

COLLIN COUNTY FROM THE OX TEAM TO THE AIRPLANE

McKinney Daily Courier Gazette, 1949

The following letter was printed in Examiner June 30, 1930, nearly 20 years ago. Many changes since that time:

Editors Examiner:

My son, E. L. Naugle and I had a pleasant visit in Collin County sometime ago. Stopping at Frisco, Prosper and McKinney, we met congenial friends at each place. He had not seen McKinney for 21 years, it having been that long since we moved away from the county. The town has grown wonderfully during that time. I pass through there occasionally.

After spending a night at Prosper with relatives, we started to McKinney via the somewhat deserted village, Rock Hill, where my father, B. J. Naugle, located his headright in 1847. That survey corners there where the two roads intersect, and runs 1 mile south and 1/2 mile west being 320 acres. He later pre-empted 160 acres which corners near the same spot, running 1/2 mile east and 1/2 mile north. He first settled by a spring 1/2 mile east of that place. The village, Rock Hill, was not started there until 37 years later. It has been more than 70 years since I first began traveling the road from Rock Hill community to McKinney. I have been familiar with it since I was a small boy. It has been changed some, shortened some, and is a better road. At that time going east from that neighborhood we traveled across the open prairie, varying very little from the section line that passes along the south side of the Esq. Coleman old place and on east until we reached a point near the Grey Branch creek. Then to avoid the two ravines which flow into the creek from the north side, the road turned to the right, leading down into the creek and followed down the bed of the creek for some distance, then climbing a long steep bank at the foot of the well known as Grey Branch hill, to get up out of the creek. The roads then were almost the same as nature made them. They had not been improved much. No bridges then. Some time late (I do not know how long) there was some kind of a crossing made on Grey Branch at that point and the road was taken out of the creek and followed along the north side of the creek, parallel to it. Still late a bridge was built on the creek and each of the ravines. We then had a right good road to McKinney in dry weather except that the long steep hill was still there and we always had "uphill business" at that place when going to McKinney with a loaded wagon.

Going back home in the afternoon it was even more to be dreaded. It was dangerous. There was danger of going down too fast. One man lost his life there, was so badly hurt that he died soon afterward. Going to McKinney this time, after passing Foote, we suddenly found ourselves on a new road and seemed lost for a few minutes. Did not recognize the new road, but it being a good road going east and believing it to be the McKinney road, we drove on intersecting the old road at the Darnell old place near Bowlby. We failed to see the Gray Branch hill, as formerly. I was glad of it. I had seen it too often years ago.

I am glad you have good roads in Collin County now, as well as other good improvements. It is a real pleasure to travel through Collin now. There has been a wonderful transformation of the face of the county since I first saw it. My grandfather, Jacob J. Naugle, came to Collin County during the year 1846, the year the county was organized and also the year in which the war between the U. S. and Mexico began. He came then to look at the country, with a view of making home in Texas. Soon after

he left his home in Indiana and started to Texas his son, Benj. J. Naugle, then a lad a little past 15 years old, also left home in that state, either cause he was lonesome without his father at home and wanted to follow him or as a boy at that age he wanted to fight Mexicans or didn't have much love for his step-mother at home (very likely the latter) he went to Louisville, Ky., and joined the U.S. army and went to Mexico to take part in the war. After serving there one year, he received a discharge from the army and went back to Indiana. By that time his father had returned from Texas and was preparing to move to Texas with his family. Soon afterward they all started, 4 in number including the son. They came by boat down the Ohio River, down the Mississippi and up the Red River as far as they could travel by boat. From that point the rode on horseback to Collin County. They had already learned enough about Texas to know what awaited them. A free heritage in a fine country in the great State of Texas. Texas at that time the youngest state in the union was also many times the largest state. Not including the Santa Fe territory or New Mexico, which covered 122,503 square miles, which Texas sold to the U.S. Government for \$10,000,000.00, Texas still covered an area of 165,896 square miles. A territory larger than any European country except Russia, nearly 4 times as large as Arkansas, and 6 times as large as Ohio, Pennsylvania or New York and more than 8 times as large as all the 6 New England states combined. Great in size, great in her variety of soil and climate, great in her hidden internal undeveloped resources, with a geographical location assuring her wonderful commercial possibilities, yet Texas was poor in some respects. Land, her chief stock in trade found slow sale. People would naturally be slow in buying land fro homes in a country exposed to attacks from Mexicans, Indians and wild beasts, in a country too thinly settled for schools and churches to a good advantage. No railroads near, no market near.

What Texas needed then was people. People to settle the land, to civilize the country, to cultivate the soil, to raise stock, to increase the products and material wealth of the country to bring capital into the country, to bring railroads and other industries into the country. No wonder Texas was giving land away in those days. Coming at that time, a man with a family received a land certificate, which entitled him to 640 acres, to be chosen anywhere out of State land not yet taken. Furthermore he was not required to live on it. It might have been expected that he would live on it, but he was not forced to do it. He could sell his certificate or trade it off and transfer his title to someone else. People did not attach too much value to a section of land at that time. Some people coming in those days secured land and went away and never returned. The land reverted to the state years afterward or was sold for taxes.

My grandfather, Jacob J. Naugle, coming in 1847, being a man with a family received a certificate for 640 acres, which he located near Rowlett Creek, as shown on the may of Collin County in the Assessor's office in McKinney. His son, B. J. Naugle, being single, received a certificate for 320 acres which he located at Rock Hill as I have already stated. More later.

W. C. Naugle

(June 26, 1930 - 19 years ago)