

**[C. S. Bradley]**

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FOLKLORE—White Pioneers

Miss Effie Cowan, P.W.

McLennan County, Texas

District No. 8

No. words 2,000

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REFERENCES

Interview with C. S. Bradley, Groesbeck, Texas.

“I am of Scotch Irish descent and was born in Kentucky during the Civil War. I attended such schools as the county afforded and labored on a farm. While I was a young boy, we came to Texas, soon after the war ended. We came in covered wagons and I have lived in Limestone County, since we came here. I attended Thornton Institute three years; taught school three years and then practiced law continuously. I studied law at night, on Saturday, Sunday and on holidays. I [?] the examination for the bar and was liscened to practice. I wrote several articles on State and General Practice and published a book on Texas Practice. For more than thirty years, I have been a member of the American Bar Association and was President of the Texas Bar Association. While I have never been a candidate for office, I was elected as the first Mayor of Groesbeck under its re-organization

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in an [?] contest. I have served, by appointment of the government and by election of the bar, on all the Civil Courts of the state and have declined regular appointments on them.

### EARLY DAYS IN LIMESTONE COUNTY

“When Limestone County was created and named, it embraced all of its present territory and also that which later became Freestone County. Springfield was made county seat. The greater part of the eastern section of the county was owned by Mexican citizens who were interested [inselling?] land. This resulted in a more rapid development of this section. Therefore, the greater number of the first settlements were in the eastern part of the county and outside of the towns, because of the / sandy formation and the heavy timber for protection of stock, also, because of the supply of water at shallow depth. About the time that steel plows and barbed wire came into use, the black land in the western part of the county began to be cultivated and that part of the county settled rapidly and was put under the plow.

“After the Civil War ended at Appomatox the Confederates returned to their homes broken in health and in fortune, but strong in their patriotic determination to begin all over again; which, with the assistance of such men to Governor [Coke?] and Hamilton, would have succeeded quickly had it not been for the enemies of the South and the Yankee element of designing politicians who lived by the misfortunes of the South. These swooped like vultures 2 upon the patriotic, but misguided South.

“About the time my parents removed from Kentucky to Texas, Limestone County was the center of the storm of Reconstruction. When the radical element in Congress overpowered the President and disenfranchised practically the entire white population of the South they gave the voted to the ignorant, black, ex-slaves and a few less worthy white renegades. The people of the county suffered from the abuse and domineering of the Carpet baggers as white people have seldom suffered. These abuses have often been recited. The actors, with few exceptions, have now answered the last roll call. Under Providential guidance,

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we have wonderful reconstructed and rebuilt that which we had lost. The black, along with the white people, suffered as they have not suffered since. There is told the story of many a black who was misled into trouble by the carpet baggers, and renegade whites. They had their dens in the banks of the [Navasota?] River, and [one?], Merrick [?] Renfro was a typical outlaw. He was credited with the slaying of a white man, by the name of Applewhite, in Groesbeck. This caused the county to be placed under martial law. During this time, many negroes were slain in the county.

“In the early seventies, the present Southern Pacific Railway, then known as The Houston and Texas Central, was constructed through the county. The construction company depended upon the donations of right-of-the-way, through the country, and upon the help of the towns and upon contributions to help in paying the cost of building the road. The most suitable place for the railroad to cross the Navasota River was at old Springfield the county seat of Limestone County. Above and below that point, the River was difficult to cross. The railroad requested donations of land and a not unreasonable sum of money. This was refused by the citizens of Springfield. The Surveyors for the railroad, found another place at which the River could be crossed. The railroad was built a few miles away from Springfield and this destroyed the town. Groesbeck, five miles south of old Springfield and Mexia, seven miles north of Springfield were built. The town of Springfield remained the county seat of Limestone County until the railroad was completed and the town of Groesbeck was built. Then the County Seat and the County records were moved to Groesbeck in [?] 1873 . 3 There were four Court Houses erected in Springfield. The first was a palisade structure near the old lake. Then a log house was built. The next was built of plank and the last one was built of brick. This brick building was erected on a hill and was destroyed by fire after a [?]. Some of its remains are still visible.

“After the county seat was moved to Groesbeck, an old store house was used for court purposes and the county records were destroyed by fire at this place. The next court house was built where the present Community House now stands. This court house was rebuilt in 1889 and again a few years later. That was replaced by the building which is now

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used as a Community House. Then the present beautiful and imposing court house was erected.

