

[Mr. C. S. Bradley]

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Folklore,

Miss Effie Cowan,

McLennan County, Texas,

District 8.

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REFERENCE

Interview with Mr C.S.Bradley, White Pioneer, Groesbeck, Texas.

“I was born in Kentucky during the war between the States. My parents were of Scotch Irish descent. I attended such schools as the county afforded and labored on a farm. While I was a young boy we came to Texas in covered wagons. I have resided in this county since coming to Texas, soon after the Civil war ended. I attended Thornton Institute three years and taught school three years and have since practiced law continuously. I studied law of nights night's, Saturdays and Sundays , and during vacations, then stood the examination for the bar and was liscensed to practice. Have since published a book on Texas Practice and have written several subjects on State and General Practice books. I have belonged to the merican American Bar association and the Texas Bar Association for more than thirty years. I was President of the latter association.

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"I have never been a candidate for office, but was elected Groesbecks first Mayor under its re- rganization organization in an "ex-tempore write-in " contest. I have served by appointment of the government and election of the Bar on all the Civil Courts of the State, and declined regular appointments on them.

Early Days.

"When Limestone county was created and named, it embraced all of its present territory and also that later to become Freestone County. Springfield was made county seat. The greater part of the eastern section of the county w s owned by Mexican citizens who were interested in selling land, and this resulted in the more rapid development of this section. C.12 - 2/11/[?] - Texas 2 "Therefore the greatest part of the first settlements were in the eastern part of the county and outside of the towns, because of the sandy formation and of being covered by timber for the protection of their stock and having a shallow supply of water, [?] all of which was c ndusive to developing the land. About the time steel plows and barb wire came into use. [?] This enabled the stockman and farmer to fence his land and it was then they began to cultivate the black land in the western part of the county which was soon settled and put under the plow.

"After the Civil War ended at [Appomatox,?] the Confederates returned to their homes broken in health and fortune, but strong in their patriotic determination to begin all over again; which with the assistance of such men as Governor s Governor's Coke, and Hamilton,would have succeeded much more quickly but for the enemies of the South and the Yankee element of designing politicians who lived by the misfortunes of the South and who, like vultures swooped down upon the unfortunate ones who had been patriotic, if misguided in their cause.

"About the time of my parents removal from Kentucky to Texas, Limestone county (their destination) was the storm center of Reconstruction. When the radical element in Congress overpowered the President and disfranchised practically the entire white

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population of the South and delivered the voting franchise to the ignorant black ex-slaves and a few less worthy renegade whites, the people of the county suffered from the abuse and / domineering of the Carpet-baggers as white people have seldom suffered. 5 “These abuses have often been recited. The actors with few exceptions have now answered the last roll call. Under Providential guidance we have wonderfully reconstructed and rebuilt what we lost. The blacks along with the white people suffered as they have not suffered since. There is the story of many a black who was misled into trouble by the carpetbaggers, and renegade whites. They had their dens in the banks of the Navasota River and one, Merrick Trammel (negro) was a typical outlaw. He was credited with the slaying of a white man by name of Applewhite in Groesbeck, and which caused the county to be place placed under Mar al Martial Law , and during this time many negroes were slain in the county.

“In the early seventies the present Southern Pacafic Railway (then the Houston and Texas Central) was constructed through the county. The construction company depended upon the donations of right-of way and the help of the towns and by contributions to help in paying the cost of the road. There was a most suitable place for crossing the Navasota river at old Springfield (the county seat). Above and below it the river was quite forbidding for that purpose. The r il rail road made their request for the help by donation of land and a not i possible impossible sum of money. This was refused by the people of the town and so the railway company went back down the line a few miles, changed the crossing on the river and missed Springfield some few miles and constructed their railway , thus destroying the town of old Springfield. roesbeck Groesbeck , five miles south , and Mexia [?] seven miles north was the result.

“Springfield remained the county seat of limestone county until the railroad came through and the town of Groesbeck was built. Then the county 4 records were removed to Greosbeck in 1873. There were four Court Houses constructed in Springfield. A palasade

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structure near the old lake. A log house, a plank house, and a brick building. This brick building was built on the hill, and was destroyed by fire, but its remains are still visible.

“After the removal of the county seat to Groesbeck, there was first used an old store house for court purposes, where the county records were destroyed by fire. Then there was constructed on the site of the present Community House a beautiful structure, later torn down and rebuilt about the year 1889. and which was [?] rebuilt a year or so later and afterwards replaced by the one now turned into a community house, and the latter was succeeded by the present court house courthouse which is one of the most beautiful and imposing court houses in the United States.

Old Springfield— Now Lake Springfield.

“When nature designed this spot, it wrote in imperishable characters [?] Plus Ultra; Springfield Spring is perennial, flowing a large stream of blue water as it has done perhaps for centuries. It is now in course of transformation into one of the most attractive and beautiful State Parks in the State. Citizens of Mexia and Groesbeck recently purchased and donated to the State Park Board some seventeen hundred acres of the most beautifully located land embracing the Navasota River bed and lands on each side, and a C.C.C. Camp is now constructing Lake Springfield. This is some eight hundred acres to a depth of eight to thirty feet, and there is now in an advanced state of construction a concrete dam which is footed on solid rock fifty feet below the surface. The basin of the lake is being cleared of timber and when finished will be the most beautiful and attractive park for fishing hunting and boating and camping anywhere in the country. 5
Early Schools.

