

Carefully honoring the bell's signal, we drove cautiously onto the floating conveyance at the appointed time, were hauled across the river and continued on our way - arriving at the family home at Field's Store in a heavy downpour at eleven o'clock at night.

The series of dams placed on the Brazos in recent years has reduced the flow and resulted in the river being quite low in a number of places. In earlier days the river, when fed by floods, frequently went on wild rampages, sometimes damaging the ferries along the stream. During one such flood the San Felipe ferry was torn from its mooring and washed down stream to Freeport.

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## Encounters With Flooding Streams

By Jimmie Rene Ogg

### On Crossing Clear Creek

In years gone by my sister Hettie and I taught school at Howth where we boarded in the home of Mrs. Earline Wood. On Friday afternoons it was our custom to return to the Field's Store home to be with our father, mother having passed away a short time before.

During one particular week the rain had fallen incessantly, but when Friday afternoon came we headed home, as usual. On the way we stopped at Castle's Store in Hempstead to lay in a supply of groceries. Everyone in the store advised against trying to get home, cautioning that Clear Creek was out of its banks and all over the countryside. But knowing Clear Creek and having crossed its rising waters before, I boldly replied, "I know I can whip Clear Creek any day in the world." Thereupon we took our groceries and prepared to set off.

At the store was a young man who had come from Baylor to preach at Shiloh Baptist Church on the coming Sunday - many rural pulpits having been filled in those days by young prospective ministers who volunteered their services from Sunday to Sunday. Mrs. Castle asked if the young man might ride with us as far as the home of Mrs. Florence Cook where he would spend the weekend. All being agreeable, the young man climbed into the back seat of the Model T with the groceries and we were off.

Arriving at Clear Creek, the stream looked no different from what we had seen a number of times before, so we headed right off into it. But the water was terribly high and the motor promptly drowned out, and we were marooned in the middle of the creek, water flowing about on all sides.

Seeking to be of assistance the young man got out of the car, stepped off into the water - in his preaching clothes - waded out and walked back to Hempstead where he got someone with a wagon and team to come to our rescue. Once at the creek the obliging 'wagon man' drove his team into the water, hooked on to the disabled vehicle and pulled it out - on the homeward side of the creek.

Off and on our way, the well baptized young man was deposited at the Cook home where Mrs. Cook supplied him with dry clothing from her sons' closets, laundered his preaching clothes, and

got him all spruced up to fill the Shiloh pulpit come Sunday. Whether this particular young minister ever got up courage to return to Waller County to deliver a Sunday's message is not known. But he probably voiced a word of caution when he was next faced with crossing a swollen stream, especially with a heedless young woman in the driver's seat.

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### **Roping the Radiator Cap**

On a certain Friday afternoon my sister Hettie and I, having taught school all week, were anxious to go home for the weekend. Stymied, however, as recent rains had been so heavy as to make the trip infeasible, we settled down for a weekend at our boarding place.

To everyone's happy surprise Saturday morning dawned bright and clear and we were homeward bound. Things went well until we reached Clear Creek which we found well out of its banks. Crossing it was well out of the question so we turned off the main road and took the Wyatt Chapel Road, hoping to be able to cross Pond Creek. That creek was also pretty well at flood stage, but looked to be not high enough to prevent crossing.

Therefore, with thoughts only of going forward, I drove my Model T off into the stream only to get it firmly stuck in the little creeks' muddy bottom. Just as despair was threatening, good luck appeared in the person of Mr. Harris who lived at Liendo. He came riding by on horseback in search of cattle, fearing they had drowned and washed down the creek. Instead of cows, he found the Model T - with us huddled inside - stranded in the middle of the stream.

