

# BOSQUE

## LETTER

December 2010

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### **In Memoriam**

#### **Elva Marie Seidel**

Bosque County mourns the death of Elva Marie Seidel, who passed away December 1 at Goodall-Witcher Hospital. Elva was a resident of Meridian since 1928. After graduation from Meridian in 1935 and Dranghan's Business College, she returned to Meridian and went to work for County Clerk Clarence McCorkle, and when Mr. McCorkle was elected as tax collector, Elva moved along with him to the tax office. She served as Tax Assessor-Collector for twelve years.

Elva was a selfless caregiver for her mother for many years. She was an active member of the First United Methodist Church, and gave many hours of help to her community. Until recently, Elva walked two miles daily, stopping to pick up trash on the road or visit with the many people who loved and admired her. She always had a smile for everyone; she was a warm and generous lady. Elva is survived by her sisters JoAnn Oliphant and Nell Nichols and several nieces and nephews.

#### **Betty Lee Cantrell Keller**

Betty Keller passed away December 1 in Glen rose. She was the daughter of Lonnie and Edna Cantrell of Walnut Springs. She served as the first secretary for the Walnut Springs Baptist Church. She is survived by her husband David, six children, sixteen grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren. David Keller is an honorary member of the Bosque County Historical Commission.

## **Jimmie Lee Gill**

Jimmie was born in Meridian in 1912, and passed away while a resident of Meridian Manor on September 28. She was the daughter of James and Josephine Olsen Brown. In 1933 she and Robert E. Gill were married. She served as Bosque County Clerk for twenty-four years and never faced an opponent. She was a member of the Meridian First United Methodist Church.

She is survived by daughter Bobbie Sue Zander and son Rickey Gill, seven grandchildren, twelve great-grandchildren and several great-great-grandchildren.

## **Nell Jenson**

Nell Jenson served with the Bosque County Historical Commission for many years, being best known as the driving force behind *Bosque County: It's Land and People*. Please check with the next Bosque Letter for more on Nell and her life.

## **Minutes of the First Meeting of the Bosque County Teachers Institute - Organized at Meridian, Texas, December 17, 1888**

Transcription of original ledger book from MSS 158

Pursuant to a call by County Judge A.R. Barry, some twenty-five professional teachers of Bosque and adjoining counties met in Meridian on Saturday, December 17, 1887, for the purpose of organizing a county teacher's institute.

The meeting was called to order by Judge Barry, who briefly explained its object - referring to the good that must result from a well conducted organization, and a mingling together of the teachers of the county.

T.W. Elliott, of Walnut, introduced the following resolution which was adopted:

"We, the teachers of Bosque County here assembled, in order to promote the educational interests of Bosque County, do hereby organize ourselves into an association to be known as the 'Bosque County Teacher's Association'." .....

On motion of Conine, of Iredell, a committee of three was appointed to formulate a Plan of Organization according to suggestion of J.E. Murray.

The chair appointed E.B. Carruth, of Morgan; W.H. Davis, of Walnut; and S.L. Mettler?, of Meridian, as a committee which submitted the following report: "We, your committee on organization, report the following: "That this institute be organized by electing a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and Treasurer, who shall preside and arrange programs, and name the time and place of the next meeting, and perform such other duties as may be found needful.

We recommend that these meetings be held at different localities, every two months-the first to be held at Meridian on the first Saturday in February.

And, we further recommend that the Institute be empowered to elect officers for ensuing meetings at each term.

Respectfully submitted,

E.B. Carruth

W.H. Davis S.L. Mettler

This report was adopted, and officers elected, to wit:

S.L. Mettler, of Meridian, for president, J.W. Elliott, of Walnut, for vice-president, R.E. Conine, Jr, of Iredell, for secretary, and Miss Sallie Fussell, of Meridian, for treasurer.

Maj. E.B. Carruth, of Morgan, addressed the meeting briefly and pointedly on the subject of "Changing Text Books", emphasizing the fact that something was needed to be done in this direction.

