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**THE HISTORY**  
**OF**  
**HOUSTON COUNTY**  
**TEXAS**

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*Together with Biographical Sketches of Many Pioneers  
and Later Citizens of Said County, Who Have Made  
Notable Contributions to its Development and Progress.*

**By Armistead Albert Aldrich**



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By ARMISTEAD ALBERT ALDRICH

## MOTTO FOR PIONEERS

*"Is there no action worth my mood,  
No deed of daring high and pure,  
That shall, when I am dead endure,  
A well spring of perpetual good?"*

*Thomas Bailey Aldrich.*

## DEDICATION

TO THE MEMORY OF MY PIONEER GRANDFATHER,

COLLIN ALDRICH,

WHO FOUGHT BRAVELY FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF  
TEXAS, AND TO THE MEMORY OF THE OTHER  
PIONEERS OF HOUSTON COUNTY, WHO FOUGHT  
WITH HIM AT SAN JACINTO, AND ACHIEVED THE  
FREEDOMS WHICH WE ENJOY TODAY,

AND

TO THE MEMORY OF THAT PEERLESS SOLDIER OF  
THE CROSS,

REVEREND, SAMUEL FISHER TENNEY,

MY PASTOR FOR MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY,  
WHOSE INFLUENCE SHAPED MY LIFE MORE THAN  
ANY OTHER AGENCY, THIS UNPRETENTIOUS  
VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,  
BY THE AUTHOR.

## INTRODUCTION

To properly trace the history of Houston County back to the beginning, it would be necessary to go back to the days when Columbus discovered America. The author does not deem it proper or necessary to go back that far to present to the people of his native county such a history as will meet the demands of those for whom the present work is intended. His object is to preserve and honor the memory of the pioneers of Houston County, who blazed the way through the wilderness and won their freedom from the savage Indians and hostile Spaniards and Mexicans, who preceded them in this favored land. The Indians were here and roamed the forests where we now live and prosper, long before the advent of the first white man. The Spanish and French both asserted title to the country, of which Houston County now constitutes a part, and it was the conflict between these two people that led to the earliest development of this County. Students of History are familiar with the story of La Salle, who met his tragic death at the hands of his own companions, while endeavoring to find the Mississippi River, on a journey that would have taken him through what later became known as Houston County, and some assert that he even passed through this territory and met his tragic death in what is now Cherokee County, lying east of the Neches River. The writer would not undertake to rob Navasota of the distinction that it claims as having been near the spot of La Salle's death. Since the matter is shrouded in so much mystery, the writer will allow the neighbor City of Navasota to pre-empt all the glory that she desires from the claims made by her on account of the tragic death of the distinguished Frenchman. Citizens of Houston County will share with Navasota in paying tribute to the gallant La Salle, and will give due reverence to the splendid statue and monument to his memory that now adorns her principal street. The writer believes that the real history of Houston County should begin with the founding of the Spanish Missions in 1690, which all historians agree were established upon the soil that now constitutes the present bounds of Houston County. He will leave to other historians of more pretentious works the details of the struggles between the French and Spaniards over the territory of the Lone Star State, and content himself with chronicling events transpiring in connection with the founding of said missions and those that have oc-

curred since that time. He is of the opinion that these will be of sufficient volume to fill the history of a single county. He sends forth this little history with the devout wish that it may prove of interest to the descendents of the pioneers and of those who have chosen to find a home within the limits of old Houston County, and are interested in the story of her making.

A. A. ALDRICH.

## *EDENS-MADDEN MASSACRE*

No history of Houston County would be complete, without an account of the terrible massacre that occurred in October 1838, known as the Edens-Madden Massacre, which occurred at the home of John Edens, on San Pedro Creek, about 12 or 13 miles North East of Crockett. At that time many of the citizens of that locality were absent from home, having volunteered under Captain W. T. Sadler, a soldier of San Jacinto, to accompany Major Mabbitt in the Cordova-Kickapoo Expedition. A number of the families of the community were removed for safety to John Edens home and were left under his protection and three other old men—James Madden, Martin Murchison and Elisha Moore. The others present in the house were: Mrs. John Edens and her daughter, Emily; Mrs. John Murchison, Mrs. W. T. Saddler, her daughter, Mrs. James Madden and two little sons, aged seven and nine years; Mrs. Robert Madden and daughter, Mary; and a negro woman about sixty years of age, named Betsy or Patsy.

The John Edens home later became the home of Judge D. H. Edens, and where he lived and died. The house consisted of two log rooms, separated by a covered passageway. The women occupied one room and the men the other.

"On the fatal night, about the 19th day of October, 1838, after all the inmates had retired, the house was attacked by Indians. The assault was made on the room occupied by the women and children. The savages broke down the door and rushed in, using knives and tomahawks. Mrs. Murchison and her daughter, Mrs. Saddler, were instantly killed. Mrs. John Edens, mortally wounded, escaped from the room and crossed two fences, to die in the adjoining field. Of Mary, daughter of Robert Madden; Emily, daughter of John Edens, each three years old, and the two little sons of James Madden, no tidings were ever heard, whether carried into captivity or burned to ashes, was never known, but every presumption is in favor of the latter. The room was speedily set on fire. The men did not open the door into the passage. Mrs. Robert Madden dangerously wounded, rushed into the room of the men, falling on a bed. One by one, or rather two by two, the four men ran the gauntlet and escaped, supposing all the others were dead. Early in the assault, Patsy (or Betsy) seized a little girl of John Edens, yet living and the beloved wife of James Duke, swiftly bore her to the house of Mr. Davis, a mile and a half distant, and then moved by an inspiration that should embalm her memory

in every generous heart, as swiftly returned as an angel of mercy to any who might survive. She arrived in time to enter the rapidly consuming house and rescue the unconscious Mrs. Robert Madden, but an instant before the roof fell in. Placing her on her own bed in her unmolested cabin in the yard, she sought elsewhere for deeds of mercy and found Mrs. James Madden under the eaves of the crumbling walls, doomed to speedy cremation. She gently bore her to the same refuge, and by them watched, bathed, poulticed and nursed—aye! prayed!—till the morrow brought succor." . . . .

"Mrs. James Madden thus rescued from the flames, bore upon her person three ghastly wounds from a tomahawk, one severing her collar bone, two ribs cut asunder near the spine, and a horrible gash in the back. But it is gratifying to record that both these wounded ladies recovered, and in 1883 were living near Augusta, Houston County, objects of affectionate esteem by their neighbors. On the day following this horrid slaughter, the volunteers, the husbands and neighbors of the victims, returned from the battle of Kickapoo, in time to perform the last rites to the fallen and nurse the wounded. The late venerable Captain William Yancey, of Palestine, Robert Madden and Elder Daniel Parker and others of the Edens and other old families of that vicinity, were among them."