Meetings of the Grimes County Historical Commission are held on the Second Monday of the Month at 7:00 pm in the Courthouse Annex in Anderson, Texas

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Photo of the Month

W. W. Meachum Law Office
Anderson, Texas
Richards is located on the Allen Vince one-half league survey which the Mexican government granted him on May 30, 1831. Vince, with his three brothers, came to Texas in 1822 and settled on Sims Bayou in present Harris County. His brothers settled along Vince's Bayou and it was formerly thought the bridge across the Bayou was the one Sam Houston ordered destroyed before the Battle of San Jacinto, but today it has been proved to be the bridge over Sim's Bayou that had been built by Allen Vince. After his defeat, General Santa Anna escaped the battlefield on Allen Vince's black stallion and was captured on Vince's property.

On February 28, 1844 Vince and his wife Ann sold to Seabron J. Hendrick of Coosa County, Alabama, the one-half league on Lake Creek in then Montgomery County where Richards was later located. The one-half league contained twenty-two hundred and twenty acres and the sale was for twenty-two hundred and twenty dollars. Hendrick never moved to Texas and it is doubtful that he ever saw his purchase because he was still living in Coosa County, Alabama when on October 4, 1847 he sold the property at a loss to James Scott who paid him only two thousand dollars.

James Scott was born in Georgia in 1799 and as a young man moved to near the town of Vernon in Hickman County, Tennessee. There he married Sarah Lane by whom he had two children before they moved to Raymond in Hinds County, Mississippi. There he studied law and served as district judge for several years. He resigned that position and moved his family to the Republic of Texas in March 1839. He spent one year in Houston before moving to then Montgomery County where he established a large plantation about three miles east of Fanthorp (Anderson). Scott became a wealthy man dealing in slaves and farming hundreds of acres of land. He represented his district at the Constitutional Convention in 1845. On the eighth day of August, 1856 James Scott embarked on the steamer Nautilus from Galveston to New Orleans on business matters. The ship sank leaving no survivors.
The large Scott estate was divided among his wife Sarah and the children: John N. Scott, Elizabeth Scott Neblett (wife of William Henry Neblett), James L. Scott, Garrett Scott, Walter Scott, Sarah Scott and Alice Scott. The town site of Richards fell to Elizabeth, Walter and their mother Sarah. Walter died in 1859 and his part of land as well as the Noblett's was leased and farmed by John N. Scott who lived at Longstreet. The slave quarters later tenant houses on the western edge of Richards were the first dwellings in Richards. Three of these houses were still standing in 1920. Garfield McGill lived in the last of these houses which was located behind the present home of Charlie Hinds, but the oldest looking of the three stood near where Jonnie Baranowski has his home today.

William Henry Neblett died in 187 and his son William Teel Neblett, after finishing Trinity University, became a farmer and statesman in DeWitt County for four years before returning to Grimes County in 1884 to the land inherited from his parents. He lived in Anderson but farmed his land and raised cattle. His son William Teel Neblett, Jr., a lawyer in Laredo, sold 96 acres of Richards town site in 1936 to John Lee Montgomery who broke it into lots. Many homes are on these lots today including the Richards School.

During the many years, the Scotts and Nebletts farmed the Richards town site two communities grew up on either side of the future village. Longstreet, one of the toughest communities in Texas, came into being two miles east and the peaceful community of Fairview (or Dolph) rose about three miles west. Longstreet had two saloons, several stores, a race track, two gins, two sawmills, and some bad characters who from time to time faced each other at high noon with six shooters blazing.

There were some solid citizens there also among whom was John Newton Scott, the second child of James and Sarah Lane Scott. He lived with his grandfather Garrett Lane Scott in Tennessee while he attended Columbia College in that state. In April 1841 he became inspired with a boy’s love of adventure and came to his father’s home near Anderson. In 1843 then about eighteen, he enlisted in a company going into service for the Republic of Texas against the invading Mexicans. In 1863 he enlisted in Colonel Elmore's regiment to serve in the Civil War. He was a farmer on a large scale at Longstreet and Richards, and was postmaster at Longstreet. His wife Susan E. Womack Scott, daughter of Abram Womack, died August 27, 1905. Then his youngest daughter Mrs. Cornelia Scott Kelley and family lived with him until his death on the night of December 30, 1912. He and Susan had six sons and six daughters and left the following behind. John Henry Scott of San Antonio, James D. Scott of Dallas, Mrs. Sue Winn of Huntsville, Mrs. Hettie Scott Rhodes of Humble, Mrs. Mettie Scott Rhodes of Dallas, and Mrs. Cornelia Scott Kelley of Longstreet.

The first settler at Fairview was Thomas Gilmore who married Caroline Pinson Hill on January 7, 1830 and in 1831 brought his bride from Marengo County, Alabama to present Longstreet. A few years later they moved to Fairview where he obtained on April 18, 1848 a patent for a league of land. He had already received 320 acres of land in Victoria County on April 7, 1838 for his services from June 30 to September 1836 in the Texas army after the Battle of San Jacinto. He and Caroline had seven children which prompted him to build an “Old Field” school which was one of the earliest in Texas.