Short addresses were made by J.E. Murray, of Bell County, Isaac Gillespie, of Hunt County, and others.

On motion, the Institute was adjourned to the first Saturday in February, 1888.

A.R. Barry, Ch'm'n

R.E. Conine, Jr, Sec'y

The last entry in this journal was dated November 10, 1893, and no other journals have been discovered. There is a program from the institute's meeting held in Meridian on April 6 & 7, 1900, filed with the J.M. Bettis papers. During the span of meetings, such topics were presented and discussed: classroom discipline, civil government, teaching a child to read and penmanship; "How to Teach Fractions"; "Has Any Community School Teacher the Right to Prohibit His Pupils From Attending Parties and Other Gatherings During the Week?"; "Methods of Computing Interest"; "Moral Education in the Classroom"; "Progressive Education".

Education has always been important in Bosque County. During the November 20, 1854 session of Commissioner's Court the first school districts were laid out in this manner:

"Ordered by the County Court that the County of Bosque be layed off into School Districts-as follows-to Wit- District 1<sup>st</sup> to include the Town of Meridian and both sides of the Bosque, Down to Meridian Creek-thence in a Paralell direction to the Brazos River and all that portion of the County lying above said line to be District No 1-

District-No2 comprises all that portion of the County lying below the mouth of said Meridian Creek, on the north side of the Bosque River.

District No 3-To Commence at the mouth of Meridian Creek on the South side of the Bosque river and run south East so as to Strike Turkey Creek below the residence of P Bryant thence down said Creek on the north side of the same to the mouth of same to the mouth of said stream thence south to the County line of Coryell County

District No 4-To embrace all the Territory lying south and west of No 3 to compose No 4

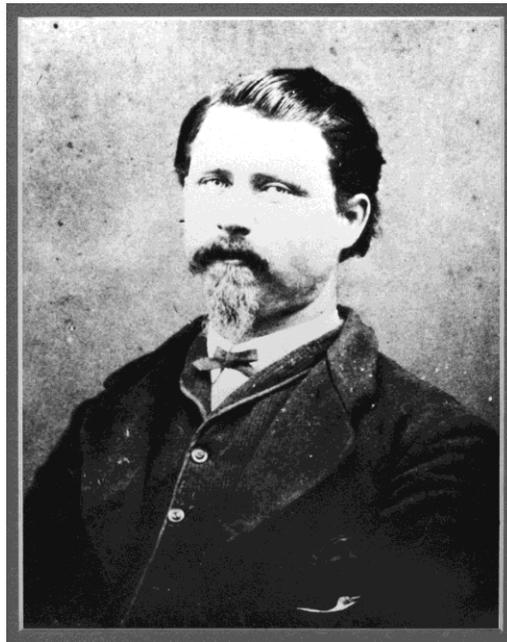
Ordered further that there be an Election held in the Different Precincts on Saturday the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Dec A D 1854 to elect School Commissioners for the Superantendance of Public Schools."

“Ordered by the Court that the Assessor and Collector of Taxes-be required to take the census of the Children in Bosque County between the ages of six and sixteen and make his return-to the Treasurer of the State forthwith”.

At one time there were 65 independent school districts in Bosque County. Most of these schools had all consolidated by the 1940's, leaving the current main school districts: Walnut Springs, Iredell, Kopperl, Morgan, Cranfills Gap, Meridian, Clifton and Valley Mills ( serving both Bosque and McLennan counties). Mosheim was the last to consolidate, hanging on until the 1970's, and finally entering the Valley Mills ISD. Tom Heartsill was the last County School Superintendant.

The Collection is continuing the research of school histories and will have more stories in the future.

## **Notes about Bosque County Judge Arthur R. Barry**



Arthur Barry was born in Maryland, a descendent of “Fighting Jack” Barry, a Revolutionary war hero, and the first admiral of the U.S. Navy. A.R. Barry had just graduated in medicine from Georgetown University when the War Between the States broke out. He was offered an officer's position in the Union Army, however Mr. Barry enlisted in the Confederate Army as a private. He was later promoted to officer and served as the Chief Surgeon at Gettysburg, during Pickett's Charge.

