillian Gray, Teachers' Guidebook, More Streets and Roads (Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1946), pp. 159-160.

understand in a simple way how certain economic factors have contributed to the increase or decrease of the population at various times.

In learning of the origins of various families which first settled the community, children are introduced to maps and learn something of their function. They can also be taught to use a map scale to compute distance in elementary fashion. A weather chart can be kept by the class to develop the concept of climate. Film strips depicting histories of food, clothing, shelter, trade, money, transportation of various kinds, and communication furnish excellent supplementary information, presented in a most interesting way.

#### Auditory Aids

Auditory aids, such as phonograph records of early-day songs, are contributory to the total picture which the children formulate.<sup>21</sup> The teaching of the songs and dances enjoyed by the pioneers adds vitality to the study of pioneer social life.

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<sup>21</sup>Ernest Horn, op. cit., p. 335.



## Oral Expression

Much attention should be given to oral expression in developing concepts. Discussion has been mentioned, but its function should be emphasized in developing and clarifying meanings and contributing to total understanding. Sharing the facts, stories, and objects which are products of each child's individual research may become the purpose of a daily show-and-tell time. Historical events lend themselves well to dramatization, which in addition to being a valuable means of children's self-expression, may well be used as a culminating activity for the entire study.

At all times children should be encouraged to contribute in whatever way they can to the general study of the community. They can be brought to understand that they, too, can have a part in collecting and recording data which will add to the general fund of knowledge concerning their locality. Knox says that "the all-important thing is that children shall want to investigate and shall have the joy and thrill of discovery through their own efforts."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Rose B. Knox, School Activities and Equipment (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1927), p. 8.

## C H A P T E R   V I I I

### CONCLUSIONS

Due to the fact that summaries were made and certain conclusions were drawn as part of the general methods discussed in the preceding chapter, a restatement of these is felt to be superfluous. There are several feelings, however, that have evolved during the development of this study, and these should be noted.

History is the story of change. Since 1950, the year at which this history was closed, several events have taken place in Bastrop. A new primary school building has been erected, an annex to the courthouse has been built, and the entire courthouse remodeled, and the city streets have been repaved. A new building has been constructed for one of the churches, three other church buildings have been remodeled, and three new religious denominations have been organized. While any historical record is being compiled, new events are taking place which will provide data for future historians.

A second observation is that towns have personality. Although there is a certain similarity in communities throughout the country, there is a difference,

too. Each town has its own atmosphere, the product of the influences which went into its shaping. It is the investigator's opinion as one who moved into this community that until one appreciates a town's background he can not understand its atmosphere. In Bastrop, the influences of the wealthy Southern planter and of the rich cultural heritages of people representing several countries of Europe have combined to produce an aura of charm and gracious living among its citizens which is one of Bastrop's distinguishing characteristics.

It was noted in the process of interviewing residents of Bastrop that happenings were usually remembered but often their dates were not. This was true of even comparatively recent occurrences. It was observed, also, that tradition is not always fact. For these reasons alone histories of communities should be compiled. Much of the history of Bastrop has already been lost to posterity because of the lack of written records.

In the process of the collection of data, the investigator encountered everywhere a deep interest in community beginnings on the part of the citizens of Bastrop. It is felt that this interest is not confined to

adults but that it will prove to be the motivating factor in third-grade children's learning in studying social studies concepts.

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A P P E N D I X

Some historical data collected during the research in this study did not fit into any one of the four divisions of political, economic, social, and religious history. Some facts were found after these divisions were completed.

Since these were felt to be of sufficient interest to deserve mention, they are recorded in the following pages.

## INDIAN STORIES

### The Comanches

Noah Smithwick lived among the Comanches for a time in an effort to make peace with them. He made these observations:

I could never discover anything analogous to written language [among the Comanches]: the nearest approach to it being diagrams, or more properly maps, which they sometimes marked out on the ground to convey an idea of locality. They were peculiarly expert in sign language, however. Some idea of drawing they had acquired, their work at times evincing a remarkable degree of skill. Any smooth surface--a board, a flat stone, or smooth-bark tree, served for canvas, while charcoal furnished pencils. Colored chalks were sometimes substituted; but whatever the material used, the subject was always the same--Indians chasing buffalo. When on a scout, out to the old Tumlinson block house, we found the walls covered with these Indian drawings.