One mile north of Richards on the old Ben Kroll Hill between Fairview and Longstreet lived the William Oliver family. William Oliver was born near Knoxville, Tennessee February 18, 1826. He came to Texas, enlisted in the Texas Mounted Volunteer and fought as a private in the Mexican War of 1846. He returned to Tennessee where he taught school for a couple of years. On January 18, 1849 he married Margaret Matthews of Memph, Tennessee, and together they came to Texas. William Oliver (called “White Bill” ran a plantation worked by slaves under the supervision of “Black Bill” Oliver. Black Bill has many descendants around Richards today. William Oliver and his wife Margaret and six of their children are buried on the small family cemetery just north of Richards.

Between Thomas Gilmore and William Oliver was the farm of James Lawrence Collins and his wife Mary (Nettles) Gillespie. They had five children before Mary died. Her husband later married Elizabeth
Doughtie who bore him seven more children, one of whom, Virginia Lou Collins married George Gilmore, son of Thomas Gilmore, Jr. James Lawrence Collins and Thomas Gilmore, Jr. have two of the earliest graves in the Fairview Cemetery.

About a mile west of the Thomas Gilmore home was the home of Thomas Jefferson Haynie and his wife Edna Jane (Uzzell) Haynie. They were married March 9, 1854 and moved into their new home shortly thereafter. The place is owned today by Margaret Cecil Sanderson Barnum, and the State of Texas has erected a historical marker on Highway 149 in front of the house which still stands. Mrs. Haynie was the daughter of Major Uzzell and his wife Margaret of Montgomery. They have many descendants in Richards and Navasota today.

There were many emigrants to the Fairview area; among them were the McCunes, Giles, Hamiltons, Woods, Browns, Smiths, Hinds, Bradleys and Krolls. Emigrants who later came to Longstreet were the Watsons, Fosters, Hurrys, Baranowskis, Tobe Carrington and the long-lived John Talliaferro. John lived to be one hundred and ten years of age. He was still living strong and well until his death caused by a fire which destroyed his home.

There were other communities around Richards that contributed to its founding. Towards Apollonia was the large farm of John Ubnoski and his son-in-law Mike Baranowski. Further toward that community were the Sheads, Hams, Barretts, Baylors and Barns. The community of Bays Chapel with the Hokes, Bays, Reaves, Weatherfords, Johnson and Greens and Union Grove Community with the Shatleys, Stovalls, Montgomerys, Fosters, Coldwells, Corleys, Talliaferros and Lees all helped in Richards founding.

Richards was born July 1, 1907 when the first Trinity and Brazos Valley passenger train came down the line from Dallas. It departed from the Cotton Belt Depot in Dallas at 7:15 am bound for Houston with J. T. Flynn, superintendent of the line, and trainmaster J. Flory aboard. There had been a few early freight trains to struggle up and down the line and even one previous interrupted passenger train trip as early as January 28, 1907. But there were bridges to repair and track to re-engineer before that momentous day in July when the train came down the track from Dallas. A great barbeque was held just east of the tracks at Scott Lake to celebrate its coming. When the train reached Richards, A. J. Novey, the Richard’s depot agent could not get the people off the tracks and away from the train so he yelled “they are going to turn the “durn” thing around” and the people scattered everywhere.

The town was named for W. E. Richards, a private banker of Fairfield, Texas. He organized banks at Teague, Streetman, Worthem, Gonzales and the Second National Bank of Houston. He also organized the Valley Route and Townsite Loan Company. He wanted a town named for himself, so it was decided by the officers of the T. B. & V. to name the new town where the railroad crossed the Old San Antonio Road (King’s Highway or El Camino Real) for him. This was bitterly protested by Judge N. G. Kitrell, First District Judge of Leon County, who was a citizen of that section, so the railroad officials decided to name the town for Judge Kitrell. The Judge’s first name was Norman and with his middle initial, the first Richards became Normangee. Later, when the railroad, building south, reached the crossing of the Longstreet and Fairview Road, Mr. Richards saw his name go up on the station house.

The people of the surrounding communities saw the advantages of moving to the railroad so they put their merchandise on wagons and some of their buildings literally on log rollers and moved to town. When Mr. Oscar Hamilton moved his business from Fairview, he built a large two story building for general merchandise. Mr. Jim Lieb opened a loan and legal office across from the depot after he put his large Longstreet home on logs and rolled it across Lake Creek to a hill overlooking the railroad. He was not a lawyer nor a banker nor a veterinarian nor many other things he engaged in, but he did these things and many more besides farming and acting as postmaster of Richards.

In August of 1908 and again in August 1909 the railroad promoters sponsored two more lavish well attended barbecues. These were held west of the present home of J. T. May under the then many large oak trees. The was the true beginning of Richards. Mr. Joseph Green Davis of Shiro, whose son-in-law was Charley Fuqua, a brick mason, had already built several large brick store buildings when the railroad
came to that town, so he and Fuqua decided to build a few in Richards. They built the bank building, the drug store with a doctor’s office on the second floor, and an adjoining grocery store. The bank was jointly owned by Mr. Davis and Mr. Oscar Hamilton and was operated by Mr. Jesse Bookman. Later Mr. Bookman became the sole owner. Mr. George Cecil was the druggist and Dr. G. C. Saunders was the doctor. The grocery store was in charge of Mr. Davis’ brother-in-law Mr. Robert C. Grissom who had moved his family from West Sandy. Mr. Ira Haynie from Apolonia, grandson of T. J. and Edna Jane Uzzell Haynie, moved from Apolonia, where he was a large land owner, and opened one of Richard’s most prosperous businesses. He sold everything from Stock feed to calico, using his profit to purchase more land.