He and other confederate ex-patriots sailed to Mexico after the war, hoping to find a haven from the scars of the war. However, a storm caused them to shipwreck off the coast of Texas.

He married Angia Caruthers in 1871, and they found their way to Bosque County, where he was a doctor in the Morgan-Kopperl area.

He was a leader of the "Anti-Courthouse Party", a group of citizens who opposed the building of the present day courthouse. He was elected Bosque County Judge in 1886, and the bitterness of the building of the courthouse was still so strong that he and the commissioners refused to pay J.J. Loonie, contractor for the courthouse, all the money that was owed him. After serving as judge, he moved to Weatherford, where he practiced medicine until his death in the early 1900s.

## **Viet Nam Era Veterans Honored**

On Friday November 12 the Bosque County Collection held a luncheon in honor of all Viet Nam era veterans; fifty three people attended. The veterans and guests were served barbecue brisket, beans, potato salad and cobbler. Ruth Crawford welcomed everyone, noting that they (the veterans) were not always welcomed as returning heroes, but they are appreciated for the service to their country just as in any other war.

Guest of honor Al West was a green beret who trained and fought with Cambodian troops along the Cambodian border. He was nominated for a Bronze Star, but because of his highly classified duty he was not awarded his medal until this Veterans Day, some forty years later. He was presented his medal after the Veterans Day parade in Waco, November 11, and showed it humbly to all present at the luncheon. Al spoke quietly about his life before his enlistment: growing up in small town Glen Rose, graduating from college, and his lucrative position as a sales representative for a defense company, and because of his job he was given a military deferment. His heart wouldn't let him stay safe, however so he enlisted in the US Army. He was sent to officer's candidate school, and then trained for special forces. Al talked about what he was fighting for: our freedom, the freedom we all take so for granted. "Freedom to gather together like today, for this luncheon; freedom to pray and worship as we choose, freedom to live where and how we choose, freedom to pursue a career." He talked about coming home to a changed America, and how that hurt, but how important the support and love of his family and friends were. He "went underground on the family ranch, because it was the one place he could find peace" and just this year has begun to speak and begin his healing process.

Sherrod Fielden, Bosque County Poet Laureate, read a special poem written for the event:

### **A Tribute to Vietnam Vets By Sherrod L. Fielden**

**Vietnam was just a name on a map.  
Our young soldiers introduction  
to monsoons with swarms of mosquitoes  
and Agent Orange destruction.**

**The other side of the world...  
what are we doing here?  
A political ping-pong ball,  
nothing is ever clear.  
Meanwhile back here at home,  
while you're on the Ho Chi Minh Trail,  
the hippies are burning draft cards  
and hoping that you fail.  
We've always honored our soldiers,  
but people cursed and spat on you  
when all you had done was exactly what  
the politicians wanted you to do.  
You endured the greatest insult ever --  
to fight for those who didn't understand  
that Vietnam was a political quagmire  
that deeply divided our homeland.  
Good men and women gave their lives  
but for some, their scars don't show.  
They remain locked away inside their minds,  
in a place where others cannot go.  
Thanks is a very important word  
It's one we use with care.  
But, it's our simple tribute to you.  
We're thankful for your service there.**

Other programs were held throughout the county in honor of all our veterans: Salute to Veterans was held at the Lutheran Sunset Ministries; Patriotic singing was hosted by the First Baptist Church of Clifton; Clifton school children held a program honoring veterans.

## **Courthouse History Calendars**

The Bosque Collection has produced a 2011 calendar celebrating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our courthouse. Each page has interesting facts and wonderful photographs describing the different faces of the courthouse through the years. Birthdays of all county judges are featured, along with important Texas history dates, and holidays.

The calendars are available at the Collection, and are a wonderful way to celebrate all through the year. The \$8.00 calendar is bound by a spiral binder, with a colored cover and the \$5.00 calendar is on white background.

