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THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEGRO LIFE IN
MADISONVILLE, TEXAS SINCE 1900

GOODEN

1949

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEGRO LIFE IN
MADISONVILLE, TEXAS SINCE 1900

By

Burnice R. Gooden

A Thesis in History Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

In The

Graduate Division

of

Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College
Prairie View, Texas

August, 1949

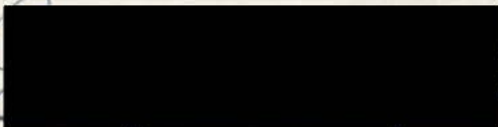
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Dr. G. R. Woolfolk

4-17-50

to mailing

37726

DEDICATION

To my family and father

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer is without words to express his feelings and appreciation to friends and officials of Madison County who rendered generous help in accomplishing this study. To you I must say thanks.

The writer wishes also to express his appreciation to Dr. G. R. Woolfolk, under whose direction this work was undertaken, for his scholarly advice and patience.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The problem of collecting data for this study has been a difficult one. In this small Texas town, as is the case of practically all small towns, the Negro leaves little records of themselves to serve as a guiding light to those to follow and would like to know something about their history.

The sources of information have been the various personal interviews with people who have lived in Madisonville and witnessed its steady growth. The local newspaper, records and information from the Madisonville Chamber of Commerce, Office of the Deeds of Records, and other local agencies and records gave valuable information that could be used in this study. The senior class of the Madisonville Colored High School made a survey of the Negro population in 1947 and their findings are their contribution to this study.

The writer of this study is a native of Madisonville and has seen the steady progress of the Negroes of Madisonville, Texas. The population consists of Negroes and whites and the interracial feeling between the two races is of such that they can live together in peace and comfort.

The point of progress, growth, and achievement of an individual, group or a race may be crowned with justice, honor and praise, but that group or community is greatest that achieves most with least means against greatest odds.

Against financial difficulty and domestic labor, paying a meager wage, and agriculture and common day labor, being the only source of income, the Negroes of Madisonville have attained, in great proportion, the distinction of good citizens, home owners, property holders and civic mindedness,

Purpose of Study

The objectives of this study are, first: to contribute valid findings to the "County Dooms" study as being carried out at Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College; and, second, to obtain valid evidence of the accomplishments of the Negroes of Madisonville, Texas, since 1900. Their slow but steady growth in the area of business and other branches of development is a mark of progressiveness afforded them by opportunities in the 20th Century.

It is the hope of the writer that others, in the field of History, will carry on this study from where he has left off.

Scope

The scope of this study is from 1900 to 1948 and applies to the Negroes of Madisonville, Texas, briefly tracing their development.

Method Used

The writer used the historical method in securing his data. Elaboration required topical-chronology for effectiveness.

Definition of Terms

The writer feels it necessary to define the following terms as they relate to this study:

1. Institutional Development may be defined as the growth and improvement of those long-standing organizations of men.
2. Economic Status is defined as the means and methods of living well and wisely.
3. Labor may be defined as physical or mental work.
4. Business Development is the unfolding and growth of commercial enterprises.
5. Health may be defined as the physical and mental condition of an individual or a group of people.
6. Crime may be defined as an offense against the public welfare.

Hypothesis

The Negroes of Madisonville have achieved much with least means against great odds and their development and growth have kept pace with the advancement of the town. As the town grows and develops so will the Negroes in proportion to the opportunities presented them.

Chapter II

MADISONVILLE---BEGINNING TO 1900

Historical Background

Madisonville is located in Madison County. "Madison County was created from Grimes, Walker and Leon Counties in 1853 and organized in 1854. The father of Madison County is P. W. Kittrell. It was named for President James Madison. Madison County is in the Post Oak Belt of East Central Texas." ¹

The history of Madison County can be traced from Indian days. Harrowing experiences have been related by old pioneers. There is no definite date of arrival of the very first permanent white or Negro settlers in Madison County; but over four centuries before their arrival, many attempts in colonizing the section had been frustrated by hostile and uncivilized man. ²

In 1854, when Madison County was organized, Madisonville was made County seat and became the principle trading and shipping point of the County. Soon thereafter the first court house was erected and stores, and churches comprised the business section. ³ In 1863 only two stores were in Madisonville and they were located near a running

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1. Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide, Dallas Morning News, Dallas, 1945-1946. Page 478
 2. The Madisonville Meteor, August 24, 1944
 3. Ibid.

spring where water would be convenient. Cattle raising was the chief source of income. In the region men would brand their cattle together and sell them together.⁴ From these two stores, along with the court house, Madisonville has steadily grown.

The first court house was built of logs in 1854 and was destroyed by fire a few years later. The second was built of the same material and destroyed by fire in 1867. The third was built of lumber and burned January 2, 1873, losing all records. The fourth court house was built of brick in 1879, but as time passed on it became unsafe and was demolished. This building was replaced by another more modernistic brick structure in 1894. In this year The Madisonville Meteor, the city paper, began its publication.

The population of Madisonville in 1897 was 500, including Colored and whites.

