History of Madison County
William Ray Malone

A HISTORY OF MADISON COUNTY

by

WILLIAM RAY MALONE

FOREWORD

The author was both surprised and embarrassed by a request to "Permit" republication of the following pages in book form. No permit is needed. Several decades ago, the article was published twice in *The Madisonville Meteor.* It was somewhat alarming to become aware of possible public interest in one's obviously puerile discussion of a subject worthy of more exhaustive and scholarly treatment than given in a school project undertaken and completed when the author was a 15-year-old senior at Madisonville High School 71 years ago. Except for occasional references to records found in the Madison County Courthouse, it was not based on any research. Source material consisted of the author's memory of stories told him by elderly men and women, many of whom had passed away in the early 1940's, but all of whom had been eager to reminisce -- even at the prompting of a child who would listen with rapt attention in respectful silence, interrupted only by an occasional inquiry.

Were the author to undertake a similar task today, he would soon find that he lacked the probable life expectancy and resources necessary to address the source material required to include much material worthy of treatment in any history of Madison County. The archives of the Texas State Government in Austin, especially those of the Land Commissioner, the Texas Railroad Commission, the Secretary of State, and the Attorney General contain rich lodes of historical data. Those of the Republic of Mexico and other State Governments of Coahuila, Chihuahua and Tamaulipas, especially the military narratives, are bound to shed light on the colorful events in the short-lived Hispanic communities of the Trinity River area now Madison County. The historical holdings of the Texas Universities contain much English language material already taken from Spanish language records south of the Rio Grande. The execution of the former members of the Magee Gutierrez forces captured at the Battle of Medina Creek, brutally carried out at the orders of General Arredondo, called *"El Tuerto" [the one-eyed],* in which slaughter Santa Anna, then a company grade officer, was a participant, deserves mention. Colonel Almonte, Father Miguel Hidalgo's illegitimate son by the priest's Indian concubine, wrote extensively about a trip to access revolutionary sentiment among the Anglo settlers in East and Southeast Texas; he made several stops in present-day Madison County and wrote about them. Almonte later appears as Santa Anna's interpreter and adjutant who followed his President into captivity and accompanied him on his trip to Washington to see President Jackson, an interlude about which both Almonte and Santa Anna wrote, including their observation about the sentiments of the Anglo Settler in East Texas.

Reconstruction in Texas was generally milder, though of longer duration, than in other Southern States. Union occupation forces were usually called upon only on days of general election to prevent white males from exercising the ballot. The Huntsville garrison, a black cavalry unit, could be summoned by telegraph, for which a line was provided strung on

porcelain insulators affixed usually to trees, for county seats which had no railroad and hence no preexisting telegraph facilities. In such instances, a telegrapher was provided to the special policeman appointed by the state government to exercise his extralegal authority to insure a Republican victory. Withdrawal of the black soldiers for protection of the frontier settlements from hostile Native Americans marked the collapse of Reconstruction, as did mob violence and lynching of Republican county officials and the decentralization of ballot boxes from the county courthouse to the rural voting precincts from which they had been earlier removed. The author's grandfather, B.S. Malone, a former Confederate soldier with Steele's regiment - the Seventh Texas Cavalry - was a scallywag whom Governor Edmond Davis had appointed as special policeman for Madison County. He narrowly escaped lynching when he failed to join a group of mounted men from Midway who rode to Madisonville to lynch the Republican County Judge. They later found and hanged the Judge when he and his wife were caught crossing Bedias Creek as they fled to Huntsville for safety. The Sheriff had been shot and killed in another County, possibly by someone who had followed him from Madison County. This County was placed under martial law, enforced by an under-strength company of Texas State Militia, as the National Guard had not yet been created at that time.

Mention should be made of local archaeological possibilities. The author recalls, from the late 1930's, that his aunt took his parents and himself to view a spring trickling from a worked stone, uncovered in excavating earth for a ramp in construction of the hard-surfaced OSR. Unfortunately, the stone was buried to form part of the ramp. On the left and the right squared margins of the vertical face of the rectangular stone, outside two vertical columns depicted in half round, were elongated "Nicks" or grooves. The unearthed sandstone slab was quite unlike any known artifact attributed to native Americans. In Ireland some 45 years later, he realized that these grooves may have been the edge form of Ogham, the earliest Celtic writing known to have been used in pagan and early Christian Ireland, Scotland and Wales as inscriptions of shrines and memorials on tombstones of tribal chiefs, saints, bishops and abbots. Several small, flat stones were observed in pastures which had been cotton fields before the advent of the boll weevil and boll worm, especially near North Bedias Creek in the Zoraster Robinson Survey. These bore unusual scratches, commonly dismissed as plow marks or root marks, but including repetitive patterns of what seemed to be some two dozen symbols resembling letters from ancient Middle Eastern alphabets.