Taking his throw rope from the pommel of the saddle, he backed away a few feet, swung the lariat and expertly lassoed the little stand up ornament that decorated the top of the car's radiator. The trusty saddle horse then heaved to and pulled the Ford out of the stream and onto the bank on the homeward side of the creek. With sincere thanks to our friend, Mr. Harris, we were off again - all creeks behind and home just ahead.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Stranded?**

The Ogg home at Field's Store was on a fairly high gravel hill. Spring Creek in its serpentine course surrounded the hill on three sides - north, south, and west - and when the creek flooded, the hill where the house stood was practically an island.

Once during a terrible flood that caused a great overflow, the family's cows were stranded beyond the creek - away from the house. As the day waned and evening approached the family anxiously waited and watched to see if the cows would return home, wondering if they would brave the swollen stream.

Papa, having no sons to serve as cowboys, handled his herd cleverly and with ease - by feeding them regularly. Each evening he fed the animals at the barn near the house and so enticed them to return at the close of each day for a feeding.

On the day of the flood the cows appeared on the far side of the wide stream. From the house we carefully watched, counting the animals as they, one by one, entered the water, swam across, and hurried homeward.

From the distance it could be seen that one cow had a new calf and all feared the little one would be drowned in the crossing - should the mother choose to cross. As we watched, the mother was seen to hesitate briefly at the water's edge, then plunge in as the others had done. When she emerged on the home side there was the little calf beside her, close by her body on the leeward side of the current where the mother's body had protected it from the rushing water. Two examples of nature were applauded by the family: those little things were born knowing how to swim, and the mother knew how to protect her baby from the swift rampaging current.

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### **The 1940 Flood on the Brazos**

(Based on a tape recording by  
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Kohler and Mrs. Ambrose Kohler)

The November 1940 flood on the Brazos was not a typical overflow with a deluge of backwater, instead it was a local flash flood. A half mile above the flooding area there was no water. Mr. Kohler said, "When the water hit the river, it didn't come down the river; it hit the river and came out on the other side until it filled everything." The Kohler home, which had six and one-half feet of water, was east of the Brazos near the San Felipe ferry.

The rain began Friday evening and continued until Sunday noon. The river, low at the beginning of the rain, was so high by Sunday morning that persons on the other side of the river could not get across. There was danger of losing the ferry in the high water and around eleven o'clock Sunday morning Mr. Kohler went down and helped tie it down, hoping to save it, but the ferry soon broke from its mooring and washed off down the river to Freeport.

By Sunday afternoon the Kohlers began moving cattle from lowlands, having to swim part way. Later, cattle had to be moved again. There were about one hundred twenty-five head in knee deep water when Mr. Kohler, with three helpers in a boat, took the lead on his horse, cut fences and started the cattle out. At first they moved well, but soon got into swift water where it was breaking over the river bank, and the cattle had to be turned loose. After flood water subsided, only about fifty-five head would be found alive.

The boat with the three helpers drifted off into the swift water and the occupants panicked and began yelling. Mr. Kohler swam his horse out, threw one end of his lariat to them and, swimming his horse, pulled them out.

The family car was left under the shed where three hogs landed on its top, mashing the top in and staying there for the duration, except that one two hundred fifty pound hog managed to get into the car and was found alive and well - hams hung over the front seat and nose in the steering wheel. The pickup was driven around to the front of the house where a cow from Austin County crossed the river, got into it and stayed there until she floated out.

By six o'clock Sunday afternoon there were twelve to fourteen feet of water at the ferry cut. Sunday night about ten-thirty, Mrs. Kohler heard by radio that Hempstead was calling for rescue boats. Arising, the Kohler men, surveying the situation outside, realized they had to "pick up some stuff." Wading through water they rescued about thirty-five pigs, tossing them onto a floating wagon bed which they had tied down, eventually putting them upstairs in the barn. A black family living nearby yelled for help about that time, and the Kohlers rescued them.