On the north side of main street at the far east and next to the railroad Mr. Rush Wood built the first store in Richards where he sold general merchandise. Soon other similar stores opened for business, and the Wood store was sold to Mr. Charley Easley who operated a hotel in the building. A few years later when the huge Bay Hotel was built across from the depot and Mr. Easley went to work at the newly opened Magnolia Pump, he left his business in charge of Mr. Bradley who in turn sold to Mr. George Watson of Longstreet. The building was soon thereafter bought by Mr. Sam Caldwell and his son W. L. “Chillie” Caldwell from Longstreet. They sold general merchandise. George Leonard of Leonard & Driscoll of Shiro and Huntsville later bought the business for his father Mr. Jack Leonard of Longstreet. Mr. Leonard Lipscomb had briefly operated in this store and in the building just west of it before he moved his business to Dacus. In the same adjoining building, Mr. John Williams, brother of Webb and Berry Williams of Longstreet, opened a peanut stand and Horace Caldwell, son of “Chillie” had a shoe shop in it and later converted it into an ice house.

The next business to the west was a general store and later a clothing store owned by R. C. Grissom and Alex Walker of West Sandy. When Mr. Davis built the brick building a few doors to the west Mr. Grissom moved into one of them. Mr. Walker soon sold to Mr. R. D. Montgomery from Longstreet who converted it into a general merchandise store. Henry and Jim Maywald owned the next building west. Jim had a small building in which he sold soft drinks and candy but when Johnnie Williams, a nephew of John Williams, opened a large confectionary around the corner toward the depot, the Maywalds built a large two story building and Jim lived upstairs. They planned to build a large confectionary but instead leased the first story to Mr. W. C. Lund for a large meat market. Mr. Lund later bought the building and lived upstairs himself until he married Miss Mabel Cooper and moved up the hill.

West of the Lund meat market were two early frame buildings housing two drug stores. The first doctor in Richards was Dr. Mohler followed by Dr. William E. Rhembert from Longstreet and Dr. Eugene Bayliss. Dr. Bayless built one of the two drug stores and the other was built by Mr. Burtis from Madisonville who employed George Cecil to run it. Later J. Green Davis tore these frame buildings down and replaced them with two brick buildings. One was a general store operated by R. C. Grissom; the other was a drug store with Mr. Burtis as the druggist. Mr. Cecil continued to work for Mr. Burtis until Mr. Cecil finally bought the business. He ran it for years. He finally sold it to Mr. W. W. McAfee. The buildings now house antique stores operated by Marion Boring, Jr. Dr. Bayliss left Richards in 1913 after the arrival of Dr. G. C. Saunders. Later Dr. Saunders bought the two buildings from the heirs of Mr. Davis, and Mr. Grissom moved his business a few doors to the west and Mr. J. M. Boring, Sr. occupied the building Mr. Grissom had vacated.

There were two disastrous fires in Richards and the last one in 1930 completely destroyed the part of two just described up to the two brick buildings and those business houses have never been rebuilt.

West of the drugstore was Buckshot Smith’s barber shop. He soon sold this to Charlie Woods, and he moved to Conroe where he had a thriving barber business until a few years ago. Charlie Woods later vacated the building and moved to Crabb’s Prairie in Walker County. The building remained vacant for a few years and was used by the boys of Richards as a boxing arena. Dr. Saunders eventually bought it for his office when the Masonic Lodge moved from the Miller building to the area above the drug store.
where Dr. Saunders had previously had his office. The building is owned today by Margaret Cecil Barnum, daughter of Dr. Saunders. Today it is rented as a Real Estate office by Bill Shead. Mrs. Barnum also owns many of the business sites in Richards.

The next building to the west is the on Mr. R. C. Grissom moved into when he left the Davis property west of the drug store. Before he moved there, the boys of the town placed a gym mat on the floor and used it for wrestling matches.

The next building to the west was built by John and George Kmiecke. The Kmiecke brothers later sold the building to Mr. John Binford who ran a general store in it for many years. He in turn sold to Mr. Frank Foster who in turn sold it to Mr. Charles Kooken.

Across the street to the west was the Richards State Bank organized by Mr. Green Davis and Mr. O. A. Hamilton and operated by Mr. Jesse Bookman, its president. Next door to the west was the David Jones garage and to the west of it was a millinery shop owned by Mrs. Lilla Northington. Up the street was the telephone office established by Mr. C. L. Oualine. The earliest operator was Miss Minnie Payne, other operators were Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Schulster, Mrs. Leonard and Mrs. Lund. This location was later occupied by the James Batey garage.

