

BOSQUE

LETTER

August 2012

Smallpox!

Commissioners Court 1/11/1872 Vol. A, page 429

Be it ordered by the county court of Bosque County and the same is hereby declared: That owing to an epidemic known as Small Pox that is raging in a portion of said County of Bosque, known as the Norwegian Settlement and said county court desiring to make this their order, so to prevent the spreading of this epidemic over any farther portion of the county. It is hereby ordered that the "quarantine" be established in that portion of said Bosque County. The Boundary being as hereinafter established and set forth and reference is hereby given to Arh. 5444 and 5445 of Pascal's digest giving county courts authority and jurisdiction to make such laws by which the establishment of the quarantine may be governed.

Boundaries of said quarantine as follows, to wit: Beginning at the Bee Rock on Meridian Creek the same being 2 ½ miles above the mouth of Meridian Creek-Thence up said creek to the old Gatesville Road-Thence with said road to the crossing of the North Prong of Neils Creek-Thence down said Neils Creek to within one mile of mouth of Turkey Creek-Thence north 60 degrees east to where the same intersects the road leading from Clifton to Gatesville by way of Snells-Thence up said Bosque Valley at the edge of mountains to the place of beginning. Be it further ordered by this court that the following rules and regulations be established in regard to enforcing said "quarantine".

Article 1 - No person living within the limits of the boundary above designated shall be allowed to pass out of said boundary unless to procure medical attention or provision that may be actually needed, and in case it is necessary to procure medical aid or provision for any person or persons within the infected district. No person or persons shall be allowed to aid in procuring said necessities except some one that has had the disease of smallpox 18 days previous to the time of passing out of said infected district provided that said person or persons shall before passing out of said boundary make a complete change of clothing at boundary line and further that no article of any kind shall be brought across said boundary that has been exposed to said epidemic.

Article 2 - No person living outside of the limits of boundary of said infected district shall be allowed to pass into the said boundary of infected district except that he be a practicing physician and said

physician is required to make a complete change of clothing at the boundary line before returning from said district.

It is further ordered by said county court that each and every family within the limits of said infected district that has in the family a case of smallpox (or may hereafter have) shall and they are required to post a yellow flag at their house as a warning to others living in their district.

It is also ordered by said county court that the clerk be required to make a sufficient number of copies of this order so as to enable all persons of this community and travelers and surrounding communities to become familiar with the same. And it is further ordered that this "quarantine" order take effect from January the 12th 1872.

Notice is hereby given to any person or persons offending against any of the above regulations and rules shall on conviction thereof before any Justice of the Peace of the county of Bosque be subject to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars or imprisonment in the county jail of said Bosque County not exceeding thirty days.

Ordered by this court that the Sheriff of Bosque County be required to post notices of the above "quarantine" in all conspicuous places in the county such as town villages and also to post notices on all roads running through the said infected district and also to send copies to said Norwegian Settlement to be posted by some responsible man or men.

Other epidemics followed this smallpox outbreak. Typhoid fever, Scarlett fever and influenza all broke out around the turn of the century and lasted until the late twenties. County doctors were extremely overworked, and considering the treatments and cures of the day, did a remarkable job.

Editor's note: Commissioner Court minutes have proven invaluable in researching county history, as they are documented events. In the case of this epidemic, there were no official birth and death records (not sure if church records were kept then, could be checked) and no newspapers, so these minutes are all we have to show this tragic event happened. I could not find any mention of how long the quarantine lasted, or a number of those affected.

Other items researched in court minutes have been: school history, how the Civil War affected the county, courthouse history. I have heard it said and read as fact that the courthouse burned at one time. I have read the minutes carefully and can find no report of such a fire. These minutes are an interesting (and at times tedious) read and are full of gems that give a small sense of life in Bosque County' past.

New Feature on the Website

Bruce Wiland, member of the Bosque County Historical Commission and volunteer webmaster has recently updated the site, making it more user-friendly. Bruce and Bill Duncan have been working together to add digitized oral histories. This is a great way for you to hear portions of these fascinating histories. The website is www.bosquechc.org, on the homepage click on Physical Holdings; then click Oral Histories. Underneath the heading "Catalog of Holdings" you can read

about this process and learn how you can listen from your home computer. Many thanks to Bruce and Bill for this project.

History of the Bosque County Historical Commission And the Bosque Collection

Bosque County has been blessed with people who value the importance of its history, and make an effort to preserve it. Hugh and Calvin Cureton worked on a comprehensive early history in preparation for the county's fiftieth anniversary celebration. Fortunately many of the early pioneers were still living and contributed stories and facts. The information they accumulated was later published in a booklet known as "The Early History of Bosque County". When Bosque County was preparing to celebrate its centennial in 1954, County Judge George Brooks appointed a Bosque County Survey Committee, whose responsibility was to document as much history as possible. Mrs. Martha Brooks was head of this committee, and had a personal interest in this project; her grandmother, Martha Mabray Randall, was the first white child born in this county in 1855.

