

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS – HOOD COUNTY HISTORY
GRANBURY NEWS-TABLET 1952

Hood County News-Tablet. Thursday, February 7, 1952. Page 6

Interested in County History

Interested in the history of our county? A great many people are and from a scrapbook which was kept by Mrs. E.A. Hannaford we are printing some questions and answers about the early days. Mrs. O.H. Lanham, daughter of Mrs. Hannaford, has kindly given us permission to use it. The facts are taken from the Tablet while it was published by A.W. Crockett. Following his plan, we'll ask the questions this week and print the answers in the next issue.

1. When was Granbury first planned and organized and after whom was it named?
2. When was it incorporated, and who was the first mayor?
3. When was the first court house built, and who held the first District Court?
4. Who was the first County Judge and who the first Sheriff?
5. When was the first county seat contest?
6. When was Hood County organized, and out of what territory?
7. When did Hood lose a portion of her territory?
8. How was Somervell county created?
9. Who was the first man hanged in Hood County?
10. When was the first murder committed in the county?

Answers published in the next issue - February 21, 1952:

1. Granbury was first planned in 1870. It was intended to locate the town between here and Thorp spring on the rolling land now occupied by the old R.G. Peters home, but some questions about land titles caused Jno. D. McCamant and others who were prime movers in locating the new town to select the present site, believing the title to be more secure. Of course they did not foresee the suit with Milam county over her school lands, which was tried before Judge Fleming and went in favor of Milam County on appeal to the higher court. The first town lot sale held in 1870. The town was laid out and houses began to be erected. The town was named in honor of Gen. H.B. Granbury, of Waco, who was killed in the battle of Franklin, Tenn.
2. In 1872, the town was incorporated, and P.H. Thrash was elected as its first mayor.

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3. The first courthouse was constructed in 1871, with plank floors, an upper story, with a wide wooden stairway leading up to it. The building was destroyed by fire in 1875. It was rebuilt and used until 1886 (*sic.* -1891 the correct date), when the present structure took its place. Hon. Chas. Soward, of Weatherford, was the first Judge of the District Court, holding his first term in 1871.
4. The first County Judge of Hood County was Abel Landers, the first Sheriff was A.J. Wright. Stockton was then the seat of government (1866-1871). Capt. Wright later resigned the sheriff's office, refusing to take the oath prescribed by the carpet-bag Republican government that he had never engaged in rebellion against the U.S. Government (meaning the Confederacy).
5. The first county seat contest was held in 1871 between Granbury and Comanche Peak, Granbury winning out.
6. Hood County was organized in 1866 out of territory taken from Erath and Johnson counties. The boundary line between Johnson and Erath was originally at Comanche Peak. After the creation of Hood County, Erath still had 1200 square miles left and Johnson 900. Hood had about 600 square miles.
7. Somervell County was created in 1875, out of one precinct of Hood County, containing about 150 square miles. It was the intention to secure some territory from Bosque and Johnson counties and make a bigger county, but during the last hours of the Legislature, Johnson and Bosque protested giving up any of their territory, and Hon. A.J. Hart, our representative, let the bill go through with just W.H. Barker's precinct from Hood. No objection was filed by Hood County citizens, as it settled a threatened county seat contest at that time (the old courthouse having been burned in March of that Year), the people of the Somervell section objection to riding 18 to 20 miles to the county seat at Granbury. They wanted to locate it on the south spur of Comanche Peak.
8. See answer to No. 7.
9. The first man hanged in this county was a horse or cattle thief name not known, whose body was found hanging to a tree somewhere in Fall Creek. No one was ever prosecuted for it.
10. The first murder ever committed in the county was in 1872, the victim being John Cross, killed by John Middleton. The trouble arose about some cattle, Cross and others at the time were moving a herd of cattle near Granbury.

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Questions published on Feb. 21, 1952:

1. Who were the first pioneer preachers in Hood County?
2. When were the first schools taught in the county, and by whom?
3. When and where was the first Sunday school taught in Granbury?
4. When was the first legal execution in the county?
5. What place in the county was called "Pull Tight," and how did it get its name?
6. When did the first political revolution occur in the county?
7. When did the first local option occur, and what were the results?
8. How did Ft. Spunky get its name?
9. When was the last Indian fight in Hood County?
10. When was the last Indian raid into the county?
11. Who cleared the timber from the site of Granbury as the county seat?