On the south side of the main street at the west end of the business section was the Ira Haynie Hotel with the Haynie Mercantile business next door. Nearby was a small bakery run by Mrs. C. L. Oualine. To the east across the street was the two story Hamilton and Witt General Store. Mrs. R. D. McCune lived upstairs and ran a boarding house. She had a small café to the rear of the store. In later years Adolph Witt opened a grocery store adjoining the large Hamilton Witt general store.

To the east of Hamilton’s store was the Sam Cooper pressing shop, later owned by Earl Whitfield. Next door was a barber shop where Charlie Woods had moved his shop from across the street. It was bought in 1926 by Mr. George Morris who operated it until 1980. Near these establishment was the original John Smith meat market before he sold it to Mr. Zeke Williams and moved into the Maywald building. Mr. Williams employed Mr. Sea to run his market. Mr. Ed. Floyd opened a grocery and clothing store east of Mr. Sea’s market. He sold to Mr. J. L. Montgomery who for many years ran the post office and a feed store in the building.

To the east of the feed store was the John Teague and Carrie Garner general store, later owned by Boeing Bay. Behind the Teague store was a small building in which Rejos Alvarado made chili and tamales.

To the east of the Teague store and on the corner was the J. W. Green general store later operated by Long and Lindman and still later Zeke Williams built a garage on the site. Mr. Williams sold the garage to Mr. Ben LaNorman, and since then it has changed ownership several times.

Behind the J. W. Green store to the south was the office of The Richard’s Rustler, the town newspaper edited by Mr. Richardson. To the south and next door to the newspaper office was the John Williams confectionary. Mr. Williams sold his business to Mr. Marion Boring, sr. who with his brother Tommy, expanded the confectionary into an ice house and a silent movie theater. Mr. Boring in later years moved these businesses into the Davis building. Vacated by Mr. R. C. Grissom. Today Marion Boring, Jr. has his antique stores in the old Davis building.

South of the Williams confectionary was the building owned by Mr. Jim Lieb in which, among other things, was the first post office. The post office was later moved to the J. L. Montgomery feed store when Mr. Montgomery became postmaster. Today the post office is near the site of the old feed store and Mrs. Gatsey Harmon is the post mistress. The rural mail carrier for forty years was Mr. Thomas C. Grissom. He was followed by Irvin Wood.

South of the Lieb building was the two story Foster Bay Hotel and across the street from the hotel, to the east, was the depot. Down the tracks a few hundred yards and on the opposite side of the tracks was the Magnolia Pump Station. For years, a large part of the population of the town was employed at the “station” and up and down its pipe lines.
There were other business establishments scattered around the business section. To the north near the railroad crossing was the John Dimney cotton gin. Nearby in later years was the Sam McKinney saw mill. To the south on the site of the present McKinney warehouse, was the Kmiecke brothers gin operated by Mr. Rush Wood and Solomon Wood. Mr. Tom Keisler soon built a larger gin across the railroad tracks near the site of an old shingle mill, and the Kmiecke gin went out of business.

Between the Rush Wood store and the Kmiecke gin was a two-story building owned by Mr. Fred Miller. On the first floor he sold caskets, and on the second floor was the Masonic Lodge. This was a spooky place for a small boy wandering around when no one else was on the premises. Up the hill from the Miller building and behind the Kmiecke brothers general store was the Bill Baker grist mill. Next door to it was the Tom Cooper blacksmith shop. This shop was operated by a succession of proprietors among whom were Lee Harrison, a man names Stuart, and Charlie Kroll. Walter Sims built a new shop building and ran it for many years. Today it is the shop of Manuel Pavalock. Mr. Tom Cooper ran a sawmill in the 1920's where the C. H. Hogue's home is now located.

Today besides the post office, the Boring Antique Shop, and the Pavalock repair shop, the only other businesses in Richards are the two drive in stores operated by Jimmy Bailey and W. A. Kennedy, the Dean Keisler sawmill, Florence Lara Beauty Shop, and the Pavalock Nursery. There are at least four churches and the Richards School System and the Richards Volunteer Fire Department. Mr. Roy W. Stracener was the fire chief, unofficial police chief and honorary mayor. The many prosperous dairies and ranches that surround Richards are responsible for the town's continuing existence.

Written by James T. Montgomery

Community Spotlight

APOLONIA, TEXAS. Apolonia, three miles east of Anderson in south central Grimes County, was founded as a lumbering center about 1835, although settlement had begun in the area in the early 1830s. The Pine Grove Baptist Church was built in the early 1840s, and later a school was established in the vicinity. A black Methodist church, known as Yarborough's Chapel, was constructed after the Civil War. The settlement was invigorated in the 1880s and 1890s by an influx of Polish immigrants. A local post office established in 1889 was named by Polish Catholic residents in honor of Saint Apolonia. At the turn of the century the community had three general stores and two sawmills. In 1907, however, the post office was discontinued, and mail was redirected through Anderson. In 1910 Apolonia reported a population of thirty. In 1920 two businesses were operating in the town. In 1948, the last year for which figures are available, an estimated twenty-five residents and one accredited business remained.

