

[Mrs. H. E. Chestnut]

Mrs. C. M. Cohea

Amarillo, Texas

District #16 PANHANDLE PIONEERS

Interview with: Mrs. H. E. Chestnut

1406 Monroe Street, Amarillo, Texas

As a small child Mrs. Chestnut came to Amarillo with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Trigg, in 1889. Mr. Trigg brought his wife, who had a chronic throat ailment, to the high plains for her health, which she regained in the salubrious air of the Panhandle.

Mrs. Trigg, wearied with the long overland journey and dismayed at the dreary stretch of unadorned prairie, asked her husband if he were going to the "jumping of off place".

When the Trigg family arrived in Amarillo, the famous Amarillo Hotel was still in the process of construction. The best residential district was at that time in the vicinity of First and Fifth streets on Lincoln, Pierce, and Buchanan. Street cars later ran south on Lincoln to Fifteenth and thence to Washington.

The home of W. D. Twichell, pioneer teacher and educator of Amarillo, was at 710 Pierce, as Mrs. Chestnut recalls, where he taught a private school. Mr. Twichell, who was one of the first surveyors in Amarillo and the Panhandle, stayed in Tascosa during the most hectic period of that notorious old cowboy capital.

Mrs. Chestnut remembers the time when the first churchhouse in Amarillo, the old Methodist Church building at 701 Jackson, was used by all local denominations in friendly

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cooperation. The presiding ministers of the first Amarillo churches frequently eked out a slender income by going into the outlying districts of the Panhandle to hold services.

Famous Heights Park, created about the lake still to be seen south of the Tenth Street highway, was established by a Mr. [Isaacs?] who owned the Famous Dry Goods store in Amarillo, as Mrs. Chestnut remembers. Mrs. [Isaacs?] [built?] an island in the middle of the lake, connected to the mainland by means of an earthen causeway. A pavilion on the island provided shade and a place for dancing or band playing. Boats were operated on the lake, which was reached by an open bus. The Isaacs home, a neat brick structure, 2 still stands east of the lake.

Mrs. Chestnut remembers the time when the rangers were stationed in Amarillo between Fourth and Fifth streets on Tyler. John L. Sullivan was one of the rangers whose name she recalls. Rangers were needed to keep order; for cowboys, after long drives from distant ranches of the Southwest and even old Mexico, gave themselves over to relaxation and the pleasures of the town's numerous saloons. Trail herds were often held on the prairie near Amarillo in the vicinity of the stockyards, which were located on the present site of the shelter.