The oil and gas industry has changed Madison County in an unbelievable fashion during the past 71 years. As the records of the Texas Railroad Commission disclose, this county is a leading producer of oil and gas with attendant problems of aquifer depletion and pollution. The end is not yet in sight, as much more hydrocarbon is almost certain to exist at greater depth and at shallower depth where it is recoverable by horizontal drilling and "Fracing". Transoceanic shipment of liquified (compressed) natural gas and burgeoning markets in Europe and elsewhere make production from deep gas deposits economically feasible. Royalties of as much as 25% are not unheard of, and it is difficult to purchase surface with minerals. Much more needs to be written about this aspect of county history.

The author has been undeservedly honored by this request for publication of his first and only effort at a historical essay, full as it is of inadequacies and probable errors, only some of which are touched upon here. Nevertheless, the author gladly grants his Nihil Obstat for this flawed production and trusts the reader will forgive its shortcomings.

WILLIAM RAY MALONE

A HISTORY OF MADISON COUNTY

THE INDIANS - The first inhabitants of Madison County were, of course, the Indian savages. At the time of the advent of the white man, this area was peopled by the more or less settled Hasanai, or Tejas, and Tonkawa tribes. These Indians are described as knowing the usage of pottery, woven baskets, and flint arrow, spear, and tomahawk heads, and were said to live in villages of a few hundred inhabitants, which villages were composed of groups of log or cane and thatch huts. The Tonkawas, who ranged along the western banks of the Trinity, were said to be not quite so advanced as the more easterly Hasanai. These Indians were not allowed to advance in civilization to its ultimate apex, however, as they were frequently raided by the warlike Comanches, who continued to be the scourge of the settlements of both Spaniard and semi-civilized Indian in East Texas.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, these ancient races of primitives began to be displaced by tribes which in turn were pushed by American settlers from the Atlantic seaboard. Among those which drifted into the immediate area of Madison County must be included the Kickapoo and Bedias, after whom the two prominent creeks or bayous of the County are named. It is entirely probable that the Cherokees, Coushattas, and Delawares also were located either

here or nearby, for they are known to have been in the vicinity. The Navasot Confederacy, after which the Navasota River and the town of Navasota are named, were also probably numbered among our primeval predecessors.

Early settlers are reported to have had encounters with all these different tribes, which, after being pushed across the Red River into Oklahoma, as they had formerly been ineffectually driven north of the Camino Real, continued to raid and terrorize the area which had been their former hunting around. Bands of mounted warriors set out from their homes in Oklahoma and sometimes, it is said, came as far south as Madison County in their search for cattle and horses, as well as the owners' scalps. The last of these raids occurred sometime in the latter part of the 1850's, when a group of warriors of various tribes congregated at the border of the Indian Territory and raided south as far as Madison County, where they stole many horses and cattle, and were in the process of driving them back to the Indian Territory when they were met in Leon County by a group of guerilla cavalry composed of citizens of Madison and Leon Counties which had set out in pursuit of the raiders. In a running battle between the enraged Madison and Leon County citizenry and the Indians, Thomas N.B. Greer of Madison County, leader of the pursuers, was fatally wounded by an arrow somewhere near Guy’s Store in Leon County. He was the only casualty suffered

by the settlers in the engagement, but the Indians lost many of their best warriors and were so frightened by this unusual display of force that thereafter they desisted from raiding the pioneers of this area.

As Texas was the great converging point for several pre-Columbian cultures, so was Madison County, on a smaller scale, another such converging point, a microcosm of at least a dozen different strains of the vanishing race of tribes whose chronology indeed may cover an unusual range of years. Interments are not uncommon, and the amateur archaeologist may find ample fields of exploration which, undoubtedly, will throw, when investigated, a brighter light upon the savage customs prevalent among Madison County citizens some centuries ago.

THE SPANIARDS - It would be impossible to absolutely determine the identity of the first white man to visit the area -Adison County, but if he were not a Spaniard, we may with a certain degree of accuracy assume that he was a member of La Salle's expedition, for it is known that between 1685 and 1689 the inhabitants of Ft. St. Louis more or less thoroughly explored the heart of East Texas in their vain search for the Mississippi River.

