

BOSQUE

LETTER

Fall 2009

In Memoriam



James Powell Word

Little did the first Word to settle in Bosque County realize what a dynasty was to be born. The Words have been lawyers, teachers, politicians, and civic leaders in this county for 129 years.

James Powell Word came to Bosque County in 1880, to live near his brother, Burrell (County Judge 1900-1904). He operated the Gordon School in Iredell for five years, then he taught at Crow School and later Live Oak School. He married Alice Hendricks in 1884. He was admitted to the bar (1890), and began practicing in Meridian in 1895. The children born from this marriage were: Barney, Elvis, Henry, Charles K, Ethel, Ila Mae and Grace. James Powell Word passed away in 1938.

Charles Kirby Word (Jake) was born July 5, 1896 in Meridian. He married Rosemary Dorman (of Kimball Bend) July 5, 1904. Rosemary taught school at Fairview. Jake passed the bar in 1932, and became partners with his father, J P, in the firm of Word and Word. He later bought the abstract plant of Robertson and Robertson, and was later known as Meridian Abstract Company, and is still family owned and operated. Rosemary and Charles K had four children: James Powell (named after his grandfather), Dorma Jane, Charlene, and Charles Kirby, Jr (Chock). Rosemary Word succumbed to a lengthy illness in 1945, and Charles Kirby, Sr passed away in 1966.

James Powell Word was born June 24, 1929. He graduated from Meridian High, fought in Korea, worked out west as a roughneck, and then continued his education at Baylor. While he was still attending Baylor Law School, he was elected as Bosque County Judge, where he served one term. He then went on to ten years of successful service as State Senator.

In a press release from the Meridian Tribune, January 19, 1962, for his first run for senator, J P had this to say;

“Since I’ve been county judge we have operated this county within our tax income without raising taxes. We have no deficit, we pay for things as we go. I think the state ought to run the same way.”

He and Bobbye Warren were married in Meridian in April, 1953. After his terms as Senator were over, he and his family continued to live in Austin, where J P practiced law. He came back to help out with the family title business a few years ago, until he became ill.

James Powell Word, Jr passed away on October 12, and due to the admiration and respect he gained while serving this state, was buried in the Texas State Cemetery, in Austin.

Elizabeth Torrence remembers, “In 1942 and 1943, when I was a clerk in the office of County Clerk Alfred Hardwick, the two Word boys would often come in and visit. The abstract office was across the street from the courthouse, and their father, C K Word, would be in the clerk’s office working on title. They were very pleasant and well behaved. J P was the oldest, and Chock, his younger brother was, in tow. They were known as the courthouse “pets”.”

Fountain

If you have used the south entrance of the courthouse, you may have been curious about a huge monolith standing alone, and on its front is inscribed "Meridian Study Club - 1925".

To solve this mystery, we must go back to *about* 1884, when it was discovered that water would gush from the ground on the northeast corner of the square. A pump was installed, and the water was used as a city water supply. People doing business, either with the city or the county, were able to cool off from a long, dusty ride, and also water their horses. (This is evidenced by a photograph of the courthouse square, taken around 1887. Notice the horses drinking from the trough)



Later, J D Rudasill (Mayor of Meridian) petitioned the commissioner's court, as follows:

"It is hereby ordered by Commissioner's Court on the 5th day of December, 1916, J D Rudasill be allowed to erect a drinking fountain or pump or both at the artesian well on the northeast corner of the public square and the same shall maintain without cost to the County. The said J D Rudasill shall assume custody of same and the said J D Rudasill shall see that the basin and pump be kept in good working order and sanitary condition." (George Hallmark's "Bosque Morning" also shows a great rendition of this fountain)

The fountain and the old fence can be seen in the following photograph. In 1922, the commissioners voted to have the fence taken down (it was used around the jail). By 1925 sidewalks were in place.



