

THE GRAPELAND MESSENGER

A splendid paper has been published for many years under the able management of A. H. Luker, who still carries on with one of the best county papers in Texas. Mr. Luker also published from his Grapeland office the Lovelady Enterprise, which is a creditable paper, and disclosed the fact that Editor Luker is a real newspaperman.

THE CROCKETT DEMOCRAT

The most recent publication established in Crockett is the Crockett Democrat, published by Henry J. Paul, and is a worthy competitor of other papers now being published in Houston County

All together Houston County has contributed her share of able newspapers and deserves high rank among all the counties of the State.

Schools in Houston County

No authentic information can be found about the earliest school in Houston County. All schools taught in Houston County prior to and during the Civil War were private schools. No public school system had been established prior to the close of the Civil War.

TRINITY COLLEGE

There probably were a few scattered schools in the county prior to 1841, but no record exists of any such schools. On January 30, 1841, the Congress of the Republic of Texas passed an act entitled "An Act to Establish and Incorporate Trinity College" which reads in part as follows:

"Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas, in Congress assembled, that a seminary of learning be, and the same is hereby established at Alabama, in Houston County, to be denominated the 'Trinity College.'

"Sec. 2. Be it further enacted, That there shall be eleven trustees, who are hereby authorized to take charge of the interests of the college; and a majority of the whole number shall constitute a quorum to do business.

"Sec. 3. Be it further enacted, That the following persons have been duly chosen trustees of the college, and are recognized as such, viz: G. W. Grant, Jacob Allbright, George Pruitt, Collin Aldrich, Elisha Clapp, John Wortham, Isaac Parker, Ralph Nelson, Elijah Gossett, William Clark and James Carr.

"Sec. 4. Be it further enacted, That the trustees aforesaid be, and they are hereby constituted a body politic and corporate, in deed and in law, by the name of 'The President and Trustees of Trinity College,' and by that name they and their successors shall and may have succession, and exercise the privileges granted herein, for the term of twenty years, and no longer; and be able and capable in law to have, receive and enjoy, to them and their successors, land, tenements, hereditaments of any kind whatsoever; and also all sums of money which may be given, granted or bequeathed to them, for the purpose of promoting the interests of the said college; provided, that the property owned by the body corporate under the provisions of

this act, shall at no time exceed in value the amount of one hundred thousand dollars, over and above the buildings, apparatus, and library."

The Act establishing the above-mentioned college, contains seventeen sections, which relate to the government of the college and to the powers of the trustees. These all indicate that the framers of this charter were educated men and had a clear conception of what an ideal college should be.

It is not certainly known that Trinity College was ever really organized as an institution of learning. It is reasonable to believe that some kind of educational institution existed at Alabama, in Houston County, at the time this charter was enacted. The Act was signed as follows: "David S. Kaufman, speaker of the House of Representatives; Anson Jones, President pro tem. of the Senate. Approved January 30th, 1841. David G. Burnet."

It should be a matter of interest to the people of Houston County that among the names of the trustees originally selected appear the names of Collin Aldrich, first chief justice of Houston County; Jacob Allbright, first county clerk of Houston County; Elijah Gossett, another chief justice of Houston County, in an early day; Elisha Clapp, a most distinguished pioneer and Indian fighter; and John Wortham, who had a distinguished share in the development of Houston County, having rendered distinguished service in the military department, and Isaac Parker, who was a congressman from Houston County during almost the entire period of the Republic, and later a prominent representative in the Legislature of the State of Texas. These men were all worthy pioneers, who came to Texas imbued with the idea of securing the independence of the Republic, and whose memories deserve to be perpetuated. Some of them had a high degree of education and were educationally-minded during the very infancy of the Republic. It should be remembered that this charter was granted less than five years after the Declaration of Independence was signed at old Washington.

OTHER SCHOOLS

It is not certain where the next school was taught in Houston County. It is probable that there were several private schools in different portions of the county during the last days of the Republic and the early days of the State after annexation.

C. H. DAVIS

C. H. Davis was one of the early teachers of the county and was living in Houston County as early as 1851, as shown by the account book of Thomas P. Collins. The purchases he made, at that time, indicate that he was teaching school, either in Crockett or at some other point in the county. He taught at Old Pleasant Grove and at Shiloh, during the days of the stage coaches. It is difficult to designate the exact time when these schools were taught, but C. H. Davis was one of the early educators of the county.