Reputable authorities state with certainty, however, that Don Alonso de Le6n, the governor of Coahuila, led an expedition in 1690 to establish a mission among the Tejas Indians, which expedition crossed the Trinity River somewhere in Madison County. It is said that at this time Father Massanet, the Abbot of San Francisco de las Tejas, christened new-found stream El Rio Trinidad.

Perhaps the most important exploration of East Texas was that made by Don Domingo Taran de los Rios, who in 1691 and 1692 surveyed the route of El Camino Real from Monclova, Mexico to Los Adaes Mission near the present town of Robeline, Louisiana. Lon Carlos II, then king of Spain, who appointed Don Domingo governor of Texas, was responsible for this attempt to establish rudimentary routes of communication through the vast and relatively unexplored region of Nuevo Reyno de la Montana de Santander y Santillana, as Don Domingo named Texas.

The King's Trail, crude as it was, remained the only route between Louisiana and the Spanish settlements along the Rio Grande for much more than a century. Along it, and therefore through Madison County, passed most Franco-Spanish commerce on the North American continent, as well as many notable exploratory and colonial expeditions. Among the former should be mentioned those of Espinosa-Olivares Aquire in 1709, St. Denis in 1714, Ramon in 1716, Alarcon in 1718, the Marquis de Aguayo in 1720 and Morfi in 1770. At a later time the same route witnessed the passing of many noted American and French soldiers of fortune, known collectively as filibusters, who, during the period of stagnation, saw their hopes of a free Texas, a military republic, rise and fall.

When in 1773 the settlers around Nacogdoches and the East Texas Spanish Missions and presidios were forced to withdraw in order to carry out the provisions of the Rubi Report, they petitioned the Spanish government at San Antonio to allow them to return to their abandoned homes. This permission was partially granted, the settlers being allowed to go no

1 This road did not follow its present route, the sites for the granite markers erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1918 being determined by local legend and tradition for the most part. Certain maps among the archives of the State Government of Coahuila, at Saltillo, of the Mexican government at the Palacio Nacional at Mexico City, and at Madrid are perhaps the only reputable reference authorities.

Further east than one hundred leagues west of Natchitoches, Accordingly, the town of Bucareli was established in 1774, and Gil Ybarbo appointed the alcalde. Thus Madison County came to have its first European settlement.

The exact location of the town site would be somewhat difficult to determine, but most authorities agree that it was located somewhere on Black Bluff east of Clapp's Ferry, on the Trinity River.

The town is said to have prospered until 1778, when the Comanches made a raid upon it. Other raids were made, and the river overflowed. In the face of all these adverse circumstances, it was decided to move back without waiting for official sanction of the return of the settlers to Nacogdoches. Thus in 1779 Gil Ybarbo led his motley band of some four or five hundred Indians, Spaniards, and half-breeds to the present site of Nacogdoches. Nuestra Senora del Pilar de Bucareli was abandoned forever.

Another early Spanish settlement which may or may not have been located in Madison County was Trinidad, or Spanish Bluff. Its positive location is not known, there being three possible sites. The granite marker erected near Antioch Negro School as a monument to the slaughtered citizens of Trindad in reality is located in the center of the cemetery which James Webb, early Madison County pioneer plantation owner, maintained for his slaves. As the cemetery had long since

fallen into disuse, it is entirely possible that the Centennial Commission's local satellites thought the remains of the negroes were those of the Spanish pioneers.

Possibly the town might have been located on the bluff which is situated upon the Shelton Alphin league, as this is the only location in Madison County near the Trinity River which is not at some time or other inundated. Here, near what is often called Rube's Landing, were situated the ruins of a building constructed of the red ochre which abounds at the junction of the Yegua and Crockett formations. As the stone easily disintegrates, no signs of that building have been visible for more than a decade. Its origin has always been something of a mystery, for it antedated the memory of the oldest settlers.

Mr. Milton Reynolds, who has done amateur archaeological work along the Trinity River, maintains that Trinidad was situated in Houston County, some four hundred yards below Hyde's Ferry, and upon a high sand hill which was above the overflow level of the Trinity River. However, the Texas Almanac, 1945 states[1] that Trinidad was fifteen miles northeast of Madisonville and again[2] it shows a map representing the location of the town as being in Trinity County.