The Pine Grove Baptist Church was organized by a few families that lived in the community back in the early 1840's. The lumber was paid for by donations and the men did all the work of building the church. The lumber was hauled on ox or mule-drawn wagons from the sawmill about a mile away. Later a school house was built a little farther down the road. Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Mansfield deeded land for the church to own as long as the church was in service. If the church disbanded, the land was to go back to the adjoining land. Mr. and Mrs. Mansfield also gave three acres of land down the road for the cemetery. They also owned the first general merchandise store, and a few years later the first post office. The mail was brought from Anderson by horseback or buggy. A few years later, tow more stores were built across the road from Mr. Mansfield. One was owned by Mr. John Fulgham. A sawmill was built by Mr. Shackelfood. Later he sold out to Mr. Stamford, then Mr. Cude put in a mill and he sold to Mr. Claude Taylor and later Mr. Taylor sold out to Mr. Tucker. The colored people built a Methodist Church on some land where the church now stands. Mr. Yarborough gave them the land so they called it Yarborough Chapel.
Cemetery Spotlight

Fairview Cemetery

Fairview Cemetery was originally the McAlpine Graveyard. It was given to the relatives of Dugald McAlpine, a bachelor, who died in 1876 for their use and for those of their friends to whom they gave permission. An excerpted history of the cemetery by Maude McAlpine Siddall follows.

About one-eighth of a mile from what was known as the Plantersville-Montgomery Road, and due south from the home site of Dr. John Anderson McAlpine was a gently rolling hill with more or less sandy soil. On this hill was a well-built typical Texas farmhouse. There were four big rooms with a wide hall between. At the north end of the house were other rooms. As was the custom the home was given a name. It was called Alta Vista, or Fairview.

On the west side of the hilltop was a mott of trees. Inside this mott were four graves, two small ones and two adult. The two small graves were children of negro slaves belonging to the owner of Alta Vista. One of the adult graves was that of a woman traveling in a covered wagon from an eastern state to West Texas. She became critically ill and died as they camped near this mott. The husband was given permission to bury her there. The other grave was of an unknown person. The graves were not marked but the adult graves were enclosed by a split rail fence about four feet high.

Sometime later, Dugald McAlpine bought the land on which Alta Vista was located. The mott of timber and the graves were undisturbed. The next grave to be placed nearby was that of an older brother of Dugald., Malcolm S., who had come to Texas before he died, receiving a land grant from the Republic of Texas near Beaumont. The next year was that of Susanna Parilla Anderson, “relict” of Dugald's brother John who had died years earlier in North Carolina.

Shortly after great grandmother's death (Susanna's) Dugald McAlpine laid off a plot of land which included this grave and enclosed it with an iron fence. On the gate of the enclosure was the word “McAlpine”. This plot was made large enough to hold the remains of his own nephews, great-nephews and their wives. The next grave in the enclosure was that of Dugald himself.

This was the beginning of the McAlpine Cemetery. The first grave of a person not related to the McAlpine's given permission for burial outside of the iron fence was that of Ellafair Johnson, whose grandfather, Munroe Johnson, was living at Alta Vista. The grave had a stout picket fence around it.

At a later time, to the north from the iron fence enclosure, Dr. John Anderson McAlpine set aside a plot of land for his own family's cemetery. This has concrete curbing around it. Still later, his widow, Mrs. Willie Cameron McAlpine, added another acre to the north for cemetery use.

Gradually relatives of the McAlpine's were buried outside of the iron fence enclosure until several acres were fenced off and this became a “neighborhood cemetery.”

Through the years, the burial plots of Dr. John McAlpine and of the Johnson's had always been kept cleared and orderly, but the remainder had grown up into a thicket and a clearing had to be chopped out every time there was a burial. Following World War II at the initial suggestion of Mrs. Bud Dedmon (Anna McGee) relatives of those buried in the cemetery came together in large numbers to clear off the entire area.

From this beginning a cemetery association soon formed, which had annual meetings. For a good many years the meetings on a Sunday combined much maintenance work and a “dinner on the grounds”. At a later time the association hired someone to maintain the grounds year round, but retained the Sunday dinner and business meeting, using the White Hall Community Center after it was erected.
Cemetery Spotlight

Apolonia Cemetery

The Apolonia cemetery was formed in 1869 and was known as Pine Grove for the Pine Grove Baptist Church there. In 1929 when the church was disbanded, the cemetery was renamed Apolonia for the area’s then defunct post office. The cemetery is located one-half mile off FM 2819 on an unpaved road (now CR 214).

Land for the cemetery was donated by J. L. Mansfield and his wife Eveline Mansfield to George D. Neal, County Judge and his successors in office to be used by the Baptist Church and surrounding community as a burial ground. With the land was given all rights, title and claims forever.

In 1971, a cemetery association was organized. Mrs. Helen A. Sims, President; Mrs. Mattie Bennet, Secretary-Treasurer; Mr. N. B. Fabian, Caretaker. The association has about 50 members throughout Texas. An Apolonia homecoming is held each year at the cemetery on the first Sunday in October. Each family brings a picnic lunch and uses the picnic tables and other facilities built by Mr. N. B. Fabian.