By this time water around the house was waist deep, so they took the fourteen foot skiff which had been tied down under the house, and went to the chicken house for the chickens - having to "mash down" the boat so they could get in at the door of the chicken house - so high was the water. Catching them off the roost,

they put most of the fowl in two big cotton sacks, carried them to the house and dumped them out on the upstairs screen porch. They were unable to get back into the chicken house because of the fast rising water, but at least some of the fowl that were left reached safety in the trees. Milk cows were let out of the lot so they could go to higher ground, instead they got under the house where their horns made a terrible noise as they dragged along the sleepers under the house. Most of them were drowned.

A big norther blew up and the men who had been working in the water most of the night got terribly cold. At four o'clock in the morning they changed into dry clothes, ate breakfast and set out by boat to look for the horses. They heard them swimming upstream and pursued them. One became entangled in wire, from which he eventually freed himself, and both were saved.

Neighbors who lived in low lying places had walked, following high ground, until they got to Mrs. Kohler's father's place. By this time rescue boats were coming in. One boat that took on too many people got hung up on the barn fence; some of the men from the house got out into the swift water and maneuvered it off the fence, and it went on its merry way. Another boat that took on too many passengers had to leave one man, Mr. Joe Schier, in a huisache tree - even though he "couldn't swim a lick" - but returned for him later.

The Kohler family had taken refuge in the home of their good friends, Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Kerr, of San Felipe, and later Mr. Kerr picked up Mr. Kohler and carried him to the San Felipe home. After having been in the water all day and all night the wet and tired Mr. Kohler was asked by his hosts if he would like to take a bath. To that invitation he replied, "I've been in the water all night and all day and now you want me to take a bath? I ought to be clean!"

## Field's Store

By Ruby D. Robinson, a Field great-great granddaughter

The community of Field's Store was bounded by Reid's Prairie on the north, the south by Joseph Road, the east by Bowler Road and the west by Giboney Road. Roads, which in reality were dirt trails and referred to by early settlers as lanes, were usually named for the family that resided at the end of the lane. As families moved to other houses, or out of the community, the former residence was referred to as "the old Perry Place" or whoever the former resident happened to be. If you were not the original owner, you very seldom had the honor of having a residence, or place, named for you.

The exact date that Drury Holland Field and his wife Caroline Francis settled in the community is not certain. A deed showing a land purchase by D. H. Field from Y. D. Sapp dated October 29, 1866 is the earliest date that could be found. Other deeds were dated 1868 and 1871. The deeds of land transactions were filed in Grimes County, since the Field's Store area was first a part of Grimes County, later a portion of Waller County when it was created in 1873.

It is not known just when Field's Store community was established but information from the Texas Conference of the Methodist Church shows that there were enough people in the community to organize a Methodist Church in 1845, that being the New Hope Methodist Church, the first Methodist church in the area.

Life in the early years of any rural community was centered about the church and the school. An early day school is known to have stood just east of the present day Field's Store school building. The present building was erected in 1923-24 and is today used as a community center, the school district long since having been consolidated with Waller. Early rural schools were not subsidized for athletic equipment and other such supplies. Instead, improvising and energetic teachers raised funds by producing plays for which they used a temporary makeshift stage with bed sheets and wagon sheets for curtains. Other funds were raised from an occasional pie supper or box supper, at which events young men would bid competitively on a best girl's culinary offering.

Mainly a farming community from the late 1800s until the Great Depression, cotton was the cash crop. Corn was grown to feed farm animals that supplied families with milk, meat, butter and eggs. Watermelons and other truck crops later appeared on the scene, furnishing families with a variety of foods and also bringing in more cash on the Houston market.

The Great Depression brought about a change in the lives of farming people. Farmers struggled because of the drop in the price of cotton. Young farmers left the community to eke out a living in other places. Only the "Old Timers" were left on the home places and many of them sold their land.