MRS. H. B. DILLINGHAM

About 1858 to 1860, Mrs. H. B. Dillingham, a sister of Collin Aldrich, a pioneer of the county, taught school in Crockett at an old school house, either on the southwest corner of the town of Crockett, or at a point near by, South of that point. There are indications that there was a log school house near where the Jim Smith Memorial Hospital now stands, and that school was taught in this building by Mrs. H. B. Dillingham and perhaps, earlier, by L. E. Downes.

OLD RANDOLPH SCHOOL

It may be that school was taught at Old Randolph prior to the year 1855, as there was a school house there prior to that time. However, the first school of which we have any authentic information was taught at Old Randolph by Judge Samuel M. Thompson, during the years 1855 and 1856. Judge Thompson moved to Old Randolph in 1855 and was furnished a house for himself and family and the old log schoolhouse in which he taught school during the years 1855 and 1856. The next teacher for Old Randolph School was a man by the name of Wiley who taught there in 1857. Among the well-known citizens of Houston County who were students under Judge Thompson in 1855 and 1856 were Gus Aldrich and Tom Vaughn. They both entered the Confederate Army in 1861 and went to Virginia as a part of Hood's Brigade. We do not know who taught school at Old Randolph subsequent to 1857, although it is probable that others taught school there.

COCHINO SCHOOL

In 1864 there was a settlement on Cochino Bayou consisting of farmers with slaves, who constituted the backbone of the community. Among these were Dr. W. W. Adair, Rough Kennedy, James McLemore and a man by the name of Kitchens. These men engaged Judge S. M. Thompson to teach their school in 1864, paying him in corn. The school house was a small log cabin, with puncheon floor, situated just South of where Kennard State Bank now stands, on the old Dodson Road. The log cabin school house was so shabby and disreputable looking, that many of the pupils belonging to aristocratic families, rebelled against the school house and resolved to burn it down. Judge Thompson received a tip from one of the students and knew of their plan to set fire to the building and hid himself in the school building. When the young conspirators appeared to carry out their scheme, they were suddenly confronted by Judge Thompson, who had them brought before the trustees of the school. They were tried by a kangaroo court and convicted, but their energetic protest resulted in the trustees agreeing to build a new schoolhouse, which they promptly proceeded to do, erecting a house of sawed lumber, situated near the old Cicero Dupuy home. It will be interesting to know who these young students were who made their bold protest against the schoolhouse. Some of them were: Porter Thompson, son of Judge Thompson; George Adair, Billy Adair, Columbus West, Dump McLemore and George Dodson. There may have been others.

OLD PLEASANT GROVE SCHOOL

Prior to 1857, there was an old log schoolhouse at Pleasant Grove made of round pine logs. It is not known who taught school in this old log house, but sometime prior to 1857, a new two-story schoolhouse was erected, the school being taught in the lower story and the upper story was used as a Masonic Lodge. C. H. Davis taught school in this schoolhouse in 1857, and school was taught there in 1858, by James Moore, at which time T. W. Thompson, his brother, Porter Thompson and Sally Thompson, later Mrs. G. B. Lundy attended school under James Moore. Later, the school was taught by a Mr. Wilkerson when the children of John F. Arledge, Captain John English, Arch English and R. B. S. Owens attended the same.

OWENS SCHOOL

A little schoolhouse was built on the farm of R. B. S. Owens about eight miles East of Crockett, and situated a short distance South of the old Owens home. It is not known how many people taught school in that schoolhouse, but a school was taught there in the fall and winter of 1865 by Mark Miller, afterwards county surveyor of Houston County, and also postmaster, and T. W. Thompson, his brother, Porter Thompson, Mrs. Sally Lundy and at least one of the children of Uncle Billy Stanton, Miss Kate Stanton, afterwards the wife of Billy Beavers, attended the school.

OLD SHILOH SCHOOL

Old Shiloh is principally noted for the camp meetings that were held there in the early days. Old families would go there and camp out for a week at a time, and preaching would be held day and night. Many big revivals were held at that place. As early as 1868 a school was taught there, but as the school was close to the mail route between Crockett and Huntsville, some traveling was done on the stagecoach by pupils of C. H. Davis. Miss Florence Johnson, now Mrs. Florence J. Arledge, attended this school in her girlhood and traveled on the stagecoach to Crockett. For many years school was taught at Old Shiloh but we will not undertake to give a list of the teachers since the days of C. H. Davis.