The family meals, consisting of meat alone, generally roasted on sticks, were all served together on the flesh side of a dried skin, each fellow helping himself. Their drinking vessels were made of buffalo horns and terrapin shells, and some had even become possessed of a tin cup.

The vessels for carrying water were made of deer skins "cased"--stripped off whole--the legs and necks tied up tightly with sinews. Sometimes the smaller stomach pouch of a buffalo was used.

So far as my observation went, the Texas Indians were unlike those of any other section of the country subsisting entirely on meat. The

northern tribes raised corn, beans, and several kinds of vegetables. Perhaps, though, it was owing to the unfailing supply of game that the Comanche eschewed vegetable food which required more labor than did the meat. Another peculiarity of the Comanche was his abstinence from whiskey, few of them ever venturing to taste it.

They had some kind of religious belief which seemed akin to sun worship. Judging from outward manifestations there was some power which it was necessary to propitiate by offerings. When out on a hunt as soon as game was killed they struck fire and roasted meat, and always before eating a bite the chief would cut off a morsel and bury it; the first fruit of the chase, I suppose.

A similar ceremony was observed when the chief lit his pipe; the first puff of smoke was blown toward the sun and the second to the earth after the manner of incense offering; the substance used for the purpose being a mixture of tobacco and dried sumach leaves. The pipes were made of soft stone generally, though sometimes hard wood was substituted. They were not seemingly anxious to make proselytes to their religion, therefore were reticent about their tenets, all I gathered concerning which being from observation. They evidently believed in a hereafter, but whether the conditions thereof depended on their conduct in this life was uncertain. One thing I know, that though they would fight desperately to rescue the body of a fallen comrade so long as his scalp was intact, the moment he lost it he was abandoned; they would not touch the body, even to bury it. Another point of which they seemed to be superstitious was in never touching the heart of an animal. They would strip off every particle of flesh, leaving the skeleton entire and the heart untouched inside.

Although it was customary for the first fellow who woke in the morning to announce the fact in

song, the act seemed a spontaneous outpouring akin to that of the feathered songsters than a religious rite; the song itself resembling the lay of the birds in that it was wordless save for the syllables, ha ah ha, which furnished the vehicle on which the carol rode forth to the world; the performance ending in a keen yell.

Their criminal laws were as inexorable as those of the Medes and Persians, and the code was so simply worded there was no excuse for ignorance. It was simply the old Mosaic law, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." "Whoso sheddeth men's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

In cases of dispute, a council of the old men decided it, and from their decision there was no appeal. And when one died, all his belongings were destroyed, precluding all possibility of a family quarrel over the estate.

An Indian brave would have felt it a burning disgrace to strike a woman, although they were abject slaves. I don't think they ever resorted to corporal punishment within the tribe. . . . However, tribal law didn't apply to "the stranger without the gates," nor within, either, when the stranger was a captive.

There was a distinct line dividing the provinces of men and women, the mother having complete control of the children.

When an Indian girl arrived at a marriageable age, it was her mother who arranged the match; the suitor generally winning her favor by gifts, or barter of skins, and sometimes horses, if the girl was a belle.

The women, of course, performed all the labor, aside from killing and bringing in the game; stripping the skins from the animals, dressing and ornamenting them with beads or paint, a process which interested me very much. The skins



were first staked down to the ground, flesh side up. With a sharp bone the squaw then scraped off every particle of flesh; next the scraped surface was spread with lime to absorb the grease, after which the surface was spread with the brains of the animal, rubbing it in and working it over till the skin became soft and pliable, the process requiring days and days of hard work.

Then with paint, which they manufactured from colored chinks, and brushes made of tufts of hair, the artist, with the earth for an easel, beginning in the center, drew symbolic designs, the most conspicuous of which was the sun, executed with a skill truly remarkable.