The following is a list of families that settled in the Field's Store community: W. A. Sorsby, E. C. Schneider, Scott Howell, J. A. Smith, Walter Bunting, Mary Giboney, Walter McConnell, Clarence Survant, Wallace Wade, Will Scroggins, Andrew Campbell, Ed Izard, George Lawrence, Lige Hargrave, John Bruner, Lonnie Sprayberry, John Wallingford, Willis Blair, Y. D. Sapp, J. W. Day, John Blumberg, Melvin Moore, T. L. Dawson, Hugh Dawson, Jim Wilson, Frank Wilson, Rufe Wilson, Sarah M. Spikes and William Boulware.

Some characteristics of the Field's Store community are unique. One of particular interest to anyone who has ever lived there is the July 4 picnic and rodeo to raise money for the upkeep of the cemetery. The cemetery is located on a gravel hill back of the New Hope Methodist Church. Without water, grass would never have grown; so the grass has been hoed off the lots from the beginning. Before money was being raised for the care of the cemetery, families would meet for a "cemetery working." Water is available now and in the newer part of the cemetery, carpet grass is growing.

Known as a community of varied interests, Field's Store had its mixed political views, often leading to the parting-of-the-ways for family and friends. On November 10, 1892, the following news article appeared in the Houston Daily Post:

### A FATAL ELECTION

Hempstead, Texas, November 9 - Field's Store is a voting precinct, known as beat No. 3, ten miles from here and in this county. A tragedy occurred there yesterday evening while voting was going on, as a consequence of which Charles Quinn is a corpse and C. McConnell is dangerously and perhaps fatally wounded. The scene of the tragedy being so far from town, and reports brought in being very conflicting, it is almost impossible to form any correct opinion as to what started the trouble. Joe Wood, Reuben Boulware and Tom Wallingford, Jr., are charged with the shooting. Some reports have it that an election bet started the trouble, while others assert that the trouble was only a continuance of a former quarrel. The

shooting lasted quite a while, and during the excitement the crowd dispersed and the judge of the election with the ballot box left for the woods. All parties are white and are well known here, and the catastrophe has caused much regret.

The following interjection was taken from the conference records of the New Hope Methodist Church:

"As was the custom, when a funeral of a well known person was held at the church the school children of the nearby Field's Store marched, two abreast, and were seated in this large building. Teachers kept a watchful eye on them and they were instructed not to talk. In the fall of 1925 during a service conducted by a blind minister, Rev. Stahley, the shingle roof of this very tall building caught fire from sparks from a wood burning heater. Some of the school children saw the burning shingles falling but 'minding their teacher' they said not a word!"

The Field's Store school was a three-room building with folding doors separating two rooms to form an auditorium for special programs. The 10th grade was the "graduating" class. When Field's Store School closed in 1953 the furnishings were sold. Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Christopher bought one of the desks and donated it to the Waller County Historical Museum in Brookshire. Successor to the old fashioned school bench, desks of its type were usually fastened (often several in a row) to boards, or runners, in order to discourage the student's ease of movement. The hole at the right top accommodated an inkwell. This was an improvement over the double desks with two students to the desk.

Very few of the old families' younger generations are living in the more-than-a-century-old community but fond memories of natives who have deep roots there are drawn back on occasions. They, too, have seen the community come "full circle." Again the undulating hills of the old community are being enjoyed by many newcomers who have moved out of the big city "rat race."

## Friendship Community

By Leonard R. Mattox

Friendship Community holds a unique and tender spot in the hearts of many of the residents of Northeast Waller County, especially with those who were raised in and around the community. The two landmark establishments in the community, other than certain farms and ranches in the area, are Friendship Baptist Church and Friendship School, known also as Smith School.

In the early 1920s, Friendship School was comprised of two rooms and formed an "L" shape. It was during these years that Ms. Elma Lloyd and Mr. Bobby Page taught with the lower grades attending class in the main part of the building and the upper grades meeting in the wing of the building which extended to the north of the main building. During these years this small country school was filled with boys and girls in various stages of obtaining their education. Ms. Lloyd normally drove her horse and buggy to the school each day and upon arrival some of the older youth at school would take care of her horse for her.