“This county was a pioneer in advanced education. As early as the middle of last century the Presbyterian Church had established and was successfully operating Trinity University, in Tehuacana, (home of the Tehuacana Indians). This was a first class school and [?] while there located, it turned out a class of pupils who have largely dominated

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the affairs of Texas. To make it possible such men as Judge D.M.Prendergast and Co. John R.Henry and like public spirited men, donated large portions of their fortunes, and that institution in return gave the state hundreds of men and women who have stood in the front of every walk in life. This institute has since been removed to the town of "axahachie some three or four decades ago and in its new location it still exerts a mighty power for good.

"In the late seventies and early eighties Central Institute, situated on Honest Ridge, some ten miles Northwest of Groesbeck, (another private institution) operated by John Parker, educated many young men who became a large portion in later years of the business element of the state and whose influence are still powerful and wholesome. About the same time Thornton Institute, a State chartered educational institution with Judge E.C.Chambers as its head operated for many years an / institute with its curriculum equal to the best school's of that day. A diploma from this institute entitled the holder to enter the best seats of higher learning.

"Westminster College is located on the historic site of Trinity University (which move moved to [Waxabachie?]) in Tehuacana, this is a recognized first class Junior College is composed of a corps of excellent teachers and doing a great work. 6 .

Westminster is a protestant Methodist University and a worthy successor to old Trinity University. It is situated in a picturesque and charming location amid the hills of old Tehuacana, Hills , as it was called in the early days. In the spring they are covered with the Indian blanket and bluebonnet flowers as well as other beautiful Texas wild flowers. The towns of Mexia and Groesbeck now have swimming pools near where the tired business men and women and the younger generation can go for a swim at the end of a summer day and relax in the cool waters of old Tehuacana Springs.

Politics.

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“The county has always been active in politics since the days of the Reconstruction period and even farther back before the days of the Civil War. It has furnished among other notable men two Comptrollers and one Judge of the Court of Criminal Appeals, and Attorney General, a Commission Commissioner of Agriculture, a Superintendent of Public Instruction and a Collector of Internal Revenue , and indirectly a member of the Court of Civil Appeals. It has furnished other states a United States Senator, a Judge of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, a Governor and at least two members of Congress.

“The town of Tehuacana was settled first by Major John Boyd, who was given a large grant of land that included a good part of Tehuacana hills. In the old cemetery on the hill where so many of the old pioneers rest , a tall marble shaft marks the resting place of Major John Boyd. The inscription says that he came to Texas in 1835, fought in the Texas Revolution was a member of the first congress that met in the Republic of Texas, and was sent as Legislator. In 1869 he gave 1500 acres of land to establish Trinity University. T 7
“A pioneer minister, Rev. J.W.Pearson who had been closely associated with Tehuacana and a close friend of the earliest settlers, was a great leader in the affairs of the county. He graduated from a Trinity University in 1879 and won outstanding recognition as a leader in the moral forces of Texas. In 1906 he was drafted and placed in the race for governor of Texas against Tom Campbell, who was also an ex-student of Trinity at Tehuacana. But the minister lost in this race, but it was with a calm satisfaction he stated that he “ran for principle.”

Indians Legends.

“According to Rev Pearson , Major Boyd located his league of land about the year 1835 or 36 and at this time the tribe of Tehuacana Indians had been destroyed. Their stronghold was its headquarters at Tehuacana and the story of their destruction has been handed down as legend. Long ago when the Indians roamed this country the interests of the different tribes often clashed, causing bloody wars and the savage memory never forgot

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the scars of the battle's. To the east of the Tehuacana's lived the powerful Cherokee's and the two tribes were not friendly.

“The story goes that the warlike Comanches stole a band of horses from the Cherokees and fled, followed by the Cherokee braves who were bent on recovering their loss. The Comanches were the victors and made their get-away and the mad and dissapointed Cherokees turned their steps toward their home returning by way of Tehuacana. On sight of the peaceful homes of the Tehuacana's the old grudge came to the minds of the Comanches and in the bloody battle which was fought between the two tribes the wigwams were burned, the women and children murdered and the tribe completely destroyed, with the exception of eight warriors who 8 fled with the young son of their chieftain. It was believed they went west and joined the Lipan tribe of Indians. Some time in the sixties the son of major John Boyd (the founder of the town) was standing near one of the beautiful bluffs on the west side when he saw an Indian. In a friendly manner Major Horace Boyd greeted the Indian, but silent as if he were dreaming he stood gazing upon the land of his fathers. Then drawing himself up to his full height he took one long look and as silently tread over the bluff and dissapeared in the valley below.

“Many years later Rev. Pearson learned that an Indian answering his description joined two small tribes in what is now Oklahoma. There he was made a chief. Following clew after clew , Rev. Pearson learned that a chief over a few scattered tribes had died at the age of 90 years. He was thought to have been on a return visit to his native home when he was suddenly come upon by Major Horace Boyd and as silently went away.

“There are many other stories rich in legend and lore about Tehuacana. There is a large rock that the old pioneers, before our time, have pointed out as the place where the sole survivor of the Battle Creek Massacre, having crawled eighteen miles after being wounded in a fight with the Indians , in which his comrades were killed , hid under the shadow of this

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rock. The stones will not speak, nor will the earth yield her secrets, a land full of tradition and legend. No more important point of historical interest can be found in Central Texas.