The Negro

The first Negro that probably came to Madison County was Mary Johnson, who came to this section and settled on the Trinity River in 1845 with the Dr. L. J. Goree and Kittrell families.⁵

Abraham Lewis and Lucy Lewis were the first Negroes to settle in Madisonville. Abe, as he was called, was from Virginia and Lucy Lewis was from Louisiana. In the words of

4. Recorded Interview, with John Malone, Madisonville, Texas, August 20, 1948.

5. The Madisonville Meteor, August 24, 1944.

their daughter:

"Abraham Lewis and Lucy Lewis were the first colored people to come to Madisonville. Lucy Lewis was freed under Boss Crawford, one-fourth mile from town. Abe Lewis came in possession of more than two hundred acres of land. He bought this land because it was cheap. He was the only blacksmith in this section. He got five dollars per horse for shoeing horses. The land where the county jail is located once belonged to Abe Lewis." 6

From the number of deeds in the possession of Nina Lewis, daughter of Abe and Lucy Lewis, Abe was a good liver and managed well. The Lewis family maintained a good standard of living. In 1872 Abe Lewis bought fifteen and six-tenth acres of land. 7

The following re-copy of this deed will show, in part, how it reads:

"The State of Texas know all men by Madison County these present that I, L. D. Collins of the County of Madison State of Texas in consideration of the sum of fifty dollars gold to me in hand paid by Abraham Lewis of the County and State afore said have granted, bargained, sold and released, and by these present do grant, bargain, sell and release unto the said Abraham Lewis the following tract of land of fifteen and six tenth acres." 8

Another deed shows that in 1878, Abe Lewis bought seventy-five acres of land for \$225.00. 9 A third shows that in November 1890 he bought two tracts or parcels of

6. Recorded Interview, Nina Lewis, Madisonville, Texas, June 30, 1949.

7. Deeds of Record, Madison County, Volume H, 1872. PP. 386-87.

8. Ibid.

9. Deeds of Record, Madison County, 1878, Volume G, PP. 514-515

land for \$40.00. ¹⁰

The Negro population of Madisonville from 1886 to 1897 was of such a small number that they could be easily named and counted and their location was easy to indicate. This location seemed to have been the pattern for other Negroes to follow; for in the western section of town they have settled. Down on the west side of the Court House Square was a little old house occupied by Charlie Johnson and his wife and farther down, two other houses were occupied by Negroes. A Colored Methodist Church was below these houses and a house occupied by Ed Burrell was below the Methodist Church. On the south side of the Court House Square lived Abe and Lucy Lewis whose family still own their property. ¹¹

Woven into the fabric of the history of the development of the Negro in Madisonville, as expressed by one of the earlier Negro settlers, is found in evidence in 1886 when General Sam Houston was a guest at the Green Hotel and Mr. Burtis, a druggist, was selected by the citizens to designate a valet for him during his stay. He chose Scott Fant, a Colored man, as valet. ¹²

As to the amount of income of Negroes up to 1900, from domestic and farm labor, it was very meager. The

10. Ibid., Volume M, PP. 391-392.

11. The Madisonville Meteor, August 24, 1944.

12. The Madisonville Meteor, August 24, 1944.

daily income was from thirty-five to fifty cents wages.

In the statement of Chanel Loud, who says:

"Many days I worked for thirty and fifty cents per day. I washed many washings for the same price." 13

The bricks, of which the present court house is constructed, were made by Pap Budes, as Chief Molder, along with other Negro and white labor.

"Building of the court house in 1894 brought fifty cents to sixty cents per day to white and colored brickmakers and in putting down the I and G N Railroad the prices were from fifty cents to seventy-five cents per day. An extra ordinary hand was given one dollar per day." 14

The old brickyard where the bricks were made still shows signs of a brickyard and the land is now owned by Perry Ashley, one of the pioneer Colored citizens.

In politics, before 1900, Negroes of Madisonville and in Madison County in general took part in the electing of local, state and national officers. This was from the latter part of 1800 to the time of the Terrell election law of Texas in 1903. The Terrell election law provided for only one primary. 15

"In 1901 there was no primary and neither any one paying poll tax. Most all Colored that were old enough voted. The Colored in Madisonville voted for me and the Colored in Midway voted for Mr. Hayes. I won. When

13. The Madisonville Meteor, August 24, 1944.

14. Recorded Interview, with J. P. House, Madisonville, Texas, August 22, 1948.

15. R. W. Steen, History of Texas. The Steck Company, Austin, Texas. Page 378.

the primary came in that was the last time
Colored voted." 16

The first church to be built in Madisonville was an African Methodist Church. This Church was short lived and the next to follow was the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. This Church is still in existence. Long before this Church was built its members met under an Arber without anyone as pastor. The members who would take the place of ministers were called exhalters. The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church building has gone through several remouldings, but its first construction was of log foundation hauled by John D. House. It had twelve foot walls. After the end of its construction in 1888, its first pastor was a Reverend Parker.

Before any Baptist Church was built in Madisonville, people of the Baptist faith walked more than two miles west of town to worship. About 1895 this group of people organized the first Baptist Church and held services in the Colored School with Reverend Neal McCloud as pastor. Following Reverend McCloud's pastorate, Reverend Lee Kingsbery pastored until 1902, when the first Baptist Church house was built and Reverend Dave Byrd became pastor. It eventually came to be known as the Shiloh Baptist Church.

16. Recorded Interview, D. W. Evans, Madisonville, Texas,
June 17, 1949.

The first school, for Negroes, in Madison County was established in a small community eight miles west of town known as High Prairie. This was in 1868. The first school, for Negroes, in Madisonville was in 1880, taught by Spencer Davis in a box house on the northeast part of town. In 1885 the school was established on the west side of town where most of the Negro people had settled. The land for this school was given by Neal McCloud. One of the first students of the first Negro school in Madisonville still lives and makes the following statement:

"After clearing away the timber, father and I hauled the lumber for the construction of the school house. I entered school in the first grade and the school term ran from three to five months." 17

After the one room building was constructed, Neal McCloud became teacher. Teachers, during this time, were also preachers. Neal McCloud attended Hearne Academy in Hearne, Texas. 18 This was exceptional, for most teachers during this time took County examination for Certificates.

We find that the Madisonville Negroes, up until 1900, were interested in three major areas - politics, religion and education. They built churches and they were interested in the limited schooling that was afforded them at the time. They were voters also, but for their interest in fraternal organizations and business development they were late.