The main part of the old school building, located just south of the Friendship Baptist Church and on the west side of Kickapoo Road, is still standing at this time; however, it is standing empty and is in dire need of repairs.

A few of the family names of the children attending the Friendship School and shared with the reporter were as follows: Jones, Yeats, Roberts, Clepper, Riley, Sheffield, Stokley, Peterson, McWilliams, Hargrave, and Reinhardt.

In addition to receiving an education, they also learned to get along with one another in competitive sports. One of the exciting sports events of the school year was that of basketball. In those days, the primary opponent of Friendship School was Fieldstore School. In order to form two teams and thus give the Friendship boys the practice they needed, the girls would also form a team and play against the boys. On one such occasion, the boys were playing the girls by the girl's rules. Young Garnet Jones was playing Guard and the ball was rolling on the ground. Young Alton McWilliams was "hot" after the ball. Young Cassie May Roberts saw she wasn't going to get the ball herself so, being a little "hot" tempered, let go with her foot and kicked the ball and at the same time hit Alton on the nose! Garnet was yelling, "Get the ball, Alton, Get the ball!" to which Alton replied, "I can't even see it!"

## My Treasure

By Patti Meyers

Chubby little fingers  
Tightly clutching a bouquet  
Of enchanting daisies  
Signs of a summer day  
  
Some stems short  
Some long, some withering  
All crushed with elfin enthusiasm  
In the gathering  
  
Joyfully presented  
These miracles of beautiful discovery  
To me, "Mama",  
All the world to my three year old  
  
A child's trusting admiration  
Oh how do I deserve  
This small miracle of innocence  
That I love so dearly?  
  
Poor crushed and bent daisies  
You are a gift  
But it's not you I treasure —  
It's the giver!

## Buried Treasures

By Jimmie Rene Ogg

### On Planting Silver Dollars

The John Ogg family made their home on a gravel hill in the Field's Store community. In addition to being a farmer and rancher, Papa was a fine fiddler, furnishing music for dances throughout the countryside. Of course, he charged no fee for his services, but at each event the hat was passed and dancers "chipped in" to see that he did not go home empty handed.

In those days there was little currency afloat in the country, instead most of the medium of exchange people had on hand was in coin - mostly silver dollars. And so it was that when the hat was passed it was mostly silver dollars that were collected. As time went on, and as it was the custom to refrain from great use of banks, there came to be quite a collection of silver dollars at the Ogg home.

The yard about the house was always abloom with seasonal flowers, for Mama was an avid grower of flowers. My little sister Hettie, alert and a close observer, often accompanied mother as she worked in the yard. Aware of how her mother planted seeds, of how they came up and yielded a bounty of beauty, Hettie had a bright idea. One day while the family was away for a short time at a funeral, she sought to do a good turn - to put her bright idea to work.

Collecting a handful of silver dollars she carried them into the yard where, by use of a hand auger, she drilled deep holes through the hard gravel and dutifully planted the dollars. Missing the money, the parents made inquiry concerning its whereabouts. With a great deal of pride she stepped forward and told of her undertaking, explaining that all should watch carefully and give proper attention to the dollars when they came up - that there would be a fine and beautiful crop of dollars once the money plants came up and blossomed.

Not waiting for the dollars to sprout and come up, the family sought their burial place immediately, but the search was in vain. Little Hettie had patted down the soil over her money seed ever so firmly and with several days having passed since the planting no trace of the dollars could be found. To this day those silver dollars lie buried well beneath the soil of Mama's flower garden.

side meat and sausage were hung by strings on long poles in the smokehouse for curing. All trimmings were used in sausage making.

We enjoyed many meals from our hams, bacon, sausage, liver sausage, souse and pickled pig's feet. Nothing ever tasted better than pork bones and dried peas or beans on a cold winter's day. Sausage was a Sunday morning breakfast treat, just as fried chicken was a treat after church on Sunday.