You may pick one up from 8-5 Monday through Friday at the Collection, or order one by calling 254-435-6182 or email [inquiries@bosquecountycollection.org](mailto:inquiries@bosquecountycollection.org)

### **Donations and acquisitions:**

Charlie Boswell – Memorabilia from WWII and Pearl Harbor, oral history

Rex Hopson – additional material for the George R Hopson collection

Maxie Page – oral history of her life with Judge Pete Page  
We have acquired the English/Norwegian version of *Nordmaendene i Amerika*

### **Meridian Abstract Company:**

**Charles K. "Chock" Word, Jr., Joann Word, Sonja Word and Charles Cole Word:**

The Word family has been in the land and title business in Meridian for almost 100 years. They have graciously loaned a huge collection of legal manuals, some dating from 1850, abstract books, probate records and wills, along with a beautiful abstract desk and a 1936 model microfilm reader. The desk was built to fit into the County Clerk's office, so that Charles K. "Jake" Word, Sr. could work on abstracts and title. These records contain years of detailed study of county land records and are an invaluable resource to that aspect of our county history.

### **Blaine Hedberg Tours The Collection**

The Collection was honored with a visit by Blaine Hedberg, the Norwegian American Genealogical Center Research Fellow from the Naeseth Library in Madison, Wisconsin on October 25. Mr. Hedberg donated correspondence between Theo Colwick, Elise Worenskjold and Professor R.B. Anderson regarding the book *Norwegian Immigration*. This book was published about 1894, and gave extensive information about the families who settled in America from Norway. Mr. Colwick had several corrections to bring to the attention of Mr. Anderson. Mrs. Worenskjold's correspondence is entirely in Norwegian, with no translation.

Beginning in the 1840's Texas welcomed huge numbers of Norwegian immigrants, and Mr. Hedberg was visiting sites across the state, assessing what archives are available for Norwegian research. Mr. Hedberg and manager Ruth Crawford visited about the remarkable record keeping that was done by these immigrants: the detail of everyday life, births, deaths, baptisms, marriages, or if you want to know who moved where and when and why.

After his visit at the Collection, Mr. Hedberg toured the Bosque County Museum, St. Olaf's Kirke, the Ringness house, and Our Savior's Lutheran in Norse.

Norwegian resources available at the Collection:

New – *Norwegians in America, their History and Record: A translated version of the 1907 and 1913 Normaendene i Amerika, deres Historie og Rekord*

Original version, untranslated, copyright 1907, donated by Derwood Johnson

*The Norwegian Texans*, University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures

*The Norwegian Settlement of Bosque County*, National Register Department, Texas Historical Commission

*Norge i Texas*, Odd Magnar Syversen and Derwood Johnson  
McKay's Modern Norwegian-English Dictionary  
*The Lady with the Pen*, Elise Worenskjold, English translation  
*Agder og Amerika*  
*Slik Dor Menn*

*Norwegian Settlements in Bosque County, Texas*, by Oris E. Pierson

*Pathfinder for Norwegian Emigrants*, by Johan Reinert Reiersen

Files from the Collection on various aspects of Norwegian life and these papers: Alice Maria Berg, MSS057; Esther K Tipps, MSS062; John Pederson, MSS067; Mrs. Hans Dahl, MSS077; Norse Mutual Fire Association, MSS108; Ole & Ingborge Canuteson, MSS140; Mrs. E.D. Johnson, MSS151.

## McCurry Reunion

On August 28<sup>th</sup> the descendents of William C McCurry met for a reunion at the Bosque County Collection. About twenty people attended, traveling from places such as California and Arizona. Mr. McCurry was important to the early forming of Bosque County. His daughter Louisa and Frank Gandy were the first couple married in Bosque County, and his son-in-law Nathan Screws helped him build the first courthouse. Local descendents who attended were Linda and Tommy Weir and Peggy and Buddy Brantley.

***Congratulations*** to District 222 Judge James Morgan, District Clerk Sandra Woosley and Justice of the Peace Precinct One Bennett L. Morrow on their retirements from public service!

**Thank you to all members who continue to support the Bosque Collection!**

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