The fountain can just barely be made out in the previous photograph, in the bottom left corner. (Also note the size of the trees)

From the Meridian Tribune dated June 5, 1925:

"The granite fountain, the erection of which is due to efforts of the Meridian Study Club, was placed on its foundation at the northeast corner of the courthouse lawn this week, and is being connected with the water and sewage system. Carved from Stone Mountain, Georgia, granite, the fountain is a beautiful addition to the lawn and city. It will have two sanitary drinking faucets, one at each end, and in addition, a cooling apparatus beneath. The cement walk will be widened to surround the fountain. The county and Meridian is indebted to the Study Club for this attractive and useful fountain."

During the 1935 WPA repair project of the courthouse, the original turrets were removed, the addition was added to the west entrance, and the sidewalks were torn out and replaced. At this time the fountain was torn out, and stored on private property. On October 16, 1996, a re-dedication ceremony was held by the Study Club on the steps of the courthouse, and what was left of the fountain was placed at the south entrance, where it stands today. Just think, if that fountain could talk, imagine the changes and events it could recount!

The Meridian Study Club was a very civic minded group, and was responsible for many other projects. Soon after the re-dedication of the fountain, the group disbanded, after 82 years of service to the community.

Thank you to Virginia Christian, last recording secretary for the club, for her help. (MSS054, Commissioner Court minutes, and Meridian Tribune)

From a letter addressed to Mr F O Landrum, Secretary-Treasurer of the National Mohair Growers' Association - Texas

Gentlemen:

This is to advise you that the Government will require the entire fall domestic clip of mohair in the United States for the year 1918, and will purchase it all, at a price to be fixed later in the season. The matter will be handled by the Wool Division of the War Industries Board, and regulations regarding the assembling, commissions to dealers, etc., will be promulgated.

In the meantime, no sales should be made, or contracts entered into.

At the time the price is fixed and regulations adopted notice will be given your Association, so you can be represented at the hearing, should you so desire.

You are requested to convey the foregoing information to the members of your Association and to the mohair growers generally.

Very Truly yours, Louis Penwell, Chief of Wool Division, War Industries Board

Women Kill Wolf

Transcribed from the Meridian Tribune, 1912

Kopperl, Bosque Co, Texas. April 13 - Sunday afternoon four ladies killed a grown wolf without weapons, except such sticks as could be found conveniently. The ladies were Mrs J R Alley, Mrs Joe Lewis, Miss Annie Newsome and Miss Maggie Hughes. They were fishing and heard their dogs baying something, and upon investigation it proved to be a wolf. He was in the middle of a creek holding three dogs at bay.

Misses Newsome and Hughes procured clubs and waded in and fought him to the bank, when the other ladies joined the fight and quickly killed the wolf. Fearing he was not quite dead they dragged him to a house close by and procured an axe and cut his throat. They now have his scalp, and plan to collect the bounty of \$5.00 that this county pays for wolf scalps.

Texas Almanac

The Bosque Collection is honored to announce that a photograph from our collection is published in the new 2010-2011 edition of the Texas Almanac. The photograph is one of the Glass Plate Negative Collection, (photographer unknown), which was digitized by a grant from University of North Texas and hosted by the Portals of Texas History, and depicts beautiful scenes of everyday life in Bosque County, circa 1900.

The photograph in the Almanac, shown on page 547, is of the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church School in Clifton, which is part of a special feature about the influence of Early Scandinavian-Texans.

To view this photograph, along with many more wonderfully rich slices of early Bosque County life, visit our website, bosquecountycollection.org, and on the left hand side of the home page, click on "Photos", and there you may choose from several groups that are part the Portals of Texas group.

Many of these photographs are unidentified, so if you recognize anything, please contact the Collection (254-435-6182) so we may add the correct information.

121 Visitors and 40 email research requests!

Gloria Hewlett has contributed memorials to the following veterans: James M Gustafson, Furman Grimm, Chris Morris Hansen, Samuel T Hastings, Nadine Faye Matson Heid, Alton C Heier, Calvert Helms, Milton C Helms, Burrell W Helton, General Elbert Helton, Garland Helton, William Henkelman, Howard Hillin, Norris O Hogstel, John M Homerstad.

The Bosque Collection is planning an exhibit honoring veterans who served in WWII, focusing on: Pearl Harbor, the War on the Homefront, the USS Indianapolis, and Women Who Served. More information will be mailed out and put into the papers as plans are finalized.