A multitude of different-colored rays commingling in a common center and radiating out in finely drawn lines, the spaces made by the divergences again and again filled in, taking as much time as a work by the old masters. Time was no object, life having nothing to offer beyond the gratification of this single vanity. These painted robes were worn over the shoulders like shawls, the fur side underneath.

The old people of both sexes were treated with deference . . . .

The Indians combined business with pleasure in the lassoing of turkeys, deer, mustangs, and buffalo calves. When a drove of turkeys ranged out on the prairie in pursuit of grasshoppers, the Indian would follow at a distance until the birds were a mile or more from timber; then he would dash upon them, causing them to rise. Putting spurs to his horse he would then keep right under the flock, keeping them on the wing until they fell to the ground from exhaustion, when he ran among them and lassoed all he wanted.

When he wanted venison the Indian secreted himself near a watering place until the deer came in to drink, after which they became stupid

and any good mustang could run upon them with ease. The same tactics were pursued in the capture of mustangs, which often fed away ten or twelve miles from water, remaining until thirsty, when they would start on a run, keeping it up till water was reached, by which time they were tired and thirsty, imbibing such quantities of water as to render them incapable of exertion, thus falling easy prey to the Indian's lasso. If veal was his desire, the Indian would start a band of buffalo, crowding them so closely that the calves could not keep up, and falling behind, were cut off and lassoed.<sup>1</sup>

### Some Friendly Indians

Miss Fenora Chambers told this story:

For help with the farm work, Mother and Mr. Wilbarger depended on friendly Indians. A number of Indians would come together, set up their tents, and pick peas on the shares, or pick cotton for the watermelons, corn, or beef. One season a very old squaw trudged in far behind the others. The cover for her tent, which she carried on her shoulder, was made of small pieces of buckskin sewed together. At another time, on an extremely cold day, Mother saw a couple of braves come to her well. One drew a bucket of water and dashed it over a bundle which the other took from under his buffalo robe. She was never able to learn whether or not the newborn babe, which the bundle proved to be, survived this test of endurance.

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<sup>1</sup>Noah Smithwick, The Evolution of a State (Austin: The Steck Co., 1935), p. 177 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>Margaret Bell Jones, Bastrop (Bastrop, Texas: 1936), pp. 10-11.

Incident at Hill's Prairie

Mrs. Louis Wright described an incident which took place at Hill's Prairie:

It was the custom of some of the cotton planters of the Bastrop area to take their cotton to the state of Coahuila to sell it. One night, during the early 1830's, the men of the Hubbard family at Hill's Prairie were away from home for this purpose. As the rest of the family were sitting at the table for their evening meal, Mrs. Hubbard saw an Indian peering in at the dining-room window. Without visibly betraying the fact that she had seen him, she very quietly told the other members of the household what she had seen and warned them not to give any sign that they knew the Indian was there. She sent the largest boy out of the room ostensibly to perform some errand about the house, instructing him to slip away from the house and run to a neighbor's for help. A few minutes later they heard a scream of terror, and running out to the back yard, they found that the Indian had fallen into the well which had a low curbing. There were no more Indian alarms that night. The Hubbards never knew whether the Indian had been alone in his prowling or whether he had had companions who, hearing his scream and thinking that he had been attacked, were frightened away.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Mrs. Louis Wright, interview, June 15, 1954.

## SOME INTERESTING INCIDENTS IN BASTROP HISTORY

### A Trip Made by Mr. and Mrs. Josiah Wilbarger

This account was given by Miss Fenora Chambers:

In 1837, in order to have more help with their farm work, Mother and Mr. Wilbarger decided to make a trip to their home state of Missouri and buy slaves. They carried their money, five thousand dollars in gold and silver coin, in a trunk. The vessel in which they took passage for New Orleans was carried far out of its course by a storm, but, after two weeks, reached New Orleans, where Mr. Wilbarger exchanged their gold and silver coin for currency, which he and Mother divided and carried in belts around their bodies. While Mother and her little sons were waiting on the boat for Mr. Wilbarger to make this exchange of money, the American statesman, Henry Clay, on board another vessel in the harbor, sent them fresh milk from his cow, which was comfortably taken care of in the same vessel. Although the trip to Missouri was made for the purpose of buying slaves, Mr. Wilbarger bought only one, a Negro man, who was a most faithful servant. Mother objected to separating families and after this never bought slaves unless she was able to get an entire family.<sup>1</sup>

### First Trial by Jury

The first trial by jury ever held in Bastrop County, then the Municipality of Mina, was that of Oscar F.