At any rate, Trinidad was established by the Don Antonio Cordero Expedition in1805. During the period of stagnation, it played an important part in East Texas history. Through this town passed the Magee- Gutierrez Expedition in 1812, and much of the male population of Trinidad joined in the fatal undertaking. After the Battle of Medina, a number of the survivors were taken to Trinidad and shot, but in order to punish the citizens of the settlement, who were traitors to Spain in the eyes of General Arredondo, the Spanish commander in this region, a more cruel fate was devised. The General ordered the barbaric Indian recruits from western Mexico to bayonet every person who inhabited the town, giving as an excuse for this massacre the shortage of ammunition. The scene of this inhumane slaughter of some two hundred innocent victims of Spanish decadent tyranny is as unknown as the site of the village, but the so-called Bull's Hill - La Montanita de los Toros -situated somewhere in the eastern part of Madison or the western part of Houston Counties, is said to be their resting place.

THE ANGLO-AMERICANS - Madison County was situated at the junction of three empresarial grants by the Mexican government - those to Austin, Vehlein, and Burnet. The first land for settlement in Madison County was to Don Jose Miguel Musquiz, to whom in 1829 were granted 101,852.6 acres of land, 42,712 of which were in north-eastern Madison County. Don Jose evidently did not reside in Joseph Vehlein's colony for long, if at all, for a deed from Musquiz to a certain Brigadier General of the Mexican Army was filed some two years later. Within the next few years several more land grants were made, and by the time of the Texas Revolution there may have at least a hundred residents of the area, exclusive of Indians.

Many early landowners of this area played important roles in the Texas Revolution. Among those who participated in the Battle of San Jacinto were Job Starks Collard, Andrew and John Montgomery, Dr. George Washington Robinson, and Major William Forrester Young. Ransom Alphin, our county's first permanent landowner, and Zoraster Robinson, through no fault of their own, were ordered by General Houston to remain in camp during as a part of the reserve.

Another little known fact connected with the rebellion is that the exodus from the Texas settlements which is known as "The Run-away Scrape" was disbanded near Midway, as the refugees from The Mexican army were attempting to cross the Trinity

River via Robbins's Ferry. There, a courier from the Texas army arrived to announce the surrender of the Mexican forces and the victory at San Jacinto to the huge caravan of disgruntled pilgrims.

After the revolution, there was a great influx of immigrants to Texas, and of these Madison County had her share, as may be shown by land grants and deeds recorded in the County Clerk's office. Probably the first post-office established in this area was that at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jimmie Mitchell, near Midway, at some vague time during the Republic's early History. This fact throws some light on the increasing population.

CREATION OF MADISON COUNTY - Although the term "Madison County" has been previously used in this work, there was no area so known until the year 1853. Prom the time of the division of Texas into counties until 1837, most of the territory was included in Montgomery County's predecessor, Washington County; from 1837 until 1846, it was included in Montgomery County. In the last named year, the counties of Grimes and Walker were organized; these two divisions contained the greater part of Madison County. In 1853, Dr. P.W. Kittrell, representative of Walker County in the State Legislature, proposed that a new county be created from Walker, Grimes and Leon Counties. The measure was adopted, and in accordance with Dr. Kittrell's wishes, the new county was named Madison, after the United States President of the same name. That part of it which lies north of the Old San Antonio Road had been a part of Leon County, which in turn had been included in Robertson and Milam Counties.

EARLY GROWTH AHD LATER DEVELOPMENT - During the ante-bellum period, Madison County boasted small and few cotton plantations after the style of the ''Old South," although there were many slave-owners among the local citizenry. Cattle raising was the principal industry, and continued to be so until the times of the Reconstruction. The cattle, true Texas longhorns, were driven to market in Louisiana over the Old San Antonio and La Bahia (Labodie) Roads.

By 1868, however, some cotton raising was being carried on, for in that year H.B. Munnerlyn began operation of a horse-tread-mill powered cotton gin, located on Larrison's creek about seven miles northeast of Madisonville. Other gins soon flourished, and cotton became the main crop raised, with grains and feedstuffs running a close second. This state of affairs continued until the 1930's, when, through the efforts of the New Deal Administration, tenant farmers were eradicated, Madison County's population dropped, and cattle-raising again became predominant.

Madison County has never had a reasonable amount of industrialization, a few cotton gins and saw mills constituting the major part of such development. Certain stave mills, a fiasco of a city owned cottonseed oil mill in Madisonville, and the late lamented veneer mill west of Madisonville are worthy of mention, as are several short-lived brickyards.

Hope for future industrialization and increased wealth lies in predicted exploitation of Madison County's reputed

natural resources.