Answers published in the next issue - March 6, 1952:

1. Among the earliest pioneer preachers can be mentioned Revs. Wm. G. Veal, James Hiner, and Wm. Manley, of the Methodist church; Rev. Jos. Robertson, of the Baptist church; and Rev. Ben Austin, of the Presbyterian church. They did evangelistic work from the close of the Civil war up to the 70's.
2. The first schools taught in the county were just after the Civil War, when under reconstruction rule. There were Federal supervisors in those days. Fayette Halford taught a school at old Center Mills; a man named Boomer taught a school in the timber between Rucker's and Long Creeks; Mrs. Sallie Karnes taught one on Nolan Branch, North of Acton; and C.F. Rodgers in the old Masonic institute at Acton.
3. The first Sunday school taught in Granbury was in the old courthouse in 1871. T.T. Ewell was the first superintendent. N.L. Cooper was also superintendent for some time. It was a union Sunday school, as the population was sparse.
4. The first legal execution occurred in 1874, Nelson Mitchell being hanged on a gallows in a draw near the reunion grounds in Granbury for complicity in the murder of Sam and Ike Truitt.
5. The little village of Paluxy was called "Pull Tight" by its own citizens. The name originated from the fact, it is said, that there was a steep hill this side of Paluxy which was very difficult to ascend with a wagon and team and it pulled the

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animals hard to get up to the top, hence it was “pull tight” in order to get out of town.

6. In 1876 the most bitter contest for county officers occurred in the November election. The interest centered; as it usually did, in the sheriff’s race and A.J. Wright was defeated by John H. Traylor. This was the first election held under the new constitution adopted in 1875.
7. The first election of local option occurred in 1876, the saloons being voted out of several precincts, Thorp Spring and Acton. This law was repealed by a vote two years later, as it was not satisfactory. It was an easy matter to go over to Granbury, Lipan or Paluxy and get liquor. Then an election was ordered on a county wide prohibition and the saloons were voted out of the county in March, 1882.
8. Just how Ft. Spunky was named is a bit hazy. We have heard that it was due to the solid Democratic vote it always rolled up, and that it sometimes decided county races in a close contest. Owing to the difficult way of getting to Granbury, the returns were always some days late getting to the county seat and the candidates would have to wait till Spunky came in.
9. The last Indian fight in this county occurred in September 1869, on Point Lookout or Star Hollow, between Tolar and Robinson Creek. A band of seven Kiowa and Comanche Indians were chased from near old Barnard’s Mill up Squaw Creek and the settlers organized and brought them to bay at Point Lookout and after fighting around a rocky hill, the Indians ran into a thicket in a ravine. A heavy rain came up, flooding the ravine and as the Indians came out into the water, the settlers attacked them. One white man named Bean was wounded and later died. J.M. Formwalt of this place was in this battle.
10. The last Indian raid was 1875, a party of Indians coming into the Lipan section and killing two women by the name of Rozell. The Indians made their escape.
11. The square was cleared by Barney and Anthony Hightower, two young colored men who were the sons of Simon Hightower. Barney’s daughters, Josie Anna, Phoebe, Amanda and Linky still reside in Granbury. Their grandfather, Simon, was the father of thirty-six children – sixteen by his first wife and twenty by his second wife who was the mother Barney and Anthony.

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Questions published on March 6, 1952:

1. How was the Brazos river crossed when in flood before the bridges were built?
2. Was the Brazos river ever frozen so hard in winter that a wagon and team could cross over on the ice?
3. When was the first bridge constructed across the river at Granbury?
4. In what year was the Fort Worth & Rio Grande railway built to Granbury, and how long was Granbury the terminus?
5. How many signers were there to the right of ways and depot grounds bond, and how many of them are living?
6. After whom was the town of Tolar named, and who was its patron saint?
7. When were the first graded schools established in Granbury and Thorp Spring and by whom?
8. Who owned Comanche Peak 35 or 40 years ago?
9. Where was the first post office in the county?
10. Where was the first commercial trading point in the county?

Answers published on March 13, 2014:

1. The Brazos river was crossed by means of ferry boats before bridges were built. These boats were secured by heavy cables stretched across the river and attached to trees.
2. C.W. Rhea states that his father, P.V. Rhea, came to this section in 1853, in the dead of winter. The river was low and frozen hard. His father dug down the banks at what is known as the old Edwards Crossing at the Leitch Bend in order to make a crossing. He then scattered sand across on the ice, and drove a loaded wagon drawn by a yolk of oxen across on it. This was five years before Charlie was born.
3. About 1879 the wagon bridge at Granbury was constructed as a private toll bridge. It was operated as such for a number of years, when it was sold to the county and made a free bridge.
4. In 1886 (sic. – 1887) the Ft. Worth and Rio Grande railway was built to Granbury, and this town was the terminus for a year or more when it was continued to Brownwood.
5. The right of way bond to secure the railroad contained 18 signatures. Only four of them are living now: D.C. Cogdell, J.H. Doyle, J.B. Wilson, and A.W. Crockett.