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<sup>1</sup>Margaret Belle Jones, Bastrop (Bastrop, Texas: 1936), p. 11.

Hume, for the crime of stealing four Negroes and five horses which belonged to John G. McGehee, Bartholomew Manlove, and James Doyle. Hume was pursued and caught near Nacogdoches by L. C. Cunningham, Mr. Hutchinson, and Sol Reid. He was brought back by Bartholomew Manlove and Charles Wammell, both of whom were afterwards among those killed at the Alamo. Hume was regularly tried by a jury and sentenced to receive thirty-nine lashes, to have one ear clipped, and to be branded in the right hand with the letter R.

Colonel Hill said Hume stood the executing of the sentence bravely until the branding, which was severely executed, the smoke ascending to the top of the little blacksmith shop.<sup>2</sup>

#### Life of a Confederate Soldier

In letters written to the family in Bastrop of William Nicholson, who was one of the Terry Rangers in the Civil War, several interesting items pertaining to the life of the Confederate soldiers were given:

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<sup>2</sup>Galveston News, April 4, 1878.

In their journey through Louisiana, James Nicholson observed that New Iberia and the surrounding country were very thinly settled and almost entirely by persons of French descent. The soldiers molded their own bullets. They were able to obtain coffee, but it was "very high, forty to fifty cents a pound."<sup>3</sup>

Three popular songs of the time were "Bonnie Blue Flag," "The Flag of the South," and the "Minstrel Boy."<sup>4</sup>

The soldiers made up dough on a piece of oil-cloth and twisted it around sticks to cook it.<sup>5</sup>

A private's pay in the Confederate Army was twenty-four dollars in Confederate bills.<sup>6</sup> Paper money was of little account in Mississippi, because of the fact that when the soldiers bought anything they always received shin plasters or tickets for change which were not good outside of the town where they got them. When

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<sup>3</sup>Letter from James Nicholson, September 27, 1861, quoted in Jones, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., October 14, 1861, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., March 29, 1862, p. 50.

<sup>6</sup>Letter from William Nicholson, January 14, 1862, quoted in Jones, op. cit., p. 49.

the soldiers had gold, they could insist upon gold or silver in change.<sup>7</sup>

Nicholson purchased an army six-shooter and a Burnside Rifle, for which he had to pay two hundred and fifty dollars.<sup>8</sup>

### A Trip to Galveston

Mary Ann Nicholson, at the age of fourteen, went to Houston and Galveston with her father. They made the trip by stage coach to Hempstead, traveling night and day. The Concord coach carried nine inside and nine out on top, with the driver on an elevated seat. She and her father rode with him for a while. He drove four fine horses, always trotting, now and then breaking into a lope. The "boot" at the back of the coach held trunks.

Horses were changed every ten or twelve miles. The horses were very fine and well trained. When a stop was made at a stage stand, fresh horses were in the harness and waiting. Quickly, those which had just come were

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<sup>7</sup>Letter from William Nicholson, April 16, 1862, quoted in Jones, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., March 20, 1864, p. 67.

unharnessed, and the fresh ones rushed out to the coach and backed to their places.

At Hempstead, Miss Nicholson rode for the first time in a steam car. In Houston, she and her father took a boat down Buffalo Bayou for Galveston.<sup>9</sup>

#### Sam Houston's Life Saved by a Slave

One cold winter night, Sam Houston, President of the Republic of Texas at that time, attempted to ford the Colorado River at Bastrop. He missed the ford, and his buggy was upset. Sam Banks, a slave belonging to Dr. Eli T. Merriman, swam out into the river and saved Houston's life.<sup>10</sup>

#### Slavery on the Plantations

Mrs. Mary Ann McDowall recalled several incidents of slave days on the plantations surrounding Bastrop:

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<sup>9</sup>Mrs. Mary Ann McDowall, "A Little Journey through Memory's Halls," unpublished manuscript, 1927, pages not numbered.