### OLD [SPRINGFIELD—NOW LAKE SPRINGFIELD?]

“When nature designed this spot, it wrote in imperishable characters “ [NO plus ultra?] .” There is a beautiful spring in Springfield from which a large stream of blue water has been flowing for ages. This spot is now being transformed into one of the most attractive and beautiful State Parks in the State. Recently, the Citizens of Groesbeck and Mexia purchased and donated to the State Park Board about seventeen hundred acres of land along the Navasota River bed and each side of the river. This is lovely scenic land and a [C.C.C.?] Camp is now at work building Lake Springfield. This lake will cover eight hundred acres and be from eight to thirty feet deep. A concrete [?], footed on solid rock fifty feet below the surface is being constructed. The basin of the lake is being / cleared of timber and when this part is finished it will be a very attractive park and lake with fishing, hunting and boating and camping facilities.

“This county was a pioneer in advanced education. As early as the middle of the last century, the Presbyterian Church had established and was successfully operating Trinity University, in Tehuscana. This was a first class school and while it was located at Tehuscana, it furnished many leaders in Texas affairs. Judge D. M. Pendergast and Colonel John R. Henry and other public spirited men donated large amounts to this institution. Later, this institution was moved to [Texahachie?] where it exerts a wonderful power for good.

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“In the late seventies and early eighties, Central Institute, located on [Honest?] Ridge, was a fine private school. It was located about ten miles northwest of Groesbeck. John Parker was the president. From this institution came many young men who became prominent in business and other lines. About the same time, the State granted a charter to

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the Thornton Institute with Judge [?] C. Chambers as its head. This school was affiliated with other schools of higher learning. Westminster College was located on the original site of Trinity University, which had moved to [Texahachie?]. This is now a reorganized Junior College and Tehuscana is very proud of its work. This a Protestant Methodist school. It is located in a picturesque and charming spot amidst the old Tehuscana hills. In the spring the ground is a carpet of Indian blankets, and bluebonnets and other wild flowers. The swimming pools at Mexia and Groesbeck are fed by water from the old Tehuscana Springs.

“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 notables, two Comptrollers and one Judge of the Court of Criminal Appeals, an Attorney General, a 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 with 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 Tehuscana was settled first by Major John [Boyd?], who was given a large grant of land that included a good part of Tehuscana Hills. In the old cemetery on the hill there is a tall marble shaft which marks the resting place of Major John Boyd, and many of the old pioneers also rest there. The inscription on the Boyd monument states 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 1,500 acres of land on which to establish Trinity University.

“The pioneer minister, Rev. J. A. Pearson, was closely associated with the early days of Tehuscana and he was a close friend of many of the earliest settlers; and an active leader in the affairs of the county. He graduated from Trinity University 5 in [?] 1879 and won outstanding recognition as a leader in the moral forces of Texas. In [?] [1900?] , he was drafted and placed in the race for governor of Texas against Tom Campbell, who was

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also an ex-student of Trinity at Tehuscana. But the minister lost in his race, but with calm satisfaction he stated that he “ran for principle.”

“According to Rev, Pearson, Major Boyd located his league of land about 1835 or '36. By this time, most of the tribe of Tehuscana Indians had [beendestroyed?]. Their strong hold was at Tehuscana 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 the scars of battle. East of Tehuscana lived the powerful Cherokees and the two tribes were very unfriendly.

“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 victorious and made their get-a-way. The angry and disappointed Cherokees turned their steps toward their home and returned by way of Tehuscana. When they saw the peaceful homes of the Tehuscana, the old grudge against them returned to the minds of the Comanches. A bloody battle was fought between the two tribes and the Tehuscana wigwams were burned; the women and children murdered and the tribe almost completely destroyed. Eight warriors fled with the younger son of their chieftain. It is believed they joined the Lipan tribe. At 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. Major Horace Boyd gave the Indian a friendly greeting but the Indian stood silently gazing upon the land of his fathers. Drawing himself up to his full height, the Indian took one long look at the beautiful landscape, then silently [sped?] over the bluff and disappeared in the valley below.

“Many year later, Rev. Pearson learned that an Indian answering his description joined two small tribes in what is now Oklahoma. Of these combined tribe, this Indian became chief. Tracing one clue after another, Rev. Pearson learned that the chief over a few scattered tribes had died at the age of 90 years. This is the Indian that it is 6 thought Major Horace Boyd saw at the Tehuscana bluff. There are many other stories rich in legend and lore

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centered around Tehuscana. The old pioneers point out a large rock as the place where the sole survivor of the Battle Creek Massacre, hid after crawling eighteen miles after being wounded in an Indian fight in which all his comrades were killed. Tehuscana is a very important historical point in the history of Texas.