This committee was made up of members from all areas of the county, who through old news articles, personal interviews, photographs and documents, gathered information on communities, churches, schools, cemeteries, people, industry and commerce. The information they gathered was vital to the preservation of our history.

After the celebration was over the Bosque County Survey Committee continued to meet and document information. Each person was assigned an area, and the papers or photos they collected were kept in shoe boxes, closets, etc. There was no central place to store these items.

By 1980 the name of the Survey Committee had been changed to the Bosque County Historical Commission, and the commission was duly registered with the Texas Historical Commission. The collections that had been gathered had multiplied and storage was becoming a problem; it was decided to find a safe place to keep these collections.

Elizabeth Torrence and Dula Bonds approached then County Judge Chock Word to see if any space was available in the courthouse. Judge Word agreed to allow them to use rooms on the third floor, provided they would clean the rooms and make any repairs. Elizabeth stated that they almost fainted when they saw the condition of this space. Bare mattresses and old blankets covered the floors (left over from years past, whenever Grand Jury or other juries were held over, the men were placed the third floor to sleep). Paint was peeling off the walls, the roof was leaking, glass was broken out of windows, and worst of all-no elevator and no air-conditioning. Thus was the humble birth of the Bosque Collection.

The Collection grew by leaps and bounds and the Bosque County Historical Commission realized they needed more space. Nell Jenson came up with the idea of publishing a history book and using the proceeds to buy a permanent home for the Collection. Once again the members of the BCHC went forth and assembled family and community histories and published "Bosque County: Land and People". The Lumpkin Building was purchased with the money from the sales of the book. The BCHC faced more problems when they realized the Lumpkin Building was going to be very expensive to renovate; a grand scale fund raiser was organized with Elizabeth Torrence as the driving

force. After many years of struggle, the Bosque Collection opened its doors to the newly renovated Lumpkin Building in 2001.

Since that time the volume of materials has more than doubled. I invite each of you to come for a tour and to see what has been accomplished toward the preservation of Bosque County's history. The Bosque Collection is one of the largest independent county archives in the state. Folks come from all over the United States and even England, Germany and Norway, and all are amazed at the volume that has been archived.

Donations:

Teddy Marks donated photographs of "Trade Days" tokens. Trade Days were the first Saturday of the month, during the spring and summer. Mom, Pop and the twelve kiddos loaded up the wagon with their wares and crops and headed for town. These days offered a great opportunity for rural families; not only the chance to sell or trade, but also to buy supplies, and most importantly as social interaction with others. Parades and once even hot air balloons entertained the crowds. Drawings were held throughout the day and cash and tokens were awarded by the various merchants, with one very large grand prize awarded at the end of the day - \$10.00. The majority of these photographs are of tokens from P.E. Schow & Bros. in Clifton, and they are marked for 5 cents to \$5.00 in merchandise. One token is marked Rainsback & Forson, good for one shave, and another one is marked "5 cent soda" to be redeemed at Alex McNeill - Druggist - Valley Mills. Other tokens are: Lovelady & Bros, G.O. Bronstad in Cranfills Gap, one marked "Good for a drink at the Golden Rule Saloon in Iredell, Tex.", Wm. Connolly & Co., Meridian, Texas, H.C. Hughes, General Merchandise, Meridian, Texas, G.M. Carlton Bros, Dealers in Everything, Walnut Springs, Texas.

Meridian High School Ex-Students Association: Miscellaneous photos and memorabilia

Bonnie Dickson: beautiful oil painting of the "Odle" house, which was tragically lost to a fire last year. The painting is done in honor of her mother, Esther Paul Schluter, who was always fascinated by the home. One of Esther's teachers lived in the "mansion" which was used as a boarding house.

History of the Royal family

Bill Babb donated copy of "Rope Burns & Lead Poisoning, the Wild West in Central Texas" by Michael Barr. The book includes stories about Bill's great-grandfather, William Babb, infamous rancher and known as the Baron of Coryell County, and his involvement with feuds and bad-men, especially the Horrell Brothers.

Derwood Johnson donated a family history book entitled "The VIK Dynasty" featuring the Poulson, Hanson, Gillund, Godager, Hagerup, Durie, Fuglhol, Raa and Formo families.

Claiborne Phillips donated a stamp marked "The Lomax Mercantile, Meridian Texas, Incorporated 1903" and a hammered tin lid marked "Little Bo Peep" and some square nails. Mr. Phillips included some history about how these were found; apparently his home on Bosque Street in Meridian once belonged to a Mr. Bass who served as garbage man and used his backyard as the dump (the home was outside city limits at the time). Mr. Phillips found these items while tilling a garden.

Hugh Woodard donated three photos of the Union Hill School, cir 1910-1913.

Welcome to new member Janis Fox from Muskogee, OK, researching her Burdette family!

Many thanks to those who continue to support the Bosque Collection in its mission to preserve and document the rich history of Bosque County!