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An indemnity list was signed by the citizens generally and assessments were made pro rata according to this list.

6. The town of Tolar was named in honor of Col. Alf Tolar, of Abilene and Col. W.L. McGaughey was the leader in naming the town for friend and political supporter. He donated grounds for the town site.
7. The first graded schools were established in Granbury and Thorp Spring in the year 1872. Rev. W.P. Wilson was at the head of the first Granbury High School which later became Granbury College. J.A. Clark opened the first school at Thorp Spring and in 1873 his sons Addison and Randolph, took charge of it and chartered it as the Add-Ran College.
8. About 40 years ago J.F. Torrey owned Comanche Peak and later deeded it to his son, Ed Torrey, who lived in Galveston. Charlie Rhea was the first man to plow the land on the summit of the peak, which was planted in corn.
9. The first post office in the county was at Acton, which was the first section of the county to be settled.
10. the first trading point of any importance was at Acton, there being four or five stores ther as early as 1869 or '70. W.H. Kingsbury had a store at Stockton, where he sold goods and bought cotton.

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Questions published on March 13, 1952:

1. What Democratic nominees for the Legislature from this county were defeated by an independent candidate?
2. Who was the physician in Granbury in the first year of its existence?
3. Who were the first attorneys?
4. How did the citizens of Granbury obtain drinking water before a water system was established?
5. What year was John Wilkes Booth in Granbury, and what was his occupation?
6. Who operated the first daily stage lines connecting Granbury with Weatherford, Cleburne and Fort Worth?
7. In what year did thickets of young oak bushes grow up on the public square of Granbury?
8. When and where was the first rock building constructed in Granbury?
9. When and where was the last horse race pulled off in this county, and who owned the race horses?
10. Where is Dog Town and Duckingville located?

Answers published on March 20, 1952:

1. In 1872 D.L. Middleton was the nominee of the Democratic convention from this county for the Legislature and was opposed by A.J. Hart. Hart was elected, although he did not make a single speech, but was a fine campaigner.
2. The physicians in Granbury in 1871 were Dr. D.K. Turner, Dr. J.R. Coffman and Dr. Carmichael. Physicians who located here a year or two later were Dr. A.E. Hanna and Dr. B.W. Holcomb.
3. the lawyers who were here in 1871 were T.J. Duke, T.T. Ewell, N.L. Cooper, B.F. Williams, J.J. Farr and ___ Newton.
4. The citizens of Granbury got their drinking water by means of surface wells and windmills until a water system was put in.
5. John Wilkes Booth, alias John St. Helen, was a resident of Granbury in the winter of 1872, and operated the Black Hawk Saloon, in the little rock building now occupied by R.W. Bowden.
6. The first daily stage line to Ft. Worth from Granbury was known as the Chidester line, and it extended from Ft. Worth to El Paso, a distance of 1400 miles. It was

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operated by relay stations and the section from here to Brown wood was driven by Major Dixon, a great old border hostler. A daily line to Weaterford was run by T. P. Mullins for several years, and one to Cleburne by J.M. Glenn.

7. In 1871 and '72 it was a common thing to see a thicket of post oak and live oak bushes grown on the public square in Granbury. The last writer remembers was about where Ferrell & Co.'s store is located and extending on down to the bank of the branch. The back alley on the east side and on the south side of the square from the back alley out to the river was overgrown with bushes.
8. The first rock building put up in Granbury was the little rock house on the corner, now occupied by R.W. Bowden, built in 1871. The next buildings to follow that year were the Counts Hotel on the southeast corner, the building adjoining it and two stone buildings on the south side, both burned down and now being rebuilt by M.H. Shanley. They were occupied as dry goods stores by W.W. Snider and S.D. Blake and Co.
9. The last big horse race was run in the Peveler valley near Fairview in 1873, and the horses were owned by Shelby Stanfield and Joe Washburn. There was furious betting on the races and great sums of money at the stake.
10. Dog Town is located on the river west of Acton near the mouth of Walnut Creek. The original settlers had large packs of dogs for hunting purposes and they were so numerous that section was dubbed Dog Town. Duckingville is supposed to be located in the Brushy neighborhood, but just in what way it got its name we have never learned.