

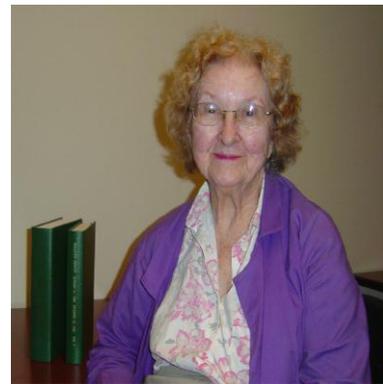
1890s REVISITED FROM HOUSTON COUNTY, TEXAS

In the 1890s the United States was on the move. Our flag had 43 stars, Benjamin Harrison was president. The US frontier was gone, as uncleared land was rapidly being settled. Ellis Island was opened, eventually admitting 12 million immigrants to our land. In the middle of the country, the Oklahoma land rush was being held, allowing Americans to file a claim on a parcel of land. And on the West coast, the Gold Rush had lured 300,000 out West.

New discoveries and inventions brought great promises to our country. Electric lights were gradually coming to Texas – to large cities first, then to rural areas. The first patent for an automobile was granted. The first professional football game was played.

The population of Texas in 1890 was about 2 million and Houston County, Texas, had a population of about 25,000. The county was established by the Republic of Texas in 1837. The railroad had come to the county in 1872.

The Houston County newspaper, *The Crockett Courier*, began publishing in 1890 and chronicled events big and small from near and far. A donation of the microfilmed copies of the *Crockett Courier* from the years 1890 – 1901 was given to the Waco/McLennan County Library's genealogy collection, and this film was abstracted by **Betty Ross Crook**, a member of the Central Texas Genealogical Society. The Society then published these interesting bits of information from long ago. The books are in two volumes - Volume 1 and 2 Houston County January 31, 1890 – January 25, 1901.



The books give us a picture of life 125 years ago. Some of the information is political: In 1891 the state convention of the Democratic Party was held in Houston. The I&GN Railroad sold round trip tickets from Crockett to Houston for \$2.00. In May of 1894 R.V. WATTS announced his candidacy for sheriff of Houston County and J.L. SHOTWELL announced for Justice of the Peace for Precinct #1. John A. DAVIS of Grapeland also announced his candidacy for Sheriff and D.J. CATER of Lovelady announced for Tax Assessor. The Populist Party held a county convention on Saturday, May 5, 1894 in Crockett and endorsed Thomas L. NUGENT for Governor. In 1897 the Houston County Republican Executive Committee recommended the following for post office appointment: F.H. HILL for Crockett, Miss Bettie WHITLEY for Grapeland, C.B. MOORE for Lovelady, W.D. GIMOND for Weldon, and Mrs. V.E. FURLOW for Creek.

Many engagements and marriages were celebrated: October, 1890 Rev. J.C. SULLIVAN and Mill Leona SALLAS were married at the home of the bride's father,

Rev. Ben SALLAS at Nevel's Prairie. In September, 1894, at the Methodist Church in Crockett Sunday night, J.W. BRIGHT of Trinity County married Miss Dora KELLEY of Crockett. The bride was a teacher and was the daughter of M.J. KELLEY. They planned to live in Groveton. Rev. J.S. MATHIS officiated at the wedding. In December, 1893 two men got licenses to marry the same woman, one on the 14th and one on the 20th. The second man won her. All parties lived near Ash. Even well-known people married in Houston County – On May 31, 1899 Pat M. NEFF of Waco, a member of the legislature and a lawyer in Waco, and Miss Myrtie MAINER of Lovelady were married in Lovelady. They met while students at Waco University and planned to live in Waco.

Some marriages did not end well: In July, 1898 at Waco Lucinda MORE rejected the affection of Walter FORD. He shot her to death and then committed suicide. In 1897 Garrett McCULLOUGH of East Point, Georgia, sued his wife for divorce. They were married in 1849. In 1861 he went to war, leaving his wife to care for their 7 children, protecting them from General Sherman's army. After the war they had more children. An old neighbor told McCullough that his wife had been intimate with a federal officer during the war. Other neighbors confirmed the news and the husband, nearly aged 80, went to Atlanta and filed for divorce.

Death came early to many: In May, 1896 Letha WRIGHT, age 2, daughter of J.E. and Luna HOLLINGSWORTH of Grapeland died after 8 days of illness. In January 1897 the 14 year old daughter of James FOSTER died of lockjaw. A nail had stuck into her foot a week earlier. Some deaths of well-known people were noted - Miss Winnie DAVIS, daughter of Jefferson DAVIS, died in September 1898 in Rhode Island and was buried in Richmond, Virginia.

The entries in these books give a view of life in the US before the turn of the 20th century. As well as being entertaining, they are a fine resource for those researching families in Texas and beyond, showing the way of life for that era. The volumes are every-name indexed. The cost of Volume 1 (1890-1895, 472 pages) is \$30. The cost of Volume 2 (1895-1901, 654 pages) is \$40. If ordering both copies, the cost is \$65. They can be ordered from the Central Texas Genealogical Society on line (www.ctgs.org) or by mail at 5301 Bosque Blvd, Waco, TX 76710.

By Norma Cannata
July, 2012