17. Recorded Interview, with T. B. Mott, Madisonville, Texas, August 14, 1947.

18. Ibid.

Chapter III

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

From the two store town of the 1860s, Madisonville of the 1940s can speak of two banks - First National, organized in 1902 and The Farmers' State, established in 1907; three highways - Highway 75, that connects Houston and Dallas, Highway 21, that goes east and west, and Highway 90, that comes from Navasota and terminates at Madisonville; a Court House, which is solidly flanked on all four sides with brick buildings; ten dry good stores, one gin, four white churches, five Negro churches, modern grocery stores; creamery plant capable of producing 4,000 pounds of butter a day; chicken hatcheries; newspaper and printing plant; golf course; and, schools. ¹ Madisonville has grown from seemingly virgin territory into one of the leading agricultural centers in the State. ²

Homes

Just as the population increased, wages became better, and above all, thrust upon his own without homes, the Negroes of this little city increased in home ownership. They settled in the western part of the town. This section is fairly drained and is without paved streets, but they are

-
1. Madisonville Chamber of Commerce, Madison County, Madisonville, Texas, 1945. Page 4
 2. Madisonville Meteor, August 20, 1944.

passable practically at all times. The homes are well spaced and improved with beautiful lawns, adorned with shrubbery and flowers. Up until as late as 1900 there were no painted homes nor churches for Negroes. The buildings were constructed of rough lumber and without siding for painting and for beauty. All but about a dozen of these homes were rented and were owned by white owners.³ The lack of finance was the contributing cause of non ownership of homes among the Negro population. Domestic service and farming were the chief sources of income.

With the construction of the I and G N Railroad, from Navasota to Madisonville in 1903, and hiring of Negro labor with better pay, some were encouraged to buy land and build homes.⁴

The Negroes of Madisonville, who gradually increased from a mere handful in 1886 to 960 in 1947, seemed to have progressed according to financial booms. Beginning with the war years of 1918 and 1939, and with the exception of the depression years of 1929, practically all Negroes began rebuilding their homes with most of them painted and modernized. The first Negro to build a large, beautiful, painted home in Madisonville was Perry Ashley, in 1924.

3. Recorded Interview, with Buff Johnson, Madisonville, Texas, August 20, 1948.

4. Ibid.

Gradually and slowly, year after year, others did the same by remodeling or building all out with new material. Most of these homes have modern conveniences - electric lights, radios, running water, telephones and gas. Some few have bathrooms but they use septic tanks since there was no sewage line.

Note: Since 1947 the city has put down the sewage line in the Negro section and many have connected these. Street lights are also in the Colored Section.

School

In reviewing the school from its earliest days of establishment in Madisonville up until 1947, we find little, but slow, educational progress in adapting the school to the needs of the children in point of accomplishments after leaving school. The school mostly was taught at first by the minister, whose training was limited.

Since its establishment, the school house has gone through one stage of remodeling. As the scholastics increased, it became necessary to increase the number of teachers as well as add more rooms to accommodate the students. The present building, built in 1926, is a Rosenwald structure of painted lumber. In contrast with the early 1900s unpainted, one room, one teacher and approximately forty students school, it now has eight classrooms and eight teachers in the city with three others in the consolidated districts. ⁵

5. Recorded Interview, T. B. Mott, Madisonville, Texas, August 1947.

The present enrollment is 268. ⁶ The teachers' training takes in teachers with degrees ranging from Bachelors to Masters. Only one teacher in the system is without a degree. This teacher, however, has better than three years of college training.

The school has always been an asset to the community. From its earliest days until recently, the Madisonville Negro School held no accreditation with any college. Any student, who wished to continue his education, had to take a college entrance examination or go to some other high school with State recognition. This, of course, was added expense to the poor families who sacrificed to send their children to school. Incidentally, the first graduates, of the school, who finished and continued their college training were the writer, J. G. Gooden, M. V. Brown, and Phinis Ashley. This was in 1926, and since then, up until the accreditation of the school in 1947, a few others have continued their education.

The following tables will show, over a period of years, how the school enrollment, and the teachers salary increased. ⁷

6. Public School Directory, Austin, Texas, 1948.

7. Ledger of Teachers Salary, Madison County, 1920-1947.

Table I. Scholastics of the Madisonville Negro School and the Salaries of Negro Principals and Teachers of Madisonville and Madison County

Years	Enrollment	Principals Salary		Teachers Salary	
		City	County	City	County
1920-1930	619 to 130	\$60.00- \$75.00	\$75.00- \$85.00	\$40.00- \$40.00	\$40.00- \$60.00
1930-1940	130 to 160	\$75.00- \$90.00	\$60.00- \$114.50	\$40.00- \$45.00	\$40.00- \$75.00
1940-1947	160 to 260	\$90.00- \$100.00	\$95.00- \$143.00	\$60.00- \$75.00	\$81.90- \$134.00

There are no data, local or otherwise, on the enrollment and salary of teachers from 1900 to 1920. The table shows that the enrollment was ever on the increase in the Madisonville Colored School, whereas the salaries of the rural or County teachers were increasing. Before the equalization of salaries in 1947 the County schools received State Aid and the City school operated on independent basis.

Most of the teachers during this time took out Certificates and started teaching before receiving degrees, but continued their college training during the summer. The following table will show the teachers Certification. ⁸

8. Ledger of Teachers Certificates, Madison County, 1910-1947.

Table II. Certification of Negro Teachers in the Madisonville Negro School

Years	M	F	Kind of Certificate					How Obtained
			1st. C.E.	2 yr.	3 yr.	4 yr.	Perm.	
1900-1910	2	1		2		1		College
1910-1920	2	5	3	2			2	College
1920-1930	3	4	6	1				College
1930-1940	2	6	1	3	1		3	College
1940-1947	3	9	4				8	College

During the depression days the school operated a farmers' shop, where farmers would come and repair their farm implements without much cost. The Out of School Youths, under the OSYA Program, were given training in woodwork, painting, and general repair. ⁹