The cemetery has never been closed to anyone wishing to use it. The first county soldier to be killed in World War I, Brosig T. Wasson is buried there. When the burial ground was first opened, a small boy who was ill remarked he would hate to be buried in those pines. True or not, Mr. Edd Hobdy cleared the pines and very systematically planted very pretty cedars which are now beautiful shade trees.

This information is taken from the historical narrative prepared by Mrs. Mattie Bennett and Mrs. Helen A. Sims.

Cemetery Spotlight

Berryman Cemetery

The first cemetery for blacks was located in Anderson near the home of lawyer Meachum. On July 26, 1888 lawyer Meachum deeded a tract of land about 2.5 miles from Anderson, Texas and ¼ mile from Highway 90 to Steve Ragland. Thomas Lindley and John White, Trustees of the 2nd Anderson Colored Baptist Church for a burial ground for the black people.

The deed is in the Grimes County Courthouse in Anderson, Texas in Volume 32 page 569. The plot of land was fenced recently to replace the old fence. It has been fenced ever since it was given to the black people. An organization was formed. The officers were Jerry Blakshere, President; Carry Loudd, Vice President; F. D. Calhoun, 2nd Vice President; Eleanor Minor Secretary, J. L. Blackshear, Asst. Secretary; Pearl Loudd, Treasurer; E. A. Mosie, Coordinator.

Names of families that are buried in the Berryman Cemetery are as follows:

John Lee Montgomery (1888-1966)

John Lee Montgomery, eldest son of John and Ella (Uzzell) Montgomery was born near Richards, Texas on September 7, 1888. His father was the son of Andrew Jackson Montgomery who established an Indian trading post near the town of Montgomery, Texas and became the first permanent Anglo-American settler between the Brazos and Trinity Rivers. Andrew married Mary Farris, daughter of William Farris who came to Texas in 1830.

John Lee Montgomery grew up on his father’s farm with his brothers Dee and Lester and his sister Evalora, now Mrs. Milton Whatley. His father eventually became one of the leading cattle men of Montgomery County until the price of cattle declined in the early 1920’s and the severe draught of 1925 ruined the cattle business. John Lee and his brothers and sister attended the rural schools of the area. In 1910 he attended Draughon’s Business School in Houston, while he worked in the nearby rice fields. Upon graduation he was a bookkeeper for a wholesale florist and a sawmill. On May 28, 1911 he was married to Ethel Foster, born September 29, 1886, daughter of James W. and Dolly (Davis) Foster and granddaughter of James F. Foster who had settled in 1842 at Loma east of Shiro, Texas. The following year their first child, Lillian was born but she lived only a few days and was buried in Houston. After this tragedy they moved to Richards where they built a new home in the latter months of 1913. It was in this home that their sons were born; James Troy on December 24, 1913 and Morris Bailey on December 19, 1914.

During this time, John Lee worked in the Richards bank and as a laborer on the public roads. He later did bookkeeping for several local merchants; until he entered the grain and cotton warehouse business. This business improved when Delta Land & Timber Company of Conroe “logged off” what is now Sam Houston National Forest with scores of mules that needed grain. John Lee was not a lawyer, but did paralegal work the rest of his life for his friends and neighbors, who honored him by electing him Commissioner of Precinct #2 from 1933-1936. Throughout the years, he bought acreage until at one time he owned over seven thousand acres in Grimes, Walker and Montgomery counties. He was a member of the Baptist Church and served many years as church clerk, was a mason for fifty years and served twenty two years on the Richards school board. John Lee Montgomery died on December 28, 1966 and was buried in Union Grove Cemetery near Longstreet a few miles from where he was born. He is survived by Ethel, his widow, who at the time was 95 years of age.

James Troy Montgomery, their eldest son, is retired after 42 years from public school administration most of it in Conroe and lives in Richards. Morris Bailey Montgomery the second son of Ethel and Lee was a career army officer. He was a much decorated soldier in World War II and retired a Colonel in the position of Post Commander under General Lincoln at Fort Sam Houston at San Antonio. Morris died January 14, 1970 and is buried in the National Cemetery at San Antonio.
Dugald McAlpine was born 1795 in Robeson County, North Carolina, son of Scotch Irish immigrants Malcolm McAlpine and Mary Smith. He died in Grimes County, Texas on May 31, 1876 at the age of 81. Dugald was a bachelor and a planter. He went to Marengo County, Alabama sometime between age 26-35 and accumulated large land holdings, living there about 25-30 years. About 1851, when he was about 56 years old he sold his Alabama land and moved to Grimes County. It is thought he left Alabama, as did other farmers, because the land had been “farmed out” and Texas virgin land was more productive. Accompanied by a young nephew William Kennedy McAlpine, who eventually settled in Galveston, he moved his slaves to Grimes County by wagon train. Grimes County tax rolls show he had 61 slaves in 1852 and the most ever shown for him was 93 in 1862. In 1865 no slaves are shown because the Civil War had brought freedom for them.

His first land purchase was 1082 acres from Dunham out of the J. E. Groce 3-league grant. He bought in succeeding years other tracts from this grant as well as from the Whitesides, Fulton and Wallace grants, and he also bought other land. Though he did buy the site of Groce’s Retreat (Old Retreat) and adjoining land from Dunham, he did not buy 2 ½ leagues of Groce land from Dunham as stated in Blair’s *Early History of Grimes County*. At the time of his death he owned about 2 ½ leagues, but it was clustered out of the several grants mentioned above.