Gifts, Donations and Memorials:

Honorarium for John and Mary Hastings, for title work done by Bosque Cen-Tex Title Company, given by Pam Baker and Craig Youngman

Diana Born - donation

Virginia Christian - Final minute book of the Meridian Study Club

Pamela Jones Speed - "Shinbone Valley" Stricklands & Elders

Derwood Johnson - "Descendants of Johan Reinert Reiersen"

"The Wilburn Family Heritage Book" found in wall of home being remodeled in Laguna Park

Gary Jones - The Peder Olsen Hoff Family

Ruth and Jody Crawford - "The Courthouses of Texas"

Pam Baker - three books: "James Butler Bonham, Messenger of Defeat", "Texas Boys in Gray", "A Texas Sampler, Historical Recollections"

Angela Blair and Steven Fromholz - "Texas Trilogy"

Elizabeth King - several old postcards featuring the Meridian area

Elizabeth Torrence - "The Painted Hills", by George Larson, in honor of George and Martha Boutwell

Ruth Paulson - an 1897 copy of "Lessons in English" which belonged to Raymond Alexander

Christmas Gifts at the Collection

Christmas is fast approaching, and the Bosque Collection offers several items that would make wonderful gifts for history buffs or those who are difficult to buy for:

Bosque County History Maps were produced by Ava Bonar, who photographed historic sites around the county and made notations for each. These are wonderful resource maps, very beautifully produced. **\$5.00 plus S&H**

Chisholm Trail Map, researched by Chock Word and Ron Carlisle and the artwork is by George Hallmark. This is an authentic looking map, showing the main trail and all feeder trails that ran through Bosque County. **\$5.00 for plain map and \$20.00 for autographed map, plus S&H.**

Bosque Collection Notecards - 12 cards (Blank) and envelopes, front of card has sketch of courthouse. **\$5.00 Plus S&H**

Texas Central Headquarters in Walnut Springs by Bryan Sowell - Mr Sowell has written an extensive history of the Walnut Springs area, and especially the part that the railroad played in its development, featuring personal stories and photographs. (346 pages plus notes) **\$40.00 plus S&H**

Profiles of Pioneer Families in the Valley Mills Area by Gerald and Jo Nell Meyer – featuring 174 pages of histories and documents of Valley Mills families (indexed) **\$25.00 plus S&H**
Hoiein' the Short Rows by Francis Edward Abernathy – miscellaneous folklore and legends **\$21.65 plus S&H**

Bosque Primer and Early History of Bosque County

Bosque County Flags – created by County Judge Pete Page and adopted by the County Commissioners as the official county flag **3x5 \$40.00 or 2x3 \$20.00 plus S&H**

Items sold by the Collection for the benefit of the Bosque County Courthouse Restoration and Preservation Association: This fund is to be used for extra projects for the courthouse, possibly some monuments and artwork:

Ceramic Courthouses – Beautiful miniature replicas of the courthouse, including inside light and Lady Justice, this makes a perfect addition to a Christmas village **\$25.00**

Commemorative Coins – 4 individual coins, honoring Tom Pool and the 1886 Courthouse; B F Word, attorney and County Judge; John Lomax, musicologist; George Erath, Texas Ranger, who is responsible for the surveying of a large part of the Bosque Territory. **Set of all four coins \$12.00 or individual coins \$3.50 plus S&H**

Bosque County Courthouse Medallions – crystal-like ovals with etching of courthouse, these make lovely Christmas ornaments, stocking stuffers or suncatchers. **\$2.50 each or five for \$10.00**

Call the Collection at 254-435-6182 for orders.

This is the last edition of the newsletter for 2009.

The Collection is asking you to help save a polar bear! Seriously, if you would like your newsletter delivered by email, let me know by mailing “I would like to save a polar bear” to inquiries@bosquecountycollection.org. The benefit will be quicker delivery, less paper and no postage! Thank you!

May your Holidays be bright and blessed, and we will see you in 2010!

The Collection had 205 visitors since April and 60 research requests!

Bosque County Collection, PO Box 534, Meridian TX, 76665

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The mission of The Collection is to gather, document, record and preserve the history of Bosque County.