The school in Agriculture is stressing to the boys and girls "The Live at Home" idea since they are living in an agricultural area. Along with the agricultural teacher of the school the Extension service of the A and M College, with the County Commissioners Court cooperating, much has been done toward educational advancement of farming in this Community and Madison County in general. The following Agricultural Agents, who have been appointed and rendered valuable service in Madison County, are: Gus Jones, February 1, 1931, whose appointment was cancelled; B. T. Prince, July 1, 1931; William Cullen David, March 21, 1934, transferred to Prairie View as District Agent; and, Jack Carver

9. Recorded Interview, with O. C. Davison, Walker County, Texas, July 7, 1949.

Gooden, April 1, 1943, present Agent. 10

Churches

Of the thirty-three major denominations in religion, the Negroes of Madisonville are communicants of four of them - the Baptist, Methodist, Church of Christ, and the Sanctified. Their membership ranges from 11 to 227. The Methodist Church, being the oldest Colored Church in town, increased in membership from 45 in 1920 to 90 in 1947. It has been rebuilt once since its construction in 1888. That was in 1923 under the pastorate of Reverend J. C. Stripling.¹¹ This white painted Church has a high steeple on its bell tower and a nice front view with a spacious lawn and a parsonage for its minister and family. In 1920 the membership paid ten, fifteen and twenty-five cents to meet its Church obligations. Now they pay from fifty cents to one dollar and more to meet its obligations.

The Shiloh Baptist Church, the second oldest Colored Church in Madisonville, had a membership of 266 in 1930 but in 1947 it had decreased to 227.¹² Since its organization in 1895 this Church has been rebuilt twice. The last being in 1937 under the pastorate of Reverend S. E. Diggs of Bryan, Texas.¹³ This Church also has a spacious lawn,

10. Madisonville Meteor, August 24, 1944.

11. Wilson Chapel Methodist Church, Conner Stone, 1923.

12. Church Ledger, Shiloh Baptist Church, Madisonville, Texas, 1928-1947.

13. Ibid.

a flat bell tower, paster's study, choir room, six Sunday School class rooms, a balcony, and a main Auditorium. To meet its obligations, the membership paid the same amount as the Methodist did.

The third church that was established in Madisonville among Negroes was the Church of Christ, in 1936 under Brother Jim Johnson of Midway, Texas, with seven members.¹⁴ Its membership has increased to 11.¹⁵ This Church, with the support of the white Church of Christ in the City, is still carrying on. Its building is smaller than any other of the Negro Churches of the City but it has a large Church lawn. The next Church to be established was the Sanctified Church in 1937 with 50 members, by Elder Evans.¹⁶ The membership held services for awhile in a vacant house on Ell Tyler's place, but later bought and built about 300 yards east from where it was first set up. Its membership decreased from 50 in 1937 to 30 in 1948.¹⁷

In 1940 a second Baptist Church was organized among Negroes of Madisonville. It came 53 years after the setting up of the first Baptist Church. Its founders were mostly members who had moved to town from a small Community known

14. Church Ledger, Church of Christ, Madisonville, Texas, 1936-1945.

15. Ibid.

16. Church Ledger, Sanctified Church, Madisonville, Texas, 1937-1948.

17. Ibid.

as Sweet Home. 18

This Church is the only Negro Church in Madisonville that can present a Charter giving the names of its founders. A re-copy of the Charter follows:

"Madisonville, Texas, October 23, 1944
Organization of the Sweet Zion
Baptist Church.

The Sweet Zion Baptist Church was organized in the year 1940 by Reverend W. F. Jackson on the spot of ground of Mr. Ben Gooden, on the South side of Madisonville, Texas, in a store house owned by Ben Gooden."

Names of members that constituted the organization
are: 19

Brother Abb McGrew	Sister Rella Manning
Sister Jennett McGrew	Brother Alvin Evans
Sister Cora Williams	Sister Eddie Evans
Sister M. L. Bridges	Sister Stella Cooper
Sister Roberta Palmer	Sister Lucy Curtis
Sister Adda Gibbs	Sister Cadella Curtis
Brother Travis Cooper	Sister Viola Ray
Brother Allen Brown.	

The Church membership has grown from 15 in 1940 to 123 in 1948. 20 In 1941 a building 24 feet by 36 feet was built on property they had bought. This was under the pastorate of Reverend Horice Jackson. 21 In 1943, under the pastorate of Reverend J. T. Harris, 14 feet were added.

-
18. Church Ledger, Sweet Zion Baptist Church, Madisonville, Texas, 1940-1948.
19. Charter, Sweet Zion Baptist Church, Madisonville, Texas, 1944.
20. Church Ledger, Sweet Zion Baptist Church, Madisonville, Texas, 1940-1948.
21. Ibid.

As the membership increased this building became too small and in 1945 it was torn down and rebuilt with a deminsion of 40 feet by 65 feet. ²² No Negro Church in Madisonville has a full time pastor. The Baptist Churches have two pastoral Sundays per month. It was in 1929 when Shiloh Baptist Church began to use the first and third Sundays as pastoral days in every month. ²³ Up until this time the fourth Sunday was its regular Church day. Since 1947 Sweet Zion Baptist Church uses the second and fourth Sundays as its Church days. ²⁴

Wilson Chapel Methodist Church uses the third Sunday for its pastoral day. ²⁵ Because of its small membership, the Sanctified Church has no regular preaching day.

Every Sunday morning these Churches have Church School with most of the attendance young people and a very few adults.

