

WAXAHACHIE

Ellis County was created by the legislature that created Tarrant County. It also came out of Navarro County and officially became a new county on 20 December 1849. Its area included what comprises present Ellis County, plus a triangular area of present northeast Johnson County which did not become a part of the latter county until 1871.

According to the creation act, [MICHAEL] T. FLAHERTY, B. F. HAWKINS, NORMAN WHITTENBURG, [GEORGE] YOUNGER, WILLIAM DOWNING, JAMES E. PATTON, JAMES JACKSON, and WILLIAM S. MITCHELL were to constitute a board of commissioners to ascertain the center of the county, to solicit donations of land, and to nominate places from which the electorate would choose a county seat, which, when chosen, would bear the name of Waxahachie.

On 28 January 1850 and 5 February 1850, legislative acts were approved, correcting an error (pertaining to boundaries) in the creation act, and calling for an election of county officials on the first Monday in August 1850.

The first elected officials were: WILLIAM HAWKINS (Chief Justice), BENJAMIN F. HAWKINS (County Clerk), ROBERT M. BERRY (Assessor & Collector), EMORY W. ROGERS (Treasurer), WILLIAM H. H. BRADFORD (Sheriff), and CHARLES H. BARKER (District Clerk). Commissioners were: LARKIN NEWTON, JAMES S. BERRY, THOMAS HERRON, and HENRY TRIMBLE. Justices of the Peace were: WILLIAM T. PATTON, GEORGE C. PARKS, HENRY TRIMBLE, and WILLIAM IRWIN.

The donation of EMORY W. ROGERS was chosen as the county seat and was named, per law, Waxahachie. The county court held its first meeting in the home of EMORY W. ROGERS, "there being no place designated by law." Its first session was on Monday, 19 August 1850. The court ordered that RICHARD DONALDSON be employed to survey the county seat "comprising 60 acres into a public square, lots, streets, and allies" and that he be allowed the sum of \$100, to be paid in town lots. The court, still in session on 23 August 1850, appointed ELBERT C. NEWTON to superintend the advertising, auctioning-off, and executing deeds to the town lots. On the same day, the court commissioned JOSEPH H. WHITTENBURG to build a court house. He reported to the court, in November, that the building was complete, as specified by the court.

On Monday, 17 February 1851, R. C. DONALDSON, Surveyor of the Town of Waxahachie, made his report (which was dated September 1850) to the county court. He stated that he commenced the town tract survey in "the middle of Spring branch Channel where RODGERS Spring puts into the branch." He stated that the survey contained 62 acres, 1 rod, and 19 perches, including Block No. 1, which block contained something over one and three-fourths acres, indicating that this was where ROGERS lived. The report stated that the blocks were 200 feet square, except for the following: No. 1 which was 200 x 260 feet; No. 33 was 200 x 315 feet; No. 34 was 200 x 280 feet; No. 35 was 200 x 200 feet; No. 36 was 200 x 140 feet; No. 40 was 200 x 112 feet; and Numbers 37, 38, & 39 were 200 x 382 feet. The streets were 60 feet wide.

Sources:

H. P. N. Gammel, Laws of Texas, Vol 3, pp. 454-455, 524-525, 554-556  
 Commissioners Court Minutes, Ellis County, Texas

Elected Officials, Ellis County, Archives Division, Texas State Library

Plat of Waxahachie

*Map of the Town of Waxahachie County Seat of the County of Ellis State of Texas*