CROCKETT SCHOOLS

It is not known by the writer who taught the first school in Crockett, but evidently some schools were taught long prior to the Civil War. Mention has already been made of a school taught by L. E. Downes near his old home on the Southwest corner of the public square, and later by Mrs. H. B. Dillingham, probably in the same old schoolhouse. It is not known who taught school at that place last.

A substantial school building was erected one-half mile East of the courthouse about 1855, which was known for many years as the Crockett Academy. Some schools were taught in that building, but the names of the early teachers are not known.

One maiden schoolteacher from the North taught school there and during the time she was there, something was said or published by General Thomas P. Collins about her which resulted in a suit for damages, in which she recovered a substantial sum. About the beginning of the Civil War, Mrs. Helen Nunn, wife of Col. D. A. Nunn, taught school there and some of our oldest citizens were her pupils, including Mrs. Nan Hail and Mrs. Bella Romain. It was in this building that in January 1871, Major John Spence began the first well organized and equipped school that Crockett ever had. He taught until June, 1873, when he entered the practice of law and was succeeded by Hon. W. B. Page, who taught a very successful school for many years. He was later elected State Senator and then in 1890 began the publication of the Crockett Courier. He was succeeded in this school by a Professor G. J. Nunn, who presided over the schools for a number of years. The Crockett Academy continued to be used as a school building until the corporation of the City of Crockett was revived about 1890, and a new school building was erected on the campus where our present grammar school now stands. In this school a number of distinguished educators presided as superintendent, including: Walker King, E. A. Pace, C. E. Godbey, Donald McDonald, I. J. Deck, and is now presided over by W. L. Jordan. No attempt is made to give a full list of the superintendents and distinguished teachers who had a share in making this an outstanding school. Among those who taught there were Mrs. A. R. Spence and Mrs. Lucy Collins, who both had a large share in the educational program of Crockett.

PROFESSOR J. W. BARROW

As early as January 1868, a school was taught in the old Baptist Church building, where Miss Lena Woodson's home now stands, and the following advertisement appears in the Crockett Sentinel in its issue of March 3rd, 1868:

"CROCKETT HIGH SCHOOL

(For Both Sexes)

"J. W. Barrow, A. M., principal and professor of Latin and Greek, French, Algebra, Geometry, etc.

"Prof. C. W. Edmiston has charge of the Intermediate Department.

"Mrs. Allie Barrow, the Primary Department.

"....., professor of vocal and instrumental music.

"This institution will be open for the reception of students on the 6th of January. The location is healthy; the community highly moral.

"There is a flourishing Sabbath School;

"Preaching regular and often; as a centrality, Crockett has few, if any equals, in the State. As to enlightenment, it has vast advantage. Sectarianism discarded. Students received at any time and charged from date of entrance to close of session. A deduction will be made for protracted sickness. Good board easily obtained at from \$9.00 to \$15.00 per month.

"Patrons, visit us.

"Rates of tuition in specie or its equivalent per session of five months.

"Orthography, Reading, \$10.00; Spelling and reading, primary arithmetic, and geography, \$12.50; Advanced Arithmetic, grammar, history, natural philosophy, rhetoric, logic, etc., \$15.00; Astronomy, botany, chemistry, geology, geometry, surveying, Latin, Greek or French, \$10.00; Music on piano or guitar, \$30.00; Patrons and friends of education, visit our school. Crockett, Texas. January 7th."

Among the early teachers in the old Crockett Academy were Mr. Edward A. Gause, and his sister, Mrs. Mary E. McColl. They taught there in 1866, and later. Prior to that time it was a difficult matter for teachers to control their older students. There were a number of unruly boys nearly grown who took pride in disobeying the rules established by teachers and breaking up schools. Mr. Gause had heard of these pranks on the part of the older boys and determined upon what course he would pursue. He had been forewarned what to expect. On a certain day one of the unruly students, Oscar Burnett, decided he would purposely disobey the rules and defy Mr. Gause to inflict the proper punishment. As a result, when Mr. Gause and his sister came to the old academy on that morning he brought his pistol and laid it on the desk. The boys also came prepared for the difficulty, but had such simple weapons as sticks and stones. At the proper time Mr. Gause called the refractory Oscar Burnett to take his punishment which was to be a severe whipping with a switch. He refused to respond so Mr. Gause seized him and took him into the smaller room of the school