Organizations

Since 1901 we find the Negroes of Madisonville played but little part in politics. There is no record to be found nor any of the older citizens who can give an account

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- 22. Corner Stone, Sweet Zion Baptist Church, Madisonville, Texas, 1944.
 - 23. Church Ledger, Shiloh Baptist Church, Madisonville, Texas, 1929-1947.
 - 24. Church Ledger, Sweet Zion Baptist Church, Madisonville, Texas, 1940-1948.
 - 25. Church Ledger, Wilson Chapel Methodist Church, Madisonville, Texas, 1920-1948.

of any political organizations. It seems from the organizations established during these years that the people were interested in two things - a home for their soul after this life and a decent burial for their dead. Churches and benevolent organizations claimed their attention. The following organizations were set up in Madisonville but for a short duration:

The Odd Fellows and the Household of Ruth were the first to be organized. They were established in Madisonville in 1900. ²⁶ There was a monthly fee of twenty-five cents for homes dues and one dollar and fifty cents quarterly dues for headquarter fee. The beneficiary received \$75.00 for burial and \$300.00 endowment. ²⁷ This Organization bought property and built an Odd Fellows Hall in 1913. This society went out in 1926 and after going down the property was sold to Ben Gooden. ²⁸ In 1917 the Masonic Temple of America was organized but ceased to function in 1923. Money paid into it was on the same order as the Odd Fellows. The beneficiary received a monument for the deceased and \$150.00 in cash. ²⁹

Following this order came the Sir Knights and Daughters of Tabor whose members paid on the same basis as the other organizations. It was set up in 1918 and went out in 1926.

26. Recorded Interview, with R. D. Davis, Madisonville, Texas, July 1, 1949.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

The beneficiary received \$300.00 and a \$75.00 burial for the deceased. The Home Protection came in 1926, but went out in 1929. It paid \$60.00 to the beneficiary.

The Masonic Order was established in 1937.³⁰ The women's division, the Heroines, soon followed. This is the only benevolent organization still in existence that ever was established in Madisonville among its Negroes. The depression years were the contributing cause for the failure of most of the organizations to exist.

In 1940 an organization known as the Civic League was organized in Madisonville and various other Communities in the County.³¹ It became concerned with the civic affairs of the community. This movement was led by J. H. Owens, now editor of a Walker County paper.³² In 1941, under the leadership of Mrs. Armye Jones, Jean Supervisor of Madison County, these Civic Leagues merged into one and is now known as the Madison County Coordinated Cabinet.³³ It has encouraged the Negroes to pay poll tax, to become civic minded, and better their health conditions. This Organization played a part in getting rest rooms for Negroes in Madisonville. The effort to locate these rest rooms in the City Hall was a failure but they are located by the jail house. Other works of this Organization will be discussed later.

30. Masonic Ledger, Madisonville, Texas, 1937-1948.

31. Recorded Interview, O. C. Davison, Walker County, Texas, July 7, 1949.

32. Ibid. July 7, 1949.

33. Armye Jones, The Madison County Recreation and Health Center for Negroes, 1948. Page 1.

Chapter IV

ECONOMIC STATUS

From 1897 to 1948 the population of Madisonville increased to 3,595; ¹ with 970 or 27% of these being Negroes. With her principle industries of dairying and beef cattle raising in the Post Oak Belt of East Central Texas, Madisonville has developed Negro businesses, Churches, fraternal organizations and modern dwellings.

In 1940, Madisonville had 84 white business establishments and only six Negro businesses. ² This, of course, is due to the increase of population, for in 1920 the total population of all races in Madisonville was 1,079 and 1,294 for the year 1930. The Negro population in Madisonville in 1920 was 110 and 181 for 1930. ³ In 1940 the total population for Madisonville was 2,095 and of this number 242 were Negroes. ⁴ There is no separate figures nor data in detail available for 1900 and 1910. ⁵

A survey of Madisonville Negro population in 1947, by the writer and senior class of the Madisonville Colored

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1. Madisonville Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Survey of City of Madisonville, Madisonville, Texas, May 1, 1948. P.P. 2 - 5.
 2. Madisonville Meteor, August 24, 1944.
 3. G. H. Powers, Secretary, Madisonville Chamber of Commerce, July 18, 1949.
 4. Race, Age, Sex for Incorporated Places of 1,000 to 2,500, Table 29, Census of 1940. Page 240.
 5. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D. C., August 25, 1948.

School, shows that the Madisonville Negro population has increased considerably since 1900. This increase is due to the depression years and World War II. Many Negroes left the farm because it was hard to get their parity checks from the landlords.

World War II is another contributing factor for the shift of many Negroes to move to Madisonville from rural communities. Men who went into the Armed Services and those that went to larger cities for better jobs and higher wages moved their families to town. By doing so, they bought homestead lots and built nice homes.

The table that follows will show the increase and decrease of property owners, as well as point out the amount of land bought through the span of years by Negroes of Madisonville. This table is based on the adult population rather than the total population which counts children and all.

Table III. Adult Negro Property Owners of Madisonville, Texas

Year	1920	1930	1940	1948
Number of Negroes ⁶	110	181	242	970
Children ⁷	69	130	160	268
Adults	41	51	82	702
Property Owners ⁸	10	12	25	251
Per cent of Property Owned by Adults	24.4%	23.5%	30.5%	37.7%
Non-Property Owners	31	28	57	451
Amount of Land Owned by Individuals ⁹	8-3/4 Acres	15 Acres	36 Acres	101 1/2 Acres

Labor

It has been brought out that farming and domestic service were the chief sources of Negro labor in Madisonville. Other areas of labor for employment, as the town

6. G. N. Powers, Secretary, Madisonville Chamber of Commerce, July 18, 1949.
7. Public School Directory, Austin, Texas, 1920-1948.
8. Survey, Madisonville Negro Population, High School, Madisonville, Texas, 1947.
9. School Tax Roll, Madisonville, Texas, 1930-1948.

grew and the population increased over the years were: store helpers, gardeners, yard work, woodhauling, truck driving, garage work, public jobs, and other odd jobs. Other more skillful jobs that Negro men took to without special training were: Carpentering, Masonry, Mechanics, Plumbing, Concrete Finishers, and Blacksmithing. 10