Since 1900, Madison County has greatly increased her material wealth, population, literacy, and civilization in general. This change has come about as a direct result of the advancement of the many modern conveniences of transportation and communication into the county. In 1905, the International and Great Northern Railway completed its back feeder-line into Madisonville, which enterprise had begun in 1904. This, Madison County's first railroad and telegraph service, lasted until 1944, when the line from Navasota into Madisonville was taken up by the railroad company, Southern Pacific, much against the efforts of the local citizenry. Other railways, completed into the western part of the county in 1906, were the Mexia cut-off of the H.&T.C., now abandoned, and the T.& B.V. Railroad, still operating under a different name.

In the year 1904, H.B. Houston was granted a franchise by the Commissioners' Court to install the county's first telephone system, which, incidentally, was a line from Huntsville to Madisonville. This service has increased in the number of subscribers until the whole county is knitted together by a network of telephone lines which, in some instances, reach even the most isolated rural areas.

In the year 1913, Dr. Acie Spear and Mr. Sherman McAfee bought the first automobiles ever owned by Madison County citizens. These chain-driven Fords introduced the "horseless carriage" to the people of the area, inciting a great demand

for the early Fords, Chevrolets, Maxwells, and Willys-Knights. A general need for better and more roads and bridges culminated in the paving of Federal Highway 75 in 1929, State Highway 21 in 1933, and the opening of State Highway 90 in 1932, as well as State Highway 0.S.R. in 1939.

In the year 1913, Madison County had its first electric service when a dynamo, operated by gasoline, was set up on the present site of the Gulf States Utilities sub-station, located in northwestern Madisonville. In later years, the Gulf States Utilities Company bought out the Madisonville Light Company, and lines have been extended to almost every part of the county. Two other rural electrification companies also have lines running through the county.

In the winter of 1940-1941, the Lone Star Gas Company put its facilities within reach of many Madisonville and Madison County consumers when a pipe line was laid through the county, reaching Madisonville. This completed the cycle of modern conveniences. Maintenance workers for these utilities make an important fraction of local population

Let us now consider an aspect of our development yet to be fully realized, - a field of industry which has, however, contributed more than any other to that measure of prosperity possess. The endeavor to which reference is made, is of course, the much-hoped-for prospective oil industry of Madison County.

Since 1913, when the Climax Refining Company drilled a shallow testing well, there have been between thirty-five and fifty wildcats drilled in Madison County. Several have had show of oil, but many more have had a larger volume of gas. The main contribution of the oil companies and speculators to the County so far, however, has not been money derived from the sale of petroleum and its products, but funds paid landowners for leases and royalty deeds. Although much information has been gained from local wells, the information is of a geological nature more than that of immediate monetary value.

However, in May, 1945, a wildcat was spudded in on the H. M. Boring farm which promises to contribute more to the growth of our county in the near future than has heretofore been accomplished by such methods. Completed in October, 1946, this well has proved that there is a certain oil reserve under the area immediately surrounding, which may bring a good measure of wealth to its inhabitants. This well, sponsored by the West Production Company, is 12,536 feet in depth, and has a good pool of distillate and casing head gas in the Edwards Lime Formation. At a much deeper depth is found a great volume of sulphuretted hydrogen, which may, in the far distant future, open up new horizons of industry nearby.

It is learned on reliable information that thirty-seven barrels per day of distillate, and perhaps more, may be produced from this well without pumping. It is expected that more wells may be drilled in the immediate area in the near

future; and thus we see that after a few years, at the most, Madison County will probably have a producing field, which may cause extra exploration in the whole County of Madison, and bring in other fields.

It is to be remembered that Madison County has not at this time been fully explored by deep-drilling equipment, and therefore the results of such complete exploration can only be inferred and surmised. All of the citizens of the area have in some degree profited already, either directly or indirectly, from the beginnings of such development, however.

EARLY SCHOOLS OF COUNTY - It would be impossible to give the name of our county's first schoolmaster or to give the date of establishment of his school. It is probable that the Catholic priests who guided the religious lives of their parishioners of Bucareli and Trinidad made provision for the secular education of children of the communities. After the Anglo-American invasion, it is possible that several "old field schools" patterned after those of the Southeastern States existed at the time. However, it is known that in 1854, when the town of Midway was established and named, the Reverend Joseph A. Clark, a Christian minister of the area, was induced to teach the first school in that immediate vicinity. This, the first school of the county of which we have a record, always is said to have been a somewhat primary arrangement held in the home of its master and main sponsor. Another primary school of a private nature was held during the Civil War years in the Elwood community by Miss Clara Steele, who is said to have taught little besides the alphabet, reading, spelling, and simple arithmetic. This continued to be for several years the curriculum of schools in the vicinity, those advanced pupils who wished to pursue further knowledge finding it necessary to travel elsewhere in order to study at one of the numerous "academies."