## GLOSSARY

- A round: A full row's length and return  
Burned off: Fired to kill off weeds and grass  
Brine: Extremely salty water  
Cotton patch puddin': A quick custard without meringue  
Flat broken: Plowed smooth, no rows  
Goad: A long wooden pole, peeled smooth, used for tapping the oxen  
Gallery: Porch or veranda  
Horny frogs: Horned lizards  
Killdeers: Birds called killdees  
Oxen: Castrated bull calves  
Plow Shares: A detachable device made in the shape of wings for opening and closing plowed ground  
Sweep: A device shaped like wings used for plowing out middles. Also called a middle-buster.  
Souse: Hog's head cheese  
Side meat: Unsliced bacon  
Stalks: Corn and cane plants having long leaves  
Sweet potato slips: Planted slips about 18 inches long cut from the original plant  
Slide: A rough wooden sled made with wooden runners and a flat bed  
Tumble bug: Dung beetle  
Rendered: Fried out slowly

## Wild Cattle

By Lil L. Kobs

Longhorns, a wild breed of cattle, have been well known throughout most of Texas, and this included Waller County. There existed another sort of wild cattle, just as wild as Longhorns and just as hardy, but possessed of shorter horns. These roamed the prairies and timber lands of northeast Waller County.

They were lank, somewhat shaggy, and often looked in wretchedly poor condition, a fact that was completely deceiving, as under that wretched looking exterior lay good commercial beef which was in great demand in the East. These cattle seemed to subsist and thrive on practically nothing. They multiplied in such great numbers that they, too, fell victim to huge cattle drives as did the Longhorns, the Mustang ponies, and wild hogs.

Wild cattle roamed from place to place foraging for food and ate anything within reach - leaves and nuts and berry vines and their fruit, and they enjoyed wild plums greatly. Nightfall, however, found them congregated at water holes along with the Mustangs. Here many fights took place, not only between bulls, but minor skirmishes took place between some cows that were just naturally fighters - some even went looking for trouble. These were usually the cows that sported long horns, which fact seemed to make bullies of them.

Predators were abundant in Texas and they were no less prevalent in northeast Waller County. These wild cattle had, over the years, developed protective instincts; and when the alarm sounded the young were quickly herded into a circle and the adults, bulls and cows alike, made a solid mass of cow flesh about the young, head turned outward ready and willing to protect the young and infirm.

There was much angry bellowing accompanied by a pawing of the earth with the front feet. A pack of wolves was helpless against such odds and seldom dared approach those threatening horns. It must have been a formidable sight indeed to see those bristling horns and angry eyes, to say nothing of the din of their bellowing. Wolves were clever, though, and followed the herds during the day if hunger drove them to extremes, sometimes managing to cut a calf away from the herd or to bring down an old or infirm cow. They were experts at waiting for the unwary.

Drought was hard on the cattle and sometimes caused some of them to drift farther and farther southward toward the Brazos River. Some even drifted down to the Gulf of Mexico. True, they could not



drink the salt water of the Gulf, but they did stand in it belly deep for some comfort. Some ranchers believed that a cow could absorb enough water in this manner to stay alive. It was reported by some that during a drought, a really prolonged drought, when steers were slaughtered their kidneys were as small as a hickory nut from lack of water.

Louie Hegar, Henry Walker, the Izard boys, and some others whose names are lost to us, were drovers of these wild cattle. They were aided in the drives by one George Hermann who was in the cattle business in Houston. Cattle were rounded up by Hermann and his boys, rounded up from the Gulf area, and joined by the drives from Waller County. It must be noted here that other counties took part in these drives also.

Drovers had to be rough, daring, adventuresome, and hardy to survive the drives. They feared nothing, much less a wild, scared, and often angry cow; one thing was outstanding - they understood these animals, some said to the extent they could think like a wild cow brute. When drives started, cattle took to the thickets and had to be flushed out, often one at a time. Drovers rode into thickets and were, often as not, rewarded by being charged by a beast that lurked there waiting to ambush his pursuer. Some drovers lost their mounts and some even lost their lives in such surprise attacks. Much blood was spilled on these roundups; blood of horses, cattle, and men often mingled in the sand.