The following table will show the various types of occupations followed by Negroes of Madisonville over the years. The table is based on the adult population and shows, in percentage, the type of work followed to the total adult population during the years:

10. Survey, Madisonville Negro Population, High School, Madisonville, Texas, 1947.

Table IV. Occupations Followed by Negroes of Madisonville, Texas

Years	1920	1930	1940	1948
Adult Population	41	51	82	702
Per cent in Work Followed	7.3	7.8	8.5	14.2
Kind of Work 11	Domestic	Domestic	Domestic	Domestic
	Farming	Farming	Farming	Masonry
	Common Labor	Common Labor	Common Labor	Cafe
		Delivery	Delivery	Store
			Stores	Blacksmith
			Garages	Carpentry
			Carpentry	Garage
				Beautician
				Barbershop
				Farming

The survey revealed that Madisonville isn't without aged people and disabled veterans of World War I and II, but for their income they draw Old Age Pensions and

11. Survey, Madisonville Negro Population, High School, Madisonville, Texas, 1947.

Veterans' Benefits. When the survey was made only eight were drawing Old Age Benefit. This, of course, does not apply to the County, for the writer was unable to get the County total from the Pension Office in Madisonville.

From 1900 up until World War I, as it has been mentioned before, the type of labor done was mostly domestic and farming. Domestic work was from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per week and farm labor was from fifty cents to seventy-five cents per day. ¹² Many farmers hauled cotton and cotton seeds to Huntsville, 30 miles away, in wagons over unpaved roads to get \$5.00 for a ton of seeds and \$25.00 to \$40.00 for a bale of cotton. ¹³ Seven dollars was a good price for a good cow.

The cost of living was very low and as a result living conditions were not a burden.

From 1914 to the depression year of 1929 the people of Madisonville enjoyed a few prosperous years, especially the farmers who received fair prices for their commodities. He received from \$125 to \$200 for a bale of cotton. ¹⁴

Wages for day labor were from one dollar to one dollar and fifty cents and as a result a few Negroes made

12. Recorded Interview, with Larar Bassett, Madisonville, Texas, August 17, 1948.

13. Recorded Interview, with Jimmy Washington, Midway, Texas, July 8, 1949.

14. Recorded Interview with Perry Ashley, Madisonville, Texas, September 12, 1948.

good of it by buying property and building homes. 15

It has been previously stated that many farmers left the farm because it was very hard for them to get their rental checks. This was the result of the depression from 1929 to World War II. Many Negroes were without work and as a result they were put on the relief, the PWA, and a small number of young people in the CCC Camps.

Table III shows that World War II produced more Negro property owners in Madisonville than at any other period. This is due to the fact that many had no homes in moving to town and rather than to be transient or be made to move at the suggestion of someone else, they bought property and built homes for a small "down payment", and a small monthly payment.

During World War II and the Post War period, the Negroes, along with the other people of Madisonville, enjoyed the most prosperous time of their history. The Negroes were well compensated for their labor and service. Their average income, excluding the Old Age Pensioners, was from \$1,300 common labor to \$2,500 on more skillful jobs as Carpentering, Plumbing, and Concrete Finishers. 16 As a result of high wages and money sent home from men in

15. School Tax Roll, Madison County, 1930-1948.

16. Survey of Madisonville Colored Population, High School, Madisonville, Texas, 1947.

the Armed Services, home ownership increased and homes were remodeled and beautified.

The Negroes of Madisonville contributed their share in the support of the War. They bought War Bonds, gave to the Red Cross, the March of Dimes and to the USO. ¹⁷ These contributions were donations given through the churches, school, organizations, businesses, and by individuals. ¹⁸

As a result of this economic boom, Negroes in Madisonville paid more poll taxes. In comparing the number who paid poll tax in the early years of 1900 with those of the late thirties and forties, we find that only five paid poll tax from 1900 to 1917; none from 1917 to 1928; eleven from 1928 to 1937; and twenty-six from 1938 to 1948. ¹⁹ This is a small number in proportion to the Negro population but it does show a trend toward politics.

Business Development

It was previously stated that in 1940 there were only six Negro businesses in Madisonville. These businesses, along with others, are still in existence. In 1925 Eddie Josey went into garage business and in 1934 he added a grocery store. ²⁰ In 1926 Ben Gooden established a grocery

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- 17. Recorded Interview with Cashier, Farmers State Bank, Madisonville, Texas, July 20, 1949.
 - 18. Madisonville Negro School, School Record, 1942-1945.
 - 19. Poll Tax Roll, Madison County, 1913-1948.
 - 20. Recorded Interview with Eddie Josey, Madisonville, Texas, July 16, 1949.

store and in 1928 his wife, Lucy Gooden, established the first Negro Beauty Shop. ²¹ In 1939, James Wiley went into the blacksmith business for himself and his trade has been so great that he had to train a helper to help meet his customers' demand. ²² In connection with his blacksmith work he established a grocery store in 1942. ²³

In 1932 the first funeral home for Negroes in Madisonville was established by Gus Jones. ²⁴ In 1939 Josephine Josey established the Stream Line Beauty Shop. ²⁵

The financial boom of World War II was a boost to women in the field of beauty culture for in 1944 Johnson's Beauty Shop was established; and in 1946, Beatrice Beauty Box and Washington's Beauty Shop were established. ²⁶ Also, in 1946, Webber's Ideal Benevolent Burial Association was organized. ²⁷

Small's Cafe was opened in 1945 and Byrd's Barber-shop was opened in 1947. ²⁸ These businesses give part

21. Recorded Interview with Ben Gooden, Madisonville, Texas, July 10, 1949.
22. Recorded Interview, with J. L. Wiley, Madisonville, Texas., July 20, 1949.
23. Store License No. 60675, Austin, Texas, 1942.
24. Survey of Madisonville Negro Population, High School,
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Certification of State Board of Barbers, Austin, Texas, 1947.

time employment to Negroes of Madisonville as a result of good patronage.