A description of an early state-supported school which was taught at Jenkins in 1877 by a certain Mr. Williamson was given early scholars as follows:

" The pupils of Mr. Williamson were about fifteen in number and ranged in age from five to twelve years. All were studying from the Blue back speller, or were learning to read. Five mornings a week they assembled in a fearful fifteen foot square hut made of unsquared logs, which in itself deserves attention because of the fact that it was a fine example of pioneer bucolic rudity. This hut was floored with puncheon boards and was furnished with a board shuttered window with no glass and another board which swung on leather hinges and served as a door. The pupils sat on two sides of the room, perched on two long puncheon boards and holding their spellers and copy-books in their laps. Mr. Williamson, the primitive thirty-five dollar a month and three-month teacher, sat enthroned in a raw-hide bottomed chair behind a home-made table. This ceiling-less pole cage was heated by a fire built in a dirt-filled crate, and was, as I remember, exceedingly cold during the wintry Texas northers, when the wind whistled through the open window and through the unchinked crevices between the logs."

It is known that in the latter part of the 1870's, a certain Mr. George Hubbard and Major William W. Viser taught schools in Madisonville, the latter school being located

across the street from the present site of the Methodist Parsonage. These schools were later consolidated under Reverand Wilmer, a man of many talents who had formerly been Professor of Mathematics at the University of Florida. This Scottish nobleman, also a Baptist minister, greatly enlarged the curriculum. After his death in 1879 or 1880, Tulia and Susan Smithers and Lillian Otie, of Huntsville, taught a school, a small two-roomed building located at the present site of the grammar school. Later, Messers, Eberhardt and Florence, of Fredericksburg and New Braunfels, taught the same school. These were again replaced by Messers, Standard and Walker, who were followed by the two Allen brothers, John and Rivers, who again enlarged the school, both building and curriculum, even to the extent of teaching many subjects, especially sciences, which are not included in our present high school curriculum. These two Allen brothers moved their school, Allen Academy, to Bryan, Texas, around the turn of the century. In Bryan they incorporated many military aspects into the establishment, and the present Allen Military Academy was evolved.

The chronicle of Madison County's and Madisonville's schools after 1900, and especially after 1919, when John Conn was appointed Madison County's first County Superintendent, are too well known to warrant comment, the recorded information being filed in the office of the County Superintendent.

FIRST CHURCHES OF COUNTY - Probably the first religious services held in Madison County were conducted by the priests attached to the early exploratory expeditions or by those who were probably the parish priests of Trinidad and Bucareli. However, the history of the religious life of our pioneer for- bears must of necessity begin with that of the Protestant de- denominations which were active in this area during the colonial period.

Many of the early settlers were reputedly Presbyterians, who worshipped in the church at Old Bethel, an ancient landmark in the northern part of Grimes County. Circuit riders and missionaries of Baptist, Christian, and Methodist Churches were also active, and Catholic services were sometimes held in the homes of the Irish immigrants of Midway - Dr. Patrick Hayes, James Rayes, J.T. Browne, and others. The Reverend Periticles Swan should be mentioned as the earliest Methodist circuit rider of the area, who organized many short-lived congregations throughout the country. He was followed, at the beginning of the era of statehood, by the Reverend Robert Craw-

ford. who was granted two hundred acres of land adjoining the original grant for Madisonville by Job Starks Collard.

The earliest history of the permanent church establish-

of the county is shrouded in obscurity. However, it is with certainty that the Baptists had a church organiza- in Madisonville as early as April 17, 1856, when the present

site of the church building was deeded to the denomination's trustees by J.D. W. Creath. The Christian Church had its organ- on a working basis in Madisonville as early as 1883, and the next year a first meeting-house was erected on the

present site of the telephone office. It is probable, from information gathered concerning the aforementioned Reverend Robert Crawford, that the Madisonville Methodists were active in central Madison County at as early a date as 1847.

The history of the later church development is too well- known to warrant description herein.

MADISONVILLE[1]- Madisonville , the county seat of Madison county, is located on the league of land granted by the Mexican government on May 28, 1835, to Job Starks Collard, a member of Joseph colony. In 1854, immediately after the organization of Madison County, Mr. Collard donated two two hundred acres of land to the county ''For the purpose of establishing a county site". The Commissioners' Court was granted of either the present town-site or a similar location some distance east. The former was chosen because of its proximity to a good water supply - the lake which formerly existed east of what is is now the location of Madisonville High School. No record of this transaction is now available, but from deeds to surrounding areas it may be inferred that the the town square and a narrow tract of land running from the present Federal Highway 75 west to the western boundary of the older of the town's two cemeteries was conveyed.