Later, sometimes much later, a cow might run across a spot of blood which had dried, but which nevertheless she could smell, and become so agitated at the odor she would circle the spot at a run and begin to scream as only an agitated cow brute can scream in that high pitched voice. She would then drop to her knees and gore at the earth with first one horn and then the other, all the while screaming and bellowing with all her might. Her cries would bring other cattle in that vicinity on the run and soon they added their screams and joined in the ritual of goring at the sand. Their eerie screams and moans could be heard for miles around and people avoided that area until the noise subsided. It was a dangerous spot to be in.

Bulls engaged in fights for days on end. Humans have not figured how the signal is given, but in some mysterious way it IS given and at precisely the same moment two bulls charge one another head-on and come together with a thud heard miles away by cowboys and cattle alike. As a general rule cows stayed at a safe distance from

fighting bulls, but once in a while a young cow would get careless and walk between the bulls. One cowboy recalls having seen a heifer wander between two bulls at the exact moment of the charge only to be impaled on the horns of both charging bulls. Her screams were frightful.

The wild cattle thinned out as settlers and fences came and were soon displaced by tamer, more tractable breeds that produced better meat - at least it was fatter. However, the crossbreeds were still inferior and good bulls were added to herds from time to time to upgrade the stock. Finally cattlemen brought in White Faces, Brahmans (Brimmers), Angus and other good breeds to supplant the range cattle. Dairies sprang up and Jerseys were used exclusively for years until Holsteins were introduced as a dairy breed. The day of the wild cattle was drawing to a close.



In the time period between the Battle of the Alamo and the Battle of San Jacinto, the two crossings, Atascosita and Coushatti, in relation to each other played a very important part in the Texas Revolution. After the adoption of the Texas Declaration of Independence, Sam Houston was elected Commander-in-Chief of the Texas Army. As he appeared to retreat before the advancing Mexicans, he came to the Atascosita Crossing of the Brazos. He stayed at San Felipe over night, and the next day moved on in a northerly direction. "While Houston was retreating, he was recruiting and conducting drills and battle tactics for the men." He had left about one hundred and twenty men at San Felipe, and ordered every craft on the river to be destroyed in order to keep Santa Anna from crossing the Brazos. When Santa Anna reached San Felipe, the men left there fought "gallantly." Santa Anna gave up the pursuit of Houston and advanced on Harrisburg. In the meantime, after several days march from San Felipe, Houston came to Groce's Landing. There the steamboat Yellowstone was loading and unloading. Houston used the steamboat to move his raw recruits across the river. It took many crossings for the boat to get the army across. At what has been called the "Groce Encampment" he set up headquarters and stayed for about two weeks. During that time Houston worked to whip his men into fighting shape. While there Houston's army received the famed "twin sisters" - the two cannon which were used at San Jacinto. From Groce's Plantation Houston moved on to the encounter with the Mexicans at San Jacinto.

Many human interest stories are told in connection with use of the ferries — how in the moving of cattle, frequently the requirement was they must be dipped before being moved across the river. Many times cattle were permitted to swim across. San Felipe was a great social center. Party goers sometimes found the ferry boat had stopped running and was tied up on the opposite side when they got ready to go home. Undaunted, the daring have been known to swim across the river, untie the ferry, and bring it for those who needed it to cross the river to get home.

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## An Incident At Hempstead - Brenham Ferry

By Jimmie Rene Ogg

The Hempstead - Brenham ferry over the Brazos River was on old State Highway 20, now Highway 290. Manually operated, the conveyance was moved from one side of the river to the other by a system of ropes and pulleys - strong men tugging at the ropes and inching the ferry slowly across. Once across there was a great hauling and shoving and pulling to get the thing properly positioned next to the river bank cut so vehicles could safely drive off and onto the road. Fee for passage was fifty cents.