Health

The service one can give to his community, his country or to his family depends upon how long he lives. This, however, is determined by the health of the individual. It was a long time before the citizens of Madisonville and Madison County became aware of the health conditions of the Negro population. It was in 1941 when they became health conscious. Before this time the cause of death among the adults, and more especially the young, went unnoticed. They were being sick too much and dying too fast.²⁹

The table below will show the diseases that are the highest in number in causing death among the Negro people of Madisonville and Madison County:

29. Sanders and Yearwood, Coordinating the Efforts of School, Home, and Church in a Program for Community Improvement, Wiley College, Marshall, Texas, 1945. Page 4.

Table V. ³⁰ Diseases that are Highest in Number in Causing Deaths Among Negroes of Madisonville and Madison County

1910-1929		1930-1940		1941-1948	
City	County	City	County	City	County
Pneumo- nia	Pneumo- nia	Pneumo- nia	Pneumo- nia	Pneumo- nia	Pneumo- nia
Influ- enza	Appendi- citus	Still Born	Still Born	Still Born	Still Born
Appendi- citus	High Blood	Heart	Cancer	Cancer	Cancer
Tubercu- losis	Malaria	Malaria	Hemor- rage	Heart	Heart
Acute Nephri- tis	Tubercu- losis	Apoplexy	Apoplexy	Apoplexy	Hemor- rage
		Tubercu- losis	Tubercu- losis	Tubercu- losis	Premature Birth
		Premature Birth	High Blood		
			Influ- enza		

The leading diseases in the Table above are pneumo-
nia, tuberculosis, still born, cancer, heart, and apoplexy.
There were other diseases but their occurrences were not as
numerous as the ones in the group in Table V.

The health problem of Madisonville became the health
problem of Madison County. This was realized more so dur-
ing World War II when the two white doctors had their

30. Death Record, Madison County, 1910-1948.

hands full despite their interest in the health of the Negroes. Recognizing this as a problem the Negro leadership of the County in general considered some solution to it. The problem was solved by developing Community Cabinets. Madisonville Community Cabinet was organized with church, school, home and other agencies. Representatives from the communities met February 17, 1941 at the Madisonville Colored School and organized the Madison County Coordinated Cabinet.³¹ The County Cabinet discovered that the health needs of its colored people were among its most pressing problems. It adapted as its motto the pledge of Prairie View A and M College, "To render service at the point of greatest need".³²

The first step the group took towards meeting the health needs was purchasing land and providing a house for the sick to receive treatment. In 1942 a purchasing committee bought four lots, size 62 x 200.³³ These lots are located on the west side of Madisonville adjoining the school campus. In 1943 the building was erected.

In 1945, Dr. Connie Yerwood, State Health Department of Texas, made it possible to have a Well Child Conference and a Pre-natal Clinic.³⁴ The services of a

31. Arnye Jones, The Madison County Recreation and Health Center for Negroes, Madisonville, Texas, 1946. Page 1.

32. Ibid. Page 4.

33. Ibid. Page 6.

34. Ibid. Page 8.

physician and supplies for the Clinic were at the expense of the State Health Department. The Clinic staff includes the services of a Doctor, Nurse and voluntary workers. The first treatments were given September 28, 1945 through the services of Dr. S. J. Sealey, Mrs. Willie Mae Jones, Nurse, and Mrs. S. J. Sealey, voluntary workers.³⁵ In 1946 the building was made larger to accommodate the large number of patients who visit the Clinic weekly.

Through the services of the Clinic, hundreds of pre-school and school children have been vaccinated, scores of pre-natal cases have received treatment and other people come for treatment. The Clinic is instrumental in educating pre-natal mothers and mid-wives in attending mothers.

As a result of this Clinic the health condition of the Negroes of Madison County and Madisonville has been greatly improved.

Crime

From 1913 to 1948 there were five major crimes committed by 22 Negroes of Madisonville and Madison County. These crimes were, murder, burglary, forgery, aiding a prisoner to escape from the county jail and concealing State property.

35. Ibid., Page 9.

The Table that follows will show the distribution and number of crimes committed by Negroes of Madisonville and Madison County, the conviction, punishment, and the dismissal of the party involved. This includes both men and women.

Table VI. The Distribution of Crimes Committed by Negroes of Madisonville and Madison County and the Outcome

Crime	1913-1929		1930-1940		1940-1945		Conviction	Punishment	Dismissal
	City County		City County		City County				
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Murder	2	4			2		2	1	5 to 10 years in State Penitentiary Suspended-7 Sent to State Penitentiary-3 1
Burglary					3		1		2 to 5 years in State Penitentiary and \$500.00 Suspended-3 Paid \$500 fine-1
Forgery		2	1	2					2 to 5 years in State Penitentiary and \$500 fine Suspended-2 Paid \$500-1 Sent to State Penitentiary-1 1

TABLE VI Continued 36

Crime	1913-1929		1930-1940		1940-1945		Conviction	Punishment	Dismissal
	City	County	City	County	City	County			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Concealing State Property					1			2 to 5 years in State Peniten- tiary	Suspended-1
Aiding Prisoner to escape County jail					1			2 to 5 years in State peniten- tiary	Suspended-1

36. Criminal Records, Madison County, 1913-1948.

The Table seems to point out that during more prosperous years, murder is the chief crime and during depression years, burglary and forgery are the highest in number. This may be due to the fact that poverty and unemployment help breed crime.

In contrast to murder in criminal cases, gaming dominates the petty cases among Negroes in Madisonville who commit such crime. We have no data previous to 1937 on petty crimes as related to Negroes of Madisonville but the Criminal Dockets of 1937 and 1938 show gaming and drunkenness are the most numerous petty crimes.