Mr. Collard also had the distinction of operating the town's first business establishments, a combination hotel and general merchandise store situated at his home where the high school now stands.

[1] It is said that Madisonville was originally known merely as "Madison" the "ville" not being added until later by Ledford L. Swindler. installed as Madisonville's first postmaster on August 29, 1854.

Some early business establishments of the town were: the Dutch Green Hotel, operated from the year 1868 to some time in the 1880's by Messers. Green and Fox, who had. their Two-storied frame hostelry somewhere on the north side of the square; Madisonville's first drug store, operated by Major William W. Viser and Dr. Reuben Westmoreland and located where the Mustang Theater now stands; the Joseph Westmoreland general merchandise store, located where the Fred Westmoreland Grocery is situated; the Abraham Lewis Blacksmith Shop, which stood slightly west of the Al Stoddard building's present location.

Prior to the year 1882 Madisonville had its most thriving business section on the south side of the public square, for here were located two large brick buildings - unusual in this part of Rast Texas - which housed several general merchandise stores. In 1882 these buildings were destroyed by fire, along with Mr. S.T. Alphin's establishment. Madisonville stagnated until 1888, when the first newspaper of the county was established with J.H. Hall, a Baptist Minister, as editor. This publication, The Texas -Watchman, existed for only a few months, and was replaced in 1894 by T.J. Stephens, who published The Madisonville Meteor, still extant.

At the present time, the three oldest business establishments of the town that survive are the John H. Burtis Drugs, Incorporated, the T.M. Kellet Barber Shop, and the J.L. Cleere

Grocery Store, which date from 1886, 1890, and 1894, respectively.

Other early businesses included the many saloons, among which were the ancient Blue Front, located where W.N. Kellet's Barber Shop now stands, and the Brizzolara saloon, located on the present site of the Lavis Jewelry Store. The principal moving spirit of the latter saloon resided near the present location of Cleere's Grocery, and was also engaged in the operation of the Brizzolara Hotel, which several years later stood on the site of the Al Stoddard Electrical Supply Company, These, of course, were not the only saloons, but merely the oldest and most widely known.

In 1901, however, a local option election caused the Madisonville Independent School District to become ''dry." At this time E.B. Evans opened the Rough Edge Saloon some two miles east of town on Highway 21, just across the border of the school district. Across the road, and about a mile farther on, Bill Camel operated the Last Chance. In 1903, prohibition's influences extended over all of the county, and these last saloons were closed. This is why, in 1905, when the railroad to Madisonville was completed, bottles of liquor ordered via express from Navasota formed the main item shipped.

Madisonville was incorporated in 1905, but after a few months the incorporation was voted off, and it was not until 1912 that it was resumed. Since that time Madisonville has

continued to be the only incorporated town located wholly within Madison County* Its development has been somewhat aided by its Chamber of Commerce, which has intermittently been in existence since 1917. At present, Madisonville is the only town which boasts street lights, paved streets, sewage, and, with the exception of Midway and Normangee, a water works. The town also is proud of its large number of business establishments, including a federal and. a State Bank, and of the fact that it is the trading center of an area including parts of some five counties. Its citizens have hopes for the establishment of an airport and a radio station in the not-too-distant future, although the golf course north of the town is designated as an emergency landing field and has been recently graded and improved.

OTHER TOWNS OF COUNTY - It would be incorrect to gain the impression that Madisonville was the first or main early town of the area, for the settlement of Midway, named in 1854 after Midway, Kentucky, was for a time the rival of Madisonville. Mitchell's Prairie, its predecessor, was settled at least twenty years earlier, however. Roger's Prairie was another old settlement, probably dating from the 1840's, which was located about a mile from Normangee, not founded until 1907 when the B.&R. I. and the H.&T.C. Railroads built tracks and depots in the town. The "early town of Randolph" spoken of in certain Texas histories was not a town at all, but merely a steamboat landing on the Trinity River, at which point certain steamboats discharged their cargoes of a group of negroes or a few trade goods, and took on a few bales of cotton. although navigation of the river was uncertain, it was about the best means of transportation to be found in the area during the early pioneering era.

Most of the early settlements consisted merely of a rural school, and none had a population of over a hundred. Elwood, however, deserves to be mentioned, for Dr. George Washington Robinson, veteran of San Jacinto, as well as various other settlers, including the Robins, lived here some time before the Civil War, probably as early as 1840. Connor, in the southeastern part of the county, grew up around the none of the Connors, early pioneers of the county.