The cut from the road down to the ferry landing was quite steep and of the slickest and blackest mud one ever saw; good brakes were an absolute requirement for negotiating the cut, else one might find himself missing the target - off to one side or perhaps in the river. Travelers in the know were aware of the ferry's bell system by which those who would avail themselves of its services waited on the road proper until the bell was rung - a signal that all was in readiness for the vehicle to be driven onto the floating platform.

One Friday afternoon my sister Hettie and I, returning home from teachers' institute in Brenham, arrived at the ferry, stopped the car as usual and waited upon the road for the bell to ring. We waited and waited; it got later and later; evening was coming on and yet no bell had rung.

Inquisitive concerning the delay, we alit from the car and walked over and peered down into the river - looking for the ferry. To our amazement we saw a car, not on the ferry but in the river. On the running board of the car stood a red headed woman, in water up to her arms, holding a little red headed baby on top of the car. It seemed they had come to the ferry and, unaware of the system of bell signals, had driven right off into the river - perchance the vehicle had poor brakes.

Down in the river men were tugging and pulling at the car. After great effort and the expenditure of much time, they succeeded in getting the car out of the river, onto the ferry, and across to the Brenham Side. We never knew the identity of the red headed woman with the red headed baby, but surmised that when she next came to a river transport - especially the Hempstead - Brenham ferry - she would halt and listen for a signal of some kind.

Carefully honoring the bell's signal, we drove cautiously onto the floating conveyance at the appointed time, were hauled across the river and continued on our way - arriving at the family home at Field's Store in a heavy downpour at eleven o'clock at night.

The series of dams placed on the Brazos in recent years has reduced the flow and resulted in the river being quite low in a number of places. In earlier days the river, when fed by floods, frequently went on wild rampages, sometimes damaging the ferries along the stream. During one such flood the San Felipe ferry was torn from its mooring and washed down stream to Freeport.

## Encounters With Flooding Streams

By Jimmie Rene Ogg

### On Crossing Clear Creek

In years gone by my sister Hettie and I taught school at Howth where we boarded in the home of Mrs. Earline Wood. On Friday afternoons it was our custom to return to the Field's Store home to be with our father, mother having passed away a short time before.

During one particular week the rain had fallen incessantly, but when Friday afternoon came we headed home, as usual. On the way we stopped at Castle's Store in Hempstead to lay in a supply of groceries. Everyone in the store advised against trying to get home, cautioning that Clear Creek was out of its banks and all over the countryside. But knowing Clear Creek and having crossed its rising waters before, I boldly replied, "I know I can whip Clear Creek any day in the world." Thereupon we took our groceries and prepared to set off.

At the store was a young man who had come from Baylor to preach at Shiloh Baptist Church on the coming Sunday - many rural pulpits having been filled in those days by young prospective ministers who volunteered their services from Sunday to Sunday. Mrs. Castle asked if the young man might ride with us as far as the home of Mrs. Florence Cook where he would spend the weekend. All being agreeable, the young man climbed into the back seat of the Model T with the groceries and we were off.

Arriving at Clear Creek, the stream looked no different from what we had seen a number of times before, so we headed right off into it. But the water was terribly high and the motor promptly drowned out, and we were marooned in the middle of the creek, water flowing about on all sides.

Seeking to be of assistance the young man got out of the car, stepped off into the water - in his preaching clothes - waded out and walked back to Hempstead where he got someone with a wagon and team to come to our rescue. Once at the creek the obliging 'wagon man' drove his team into the water, hooked on to the disabled vehicle and pulled it out - on the homeward side of the creek.

Off and on our way, the well baptized young man was deposited at the Cook home where Mrs. Cook supplied him with dry clothing from her sons' closets, laundered his preaching clothes, and