The Table following will show the type of crimes, number committed, and the total fee for each, for the years 1937 and 1938. ³⁷

37. Criminal Docket, Madison County, Present 1, 1937-1938.

Table VII. ³⁸ Type and Number of Petty Crimes Committed by Negroes of Madisonville and the Total Fee for Each

Type of Crime	Number Committed	Total Cost of Each
Gaming	14	\$16.20
Drunkenness	10	18.00
Disturbance	9	14.00
Affray	4	15.00
Speeding	2	14.00
Check Swindling	2	19.50

This Table points out that the fee for petty crimes was paid and the Table on the major crimes shows that more than three-fourths of the criminals were suspended. The suspended sentences are given, in the opinion of the jury, because of the previous record of the defendant. Their statement follows:

"We the jury, find the defendant guilty as charged and assess his penalty at five years in the State Penitentiary and in as much as he has never been convicted of a felony in this State or any other state, and we recommend that the sentence be suspended during good behavior. ³⁹

The economic status of an individual plays an important part in his health and his social behavior. Poor

38. Criminal Docket, Madison County, 1937-1938.

39. Criminal Record, Madison County, 1913-1948.

land sometimes causes poor health and low income. These two factors have contributed their share in causing many deaths among Negroes of Madisonville and Madison County as shown in Table V. This can be summed up in Mr. Baker's statement, who says that:

"In areas where land is very poor, crops that grow in such areas are likely to be insufficient. People try to live on the income from these small crops and poverty results. In such instances poverty, poor housing, poor health, and crime results from such environment."⁴⁰

40. A. O. Baker, Dynamic Biology Today, Rand McNally and Company, Chicago, Illinois, 1948. pp 475-476.

Chapter V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Negroes of Madisonville have made slow but steady progress since the beginning of the 20th Century. Madisonville was made County Seat of Madison County in 1854 and during those early years only a few Negroes were among its inhabitants. Madison County is located in the Post Oak Belt of East Central Texas and was named for President James Madison.

In 1897, there were only 500 people, including whites and Negroes, living in Madisonville. Mary Johnson was probably the first Negro to settle in Madison County. She came to this section in 1845 with the Goree and Kittrell families and settled on the Trinity River. Abraham and Lucy Lewis were the first Negroes to settle in Madisonville. The deed records show that Abraham Lewis bought many acres of land in 1872, 1878, and in 1890. He was a blacksmith by trade. ¹

From these two Negroes of Madisonville in 1872 the number in population has increased to 927 in 1948.

Farming and domestic labor were the chief sources of income. From their meager wages Negroes bought property, built homes, established churches and went into business.

1. Deeds of Records, Madison County, Volume H, 1872.
PP 385-389.

In 1921 there was only one Negro business in Madisonville. That was Josey's Garage. By 1940 that number increased to six. As a result of World War II and the Post War period more businesses have been established, homes built and remodeled and also modernized. This was due to high wages as a result of the War.

During the two Wars and the Post War periods, Negroes of Madisonville became interested in business and during the depression they were interested in home ownership. This may be due to the fact that during the depression years he was no longer wanted on the farm because the landowners preferred the parity checks rather than his share of the crops. In such case the Negroes left the farms and moved to town. In moving to town he bought property and built homes.

When these people moved to town they brought with them their faith and as a result the Sanctified Church and the Church of Christ were established. The other churches increased in membership and finance.

The Madisonville Colored School, along with the Extension Services in Agriculture, have contributed largely to the community on cultural lines. Being an independent school district, the Madisonville Colored School lagged behind some of the County schools, financially, until 1947 when it began to operate on equalization basis.

Many Negroes of Madisonville are employed in other fields of labor outside the Agricultural and domestic line. Some are blacksmiths, garage mechanics, carpenters, concrete finishers, store keepers, beauticians, cafe operators and many others. These businesses give part time employment to Colored helpers.

In contrast to fifty cents and \$1.50 per week for domestic work and fifty cents to \$1.00 per day for common labor, the Negroes of Madisonville now enjoy from \$360 Old Age Assistance to \$2,500 in concrete finishing as an annual income.

For a long time the Negroes of Madisonville and Madison County paid little attention to the health conditions of their people. They were "being sick too much and dying too fast". There was a great number of causes for death. The chief among them all were heart disease, tuberculosis, still born, cancer, pneumonia, and apoplexy. There were more causes of death and more deaths during the depression than during any other period. This may be due to the fact that financial circumstances prevented the people from caring, as they liked, for their health needs.

To solve the health problem of Madisonville and Madison County Colored population, the leaders of all communities met at the Madisonville Colored School on February 17, 1941 and organized the Madison County Coordinated Cabinet. In 1942 this organization erected a

building on four lots they had bought and made preparation for health examinations, inspections of pupils, and dental work. This work went on until 1945 when Dr. Connie Yerwood, from the Health Department of Austin, made it possible to have a Well Child Conference and a Pre-natal Clinic. The State Health Department furnished the services of a physician and supplies for the Clinic. The first clinical treatments were given September 28, 1945 and since that date, hundreds of pre-school and school children have been vaccinated, and scores of pre-natal cases have been received and treated. As a result of this Clinic, life has been prolonged for many people and the death rate along with sickness have been lessened.

Crime among the Negro people of Madisonville and Madison County seems to follow the same pattern of health. During the prosperous years murder is the major crime committed and during the depression years burglary and forgery take the lead. More than three-fourths of the criminals convicted received from two to five years suspended sentences.

Gaming and drinking lead in petty crime. This type of crime seems to be decreasing. This is due to church activity and moral training.

The Negroes have advanced in home ownership, religion, education, business, and civic pride in the town of Madison-

ville, under difficulty. It is the writer's conclusion that if the Negroes of Madisonville have made achievements with least means against great odds, they will continue to do so. As the town grew and increased in population, so did the Negroes. They will continue to advance along with the town in proportion to the opportunities presented them.

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