Dugald had two outstanding characteristics. The first was that he was a good business man who steadily got good production from the land. The second was that he had a strong sense of the family, or clan, deriving from his Scottish heritage. His kin also had this strong clan feeling, and they “took in” and cared for each other. He encouraged his kin to settle near him and many did.

In Grimes County he built a farm house in a spot known as Elm Grove. This land is nowadays known as the Holtkamp place, is north of Highway 2 and is included in the Lynn Grove area. The house is no longer standing. He was especially fond of his nephew, W. K. of Galveston and as he grew older spent longer and longer periods of time in W. K’s home. We know little or nothing about most of Dugald’s many brothers. We do know about one sister and two brothers. The sister, Mary, had two daughters by her second marriage to Zedekiah Edwards. One of the daughters, Jane, married her first cousin, Archibald McAlpine. This family was in Alabama, then came to Montgomery County where Arch died, then to Grimes County. The other sister, Martha, married James Sullivan in Alabama. They brought their family here and from them came the very large Sullivan branch of the family. Dugald’s older brother Malcolm S. had one son Daniel, and Daniel had one child, Estelle, or Stella. She married Noah Lyles and left no issue. All are buried within the iron enclosure of the old McAlpine Graveyard, now known as Fairview.

At his death in 1876 Dugald left property in Galveston and Erath counties as well as his land in Grimes County. This was divided amongst 37 heirs, including the nieces in North Carolina, except for Stella, who was an infant and whose father, Daniel, had died. Stella was left a cash trust fund. The result of this “Heiring” was that in the late 1800’s there was a preponderance of McAlpines or McAlpine related families living in the area of White Hall, Retreat, Lynn Grove and Courtney. In the time before World War I many had moved away and the exodus gradually continued until today there are very few living in the area.
History of Valentine's Day

February has long been a month of romance. It is the month associated with Valentine's Day celebrations. We have, time and again, heard the name St. Valentine being uttered before us in this season of love. But just who is this St. Valentine? Why is this month associated with love and romance? Learn about St. Valentine, how Valentine's day came into practice as it is today.

Every year, the fourteenth day of the month of February has millions across the world presenting their loved ones with candy, flowers, chocolates and other lovely gifts. In many countries, restaurants and eateries are seen to be filled with couples who are eager to celebrate their relationship and the joy of their togetherness through delicious cuisines. There hardly seems to be a young man or woman who is not keen to make the most of the day.

The modern St. Valentine's Day celebrations are said to have been derived from both ancient Christian and Roman tradition. As per one legend, the holiday has originated from the ancient Roman festival of Lupercalia, a fertility celebration that used to be observed annually on February 15. But the rise of Christianity in Europe saw many pagan holidays being renamed for and dedicated to the early Christian martyrs. Lupercalia was no exception.

In ancient Rome, February 14th was a holiday to honor Juno. Juno was the Queen of the Roman Gods and Goddesses. The Romans also knew her as the Goddess of women and marriage. The following day, February 15th, began the Feast of Lupercalia. The lives of young boys and girls were strictly separate. However, one of the customs of the young people was name drawing. On the eve of the festival of Lupercalia, the names of Roman girls were written on slips of paper and placed into jars. Each young man would draw a girl's name from the jar and would then be partners for the duration of the festival with the girl whom he chose. Sometimes the pairing of the children lasted an entire year, and often, they would fall in love and would later marry. During the festivities, Roman priests sacrificed a goat and a dog, using strips of the animals' hides dipped in blood to whip women in the belief that it would make them more fertile.
In 496 AD, Pope Gelasius turned Lupercalia into a Christian feast day and set its observance a day earlier, on February 14. He proclaimed February 14 to be the feast day in honor of Saint Valentine, a Roman martyr who lived in the 3rd century. It is this St. Valentine whom the modern Valentine's Day honors.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, there were at least three early Christian saints by the name of Valentine. While one was a priest in Rome, another was a bishop in Terni. Nothing is known about the third St. Valentine except that he met his end in Africa. Surprisingly, all three of them were said to have been martyred on February 14th.

It is clear that Pope Gelasius intended to honor the first of these three aforementioned men. Most scholars believe that this St. Valentine was a priest who lived around 270 A.D. in Rome and attracted the disfavor of Roman emperor Claudius II who ruled during this time.

The story of St. Valentine has two different versions - the Protestant and the Catholic one. Both versions agree upon Saint Valentine being a bishop who held secret marriage ceremonies of soldiers in opposition to Claudius II who had prohibited marriage for young men and was executed by the latter. During the lifetime of Valentine, the golden era of Roman empire had almost come to an end. Lack of quality administrators led to frequent civil strife.