THE COUNTY COURT HOUSE - The need for a permanent seat justice had been felt at three sessions of county court held in 1854, it being necessary for the court to convene south of the present site of Cleere's grocery store, near the present home of Dr. J.E. Morris, and still later, under some oak trees southwest of what is now the first Baptist Church of Madisonville. Late in the year, the Commissioners' Court decided to order the execution of a structure of logs, which was duly built and promptly burned, hardly giving Judge W.F. Harmes time to open the session of court. The first court house, located in the center of our town square, was replaced by a similar shanty which miraculously stood until some time in the year 1867, when both records and building were destroyed again by a fire of extremely mysterious origin.

By this time, a sawmill had begun operation in neighbor- ing Walker County, so the Commi-ssioners' Court ordered work begun on a frame structure. Lumber was hauled in upon ox- drawn carts, and this more modern court house stood until January 2, 1873, when fire again made its appearance and for second time the records were destroyed, as was the building.

On January 3 and 4, the offices of the county were established in the old Masonic Hall. Here they remained until sometime in January, 1879. On April 2 of the proceeding year, W. C. Gibbs, County Judge, Major William W. Viser, County Clerk, and the Commissioners H.B. Cobb, P.K. Goree, and R.S. Page had

met and voted to levy a tax of one half of one percent on all assessed property of the county to finance construction of a brick building. Thomas and Warner, a firm of contractors, agreed to accept the offer for $7,000.00. Their integrity is questionable, for the two-storied building which they erected almost disintegrated of its own accord within a rather short period of time. This structure was forty feet square, two stories high, composed of seven rooms with a ten foot hall on the first floor, and extremely subject to unusual vibrations.

The Commissioners' Court, at this time composed of J.C. Morris, County Judge, S.H. Lindsey, P.K. Goree, A. J. Hicks, and E.A. McCorquedale, ordered the erection of a structure which was intended to overshadow in grandeur all other East Texas Court Houses. E.S. Glover and Company, of Houston, were engaged to draw up plans and specifications, in mixed Gothic Flemish styles, for the present building. On February 17, the final contract was drawn with Myer Brothers and

Risk, of Houston; for $25,000.00, $300.00 of which was on hand, they agreed to erect a modern court house according to Glover’s blueprints. A tax of twenty five cents per $100.00 valuation levied, and bonds, which were to mature in forty years, were issued. Two kilns of brick were burned near the old home of Perry Ashley, and work was soon begun, with B.S. Malone as consultant engineer and overseer for the Commissioners’ Court. of the refuse brick and mortar arose an interesting by-

product, the Burtis Corner Drug Store, originally intended for use by the Eastham Brothers' Dry Goods Store.

Soon the courthouse was completed according to specifications and was duly accepted by the county. It has served extremely well, needing only minor repairs from time to time, but is now rather outmoded. Although the Commissioners' Court has recently voted not to replace the present building, a movement * still underway to erect a new building.

POPULATION AND OTHER STATISTICS 0F MADISON COUNTY

1860	2238	1890	8512	1920	11956
1870	4061	1900	10432	1930	12227
1880	5395	1910	10318	1940	12029

Native population, 1940, all races	12010
foreign-born, 1940, all races19	
White	8165
Negro	3863
Urban	0

TOWNS AND SETTLEMENTS (1940 Census)

Madisonville, post office, two banks, 84 businesses, population of 2095, incorporated
North Zulch, post office, 13 business establishments, population of 400, unincorporated
Midway, post office, 11 business establishments, population of 400, unincorporated
Cottonwood, 2 business establishments, population of 70, unincorporated
Connor, 1 business establishment, population of 50, un-incorporated
George, post office, 1 business establishment, population of 50, unincorporated
Normangee, in Leon and Madison Counties, post office, 1 bank, 23 business establishments, population of 535, incorporated

COUNTY OFFICERS

County Judge, Wiley **N**. Coleman; County Clerk, Virgil Wells; County Attorney, Ed McLaren; County Treasurer, T.W. Byers; County School Superintendent, Charles N. Heath; County Health Officer, Dr. Jas. E. Morris; County Tax Assessor and Collector, Levene Wilson; County Sheriff, Benjamin Waldrip; County Surveyor, V.A. Wakefield; District Judge, Max Bogers District Clerk, R.M. Connor; District Attorney, Bill Barron County Commissioners - Ferguson, Kittleband, Hooper, Drake.