<sup>10</sup>Letter from Cayton Erhard, Bastrop Advertiser, May 8, 1875.



The T. B. J. Hill plantation boasted a real mansion, with many slaves. On moonlight nights, the little darkies trooped up to the yard of the big house and danced for the guests.

The young people [of Bastrop] rode all over the plantation on horses or mules. There were so many maids to wait on them. . . . They never thought of going to the water bucket on the gallery shelf; a negro was always at hand to bring the dipper.

Sick negroes in the quarters got every attention. Even in the middle of the night, the plantation owners would get up to doctor them.

During the Civil War, the mistress on the plantation was ever busy. She always "gave out" provisions from the storeroom. There were spinners and weavers and seamstresses, and the mistress cut out all the garments and superintended the making.

The faithfulness of the slaves was notable. At the Caldwell home, when all the males had gone to war and "Ole Marse" happened to be away, old Fred, the carriage driver, left his cabin and slept on a rug by the door of the room of "Ole Miss."<sup>11</sup>

### Civil War Story

A set of cameos belonging to Mrs. O. P. Jones and an antique watch belonging to her brother, E. E. Moore, have an interesting history. These family heirlooms

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<sup>11</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

were the property of their mother, who before her marriage to Dyer Moore, lived at Sumter, North Carolina. When Sherman made his famous march to the sea, passing through Sumter, many valuables belonging to citizens of the town were confiscated by the Northern soldiers, among them the cameos and the watch.

After Mr. and Mrs. Moore were married, they lived in Bastrop. Twenty-three years after the loss of the jewelry, General Butler introduced a bill into Congress to the effect that valuables confiscated during the Civil War and held by the federal government could be recovered if their ownership could be proved. Through the efforts of Joseph Sayers, who was at that time a member of the House of Representatives, the lost articles were recovered for Mrs. Moore.<sup>12</sup>

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Mrs. O. P. Jones, interview, August 12, 1953.

## MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS ABOUT BASTROP

In the early days, homemade tallow candles supplied illumination for homes and public buildings. One cold day enough candles could be molded to last an average family a year.

Water was drawn from a well and drunk from a gourd dipper.

Coffins were made of pine lumber by the carpenters of the town and were covered with black velvet.

Paper bags had not come into use. Groceries bought in small quantities were wrapped in paper.<sup>1</sup>

The first piano brought to Bastrop was owned by Chauncey Johnson, a jeweler. This piano has been placed in the museum of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.<sup>2</sup>

Professor Heiligbrodt, of the Casino School, had an insect collection numbering over fifty thousand specimens.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Margaret Belle Jones, Bastrop (Bastrop, Texas: 1936), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, August 7, 1881.

The attic room of the Henry Crocherons' home was the guest room. Two nieces of President Polk, Armour and Cordelia, were frequent guests. They lived in the country and, as there was only one way of getting to town, by horseback, the girls kept their best clothes and bonnets at the Crocherons', riding in and dressing for church after their arrival.

The inventor of condensed milk, Gail Borden, was another guest of the Crocherons.<sup>4</sup>

In 1875, the Claiborne House Libery Stable advertised the following rates:<sup>5</sup>

Double Buggy and Team per day	\$4.00
Single Buggy and Team per day	3.00
Saddle Horse	1.50
Hack and Driver	5.00
Hack without Driver	4.00
Feed of Horse per Night (single)	.25
One Passenger to McDade	3.00
Two Passengers to McDade	4.00

Census figures on the population of Bastrop since 1900 show the following changes:<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>McDowall, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup>Bastrop Advertiser, February 27, 1875.

<sup>6</sup>Henry Grady Jordan, "An Industrial Survey of the Bastrop Area," Unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Texas, 1947.

## Population of Bastrop, Texas, 1900-50

1900	2,145
1910	1,707
1920	1,821
1930	1,895
1940	1,976
1950	3,176

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This thesis was typed by

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