Education declined, taxation increased and trade witnessed a very bad time. The Roman empire faced crisis from all sides, from the Gauls, Slavs, Huns, Turks and Mongolians from Northern Europe and Asia. The empire had grown too large to be shielded from external aggression and internal chaos with existing forces. Naturally, more and more capable men were required to be recruited as soldiers and officers to protect the nation from takeover.
When Claudius became the emperor, he felt that married men were more emotionally attached to their families, and thus, will not make good soldiers. He believed that marriage made the men weak. So, he issued an edict forbidding marriage to assure quality soldiers. The ban on marriage was a great shock for the Romans. But they dared not voice their protest against the mighty emperor. The kindly bishop Valentine also realized the injustice of the decree. He saw the trauma of young lovers who gave up all hopes of being united in marriage. He planned to counter the monarch’s orders in secrecy. Whenever lovers thought of marrying, they went to Valentine who met them afterwards in a secret place, and joined them in the sacrament of matrimony. And thus, he secretly performed many marriages for young lovers. But such things cannot remain hidden for long. It was only a matter of time before Claudius came to know of this “friend of lovers,” and had him arrested.

While awaiting his sentence in prison, Valentine was approached by his jailor, Asterius. It was said that Valentine had some saintly abilities and one of them granted him the power to heal people. Asterius had a blind daughter and knowing of the miraculous powers of Valentine he requested the latter to restore the sight of his blind daughter. The Catholic legend has it that Valentine did this through the vehicle of his strong faith, a phenomenon refuted by the Protestant version which agrees otherwise with the Catholic one. Whatever the fact, it appears that Valentine in some way did succeed to help Asterius' blind daughter.

When Claudius II met Valentine, he was said to have been impressed by the dignity and conviction of the latter. However, Valentine refused to agree with the emperor regarding the ban on marriage. It is also said that the emperor tried to convert Valentine to the Roman gods but was unsuccessful in his efforts. Valentine refused to recognize Roman Gods and even attempted to convert the emperor, knowing the consequences fully. This angered Claudius II who gave the order of execution of Valentine. Meanwhile, a deep friendship had been formed between Valentine and Asterius' daughter. It caused great grief to the young girl to hear of his friend's imminent death. It is said that just before his execution, Valentine asked for a pen and paper from his jailor, and signed a farewell message to her "From Your Valentine," a phrase that lived ever after. As per another legend, Valentine fell in love with the daughter of his jailer during his imprisonment. However, this legend is not given much importance by historians. The most plausible story surrounding St. Valentine is one not centered on Eros (passionate love) but on agape (Christian love): he was martyred for refusing to renounce his religion. Valentine is believed to have been executed on February 14, 270 A.D.

Thus, 14th February became a day for all lovers and Valentine became its Patron Saint. It began to be annually observed by young Romans who offered handwritten greetings of affection, known as Valentines, on this day to the women they admired. With the coming of Christianity, the day came to be known as St. Valentine's Day.
But it was only during the 14th century that St. Valentine’s Day became definitively associated with love. UCLA medieval scholar Henry Ansgar Kelly, author of “Chaucer and the Cult of Saint Valentine”, credits Chaucer as the one who first linked St. Valentine’s Day with romance. In medieval France and England, it was believed that birds mated on February 14. Hence, Chaucer used the image of birds as the symbol of lovers in poems dedicated to the day. In Chaucer's "The Parliament of Fowls," the royal engagement, the mating season of birds, and St. Valentine’s Day are related:

“For this was on St. Valentine's Day, when every fowl cometh there to choose his mate.”

By the Middle Ages, Valentine became as popular as to become one of the most popular saints in England and France. Despite attempts by the Christian church to sanctify the holiday, the association of Valentine’s Day with romance and courtship continued through the Middle Ages. The holiday evolved over the centuries. By the 18th century, gift-giving and exchanging hand-made cards on Valentine’s Day had become common in England. Hand-made valentine cards made of lace, ribbons, and featuring cupids and hearts began to be created on this day and handed over to the man or woman one loved.

This tradition eventually spread to the American colonies. It was not until the 1840s that Valentine's Day greeting cards began to be commercially produced in the U.S. The first American Valentine's Day greeting cards were created by Esther A. Howlanda Mount Holyoke, a graduate and native of Worcester, Mass. Howland, known as the Mother of the Valentine, made elaborate creations with real lace, ribbons and colorful pictures known as “scrap”. It was when Howland began Valentine’s cards in a large scale that the tradition really caught on in the United States.

Today, Valentine’s Day is one of the major holidays in the U.S. and has become a booming commercial success. According to the Greeting Card Association, 25% of all cards sent each year are “valentines”. The “valentines”, as Valentine's Day cards are better known as, are often designed with hearts to symbolize love. The Valentine's Day card spread with Christianity, and is now celebrated all over the world. One of the earliest valentines was sent in 1415 AD by Charles, Duke of Orleans, to his wife during his imprisonment in the Tower of London. The card is now preserved in the British Museum.

There may be doubts regarding the actual identity of Valentine, but we know that he really existed because archaeologists have recently unearthed a Roman catacomb and an ancient church dedicated to a Saint Valentine.
We have copies of the Navasota Bluebonnet on sale for only $30 each. This book was published in 1954 and has 100 years of Navasota History. This book was reprinted in 2001.

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The Grimes County Heritage and Progress History Book is a great addition to your family library. It contains the history of our county as well as family histories of Grimes County Residents. Each book is $75 each.